

Indian Summer

Anne Graham

Characters

Marie – late 30s to 40s
Siobhan – Marie's daughter, late teens
Mrs. Blount – 40s to 50s
Jake – local newspaper reporter, 40 to 60
Tina – a single mother, late teens to early 20s
Detective – male, 40 to 60
Lizzie Green – the clairvoyant, 40 to 60

Note: Doubling could reduce the cast of 5w and 2m to 3w and 1m, by using the same actress for Siobhan and Tina, the same actress for Mrs. Blount and Lizzie Green, and the same actor for Jake and the Police Detective.

Synopsis of scenes

There are five short scenes. Four of them take place in Marie's living room. One takes place on the platform of a public hall. It is important to add an extra front row seat in the auditorium for the public hall scene. Furniture consists only of a desk/table, two chairs and a sofa.

Scene 1 – Late summer. Saturday evening. The living room of Marie's house.

Scene 2 – two weeks later

Scene 3 – two days later

Scene 4 – one week later. The platform of a public hall.

Scene 5 – the next day. The living room of Marie's house.

Scene 1

(Time: Saturday evening.)

(Setting: The living room of Marie's house. A sofa is Downstage and a desk/table and two chairs are Upstage.)

(Marie sits on the sofa, a small box of chocolates on her knee, facing Front. She is watching TV which is on the fourth wall. The sound of the TV is muted throughout this scene.)

(Siobhan enters Upstage Right, taking her bag off her shoulder and putting it down.)

Siobhan: Hi, Mum!

Marie: Hi darling! You're in early.

Siobhan: Yea. *(She sits down next to Marie, takes a chocolate, and begins to watch the television too.)*

Marie: Good time?

Siobhan: Yea.

Marie: Not fallen out with your mates, then?

Siobhan: No.

Marie: So why home so early on a Saturday?

Siobhan: *(Putting her arm round Marie.)* I thought you might be lonely.

Marie: *(Amused.)* Yea, right.

Siobhan: I didn't fancy the cinema, and I've been out all day, and I've got an essay to do for Monday morning.

Marie: Help! I gave birth to a girly swat. Anyway, I thought you said you'd finished your essays.

Siobhan: I did, but thanks to my crap virus protection, one seems to be wiped.

Marie: Oh no! What sort of person sends out viruses?

Siobhan: The sort of low life that can. It's my own fault. I should have seen to it. Any chance of an upgrade laptop any time soon?

Marie: Not in the present financial situation, but you never know, I could scoop the Lotto jackpot tonight.

Siobhan: We wish! *(She looks at the television.)* What are you watching?

Marie: It's a documentary about an obscenely rich con-woman.

Siobhan: *(Pointing at the screen.)* Isn't that Lizzie Green, the clairvoyant?

Marie: That's her. How do supposedly intelligent people fall for her overblown Romany claptrap?

Siobhan: It's not. She's the real thing.

Marie: Grow up, Siobhan. She's just a brass-necked actress, taking money from gullible people.

Siobhan: Royalty and rock stars go to see her.

Marie: Correction. She's just a brass-necked actress taking *mega money* from gullible people. Listen. She's not telling him anything specific yet he's hanging on every word. She's summed him up and she's telling him what he wants to hear, with a few educated guesses thrown in for the wow factor. Anybody could do that.

Siobhan: No way!

Marie: Why not? All you need is a bit of front. What a cushy little number! Working from home at hours to suit yourself, and no overheads, apart from a little ad. in the personal column, just to get you going. I could do that. I could start with the occasional evening appointment, and if it went well, I could pack in the rotten day job. You could even set me up with a website. What do you think?

Siobhan: You can't be serious.

Blackout

Scene 2

(Two weeks later.)

(The sofa now faces the desk/table with the chairs behind and in front of the desk.)

(Marie paces nervously as she speaks to herself.)

Marie: Remain seated and observe as she walks toward me. First impressions count. Read body language and apply psychology. Start with generalities, judge reactions, and when confident, try a few educated guesses. Just a few. *(She calls.)* Siobhan! Siobhan!

(Siobhan enters Downstage Right, a pen in hand.)

Siobhan: What?

Marie: Mrs. Blount will be here any second. Will you answer the door and show her in here?

Siobhan: I'm doing my homework. Anyway, I told you I don't want anything to do with it. I'm staying in my room.

Marie: But it creates a better impression if I'm seated here, waiting. Oh go on! Just this once.

Siobhan: And I expect it will be. She'll probably have the fraud squad or trade descriptions onto you.

(The doorbell sounds.)

Siobhan: You must be mad.

(Siobhan exits Upstage Right. Marie quickly sits behind the desk.)

Siobhan: *(Offstage)* She's in here.

(Siobhan enters Upstage Right followed by Mrs. Blount, an easily-impressed woman, who wears a jacket over the uniform of a travel agent employee.)

Mrs. Blount: Thanks.

Siobhan: You're welcome.

(As Mrs. Blount approaches Marie, Siobhan shakes her head and exits.)

Marie: Hello, Mrs. Blount. I'm Marie.

(Mrs. Blount goes to shake hands.)

Mrs. Blount: Hello, Marie. I'm ...

Marie: No, no! Don't tell me your Christian name. In fact, don't tell me anything. Information provides clues. All I know is that you're Mrs. Blount and that's all I need to know. Please, feel free to take off your coat and make yourself comfortable.

