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A WOMAN WALKS INTO A BANK

by Roxy Cook

SAMUEL FRENCH

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NOTE

This edition reflects a rehearsal draft of the script and may differ from the final production.

A WOMAN WALKS INTO A BANK was first produced by and performed at Theatre503 (Artistic Director, Lisa Spirling; Executive Director, Emily Carewe), London, on 21st November 2023. The cast was as follows:

A / AN OLD WOMAN . . . . . Giulia Innocenti
B / A YOUNG MAN. . . . . Sam Newton
C / A DEBT COLLECTOR . . . . . Keith Dunphy

The creative team and production team were as follows:

WRITER AND DIRECTOR . . . . . Roxy Cook
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER. . . . . David Allen
LIGHTING DESIGNER . . . . . Joe Price
SOUND DESIGNER AND COMPOSER . . . . . Hugh Sheehan
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
AND MOVEMENT DIRECTOR . . . . . Sam Hooper
CASTING DIRECTOR. . . . . Nadine Rennie CDG
ASSOCIATE LIGHTING DESIGNER . . . . . Nicola Crawford
PRODUCTION MANAGER . . . . . Misha Mah
STAGE MANAGER . . . . . Rose Hockaday
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
ON PLACEMENT . . . . . Amie Whickman
PRODUCER . . . . . Ceri Lothian
ASSISTANT PRODUCER . . . . . Humnah Abdullah
PR . . . . . Nicole Poole PR

CHARACTERS

This play is narrated by three storytellers: **A**, **B** and **C**, each with their own distinct personalities and opinions. As the piece progresses, they take on more and more responsibility for one of three main characters...

A – plays an old woman (82 years)

B – plays a young man (25 years)

C – plays a debt collector (59 years)

A, B and **C** also all play a cat called Sally (18 years)

SETTING

Moscow, Russia.

TIME

Act One: One day in July 2018, shortly after the World Cup.

Act Two: 6th January 2019, Russian Orthodox Christmas Eve.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

No Russian accents

/ = an interruption

ABOUT THEATRE503

Theatre503 is at the forefront of identifying and nurturing new voices at the very start of their careers and launching them into the industry. They stage more early-career playwrights than any other theatre in the world – with over one hundred and twenty writers premiered each year from festivals of short pieces to full length productions, resulting in employment for over one thousand freelance artists through their year-round programme.

Theatre503 provides a diverse pipeline of talent resulting in modern classics like *The Mountaintop* by Katori Hall and *Rotterdam* by Jon Brittain – both Olivier Award winners – to future classics like Yasmin Joseph's *J'Ouvert*, winner of the 2020 James Tait Black Prize and transferred to the West End/BBC Arts and *Wolfie* by Ross Willis, winner of the 2020 Writers Guild Award for Best New Play. Writers who began their creative life at Theatre503 are now writing for the likes of *The Crown*, *Succession*, *Doctor Who*, *Killing Eve* and *Normal People* and every single major subsidised theatre in the country now boasts a new play by a writer who started at Theatre503.

THEATRE503 TEAM

Artistic Director	Lisa Spirling
Executive Director	Emily Carewe
Literary Manager	Steve Harper
Producer	Ceri Lothian
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Thanks to all the 2023 Theatre503 International Playwriting Award Readers: Almiro Andrade, Tian Brown-Sampson, Lisa Cagnacci, Lou Corben, Sujana Crawford, Amy Bethan Evans, Adam Goodall, William Gregory, Neil Grutchfield, Isabelle Kassam, Erick Kwashie, Tom Latter, Kyle Marsh, Robbie Nestor, Nika Obydzinski, Gugulethu Oka Mseleku, Shefali Parmar, Fatima Serghini, Andrew Skipper, Audrey Thayer, Pravin Wilkins, Beth Wilson.

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Theatre503's work would not be possible without the support of the following individuals, trusts and organisations:

We are particularly grateful to Philip and Christine Carne and the long-term support of The Carne Trust for our International Playwriting Award, the 503 Five and Carne Associate.

