

# The Box

A One Act Drama

by

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# The Box

**A large box becomes the centre of attention at a bus stop. Who owns it? What is inside? Its curiosity leads to the death of an unbalanced man, who has threatened the two other characters in the play. It is a challenging play for performers and an intriguing one for audiences.**

## **Production Notes:**

**The staging should be as simple as possible.**

**Time: The present**

## **The characters**

**The Young Man is in his early twenties.**

**The Older man is in his fifties**

**The Man is in his late thirties.**

**A Bus Inspector is in his late forties**

**Costuming is referred to within the script when each character is introduced.**

# The Box

## Cast of Characters

Young Man  
Older Man  
Man  
Bus Inspector

*The Scene: The setting is simple. There is bench C next to a bus stop, which can be a fixture or left to the imagination. R of bench is a large heavy cardboard box, which is approx. 1.5 metres in height. It is sealed with thick brown tape on top and down the side facing the audience.*

*It is early morning at first light and the lighting should suggest that the street is lit with street lamps and the occasional intermittent flare of neon lighting, which fades as the play proceeds.*

*YOUNG MAN (YM) is sitting R on a bench. He wears a black T shirt, a bomber jacket, black jeans, baseball cap and sneakers. He ignores the box and is engrossed in reading a comic.*

*An OLDER MAN (OM) enters. He wears a smart suit, shirt and tie and carries a paper carrier bag. He is about to sit on the bench when he notices the box. He steps away from the bench and looks at the box from different angles. THE YOUNG MAN ignores him and continues reading.*

*OM turns to YM*

OM: Excuse me. You're not hoping to get on the bus with that are you?

YM: *(reading)* No.

OM: Could you tell me what it is?

YM: *(lowering comic and looking at box)* It's a box, isn't it?

*He returns to his comic.*

OM: *(slightly irritated)* Well what's in it, inside?

YM: I dunno.

OM: I'm sorry I asked.

YM: S'alright.

*OM crosses to bench and sits L*

OM: (*scoffs*) I just hope you're not thinking of getting on the bus with it, that's all.

*YM looks up at the box*

YM: No, I don't, not at all.

*He resumes reading*

OM: You're just going to leave it there are you?

YM: Yes, I reckon.

OM: It should go to the rubbish tip.

YM: I suppose you're right.

OM: I am right.

*OM delves into his carrier bag removes a book and begins to read.*

*Pause*

*OM has difficulty focusing on his reading and closes his book.*

OM: What do you intend doing then?

YM: To get on the bus, when it arrives.

*OM sighs irritably and returns to his book.*

*At the same moment YM lowers his comic and looks at OM, smiles broadly, slowly shakes his head and returns to his comic. OM is again restless and closes his book.*

OM: I really think you should dispose of it.

YM: (*from behind comic*) Oh yeah?

OM: It's an eyesore! Within an hour it will be ripped apart by some.... what do they call them? Local hoons, that's it, and the wrapping and contents strewn all over the place.

YM: Yer, possibly.

OM: Possibly? It's highly likely!

*Pause*

*OM glances at YM*

OM: Aren't you a little ashamed?

*YM stuffs the comic into his pocket and turns to OM*

YM: (*scoffs*) Ashamed? Give me a break.

*OM is slightly taken aback*

OM: I know we all have different values, but I must say...

YM: (*looking him up and down as he interrupts him*) I reckon you must be some kind of shrink. Look man, all I want to do is sit here, wait for the bus and read my...

OM: (*interrupting*) Comic.

YM: Yeah, that's right.

OM: Not exactly mature reading material is it?

*YM laughs incredulously*

YM: Look, what I read is my business, OK?

M: Of course, but....

*YM looks at him sternly but OM just looks at him, lost for words.*

YM: Have you finished?

*OM shifts to the far L end of the bench. He reads and makes frequent glances at the box. YM resumes reading his comic.*

*MAN (M) enters L carrying a small battered suitcase. He wears a long shabby raincoat over a dark jumper and jeans, and a beanie. He puts down the case and looks at his watch expectantly. When he eventually speaks he shows signs of anxiety.*

M: Have I missed the bus?

*OM and YM look up at him.*

OM: It's late.

M: Late? Are you sure?

OM: The bus hasn't arrived.

M: I haven't missed it then?

OM: *(without sarcasm)* If it hasn't arrived, you haven't missed it have you?

M: Oh. *(he crosses to bench)* Mind if I sit?

OM: Not at all.

*(together)*

YM: Course not.

*M sits on the bench between OM and YM. He places the suitcase on the bench next to him. OM smiles at him in acknowledgement and M returns with a nervous smile and quickly looks at his watch. OM watches him and when the man looks back at him he hurriedly returns to his book.*

M: I can't be late then? *(there is no response)* I said I'm not late for the bus then?

OM: *(looking at him slightly incredulously)* No, the bus is late. It was due before you arrived.

M: I couldn't have missed it then.

*OM looks at him and slowly shakes his head.*

*Pause*

M: Am I right there's only one bus that stops here?

OM: Yes, the 965.

M: Good. That's the one I want. Thank you, much appreciated.

OM: It's sometimes very late.

YM: It's often very late.

M: As long as I haven't missed it.

