

“Full house and totally rapt house for black comedy In Denial”

“Extremely well written, hugely entertaining and very interesting on a number of levels”

“The characters are engaging and well drawn, their dialogue is excellent, and the play is pacy, holding the attention at all times”

“I think this play is a winner and I cannot wait to see where it goes”

“A funny, well observed comedic metaphor for a very complex situation”

IN DENIAL

by James Woolf

what they're saying about it...

The Script Readers

“I particularly liked the unexpected ending. I didn't see that coming”

“I wish the play every success. I really did enjoy watching it.”

“Wonderful play from #scriptreaders team... Someone put it on please!”

“We all saw that this play is to the Brexit generation what Closer was to the Noughties”

“A really fast and witty piece of theatre”

FEEDBACK FROM REHEARSED READING BY THE SCRIPT READERS, PARK THEATRE, 8 JAN 2018

Here is my feed back form. I hope it is OK. I really enjoyed it, and I cannot wait for the next one.

What was your overall impression of the play?

I loved it. I recently saw a play at the Rose Theatre called 'The rules of living' and that had a lot of screenplay and interesting quirks that I can see for this play. Very interesting concept and I left thinking about it, which is the best.

What did you particularly like about it?

I liked the characters a lot. I thought it was brilliantly cast which is of course credit to the actors, but I think it is always amazing when you see a rehearsed reading and you can actually imagine the people who were cast in the play. I am a huge fan of dark humour anyway, but I found the whole thing thoroughly enjoyable.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

I was only slightly confused by the title if I'm being honest. Who was meant to be 'in denial'?

I agreed with one audience members view that I would have liked to see a bit more of a protest from the friend about going to the counselling session, none of my friends would agree to that without promise of a beer, money and an expensive holiday to the Bahamas! Other than that I thought it was really sound.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

I think the final scene could be cut down a little. It dragged on just a little bit. In no way tedious but just a little big long.

But seriously, congratulations. I think this play is a winner and I cannot wait to see where it goes.

What was your overall impression of the play?

Watching the play was very enjoyable. I laughed out loud a number of times. I was also interested to see how the story developed and what would happen to the characters. I would happily recommend the play to my friends – and watch it again.

What did you particularly like about it?

The magic of the play was in the chemistry. On paper Amelia and Paul are a good fit, but I was never convinced that he had what she wanted. (The “what” is one of those great mysterieis of life.) On paper Amelia and Toby don’t really work, which is why Jessica could so quickly judge them to be an ill match. But from the first moment they met they had chemistry, even if on the face of it they had little to bring them together. I was interested in Amelia and Toby’s relationship throughout the whole play but I wasn’t convinced that they would work until the last few minutes. At that point I got that they had what each other wanted from life and the chemistry that would always magnetically draw them together.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

The thread of the story was very easy to follow.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

It felt like an intimate play, so it would work well in surroundings that feel intimate.

I think I've managed to focus my Q&A comment so it can be useful to the play regardless of politics or culture.

I hope my feedback helps develop the play further and I'm looking forward to seeing it on stage soon!

What was your overall impression of the play?

It was a very well written play and wonderfully performed/read.

I thought it was a little bit long (5-10min)

What did you particularly like about it?

The complexity of the characters and the 'out of the box' take on human relationships as we think we know them, without it being extreme for the sake of it. I liked that things changed or shifted all the time without the characters being aware of the small shifts affecting their lives in a bigger way.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

I wasn't sure on *Paul's* strong stand on the Brexit vote, for someone who is so actively against it to brush it off so 'easily' when it became personal confused me.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

Definitely not a pub theatre play. Park Theatre (90), Southwark Playhouse, The Union Theatre perhaps? Something intimate but not too far out. It deserves a theatre with good reputation and can absolutely justify it! I suspect the target audience is 30+ only because there's no online dating anywhere in the play (unless I've forgotten, in which case I am sorry).

What was your overall impression of the play?

A very enjoyable play, a well balanced mix of entertainment, depth, gentle humour and unpredictability.

What did you particularly like about it?

The characters are engaging and well drawn, their dialogue is excellent, and the play is pacy, holding the attention at all times,

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

It was all clear

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

Produce a 5 minute film with 2 sample readings to accompany the play.