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Our ongoing thanks and gratitude to Three Cheers Pub Co. for our home above The Latchmere Pub.

CAST

A / AN OLD WOMAN | Giulia Innocenti

This is Giulia's first time at Theatre503. She recently played "Nelly" in Inspector Sands' UK tour of *Wuthering Heights*. Giulia is a founding member and Co-Artistic Director of Inspector Sands and has devised and performed in all their shows to date, including *Hysteria*, *If That's All There Is*, *Rock Pool*, *Mass Observation,* and *The Lounge*.

Other theatre credits include: *The Elephantom* (National Theatre); *Cinderella* (Oxford Playhouse); *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Mouse and His Child*, *The 13 Midnight Challenges of Angelus Diablo* (RSC); *Cymbeline* (Kneehigh); *Sisters...* (The Gate); *One Thousand Paper Cranes* (Catherine Wheel); *The Grimm Tales*, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* (Unicorn Theatre); *Madam Butterfly* (ENO); *Low Life*, *1984* (Blind Summit); *Lady Macbeth's Factory* (Quebracho Theatre); *Peer Gynt* (Arcola); *Wagner's Dream* (The Barbican); *Prince Charming* (Little Angel).

Feature Film: *Near Miss* (Bandit Country); *Heart of Stone* (Netflix).
Radio: *The Continuity Man* (BBC).

B / A YOUNG MAN | Sam Newton

Sam is an actor and mover from Birmingham.

Stage credits include: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (West End & UK/International Tour); *Big Big Sky* by Tom Wells (Hampstead Theatre); Frantic Assembly's *Sometimes Thinking* (River Stage); and Nigel Slater's *Toast* (The Lowry/Traverse).

Screen credits include: *Newark, Newark* (UKTV Gold), *The Bastard Son and The Devil Himself* (Netflix) & *Casualty* (BBC).

C / A DEBT COLLECTOR | Keith Dunphy

Keith recently filmed *The Winter King* (Sony/Badwolf Productions). He also is devising and performing *This Modern Colossus*, a solo theatre show, to be performed Autumn 2023/2024. Keith has previously trained at RADA.

Stage credits include: *Under The Black Rock* (Arcola Theatre); *Fighting Irish* (Belgrade Theatre); *The Lovely Bones* (UK Tour); *Easter Rising and There After* (Jermyn St Theatre); *The Rivals* (Bristol Old Vic); *The Birthday Party* (Royal Exchange Theatre); *One For The Road*, *Victoria Station* (Young Vic Theatre and the Print Rooms); *Macbeth* (The Globe Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Catastrophic Sex Music* (Mercury Theatre); *Histories Company* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Lime Tree Bower* (Theatre503)

Screen credits include: *The Winter King*; *Rebellion*; *No Offence*; *Beowulf*; *The Hollow Crown*; *Peaky Blinders*; *Life Begins*; *Ultimate Force*; *Professor T*; *The Banishing*; *Rogue One*; *The Spoiler*; *Les Misérables*; *Black Death*; *Children of Men*; *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*; *Inside I'm Dancing*.

CREATIVES

Writer and Director | Roxy Cook

Roxy is a writer, director and dramaturg working across theatre and TV. After graduating from Mountview, she spent five years directing new writing. Roxy began writing in 2019 and *A Woman Walks Into a Bank* is her first play. It was shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Playwriting 2021 and longlisted for the Bruntwood Prize and Verity Bargate Award, both 2022. Outside of theatre, Roxy works in development and script editing for TV.

Theatre highlights: Director of *Happy to Help* (Park Theatre); associate director of Jon Brittain's Olivier Award winning *Rotterdam* (Theatre503, Trafalgar Studios, 59e59 Off-Broadway and UK Tour); assistant director of *Describe the Night* (Hampstead Theatre) and *The Majority* (National Theatre); and running Zut Alors Theatre.