*M opens the suitcase and pulls out a banana which he places beside him. He carefully closes the case, puts it on his lap and places the banana on top of it. He then stands, places the case and banana on the bench and rummages in his pockets. Eventually, he pulls out a large pocket knife, returns to the bench, sits, places suitcase on his lap and cuts the banana in half.. He opens the suitcase, places the knife inside, takes out some cling film and wraps one half of the banana with it and places it in the suitcase, which he closes carefully. He peels the other half of the banana. While this ritual has been taking place the other men have been watching him intently. M becomes conscious of them at the point where he is about to bite into the banana. He freezes and glances at them. They hurriedly return to their reading. M bites into the banana and chews slowly, obviously enjoying the experience.*

M: My first bite today.

YM: Enjoy.

OM: It's good for your health.

M: What, eating?

OM: I was referring to the banana. It's a very good source of dietary fibre.

M: Are you a doctor?

OM: Good heavens no. I read it somewhere, that's all.

M: I eat three a day. My sister says I'll look like one, one day.

OM: There's nothing wrong with bananas.

M: No (*thinks*) who says there is then?

OM: I meant they are very nutritious.

M: Are you sure you're not a doctor?

OM: Absolutely.

M: A dietician?

OM: Definitely not.

*OM smiles weakly. M stands, places suitcase on bench and holding the half banana skin, quickly looks about.*

M: Is there a bin? (*agitated*) I hate littering the streets.

YM: There's no bin here. It went missing some time ago.

M: Stolen?

YM: Probably.

M: That's sad.

OM: Very annoying, but typical.

M: What d'yer mean, typical?

OM: (*uneasily*) It, it happens all the time.

M: What, people stealing bins?

YM: (*chuckling*) Yeah, bin and gone they are.

M throws YM a sharp look and OM slowly shakes his head and resumes reading.



*M sits on the bench opens suitcase and carefully folds the skin and places it inside. He closes the case. During this sequence the others have been watching him and when he looks up they smile at him. M turns and notices the box. He looks at it from different angles. The others watch him from time to time.*

M: *(turning to them)* That's a large box isn't it?

OM: I'm surprised you've only just noticed it.

M: *(to OM)* Is it yours then?

OM: Certainly not.

M: Do you know what it's doing there?

OM: *(gesturing to YM)* Ask him.

*YM continues reading*

M: *(to YM)* Well?

*No response.*

M: I'm talking to you.

*YM looks up from his reading.*

YM: What?

OM: You're wasting your time.

YM: *(to OM)* You're not on about that box again?

*He shrugs and continues reading.*

*M crosses to box and again looks at it from different angles.*

M: It's big.

YM: *(still reading and adding sardonically)* Right on.

M: How did it get there?

YM: Not by bus that's for sure.

*Short Pause*

M: Have you had a look inside it?

YM: Be our guest.

OM: (*sharply to YM*) Why don't you put us out of our misery and tell us why you brought it here in the first place, and what's inside?

YM: (*lowering comic*) D'yer know I haven't a clue?

OM: (*to M*) That's what he wants you to think.

YM: (throwing OM a distasteful look) Shrink.

M: (*agitated*) He's not is he? A shrink, is that what you are?

OM: Of course I'm not. I work for the regional council.

YM: In that case he needs a shrink.

M: I hate shrinks.

OM: I've asked him to get rid of it, but he refuses.

M: Get rid of what?

OM: (*sharply*) The box!

M: (*to YM*) It belongs to you then?

*No response*

M: Well does it?

YM: Does what?

M: Does the box belong to you?

YM: (*irritably*) No!

OM: He's lying!

*YM laughs*

YM: Ok it does.

M: So it is yours?

*YM laughs again*

YM: The shrink would have you believe it is.

M: (*irritably*) Well is it yours or not?

YM: (*firmly*) No. It is not my box!

OM: You said it was!

YM: Yes, just then I did. You obviously wanted me to say it was.

OM: All along you led me to believe it was.

YM: You presumed it was mine.

OM: Why didn't you say it wasn't?

YM: (*smiling mischievously*) You never gave me a chance.

OM: What? (*sarcastically*) I suppose you expect me to apologise?

*YM grins widely and shakes his head.*

M: What should we do?

YM: Phone the bus company.

M: No, I mean what should we do with the box?

OM: I'd report it to the police if I had time.

YM: You can imagine the headline in the local newspaper can't you? On Tuesday at the 965 bus stop in Carmody Avenue, police seized a large sealed cardboard box. Three men, one a regional council worker or shrink, the second, a reader of comic fiction and the third a hater of shrinks are currently assisting the police with their enquiries.

OM: You find this very amusing don't you?

YM: Oh, get a life man.

OM: Incidentally I am not a council worker, nor am I a shrink. I am a local council executive.

YM: What?

OM: In your trite commentary you mentioned that I was a...oh never mind.

M: D'yer think it'll be reported?

YM: What, the box? (*chuckling*) No, it's not exactly earth shattering news is it?

*OM crosses to box. M joins him. YM lounges on the bench watching them.*

*OM puts an ear to the box.*

OM: I can't hear anything.

YM: You don't think it might talk do you?

M: It could contain some type of device.

OM: Device?

YM (*with mock horror*) You don't mean a bomb?

M: Why not?

OM: Don't be ridiculous. It's too conspicuous.

M: But that's exactly what they'd want you to think.

OM: They?

M: Terrorists.

OM: (*scoffing*) Oh really!

M: (*agitated*) It's possible you know.

YM: Anything's possible.

M: (*turning to YM and sternly replying*) It's more than possible, surely?

OM: It's a madcap suggestion!

M: (*vehemently*) Who're you calling mad?

OM: (*backing away from him*) I meant the idea, not you.

M: (*Calmer, but pointedly*) If it's more than possible, does that make me mad?

OM: I didn't suggest you were...are.



