

Teddy Bear's Picnic

Cast: One, Two, Three, Four, Five. (The characters can be any gender. The roles of Three and Five can be played by the same actor.)

Scene: A white room with a passageway UC. There is a hallway seen through the passageway heading both SL and SR. The room has an empty small white table in the center. There are teddy bears strewn around the room of various sizes and shapes. There is a larger pile against the SL wall. There are no windows, no electrical outlets, and no discernable source of light. Unless otherwise indicated, all the characters enter through the UC passageway coming from the direction of SR and all the characters exit UC in the direction of SL.

One: [Enters UC confidently carrying a teddy bear and moves DC.] Hello! I'm here to deliver... Huh. [To the teddy bear they are carrying.] No one is here, Mr. Bear. Maybe we have the wrong room, heh? [Turns and exits with the bear. A moment later, One enters again carrying the teddy bear and moves DC.] Hello! I'm here to... Oh. ...Mr. Bear, I just had the strongest sense of déjà vu! [Pause.] Have we been here before? [To the teddy bear.] You're no help. [Seeing the other bears in the room.] I was told to give you to someone but there is no one here except other bears! ...I'll leave you here on the table [Places bear on the table] and when they come back, they'll find you. [Pause.] They must really like teddy bears, heh? [Exits UC. A moment later, One confidently enters holding an identical bear and moves DC.] Hello! I'm here to deliver... [Sees the identical bear on the table.] Wait a minute. Have I...? [To the identical teddy bears.] Do you two know each other? ...I have the weirdest feeling I've been here before but—

Two: [Enters carrying a different teddy bear and sees One.] Ah! I'm supposed to give this to you.

One: Wait! I've already got one. ...And I'm supposed to give mine to someone as well.

Two: Oh. I must have the wrong room. Sorry, I got thrown into this. [*Exits with bear. A moment later, enters with the bear and sees One.*] Ah! Here, I'm supposed to give this to you.

One: Wait! I've already got one, see? And you were just here a moment ago.

Two: What? [*Looks around.*] I was? Huh. I swear, sometimes I think I am losing it. [*Pause.*] Look, I'll just leave this here [*indicating table*] and when whoever is supposed to get this comes back, just tell them it is from me. [*Places teddy bear on the table.*] Thanks! [*Two exits. A moment later Two enters carrying an identical bear to the one they left on the table and sees One.*] Ah! Here, I'm supposed to give—[*Sees the identical bear on the table*]—but you already have one. [*Looks around.*] What is it with you and teddy bears anyway?

One: Ok, hold on! These aren't mine. I'm supposed to give this one away as well. And you were just here dropping that one off a moment ago!

Two: What? I just got here. ...Though, I do feel like I've seen you before. Nah, can't place it. But this is my first time here. [*Sees the identical bear and One's two identical bears.*] ...I think. I just came off the elevator at the end of the hall—

One: Elevator?

Two: Yeah, I stepped off the elevator and came down the hall to this room.

One: I came through a door.

Two: A door. What kind of door?

One: From the street...into a shop. It was a shop door.

Two: What? You're nuts. [*Moves UC and looks down the passageway toward SR.*] Look see, it's...oh.

One: What?

Two: Just sec. [*Two disappears SR down the hallway and returns a moment later.*] It, uh, is not like I remember it. The hall turns a corner and then...

One: And then?

Two: Just ends.

One: What? That's not possible. Let me see. [*One moves UC, disappears SR, and returns quickly.*]

Well, that's just not safe. What if there's a fire!

Two: Right?!? There must be a way out! [*Two slams their bear onto the table with identical bear and storms UC and disappears SL. A moment later, Two storms through the passageway from SR holding another identical bear.*] Here! This is for you! [*Half-recognizes One and stops.*] Do I know you? [*Sees two identical bears on the table.*] What the fuck!?!?

One: Try to breathe.

Two: I need space! [*Moves away and starts a breathing exercise to calm down. Pause. Calmer.*] I need to give this to someone.

