

ON THE WAY OUT

A 10 minute comedy

by
(Wendy Hopkins)

ON THE WAY OUT

Lights up. The stage is empty except for a few bits of GARBAGE, a SIGN (pointing stage right) that reads "OUT" and TWO TRAVELLERS, a male and a female.

This piece is in the spirit of Waiting for Godot.

The Male traveler lies on his back, one leg crossed over the other, wearing a t-shirt that bares, what we'll come to understand is his name, COMMON SENSE.

The Female traveler sits, knees together on the floor, also wearing a t-shirt baring her name, MANNERS.

COMMON SENSE

What time is it?

MANNERS

2:30. P.M.

COMMON SENSE

Thank you.

MANNERS

Thank YOU.

A beat. Or several.

COMMON SENSE

Do you think they'll be needing us today?

MANNERS

Well, I am always hopeful.

He sits up.

COMMON SENSE

Yes, you are. But given the pattern.

MANNERS

Yes, given the pattern. Perhaps not.

A beat. Or several.

He stands. Paces.

COMMON SENSE

Well (with growing frustration) idle hands again! It's simply not healthy.

MANNERS

Yes. The devil's workshop and all that.

COMMON SENSE

If I believed in the devil.

MANNERS

I apologize. Of course you don't.

A beat. She holds her hand in mid-air, a gesture that says "help me stand, please".

MANNERS

Would you?

COMMON SENSE

Of course.

MANNERS

Thank you.

He helps her stand, then continues to rant.

COMMON SENSE

It's just, I've hung around long enough. I mean, they know I'm here if they need me -- (when he refers to "they" he motions Stage Left) -- but it's obvious they don't.

MANNERS

I wish I could say you're wrong. But you, Sir, are not.

A beat. Or several.

COMMON SENSE

Have you ever considered just moving on?

MANNERS

You mean, leave?!

COMMON SENSE

Yes.

MANNERS

No! What if they needed me?

COMMON SENSE

(suddenly angry) Then we wouldn't be here! (regrets his outburst immediately) I'm sorry.

MANNERS

Thank you.

COMMON SENSE

I don't even know why I'm yelling. Well, of course I do, we're here.

MANNERS

Yes.

COMMON SENSE

And we have been for years.

MANNERS

Yes. On the way out. Yes.

A beat. Or several.

Manners sees that Common Sense is depressed.

MANNERS

But occasionally they need us.

COMMON SENSE

Yes, occasionally, one or two of them. But frankly, it's mostly you.

MANNERS

Well, yes, around the holidays. Best behavior and all that.

COMMON SENSE

Maybe I should just accept the fact I'll never be IN again. I mean look at them, I barely recognize them: entertainment used to be tap dancing, now it's shouting. You can shoot people as an alternative to discussion or tolerance or child care. I don't even understand them anymore.

MANNERS

This isn't like you.

COMMON SENSE

I'm just tired. I used to be useful. Busy even.

MANNERS

Yes.

COMMON SENSE

And now, I'm like you -- just, seasonal help.

MANNERS

There's no need to be rude.

COMMON SENSE

I apologize. It's my ego. Remember the old days, when we were everywhere.

MANNERS

An ounce of common sense is worth a pound of theory.

COMMON SENSE

Oh, remember that?! My hey day.

MANNERS

Yes! And "If you have an ounce of common sense and a friend..."

She lets him finish the quote.

COMMON SENSE

"...you don't need an analyst". Joan Crawford said that.

MANNERS

I know.

COMMON SENSE

Celebrities knew me.

MANNERS

Yes. (a beat) Things change. Actually I think you said that, didn't you?

COMMON SENSE

Yes. I did.

And then a man enters, wearing a t-shirt baring (what the audience may now realize is) his name, THE TRUTH.

THE TRUTH

Hello.

MANNERS

Hello.

A beat. As Common Sense and Manners take in his name,
his presence, the realization that The Truth is now, like
them, on it's way out.

MANNERS

No.

COMMON SENSE

Not you!

MANNERS

This time they've gone too far!

THE TRUTH

I believe that happened long ago. Somewhere around the 1980's.

COMMON SENSE

But surely -- I mean, us -- as much as I hate to admit it, we are optional but you (the Truth)
you... are. You just ARE!

THE TRUTH

And yet here I am. Standing where Blue Pepsi once stood.

COMMON SENSE

Blue Pepsi. I'd almost forgotten.

MANNERS

(suddenly realizing) Wait -- are you telling me, (to Common Sense) what are they called
again?

COMMON SENSE

Hoverboards. (to Truth) She's obsessed with Hoverboards.

MANNERS

Thank you! Yes, Hoverboards! --

COMMON SENSE

Which don't actually hover.

MANNERS

Exactly! You're saying hoverboards are still in. But they've decided they've got no need
for The Truth?!

THE TRUTH

It's an election year -- fiction is all the rage.

COMMON SENSE

(to Truth) If you are on your way out, then there is definitely no hope for me now!

A beat. Or several. And then RON MITCHELSON, 40's enters, he wears a t-shirt that says Ron.

MANNERS

Hello.

Ron looks confused, unsure as to where he is or why he is here.

RON MITCHELSON

Hi.

MANNERS

(Offended, to Common Sense) It's busy today! Maybe they're having a -- what's that called?