Set and Costume Designer | David Allen

David is a London based Set and Costume designer working across theatre and live music productions. He trained in architecture before training in design for performance at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

As Associate Designer – theatre credits include: *Cabaret* (Kit Kat Club at the Playhouse); *Mary Seacole* (Donmar Warehouse); *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Carousel* (Regent's Park); *Summer and Smoke* (Almeida); *A Very Expensive Poison* (Old Vic); *Fairview* (Young Vic); *The Deep Blue Sea* (National).

As Designer – theatre credits include: *Lonely Planet* (Trafalgar Studios).

As Art Director – other credits include: *Ben Platt Live from Radio City Music Hall*; *Christine and the Queens - Apple Music Live at Salle Pleyel*; *MTV Unplugged* (Live at Hull City Hall).

As Associate Designer – credits include: Pet Shop Boys Dreamworld tour.

Lighting Designer | Joe Price

Joe trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, and was the recipient of the 2015 Francis Reid Award for Lighting Design.

Credits include: *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (Young Vic); *Outlier* (Bristol Old Vic); *Petula* (National Theatre Wales); *The World's Wife* (Welsh National Opera); *Redefining Juliet* (Barbican); *Five Children And It*, *Rapunzel* (The Egg, TRB); *Revealed* (Tobacco Factory Theatres); *Heads Will Roll* (Told by an Idiot); *Heather* (Bush Theatre); *Quality Street* (Northern Broadsides); *Bitcoin Boi* (Riverfront Newport); *The Turn of the Screw* (RWCMD); *Ask Me Anything*, *Goldfish Bowl* (Paper Birds); *Kite* (UK & China Tour), *Conditionally* (Soho Theatre); *Mrs Dalloway*, *Carmen*, *How To Date A Feminist* (Arcola Theatre); *Fossils* (Brits off Broadway, NYC); *What Songs May Do* (Dance City); *Box Clever*, *Killymuck*, *Breathe* (Bunker Theatre); *Merboy* (Omnibus Theatre); *Peter Pan* (Barn Theatre); *Let the Right One In* (Arts Ed); *Magnificence*, *A Third* (Finborough Theatre); *Some Girl(s)* (Park Theatre); *Y Twr* (Invertigo).

Sound Designer and Composer | Hugh Sheehan

Hugh Sheehan is a musician – multi-instrumentalist, composer, sound designer, producer – from Birmingham, now based between the UK and Finland. He has equal footings in traditional Irish music and contemporary classical music, and the coalescence of these two worlds is supplemented by an adolescence spent in guitar bands and a continued preoccupation with club culture and electronic music. Much of his work is concerned with questions of sexuality and gender. In 2020 he was commissioned by BBC Arts and Arts Council England to make an audio work for their New Creatives series. In 2022 he was commissioned by The Sunday Boys and Melo'Men through Institut Français's fund for contemporary music to write a large-scale new work for low-voice choir and accordion.

Theatre highlights include: Plain Heroines' *SCRATCHES* by Aoife Kennan (Vault Festival and Arcola Theatre); *The 4th Country* by Kate Reid (Park Theatre); Rachel De-lahay's *The Hole* with NYT (The Old Rep); Lucy Roslyn's *Pennyroyal* (Finborough Theatre).

Associate Director and Movement Director | Sam Hooper

Sam is a 2011 graduate of the VCA Bachelor of Music Theatre, where he was awarded the Cassidy Bequest Scholarship in his graduating year. In 2018, he returned to the VCA to complete his honours project "The development and enhancement of movement narrative in live theatre".

Directing credits include: *Bonnie and Clyde* (Hayes Theatre Co); *1&Only* (VAULTS); *In Loving Memory* (Hayes Theatre Co); *A Chorus Line* (Bird College); *City of Angels* (Hayes Theatre Co); *Catch Me If You Can* (OCPAC); *They're Playing Our Song* (Company 11).

Assistant Directing: *Lipstick: A Fairytale of Modern Iran* (Omnibus Theatre); *The Apologists* (UK tour); *BARE* (Bird College); *The Drowsy Chaperone* (VCA); *Third World Blues* (Company 11).

Choreography: *Urinetown* (OCPAC); *Dreamsong* (VCA).