One: I'm in the same boat. I need to give this away before I can go, too.

Two: Really? Well, easy fix, we'll just give our bears to each other. Problem solved!

One: But we'd both still have a bear.

Two: Just leave it here, then.

One: You tried that already. ...I have a feeling I tried that too. [*Indicating the duplicate bears.*]

Two: You're nuts. Here, *you* take my bear.

One: What?

Two: Have it!

One: No!

Two: Fine. [*Takes out cellphone.*] There has to be a way out of this. ...Do you have service?

One: Oh. [*Takes out their cellphone.*] I don't know, I haven't looked.

Two: I need to let the office know I'll be late.

One: I don't have any reception either.

Two: Not even Wifi? What kind of a place doesn't have wifi?

One: My battery is low. I need a plug in. Do you see one?

Two: An outlet? Try looking behind the teddy bears. I mean, who lives here with all these teddy bears and no wifi? I ask you. [*Holding the cellphone up trying to get a signal.*]

One moves bears looking for outlets. One comes to the larger pile of teddy bears against the wall SL and discovers a body (a long-dead mummy or skeleton) hidden under bears.

One: Umm,... you should see this.

Two: Yeah, what did you—Christ!

One: Right?!!

Two: Shit got real fast! First no wifi and now this!

Three: [*Enters carrying a different teddy bear.*] Um, excuse me, I'm supposed to give this to—

Two: [*To One, indicating body.*] Quick, cover it up!

One and Two toss bears onto the skeleton and stand together blocking Three's view of it.

Three: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. [*Sees the pile of teddy bears behind One and Two.*] Wow, you have a lot of teddy bears here. I was told to give this to someone. Who can I give this to?

Two: Well, see, that's the thing, we both already have teddy bears.

Three: Oh, yeah. I can see there's no shortage here. I must have the wrong place. Sorry for the intrusion. I'll try down the hall. [*Three moves UC to the passageway.*]

One: No wait! There's no... [*Three exits. One turns to Two.*] Help me cover this up, they'll be back!

Two: What?

Three: [*Enters carrying the same teddy bear.*] Hi, sorry to interrupt, but I'm supposed to give this teddy bear to someone. [*Stops and partially recognizes them and the room.*] Have I been here...?

Two: It must have been a dream.

One: What kind of door did you come through?

Three: Door?

One: To the hallway here.

Three: Oh, from my apartment...I think. That's funny, I can check. [*Turns to exit UC.*]

One: No wait! Who is waiting for you in your apartment?

Three: Waiting for me? Well, my cat, Thomas, I guess, but I was just there. ...I think.

One: Give it to me.

Two: What are you doing?

One: I'll take it.

Three: Great! Here you go! [*Gives bear to One. One holds it.*]

Two: But now you'll have two!

One: Having one more won't kill me.

Three: I admit, this is quite a collection.

One: They're not all mine.

Three: Still, I'm always amazed by the things people do for hobbies. Thanks again! [*Exits.*]

Pause. Three does not return.

Two: Why did you do that?!?

One: It worked, didn't it?

Two: Yeah, I guess, but now you have two! It's hard enough to give away—

Four: [*Enters carrying a different teddy bear.*] Hey! Hey! Hey! Who asked for the brand-new teddy?

[*Stops and looks at One and Two.*] Any takers?

Two: [*Pause.*] Get out!

Four: Oh, sorry, wrong room! [Exits.]

One: [To Two] Why did you—?

Four: [Enters carrying the same teddy bear from a moment before.] Hey! Hey! Hey! Who asked for the brand-new teddy? [Stops and looks at One and Two.] You know you want it!

Two: Get out.

Four: Sorry, wrong room! [Exits.]

One: [Calling after Four] No wait! [To Two] I really wish you wouldn't—

Four: [Enters carrying the same teddy bear from a moment before.] Hey! Hey! Hey! Who asked for the brand-new teddy? [Stops and partially recognizes One and Two.] Have I—?

One: [Before Two can speak.] Come in!