Ensure they are mobile friendly, ie place them on vimeo with a link

A number of venues were mentioned at the reading and I would include the Arcola.

What was your overall impression of the play?

Excellent – liked the underlying humour, strong characters and pace. Held my attention throughout with some unexpected twists and turns.

What did you particularly like about it?

As above. And I particularly liked the unexpected ending – didn't see that coming.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

Nothing was unclear. As discussed in the Q&A at the end, Paul agreeing to join the couple at marriage counseling tested my suspension of disbelief to some extent, but not a major issue.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

I could see the script working well as a film for TV or a short TV series. I think the format with different media could work well on screen.

I was very happy to see your rehearsed reading so busy! You had a wonderful turn out for a Monday afternoon.

I didn't leave any feedback but I did offer an opinion during the Q&A. I have filled out the form and expanded on this in the file attached.

I wish the play every success! I really did enjoy watching it.

What was your overall impression of the play?

I liked the play! It was well paced throughout and I enjoyed the comedy which ran through it. I got drawn into watching 4 very different characters have interesting and entertaining interactions!

What did you particularly like about it?

I particularly liked the media displays, although we didn't have a physical example of this it was easy to imagine how it would work. I particularly liked how media headlines were used as a timeline.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

I didn't understand why the friend agreed to go into the couples counselling meeting. By the time I got to the end of the play I could see it was a necessary plot device but it felt like a plot device and didn't ring true as an audience member. In an otherwise well written play it stands out as the only clunky section.

I was slightly confused as to why the couple get back together at the end. I really liked that they had come to the meeting having separated, that they were prepared to perhaps self reflect on their behaviour and actions and grow after a dramatic relationship. The re-coupling after a fight is something that has been seen in plays, TV and film before and up until that point I thought we were being offered an alternative to that.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

In it's current state this play is suited to smaller, more intimate venues like studio spaces or fringe theatres. The Hampstead was mentioned a few times in the Q&A and I tend to agree with that as an example venue.

Perhaps more could have been made of the media displays? I didn't feel as if there was a comment was being made on whether or not technology impacts on relationships positively or negatively, rather it was just a thing that happens, an element of day to day life. This is certainly true but if the end goal of this piece is for it to be staged at larger venues (and this was the impression I was given during the Q&A) then this could be looked at more deeply.

What was your overall impression of the play?

A funny, well observed comedic metaphor for a very complex situation, ie. Brexit.

Comparing the UK's relationship with the EU with a marriage between two people has the potential to be confusing and ultimately unhelpful, in the same way that comparing a country's economy with a household economy is simply a way of manipulating support for a destructive ideology of austerity.

That said, the play doesn't try to draw simplistic parallels and could, in fact be making very valid points.

What did you particularly like about it?

I like the ambition of a play about Brexit. I liked that it was a comedy, that it used farcical elements to tell the story. I liked the mix of characters, all well delineated and contrasting.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

Confusion for me lay not so much in the story telling as in the style and the comedic possibilities and theatricality missed.

The set up, one character asking another for assistance in wooing someone he fancies and his friend stepping in and whisking the girl off from under his nose is classic farce.

The invention of the compatibility councillor is inspired, and also a very farcical touch.

My impression, as the play unfolded, is of a writer working very hard to convince the audience of his naturalistic approach, when all we all wanted was for the farce to be taken to new heights. We were longing for a bit of exaggeration, a flight of fancy, a kind of crazy that would match the initial set up.

For example, and I give this very advisedly, no writer likes being given this kind of advice, but the person who has seen his girl stolen could, perhaps, be out for revenge, or at least the chance to get her back; hence the compatibility councillor. That he is in on the sessions with the couple is classic farce. This character is really our leading man rather than a supporting role, and should be driving the story.

That he falls for the councillor (or the councillor falls for him) is also filled with opportunity. In fact there is the hint of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* about 2 sets of lovers, all in love with the wrong people and with multiple and conflicting motivations.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

The Brexit negotiations have long descended into farce and finding a way to show that farce in metaphorical action is potentially gold dust.

