

THRESHOLD

A Play in One Act

by

Kristen Falso-Capaldi

Cast of Characters

Darcy: A woman in her mid-twenties
Ben: A man in his mid-forties
The Man: A man of non-determinate age or occupation.

Scene

A nondescript waiting room.

Time

The present

ACT 1

Scene 1

SETTING: We are in a non-descript waiting room. A closed door in the background. Two uncomfortable chairs in the foreground.

AT RISE: DARCY enters from stage right. She looks around nervously, then looks at both chairs. She sits. BEN enters from stage left. He pauses for a moment, looks at the closed door and takes quick, confident strides over to the second chair. He sits.

Both sit in silence. They steal glances at each other. Darcy's cell phone plays the opening notes to Beethoven's 5th Symphony and both jump.

DARCY

(rummaging in her purse for her phone)

Oh! God. Sorry. My boyfriend Tate calling to find out if I know anything yet.

BEN

No, no. Understandable.

(The song continues to play)

Completely--understandable.

DARCY

Where the hell is--
(she silences the phone)
Goodness.

BEN

It's nice.

DARCY

What is?

BEN

To have someone checking in.

DARCY

You don't?

BEN

No.
(seeing she's looking at him with pity)
No, I mean, I don't like to tell anyone. Why get anybody worked up?

Darcy's phone begins to play Beethoven's 5th again.

DARCY

I see what you mean.

She answers the phone.

Hello? Tate. No. Not yet. I'll call you when I find out.

Darcy hangs up the phone. She rolls her eyes at Ben.

BEN

Still, it's nice.

DARCY

Oh no, it is. It is. Tate is--so nice.

BEN

But he's not the one in the chair.

DARCY

Right.

BEN

And he's not the one coming through that door.

Ben and Darcy turn and look toward the closed door.

DARCY

Yeah.

BEN

I'm Ben by the way.

DARCY

Darcy.

They shake hands, then sit in awkward silence.

BEN

You like Beethoven?

DARCY

Not particularly.

(He points toward her bag)

Oh, that's just my ringtone.

Another awkward silence. Ben whistles briefly to fill the space.

BEN

Beethoven was deaf.

DARCY

(nervous banter)

How nice!

More silence.

DARCY

God, I hate waiting.

BEN

(with authority)

That's all there is to life.

DARCY

That's an exaggeration.

BEN

(He looks at her)
You're young. You'll learn.

DARCY

(annoyed)
I'm learning.

BEN

Sorry. I meant no offense.

DARCY

None taken. You know--

(Beethoven plays from her phone. She answers.)
Hello? Tate. No not yet. Not yet. I have no idea. The door is closed. No. I can't see through it. Yeah, I will. Love you too. Goodbye.

(To Ben)

That was--

BEN

Tate?

DARCY

Yes.

They sit in awkward silence. Ben taps his fingers on his knees. Darcy absently scrolls through her phone.

BEN

Know what Beethoven did once?

DARCY

Huh?

BEN

Beethoven--he once knocked a hole in the wall of his apartment to give himself a view of the river outside.

DARCY

Goodness.

BEN

Yep, just said, 'there is no view. I wish there to be a view,' and--

(makes motion of hitting a wall with a hammer)

--boom! Or something like that. I saw a documentary once.

DARCY
(earnestly)

Well, good for him.

Darcy and Ben look at the closed door. The sound of footsteps is heard off stage. Ben and Darcy turn toward the door. The footsteps fade.

BEN
(shouting)

Damn it!

DARCY
I don't get why the door has to be closed.

BEN
And solid. No window. Why no window? They couldn't spare a piece of glass?

DARCY
Right? It's like all the important people are poring over the important data and - oh, no - you can't see the importance happening. It's too-

BEN
Important?

DARCY
I'm usually much more clever than this.

A brief silence.

BEN
But what would happen if we just said, "Hey, we're important too!" and we walked over, turned the knob and crossed the threshold?

Darcy laughs

BEN
I'm serious.

DARCY
We couldn't go in there. I mean, they're *in there* for a reason.

BEN

Hmmm.

DARCY

And just by virtue of the hierarchy—

BEN

Ridiculous.

DARCY

Plus, I don't want to make them mad.

BEN

(Gesticulating toward the door)

"Do not arouse the wrath of the great and powerful Oz!"

They laugh, but only briefly.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

DARCY

Except Oz was just an ordinary man.

BEN

What's that?