Mrs. Blount: Ok. *(She takes off her jacket. She wears a badge printed with the name, Fly Hi on her blouse.)*

Mrs. Blount: I've come straight from work. *(She sits on the sofa.)*

Marie: Did you know that a lady has followed you in?

Mrs. Blount: No. Where? *(She looks round.)*

Marie: I mean, she's in spirit.

Mrs. Blount: Oh. Right. Lovely.

(Marie appears to be listening to someone over her shoulder. She nods a few times.)

Marie: Alright darling... got that... got it. *(She speaks to Mrs. Blount.)* The lady has been telling me that she's a little concerned about her granddaughter, or could be great granddaughter, and something about a recent holiday abroad, in the sun...

(Mrs. Blount gets little tearful and scrabbles for a tissue in her bag.)

Marie: There's been an upset, A little sadness since this holiday. Or perhaps even during it. Your husband, maybe.

(Mrs. Blount nods vigorously and dabs at her eyes.)

Mrs. Blount: I loved him. The bastard!

Marie: You've been a martyr to mood swings lately, haven't you, love? And I'm sensing another woman. How can I put it? A bit of a chancer. On the lookout for a holiday romance. Or any romance.

(While Marie talks, the lights slowly dim to show the passage of time, and Marie's voice goes down to a murmur with them.)

Marie: There's a close relative who's going to be a tower of strength. Sister. Or cousin. The letter s is very prominent in her name. She's going to prove to be a very good friend to you if only you let her.

(The lights slowly come up to show the present again, and Marie's voice comes up with them.)

Marie: But there are lots of things to look forward to. Good things are coming. You've only got to hang on. There's a lottery win. And a promotion. In the future. At some time. And you have a secret admirer.

Mrs. Blount: Really? Who?

Marie: My, how time flies, doesn't it? That's the hour gone already I'm afraid.

Mrs. Blount: What's his name, the admirer?

Marie: It's not been given to me, but it's somebody close to you.

(Mrs. Blount is much happier now.)

Mrs. Blount: I've got a good idea who it is. Is it Ivan, at work?

Marie: I'm afraid the line's been closed. Maybe next time?

Mrs. Blount: Twenty pounds, wasn't it?

Marie: Yes, please.

(Mrs. Blount takes a bank note from her bag and Marie stands to receive it.)

Mrs. Blount: I've seen a few clairvoyants before, but you are definitely the most psychical.

Marie: Thank you. I do my best.

(Mrs. Blount puts on her coat and Marie shows her to the door Upstage Right. The lights flicker and an unearthly note sounds. Marie speaks in a loud, clear voice.)

Marie: You should have listened to me while I was still here, Judith. He'll 'phone you next Thursday, talking a load of bullshit, but we both know you're well shot of the brainless gobshite.

Mrs. Blount: Grandma hated my husband. She always called him that.

Blackout

Scene 3

(Two days later. Thursday evening. The sofa is Downstage, facing front. The desk/table and chairs are Upstage.)

(Marie, looking stunned, sits on the sofa. Siobhan, in school uniform, enters Upstage Right).

Siobhan: Hi, Mum! Sorry I'm a bit late. What's for tea? I'm starving. *(She puts her bag down).* Mum? *(She sits next to Marie.)* Hello! Anybody there?

Marie: I can't believe it.

Siobhan: What?

Marie: I feel all shivery.

Siobhan: Are you ill?

Marie: Mrs. Blount just 'phoned.

Siobhan: I warned you. Does she want her money back?

Marie: No. I told you I did a good job, *too good*, from what she says.

Siobhan: What is it then?

Marie: Well, just as she was about to leave, I was standing over there, when I said something without thinking. I mean, to start with, I'd been very careful about what I said, but all the clues were there, the travel agent uniform, the recent suntan, the white band on her wedding finger where the ring had been, and she is a very surface sort of

person anyway, so it got a lot easier, and once I got into my stride, I quite enjoyed acting the gypsy.

Siobhan: Well you've always been a drama queen. So?

Marie: So, suddenly I heard myself saying something weird. I was totally unprepared for it. It just came out, like someone else was speaking. When I thought about it afterwards, I assumed I'd got a bit over excited, a bit carried away with myself.

Siobhan: That sounds like you.

Marie: But she was convinced it was her grandmother speaking, and now she says that what her grandmother said, has just happened and she thinks I'm bloody marvellous.

Siobhan: Oh my God! You became possessed.

Marie: Don't be stupid.

Siobhan: I don't mean like *The Exorcist* or anything scary like that. This kind of possession is a coveted gift amongst psychics.

Marie: How do you know that?

Siobhan: I googled it, when you said you were going to do it. I thought you were set to make a proper fool of yourself, but hey, you could be a natural, the real thing, like Lizzie Green.

Marie: But I don't want to be the real thing.

Siobhan: Have you got more sittings arranged?

Marie: Two, but I think I'll cancel them.

Siobhan: Why? You've got to give yourself a chance to see if it happens again.

Marie: I'm not sure I...

Siobhan: Oh my God! This is so exciting. I'll put the kettle on. *(She moves to the kitchen exit, Downstage Right.)* Let's talk about it. If you've been given a gift, it's wrong to waste it. Think of all the good you can do. *(She exits.)*