Writing: *Death Suits You* (WINNER: Show of the week, *VAULTS*; (WINNER: Spirit of the Fringe, Edinburgh Fringe)

Casting Director | Nadine Rennie CDG

Nadine has over twenty years' experience as a Casting Director for Theatre. She was in-house Casting Director at Soho Theatre for over fifteen years; working on new plays by writers including Dennis Kelly, Bryony Lavery, Arinzé Kene, Roy Williams, Philip Ridley, Laura Wade, Hassan Abdulrazzak, Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Oladipo Agboluaje. Since going freelance in January 2019, Nadine has worked for theatres and companies across London and the UK; including Arcola Theatre, Orange Tree Theatre, Sheffield Theatres, Leeds Playhouse, Paines Plough, Fuel Theatre, National Theatre of Wales, Northern Stage, Wales Millennium Centre, Kiln Theatre, Park Theatre, Theatre503, Pleasance Theatre London, Almeida, Lyric, Hampstead and Minack theatres. She continues to cast on a regular basis for Soho Theatre and has a long running relationship with Synergy Theatre Project as their Casting Director/ Consultant.

TV work includes: *Dixi* (BAFTA win, CBBC), casting the first three series.
Nadine is a member of the Casting Directors Guild and currently sits on the Committee.

Stage Manager | Rose Hockaday
Rose Hockaday (she/her) is a Freelance Stage Manager based in London.
Theatre credits include: *LORENZO* (2023 Fringe First winner), *Jali*, *Spellbound: Suhani Shah*, *Age Is A Feeling* (2022 Fringe First winner and 2023 Olivier Award nominee); *and Bedu* (Soho Theatre); *Worth* (New Earth); *Evita Too* (Sh!t Theatre); *harmony. 天人合一*, *At Broken Bridge, and No Particular Order* (Ellandar); *The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale* (London & Toronto); *Milk & Gall*, *Spiderfly*, *Wolfie, and Art of Gaman* (Theatre503); *Antigone*; *Pops*; *You Only Live Forever* & *In Tents and Purposes* (Viscera Theatre); *Timmy*; *Glitter Punch*; *How To Survive A Post-Truth Apocalypse*; *They Built It. No One Came* & *Jericho Creek (Fledgling Theatre).*
Film credits include: *Heaven Knows*, *Visitors*, *Ignite*, *Pomegranate*, *Wandering Eyes*, and *Versions of Us*.
Music video credits include: "Phase Me Out", "When You're Gone", and "Saint" for artist VÉRITÉ.

Assistant Stage Manager On Placement | Amie Whickman
Amie is currently in her final year of studying Stage Management and Technical Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and is thrilled to be involved in this production at Theatre503!
Previous work includes: Deputy Stage Manager on *Hamlet* (Coutyard Theatre); Assistant Stage Manager on *Curtains the Musical* (Embassy Theatre); Technical Assistant Stage Manager on *Electra* (Webber Douglas Studio); Assistant Stage Manager on *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Embassy Theatre). Amie is very grateful to have been given this opportunity to refine her skills alongside such professionals.

Production Manager | Misha Mah
Misha is a freelance Production Manager based in London.
Credits include: Housemates Festival 2023 (Brixton House); *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* (Big Con Productions, Southwark Playhouse); *Sugar Coat* (Emma Blackman Productions, Southwark Playhouse); *Flies* (Boundless Theatre, Shoreditch Town Hall); *Brilliant Jerks* (RJG Productions, Southwark Playhouse); *Smoke* (3 hearts canvas, Southwark Playhouse); *Zombiegate* (Ameena Hamid Productions, Theatre503); *A Gig For Ghosts* (45North, Soho Theatre); *Far Gone* (Roots Mbili, ZOO Southside); *Caste-ing* (Nouveau Riche, Roundabout); *Hungry* (Paines Plough, Soho Theatre & Roundabout); *Kabul Goes Pop: Music Television Afghanistan* (Brixton House, Touring); *Til Death Do Us Part* (Theatre503).

