

Crowd Scene For Exisitentialists.

a screenplay by benjamin blaine.

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FADE IN:

1. EXT.DAY - A POST BOX.

The box is in an ordinary suburban street. JEAN sits on top of the box staring at the world.

RUTH is collapsed against the base of the box looking as if she has been dropped from a great height.

There is a feeling of freedom, or even excited euphoria.

JEAN

This is perfect.

RUTH

How do we tell?

JEAN

I speak from experience.

RUTH

You have experience of perfection?

JEAN

My experience *is* perfection.

RUTH

What have you experianced?

JEAN

Nothing. I have experianced nothing. Perfection can only be found within the simple, and what is simpler than nothing?

RUTH

Nothing could be simpler.

JEAN

How?

PAUL is walking up the street towards the post box. At the moment he is still in the distance, we do not see him properly until he speaks.

Jean and Ruth now become anxious.

RUTH

Who is coming?

JEAN

I cannot tell. Pehaps, no one.

Paul is coming closer.

RUTH

It is someone, I can see them.

JEAN

Is vision really enough proof of existence?

RUTH

But it's all that we have to go on.

JEAN

Just because it is all that we have, is that enough for it to be proof?

Paul is coming closer.

JEAN

It has been said that even if the existence of life doesn't prove the existence of God it is all we have to go on. That still doesn't make it proof.

RUTH

You don't think that he is God?

Paul is coming closer.

JEAN

I don't yet accept that he is. The concept that he is God is still a long way off. Unlike him. If he is.

RUTH

Biologists hold that the presence of movement, excretion, respiration, reproductions, sensual awareness, nutrition and growth all prove life.

JEAN

Biology is arse.

Paul is now close to the post box.

He holds a letter.

Jean is dismissive, Ruth is friendly, Paul is intense.

RUTH

See Jean, it was someone, it's Paul.

JEAN

Paul?

PAUL

I want to post a letter.

JEAN

Who is Paul?

RUTH

He is Paul.

PAUL

I want to post a letter.

JEAN

How can you tell it's Paul?

RUTH

I know it's Paul. Paul how are you?

PAUL

I'm fine. I want to post this letter.

Jean gets down from the post box. Jean is aggressive, Paul is timid, he wants to avoid a confrontation. Ruth is dismayed that they do not get on.

JEAN

You know it's Paul? Know? But what is knowledge in the face of a postal service?

PAUL

Excuse me, I just want to post a letter.

JEAN

A letter? What is the point of a letter?

PAUL

I want to write to someone. A friend.

JEAN

And you have faith that they exist?

PAUL

No. I cannot be certain whether he exists or not.

JEAN

He does not. I have no experience of him.

PAUL

I cannot even be certain that the postal service exists.

RUTH

But Paul has experience of him.

JEAN

But Paul only exists in my mind and a figment of the imagination can have no experience.

PAUL

I have no experience of my friend. I'm writing on the off chance.

RUTH

The off chance?

PAUL

Yes, if he does exist then I would like him to have this letter. If he does exist then I would like him to be my friend. Excuse me, I want to post a letter.

Jean sweeps Ruth up from the floor and they go and stand a few feet away from the post box.

Both neither look at it or Paul, however occasionally they will try to sneak a look to see what he is doing.

They are suspicious.

Paul meanwhile drops onto his knees and whispers intensely into the slot of the box.

JEAN

What is he doing? No don't look.

RUTH

How can I know if I don't look?

JEAN

Then quickly.

Ruth looks.

PAUL

Friend? Friend? Can you hear me?
Are you in there?

JEAN

Well?

RUTH

He's talking to the post box.

JEAN

That is what you see?

She nods.

JEAN

And you wonder why I didn't trust
your eyes before. I will have to
look.

Jean looks.

PAUL

Friend? Friend are you in here? I
have a letter for you, friend?

RUTH

I preferred it when he wasn't
here.

JEAN

I have no preference. Preference
denotes past knowledge and I do
not believe that the past has ever
existed. He crowds my style
though.

RUTH

Two's company.

JEAN

Do not sink to cliché!

PAUL

Friend? Unless you say something
you'll not get your letter! You
hate me! You hate me don't you!

RUTH

I want him to go.

JEAN

So do I.

RUTH

But go where?

JEAN

There is no where else.

RUTH

But he came from somewhere.

JEAN

He came from nowhere.

RUTH

Then ask him to go back there.

JEAN

Ask him to go nowhere?

RUTH

We have a problem.

PAUL

Right! Play it like that then! I don't like you anyway.

He rips up the letter.

PAUL

I don't believe in the post office anyway. Any organisation that sees the world in terms of first and second class is nothing but a mouthpiece for capitalist oppression. Ha! See how I free myself from the bonds of capitalism!

Jean and Ruth return and stand on either side of the post box.

Guiltily Paul straightens. He becomes intensely depressed.

RUTH

Are you well?

PAUL

The artist can never be well.

JEAN

But what about yourself?

PAUL

As an artist? No. As an artist I carry the burden of existence on my shoulders, at a distance from the world I can merely observe the pain of the masses and reflect it in my own troubled soul.

JEAN

And not as an artist?

PAUL

I exist only as an artist. I exist only for art. Without it I would not exist.

RUTH

That would lighten the load though.

PAUL

Lighten? Lighten? Oh, the unbearable lightness of being! I must be gone, your happiness is abhorrent to my character. And besides, hell is other people.

JEAN

That is certain. If anything is. Which is not certain.

RUTH

I'm sorry. For my part I shall always try to be less happy from now on.

PAUL

I am gone.

He walks away.

The atmosphere lightens.

JEAN

The fact that he said he was here when he said he was gone suggests that he is liar.

RUTH

I feel sorry for him.

Jean climbs onto the post box.

JEAN

Sorry for who?

Ruth sits down.

RUTH

Paul.

JEAN

But he doesn't exist.

RUTH

No.

JEAN

Is he here?

RUTH

No.

JEAN

Are you aware of him?

RUTH

In my memory yes.

JEAN

Do you remember dreams?

RUTH

Yes.

JEAN

Then perhaps you dream Paul was here.

RUTH

But you saw him too.

JEAN

Perhaps I was dreaming. Perhaps you only dreamt that I saw him.

RUTH

Do you think he'll come back?

JEAN

How can he return if he was never here?

RUTH

I prefer it without him.

JEAN

This moment is perfect.

RUTH

How can you tell?

JEAN

I speak from experience.

RUTH

You have experience of perfection?

JEAN

My experience is perfection.

RUTH

What is your experience?

JEAN

Nothing. I have experienced nothing. Perfection can only be found within the simple and what could be simpler than nothing?

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FADE OUT.