There are already so many, and so potentially successful, farcical elements to the story, that could make this a very funny play in its own right, as well as offering an unique take on the

Brexit debacle, that it seems an opportunity lost not to make this a much more heightened theatrical experience, rather than focussing on a naturalistic, emotional approach.

Molière created some very funny farces responding to events in his own time. His plays live on long after the specific events are forgotten. This play has the potential to have universal appeal, beyond the specific obsessions of this pretty unsettling moment in time.

afterwards

What was your overall impression of the play?

Extremely well-written, hugely entertaining and very interesting on a number of levels -

What did you particularly like about it?

The humour. And the parallel trajectories of the personal & the political. The seriousness...

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

Very clear, well constructed & organised.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

Perfect off-West End piece.

What was your overall impression of the play?

- Good and engaging.
- The multi media angle will help a play that has a very good script.

What did you particularly like about it?

→ Good dialogue.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

→ I think that the last scene could be edited. A little too long.

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

- Would work in a good London venue.
- Hampstead Th.
- Trepalgar.

What was your overall impression of the play?

Highly entertaining

What did you particularly like about it?

the humour - brilliant dialogue

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

NO, but wonder if it could open with
news flashes about Brexit. Also, it
scene between Toby and Amelia would
benefit from being a triple header

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

Nothing that wasn't suggested in
Q + A.

All good luck!

What was your overall impression of the play?

Gripping / psychologically brief VERY funny !!!

What did you particularly like about it?

The IDEAS The RELATIONSHIPS The HUMOUR !!!
The EMOTIONS

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

Nope

What was your overall impression of the play?

A REALLY FAST AND WITTY PIECE
OF THEATRE.

What did you particularly like about it?

IT WAS VERY CLEVERLY WRITTEN
AND VERY FUNNY.

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

THE FIRST SCENE TOOK A WHILE TO GET GOING,
BUT OTHER THAN THAT, I UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING

Recommendations for development : type of venue / target audience, etc?

THIS PIECE WOULD PLAY WELL AT VENUES
LIKE ARLOVA THEATRE OR THEATRE 503

What was your overall impression of the play?

Great stuff!

What did you particularly like about it?

In terms of the storytelling, was anything unclear or confusing?

One thing being that maybe because of no props - when Jessica was waiting for Toby & Andrea, was she on her home phone & then answering her mobile? Who uses a home phone these days? Maybe she should have been on a mobile & be angry got sent on her computer. If I've misunderstood ignore me!
At the dinner - who was Geoff?

I can see this farce as a studio piece at a provincial theatre, or as a radio play, as it compellingly captures a unique part of 2016's self-absorbed culture with an impressive pace and wit.

Tamsin Irwin, Theatre 503

 **The Script Readers**
@script_readers Following

Full house & totally rapt audience today for black comedy 'In Denial' by @WoolfJames, dir@UrsulaCampbell @ParkTheatre #relationships&Brexit



12:31 PM - 8 Jan 2018

5 Retweets 9 Likes 

 1  5  9 

 **Philippa Carr**
@philippacarr7 Following 

We all saw that this play is to the Brexit generation what Closer was to the noughties.



The Script Readers @script_readers
Full house & totally rapt audience today for black comedy 'In Denial' by @WoolfJames, dir@UrsulaCampbell @ParkTheatre #relationships&Brexit

1:16 PM - 8 Jan 2018

3 Retweets 8 Likes 

  3  8 



 **Emmanuela Lia**
@LiaEmmanuela Following 

Wonderful #scriptreaders play from @stratfordeast team. 'In Denial' by @WoolfJames directed by @UrsulaCampbell and read by an amazing cast at the @ParkTheatre today! Someone put it on please!

11:53 AM - 8 Jan 2018

1 Retweet 5 Likes 

  1  5 



FEEDBACK FROM READING BY THE SCRIPT READERS SEP 2017, REPORT BY NEW WRITING SOUTH, NOV 2016 & OTHER COMMENTS.



“It's a modern and peppy play which would find an audience with a good cast. Certainly worth a try out production.” Kenny Wax, Producer.



“A sharp timely piece that has boatloads of potential in its blending of personal/sexual politics with the civic politics of our very recent history.”

New Writing South script report.