DARCY

Oz. He was just some guy.

BEN and DARCY

(together)

"Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

Ben and Darcy laugh, then look at the door.

DARCY

I'm not sure I'm cut out for all this waiting.

BEN

That's--

DARCY

Life?

BEN

Yeah.

They sit in silence. Ben studies Darcy for a moment.

BEN
How old are you?

DARCY
How old are *you*?

BEN
I'm forty-five.

DARCY
Twenty-five. How many times have you sat in this chair?

BEN
(thinking)
Four--No, five times.

DARCY
You're an old pro!

BEN
(with fading bravado)
Yeah.

DARCY
I've never sat in this chair. Well, not for *me*.

BEN
Then you've never sat in this chair.

DARCY
I've definitely never been back there.
(points toward the door)

BEN
Shhh!

DARCY
What?

BEN
Someone's coming.

They turn toward the door. They wait.

DARCY

I don't hear anything.

BEN

I was certain I heard--
(Getting to his feet)
I heard something! I did.

DARCY

Probably someone walking by.

BEN

(Shouting)
How long are you going to make us sit here?

Ben begins to pace. Darcy remains seated.

DARCY

Calm down, Ben.

BEN

What if I just walked over there and crossed the threshold?

DARCY

I don't think you should.

BEN

Why not? You said yourself that Oz-

DARCY

That's a kids' movie.

BEN

But what about Beethoven-

DARCY

Well, he was *Beethoven*.

BEN

So?

DARCY

Well, we're not.

BEN

I'm sick of waiting.

DARCY

It won't be much longer.

BEN

You don't know that.

Darcy's phone plays Beethoven's 5th. She jumps to her feet and rummages through her bag, finds her phone and stares at it. She shuts it off and shoves it back in her bag.

DARCY

(shouting)

I've got to get out of here!

BEN

I'm going back there.

Ben walks toward the door. Darcy blocks him.

DARCY

No. We have to wait.

BEN

Why?

DARCY

(meekly)

That's life.

BEN

See? Now you're learning!

DARCY

I thought you were the old pro.

BEN

Right I'm a pro. Let me tell you about waiting--It's torture, that's what it is. It's aggravating and exhausting and I'm done with it.

Footsteps are heard behind the door. Darcy and Ben freeze. The steps grow closer. Ben and Darcy watch the door. The footsteps fade.

DARCY

(shouting and rushing toward the door)
You've got to be kidding me!

BEN

(Going after her)
Wait. No, Darcy. I don't think—

DARCY

Why shouldn't we go back there? Why do they get to have all the power?

BEN

They just do. Come on, let's go sit down.

Ben takes her by the arm and begins to lead her back to the chair, but she looks at the door again and is unable to take her eyes from it. She rushes for the door.

Darcy?

The door opens, and a man exits. He doesn't acknowledge Ben or Darcy.

DARCY

Excuse me, sir?

BEN

Hey!

The man ignores them. He exits stage right. They look at each other then at the open door, standing in front of it for several moments. They hesitate, unsure of what to do. Ben takes a step toward the door, then moves away. Darcy does the same. They each pace in different directions. Darcy looks as if she might leave the stage, then finally, she sits. She pats the empty chair next to her as Beethoven's 5th begins to play from her cell phone. Ben looks at the chair and continues to pace. Ben hesitates for a moment more, then, throwing his hands up in disgust, he exits stage left, stopping for a moment more before waving goodbye. Darcy is puzzled. She waves to Ben as she answers the phone.

DARCY

Tate. No, not yet, but I'm sure it will be any minute. Yeah, it does feel like forever. No, the door is open now. I suppose I could go in, but I think I'll wait a bit longer, see what happens.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Threshold was one of five plays featured in the 2016 Sandra Feinstein Gamm Theatre 10-minute play festival. It was also selected as a semifinalist in the 15th annual 10 by 10 in the Triangle Festival at the ArtsCenter, Carrboro, NC.

Kristen Falso-Capaldi is a writer of fiction, stage and screenplays. Her work can be read in *Joyland*, *Chicago Literati*, *Underground Voices*, *FlashDogs*, *See the Elephant*, *Quill & Ink*, *3Elements Review* and on *The Other Stories* podcast. She also co-wrote a screenplay, *Teachers: The Movie*, which was an official selection for the 2014 Houston Comedy Film Festival. She lives in Rhode Island. For more about Kristen visit www.kristenfalsocapaldi.com