Producer | Ceri Lothian

Ceri started her career as Resident Assistant Producer at Theatre503, working on new writing productions that included the World Premieres of *And Then Come The Nightjars* by Bea Roberts (2016 National Tour), and *Rotterdam* by Jon Brittain (Olivier Award Winner, 2017). She was Associate Producer & General Manager at Deus Ex Machina Productions from 2016-2021, where credits include *RIDE* (Garrick Theatre, 2021); *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Age 13 3/4: The Musical* (Ambassadors Theatre, 2019); *DUST* by Milly Thomas (Trafalgar Studio 2 2018, New York Theatre Workshop, 2019); *Spring Awakening* (Hope Mill Theatre, 2018); Stephen Schwartz' *Working* (Southwark Playhouse, 2017). She is currently the Producer at Theatre503, where credits include *Milk & Gall*, *Moreno,* and *The Boys Are Kissing*. Ceri has taken part in Stage One workshops, and is an Ambassador for Inspiring The Future of Theatre with SOLT and UK Theatre.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This play has been bouncing around in my head for a while now, so it's really thanks to the following people that it's finally here.

Thanks to Sarah Sigal and Melli Marie, who supported the earliest workshops of this idea at JW3 and the Park Theatre's Script Accelerator Scheme respectively – and continued to check in even after I'd packed up and left.

The writing process began in a workshop but ended in lockdown. Thanks to Kate Handford, Jess Clark and Pedro Leandro for getting it up on its feet when I got stuck. And to everyone who read and gave notes, in particular Josh Roche, Lily Shahmoon, Claire Russell, David Overend, Kate Reid, Lucy Arditti, Donnacadh O'Briain, and Ed Eales-White. And in particular *in particular* Amy Tobias.

Thanks to everyone at the Women's Prize for Playwriting, Bruntwood Prize and especially Gill Greer at the Verity Bargate Award. All those votes of confidence really helped.

Then suddenly the play becomes a reality! Thanks to everyone involved in the award – 503 team, readers and judges. Huge thanks to Steven Greenhalgh, Charlie Coulthard and everyone at Concord for putting it on paper and being so incredibly supportive from day one. Thanks to Philip and Christine Carne for backing this award and backing new writing.

It's been really special to return to Theatre503 with this play. I was first here with Jon Brittain's *Rotterdam* – one of the loveliest jobs in one of the loveliest venues. Thanks to the whole team – Jade Lewis, Jules Oakshett, Emily Carewe, Emily Dickson, Lauretta Barrow. In particular Steve Harper for calmly and confidently helping me get the script up to scratch. And Lisa Spirling for being so positive and encouraging over the last six months. Lisa listened to what this play needed and adapted the process to suit it. I'm so grateful you trusted me to direct it – fingers crossed no regrets.

I've been away for a few years working in TV (soz) and so I've forgotten how productions come together in such a brilliantly chaotic and collaborative way.

Thanks to Frank Herfort for lending us his gorgeous photograph *Babushka* and Amelia Leuzzi for her graphic design and being the kindest, most talented person I know. David Ralf from Theatre Deli for stepping in to save the day more than once. A lot of organisations say they support artists – Deli really does.

We're yet to enter rehearsals and I already feel so hashtag blessed to have the team around me that I do. Thanks to my design boys David Allen, Hugh Sheehan and Joe Price for coming on this journey with me. And to our incredible cast - Sam Newton, Giulia Innocenti and Keith Dunphy – and the inimitable Nadine Rennie for finding them. Thanks also to Misha Mah, Nancy Poole, Humnah Abdullah, Amie Whickman and Rose Hockaday.

Special thanks to Sam Hooper, who was attached to this play at the Park Theatre, and who I haven't been able to shake loose since. I'm so glad you've stayed on this journey, and that your years working on *CATS* have finally paid off. And Ceri Lothian, truly the producer of dreams.

Lastly, this play would not be in the shape it is without Ben Mann and Alexandra Wetherell. Two brilliant actors who gave up a lot of their time to workshop it with me, and who originated some of the very best ideas.