COMMON SENSE

A Blow out sale? Or Blow out days!

MANNERS

Ghastly. Yes. A blow out? Everyone goes but the idiots?!

COMMON SENSE

(looking at Ron's shirt) Ron?

RON MITCHELSON

Yes.

MANNERS

Is it Latin?

RON MITCHELSON

No. It's, well, Minnesotan maybe. That's where I was born anyway.

Common Sense takes Manners aside, whispers something about "he's not a concept". To which Manners replies "Of course". Meanwhile, Ron looks at everyone, it starts to don on him.

RON MITCHELSON

I hate to be rude but where are we?

THE TRUTH

On the way out.

RON MITCHELSON

Pardon me?

THE TRUTH

This way is in (stage left) This way is out (stage right) We are neither here nor there. But because we've been there (in) and we are now here, then we are, On the way out.

RON MITCHELSON

Am I dead?

MANNERS

No.

COMMON SENSE

But, in a way, yes.

THE TRUTH

(to Common Sense) In a way?! Gray area, that's always been your problem! (to Ron) No, you're not dead. Yet. But the very fact that you're here means you are closer. Much closer.

MANNERS

There's no need to scare him.

THE TRUTH

Like I can help that.

RON MITCHELSON

So, I'm on my way out?

THE TRUTH

Yes.

RON MITCHELSON

But, how can I, how is that -- (suddenly realizing) Annie. I knew it.

THE TRUTH

Me too.

COMMON SENSE

(to Ron) What? What? What?

MANNERS

(to Common Sentence) Is not a sentence.

COMMON SENSE

Pardon me. (correcting himself) Who is Annie? What did you know?

She's my girlfriend --
 RON MITCHELSON

The Truth looks at Ron skeptically.

Really?
 THE TRUTH

(correcting himself) Well, she doesn't like labels --
 RON MITCHELSON

She doesn't like you.
 THE TRUTH

(to The Truth) Here now!
 MANNERS

(to The Truth) No, no, we're living together --
 RON MITCHELSON

Not anymore. Now she's in a cab on her way to Brad's place.
 THE TRUTH

Brad?! Oh my god. I knew it!!
 RON MITCHELSON

Obviously you didn't or there wouldn't be a ring in your sock drawer.
 THE TRUTH

The Truth continues to badger Ron who crumples to the floor.

THE TRUTH	RON MITCHELSON
She was using you, for your place. Where she once slept with Brad. And she took \$20.	Oh my god. No, Annie. No...

Manners gets between them to stop it.

(to The Truth) Stop it! That's enough!
 MANNERS

Fine. But I have more if you need it.
 THE TRUTH

We don't. Thank you. (to Common Sense re; Ron) Help him, please.
 MANNERS

Common Sense goes to Ron.

COMMON SENSE

Ron, look, I know The Truth can be -- cruel, often cruel -- but maybe you're better off?

RON MITCHELSON

I love her!

THE TRUTH

No you don't.

RON MITCHELSON

I do!

MANNERS

(to The Truth) Be quiet.

THE TRUTH

I'm setting him free.

MANNERS

He doesn't want to hear that now.

COMMON SENSE

(to Ron) Annie sounds like, well, a user.

THE TRUTH

Spelled Slut.

MANNERS

Here now!

COMMON SENSE

(to Ron) I just don't think a nice guy like you could really, deep in your heart, love a user.
Could you?

RON MITCHELSON

Maybe not.

COMMON SENSE

Maybe you just wanted to be in love?

RON MITCHELSON

Maybe.

Manners hands Ron a handkerchief. The Truth can't stand all this gray area.

THE TRUTH

Maybe, maybe, maybe -- Gag me with a spoon. (to Manners) That was always one of my favorites -- because you can, you know, gag yourself, with a spoon. (to Manners) Is it here somewhere? I'd love to say hello.

MANNERS

Oh no, it went out long ago.

THE TRUTH

Really? All the way Out?

Manners points towards the OUT sign, and nods.

MANNERS

Yes.

Ron has recovered.

RON MITCHELSON

What happens now? Am I stuck here?

MANNERS

No, no dear. People come in and out all the time.

THE TRUTH

Yeah and you've just been dumped. You're about to be very in. I mean, your friend, Janice, the do-gooder, she'll probably go all pet-project on you -- play your cards right you might even get a pity --

MANNERS

Okay. Thank you.

COMMON SENSE

(to Ron) It's only fashion or inanimate objects or concepts like us that you have to wait.

They wait. A beat. Or several.

Suddenly Ron's cell rings. He looks at it.

RON MITCHELSON

It's Janice.

THE TRUTH

I'd go get that if I was you.

Ron answers the phone and EXITS (on the way IN)

COMMON SENSE

(to Manners) What time is it?

MANNERS

2:40. PM.

Common Sense sighs, puts his head on Manner's shoulder. But that's when A GIRL enters dancing the NAE NAE wildly.

GIRL

(dancing the NAE NAE) Just watch me whip! Just watch me Nae Nae.

She continues to sing and dance all the way OUT. Off stage she screams and falls down a long hole. SFX: SPLAT!

Common Sense, Manners and The Truth watch her go.

THE TRUTH

All the way out!

MANNERS

That was fast.

COMMON SENSE

(to Manners) Maybe there's hope for me yet.

THE END