

THE DISCOVERY

A Short Play for Ten Performers

by
Pat Gabridge



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(The stage is totally bare. A grey backdrop is slung across the upstage wall. The floor is barren of any marks [and preferably painted grey] except for a red diamond in the center of the stage, about a foot across. Various men and women clothed in loose-fitting grey outfits walk across the stage, each at a different speed. None of them notice the red diamond and, for the most part, don't even notice each other.)

(After a few minutes, one of the men passing through the center of the stage looks down and notices the diamond. HE stops and studies it very carefully. Other people continue walking past, ignoring him. THE MAN examines the spot a little longer and then stands on it. HE smiles, quite pleased with his new discovery. One of the other people walking across the stage bumps into THE MAN standing on the diamond, but THE MAN does not move.)

(NOTE: The men/women designations have been arbitrarily assigned here; the gender of each character in actual performance is left to the director.)

MAN 1: What are you doing?

THE MAN: Me?

MAN 1: Yes, you. What are you doing?

THE MAN: I'm just standing here.

MAN 1: Why?

THE MAN: I found this spot here on the ground. I thought it might be a good place to stand.

MAN 1: Is it?

THE MAN: It seems to be very good so far.

MAN 1: Let me try.

THE MAN: What?

MAN 1: Get off and let me try. I want to stand there.

THE MAN: I'd rather not move. I'm quite comfortable. Perhaps I could shift over a little.

MAN 1: Just get off and let me stand there.

(One of the other people crossing the stage stops by the two men. SHE taps her foot impatiently.)

WOMAN 1: Excuse me. Excuse me. What is the problem here? Why are you blocking my way?

MAN 1: This man is standing on a spot.

WOMAN 1: So. Move out of my way, both of you. I've got places to go.

MAN 1: He won't move from this spot. He says it's his.

THE MAN: I didn't say it was mine. I just would rather not move right now. Couldn't you go around me?

WOMAN 1: Why should I? What have you got that's so precious you won't move?

MAN 1: I asked him to let me stand on it, but he won't let me.

WOMAN 1: Why won't you move?

THE MAN: I like it here.

(A crowd starts to gather.)

MAN 2: What's wrong with him?

WOMAN 2: It must be a great spot.

MAN 3: Is he insane? Why won't he move?

MAN 1: I asked him twenty times to let me stand on it, and each time he refused. Categorically.

MAN 2: Did you say categorically?

MAN 1: Yes. Positively refused.

WOMAN 2: That hardly seems appropriate.

(A MAN in an especially well-cut grey frock steps forward. HE is a BUSINESSMAN.)

BUSINESSMAN: Hello there.

THE MAN: Hi.

BUSINESSMAN: Quite some spot you've got there.

THE MAN: I like it so far.

BUSINESSMAN: Quite a few people would like to be in your shoes right now.

THE MAN: So it seems.

BUSINESSMAN: But you're not going to move, huh?

THE MAN: No, I don't think so.

BUSINESSMAN: I'll pay you. How about a thousand?

THE MAN: No thanks.

BUSINESSMAN: You're shrewd. Two thousand.

THE MAN: I'm really quite content just to stay here.

BUSINESSMAN: Okay, fine. *(lowers his voice)* I'll go partners with you. We split fifty-fifty. I figure we can charge people at least ten to stand there just for a minute.

THE MAN: But I'm standing here.

BUSINESSMAN: Everyone has a price.

THE MAN: Like I said, I'm not interested.

BUSINESSMAN: *(to THE CROWD)* He's crazy.

MAN 2: Why won't he listen to reason?

CROWD: Make way. Make way for the High Priest.

(A MAN with a green circle on his shirt walks through THE CROWD and addresses THE MAN.)

PRIEST: Greetings, my son.

THE MAN: Hello.

PRIEST: Are you feeling troubled?

THE MAN: No. Actually, I'm perfectly happy just standing here.

PRIEST: If you have found something in this spot, you should get off and share it with your fellow people.

THE MAN: Why do I have to give it up?

PRIEST: Because God created this thing and that is what he wishes.

THE MAN: How do you know what God wishes?

PRIEST: He has spoken to me. It is through me that he makes his will known to mankind.

THE MAN: I don't believe in God. Why don't you just leave me alone?

PRIEST: Don't believe in God?! Everyone believes in him. You have to.

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