

Refill

John Bandler

Two young women discover that they might be more alike than they expected.



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Refill

A one-act play

By John Bandler

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REFILL - A Stage Play

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PLOT SUMMARY

Two young women discover that they might be more alike than they expected.

CHARACTERS

ANNE, an in-your-face young woman

ERIN, a young woman

SETTING

A coffee shop

SCENE: A COFFEE SHOP

ERIN, seated at a table for two, paper coffee CUP at hand, is checking her PHONE.

Taking the empty chair, ANNE sits down noisily, banging a large, empty paper coffee CUP on the table.

ANNE

Can you believe it? Like, is this a classy place, or what?

Startled, ERIN looks at ANNE and gestures with a look that says, “do I know you?”

Awkward SILENCE.

ANNE

(tap-tapping her CUP on the table)

Like, “You are only allowed that one refill, madam.” That one refill, madam!

(off ERIN’s surprised look)

Right.

ERIN

One refill?

ANNE

That’s what she said.

ERIN

(puts down her PHONE)

You’re kidding me. You’re not allowed any refills.

ANNE

(proudly, lifting her CUP)

Well, I got one out of them.

ERIN

How did you manage that?

ANNE

I asked. Persuasively.

ERIN

Kicked up a fuss, huh?

ANNE

Something like that.

ERIN

I don't believe it. You actually kicked up a fuss over a refill?

ANNE

Depends what you mean by fuss. And on the barista.

ERIN

And on how many people you're holding up in the line behind you?

A long SILENCE.

ERIN

You know something?

ANNE

What...? What?

ERIN

I'm not sure I really go for all that?

ANNE

Go for what? Getting what you've already paid for, over and over, using your hard-earned cash?

ERIN

You pay for one. You get one. You want another, you pay again. It's all quite simple.

ANNE

Subtext: I guess you don't like me too much, huh?

ERIN

Subtext: I think it might be really better for both of us, right now, if you go find yourself another table.

ANNE

Subtext: I get it! You're expecting someone, like, your boyfriend? And you think I might steal him away, huh?

(pause)

Oops. You're ready to explode.

Awkward SILENCE.

ANNE

(thrusting out her hand)

Hey, my name's Anne!

ERIN holds up her hands defensively to signal
"don't touch."

Awkward SILENCE.

ANNE

Subtext: Can we start over?

ERIN

(after a moment)

Subtext: I guess.

(taking a deep breath)

OK... I'm Erin.

ANNE

Look, sorry, Erica --

ERIN

-- Erin.

ANNE

Thanks for chewing me out. I needed that.

ERIN

Sorry, but I've kind of had it myself today...

ANNE

I've had some bad news too. I mean, I am bad news, like, all my effing life, Erica, if you wanna know.

ERIN

Erin! Life sucks, right? Particularly when you get laid off.

ANNE

I have a confession... Erin!

(pause)

I never even paid for my very first cup.

ERIN

Oh?

ANNE

(confidentially)

I asked this good-looking double-cupped dude to give me his empty cup.

ERIN

His empty cup? Are you, like, kidding me?

ANNE

Sad, isn't it? I know.

(lifting her CUP)

See? It's an extra large too. But that's a coincidence.

ERIN

(indignant)

You used someone else's empty cup to get yourself a free "refill"?

ANNE

Well, as I was coming in, he was on his way out. You know? And he didn't look like he needed it.

ERIN

You don't look exactly poor to me.

ANNE

(crosses her heart)

Cross my heart. I'm as poor right now as I was naked the day I was born. My bank froze my plastic. Never carry cash, so I'm strapped. Totally. Not even a lousy fare for a bus home. I mean, not that I know how much a lousy bus fare home costs these days anyway.

(pause)

Do you have wheels, Erica? I could actually do with a lift.

ERIN

How did you get here?

ANNE

By car.

ERIN

So?

ANNE

The bailiffs followed me into the parking lot and repossessed it right out from under me. Imagine.

(looking around)

Say, you don't actually work in this...?

ERIN

I work in the restaurant across the road. When not writing, that is.

(sighs, looks away)

Huh! Worked! That's where I worked... Used to work.

ANNE

A writer, huh? I respect that, really. A freelance journalist, I'll bet.

ERIN

(taking a sip of coffee)

They just laid every one off.

ANNE

I never really had a flair for writing; I can't sit still long enough. So boring. You know? But I kind of have this flair for speaking? I know, all bullshit, right? That's what my teachers said too. Can you, like, write me out of debt? Or...?

ERIN

I can write you into debt.

ANNE

I'm in over my head. Bit off more than I can chew. Know what I mean?

ERIN

Yeah. Sure do. Bad mistake: I actually co-signed for a car once, a real bargain my ex just had to have, right then and there, right then and there...

ANNE

You know, every time I see her -- and I love her dearly -- my mom still keeps at me with, "Annie, don't get in over your head." Money is supposed to work for you, they say. Money begets money, they say. In my case, money kind of evaporates before it even gets a foothold. My company is belly-up bankrupt. I blame money. Down with money!

ERIN

Still, it's kind of nice to have.

ANNE

They throw money at you when you don't need it. Then, as soon as they sniff trouble, they pull the rug right out from under you -- What is it you said you did?

ERIN

I worked across the road.

ANNE

-- Really? How exciting.

ERIN

Serving.

(signals "tips" with her fingers)

You know, tips and all?

ANNE

In that bank, right?

ERIN

No, across the road, in the restaurant! Next to the bank. Today is my last day there.

A SILENCE.

ANNE

Wow. That's too bad. Sorry to hear that, Erin. Across the road, you say? A classy place, I'll bet.

ERIN

What did you say your company does?

ANNE

You know, I still think you look more like an Erica to me. You did say you had wheels, right? Mine are spoken for. Say, about that ride home, or wherever...

ERIN picks up her CUP, for a moment seems to debate whether to empty the contents into ANNE's face. Is ANNE being pushy or is she desperate? Is ERIN envious, or curious, or does she simply feel sorry for ANNE?

ERIN finishes her coffee, puts down her CUP.

ERIN

Sorry about your car, Anne. Really.

ANNE

Sad, right?

They stare at each other for a moment, then smile.

ERIN

(decisively)

So what's it to be? Your ride home? Or another coffee from this classy place?

ANNE

Subtext: are you, like, bailing me out, or what?

ERIN

(reaching for ANNE's CUP)

Or, maybe it's you, Anne, smooth-talking me in.

(holding ANNE's CUP, rising to her feet)

Allow me to be your banker of last resort, madam. Subtext: Seriously. Absolutely. No strings attached. How about it? Are you ready for your next refill, madam?

ANNE

(smiling, with a flourish)

La de da!

END

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