Thanks to m&d for your unwavering support. I was scared to show this to you for a long time, but when I did you fully backed it. And gave me lots of notes. Toby, who hasn't ever read it, but enthusiastically booked a ticket to closing night. Celia, for everything, but mainly for reminding me that "it's just a play, Roxy" more than once.

Giulia said to me when we met – the storyteller in this play is the granddaughter. This is her trying to figure out how she feels about the old woman. I tried to act casj at the time, but I know now that she was right. Thanks to my Russian family. Those who will know about the play, and those who can't. Спасибо.

– Roxy Cook

For Babushka

ACT ONE

Scene One

Two storytellers address the audience.

A. A woman walks into a bank

B. An *old* woman walks into a bank

A. An old woman walks into a bank in Moscow, Russia because she'd seen a new sign on the window of the bank the week before that said

B. "Make your one day happen today"

With a picture of a man, who looked friendly, holding out money and smiling

A. And although, at the time, the old woman had thought nothing of the sign but just waited for the lights beside the bank to turn from red to green

B. Crossed the road

Gone home

A. She noticed the sign the next day and the next day and the next, until eventually it was one of the only things that had happened that week that she could remember

B. "Make your one day happen today"

Make today happen one day

One perfect nondescript day happening finally, brilliant, amazing

B. What happens tomorrow? Doesn't matter, your one day happened /

A. Okay.

And so, although the old woman wasn't entirely sure what the new sign meant or even referred to, she felt good about the man with the money and the smile, and so carried him around with her for the rest of the week, round the supermarket and the pharmacy and the boulevard, and even thought about him that evening as she prepared tea for herself, and for her cat

B. Sally.

(Beat.)

A woman walks into a bank

A. An old woman walks into a bank

B. An old woman walks into a bank in Moscow, Russia because she needs money again

And she needs money because old women in Russia always need money

A. This is common knowledge

B. Free trips to the Black Sea if your father was tortured in the gulag, sure

But money?

Nah

A. No, she needs money again because earlier that week she'd telephoned her daughter

B. A translator

A. Who lives abroad with her foreign family, somewhere foreign

B. And she'd said

A. "I need money

I need money so I can buy food for myself, and food for Sally, and medicine for me, and presents for you"

B. And her daughter had, like many times before, sat at her desk, opened her laptop, transferred the money, phoned the old woman back, told her she'd transferred it, and then returned to her translating and her family somewhere far away, somewhere foreign

A. And the old woman had gone to the machine, taken out a portion of the money and gone home

B. And she'd done the same thing the next day

A. And the next

B. And the next

A. And the next

B. Until on the fifth day she'd taken out all of the money

All five portions

Put it in a box

And put it away

A. Far away at the top of her wardrobe, far away from the bank across the road.

(Beat. **B** *is confused.)*

B. So an old woman walks into a bank because an old woman doesn't trust banks?

A. Well no, she just likes to have something she can

It's just what she's always done

She's used rubles since Stalin was in power, and now you expect her to trust a number on a screen? No and thank you!

B. Okay.

(Beat. **B** *is still confused.)*

B. So an old woman walks into a bank in Moscow, Russia because she has money in her apartment already?

A. But she's forgotten where it is

B. Riiiiiight

A. And not only that

But she's forgotten about her trips to the machine, the box, the wardrobe, and so she thinks, she *decides*

If my daughter can't follow through with her promises, if she can't even do that, then I'll have to find someone else who can

B. And just as she thinks this, she looks out of the window at the bank across the road and yes!

The man with the smile, holding out some money

A. Of course.

(Beat. Gorgeous tranquility.)

An old woman walks into a bank and is surprised by just how calm everything is

B. How quiet and still, no traffic, no voices

A. A different world

B. Squares of teal and green spin out in pleasing diagonals

A. A television plays quietly

News, improvements, seating in the park

B. Men and women nod in appreciation

A. And other men and women talk quietly behind screens

B. And a man takes out money in a

Reassuring way