Four: Is this for you? [Holding out the bear to One.]

Two: Not so fast! [Moves to the large pile of bears concealing the body/skeleton.] Look, I don't know who you are or what brought you here, but things aren't quite what they seem. You're probably thinking teddy bears and cuddles, childhood games and innocent fun. Well, it's not! These bears don't bring comfort, only DEATH!!! [Two swats a couple bears off the pile to reveal the body.]

Four: Yikes! What is this? You guys are sick!

One: Look, I didn't know—

Four: I'm out of here! [Four throws the teddy bear at Two and runs out the passageway UC.]

One: Wait! Don't! You'll just end up back... Crap.

Four: [Enters with an identical teddy bear to the one thrown a moment before but somewhat agitated.] Hey! Hey! Hey! Who wants a new teddy? [Stops and looks at One and Two with partial recognition then sees the body amongst the bears.] What the hell?!?

One: Don't run!

Four: Why the hell not?

Two: Good question.

One: Because you were here before and there's the bear you brought last time!

Pause.

Four: What?!? That's wacked. ...I'm sure there's a bunch of them here that are the same.

Two: I don't think so.

Four: And what happened to buddy over there? [*Indicating the body.*]

Two: Beats us. That was here when we got here, isn't that right?

One: I'm afraid so.

Two: And we both showed up with bears to give away. Hey, do you want *my* bear?

Four: I don't want anything from either of you! Look, you both seem nice enough and all but this whole situation is freaking me out, you know? So, I'm thinking you can take your bears and shove them up your— [*Overlap "ass" with next line.*]

Five: [*Enters with bear.*] Ah, yes! I thought I heard voices! I was told to give this to someone.

Two: We know!

Five: Oh, great, you were expecting me. Here, take this and I'll be on my way.

Two: We can't.

One: We all have bears to give away, too. See? [*They all hold up their bears.*] You can't leave here with a bear, and if you leave it here, you come back with an identical bear.

Five: That's ludicrous.

Two: He's not lying.

Five: I don't believe it. You're all putting me on.

Four: Don't look at me, I'm new here. ...And whatever you do, don't look at that. [*Points to body.*]

Five: Jesus Christ!

One: That was here when we got here.

Four: So they say!

Five: I'm just going to leave this here. Fair? [*Leaves bear on the table and exits UC.*]

One: No, really don't!

Two: Let them go!

Four: What? What's going to happen? Is something going to happen?

Five: [*Enters confidently carrying an identical teddy bear as the one left on the table a moment earlier.*] Ah, yes! I thought I heard voices. I was told to give this to someone.

Four: Holy shit!

Two: Right?

Five: Do I know you? I just had the strangest feeling of Deja— [*Notices body.*] Eww! What happened there?

Two: Beats us.

Four: I'm calling the police. [*Takes out cellphone.*]

Five: Police? Look, I really didn't mean to stumble into the middle of—

Four: I don't have a signal. Are any of you connected?

Two: We tried.

Four: Wifi?

Two: Nope.

Four: What kind of a place doesn't have wifi?

Five: Look, I'm just going to leave this here. [*Sees identical bear on the table.*] That's, um...what a coincidence!

One: Right?!?

Five: [Sees the other duplicate bears.] Now, wait a minute. Are you all putting me on? Is this some sort of elaborate prank? [Laughs.] Well played, friends. The body over there is a little dark for my taste but [indicating all the bears] I admire your commitment. Now, if you'll excuse me.

One: You can't leave.

Five: What?

Two: Tell them.

Five: Tell me what?

One: You can't leave with a teddy bear, and you can't just leave it here, you'll only come back with another. [Indicating duplicate bears.] See? You have to give it away.

Five: You're joking.

Two: No joke.

Five: [To Four.] And you're privy to all this?

Four: Don't look at me, I'm super confused and a little freaked out. I just want to get out of here.

Two: Nobody gets out of here with a bear.

Pause. They look at each other holding their bears.

One: Fine. [To Four.] Here, give it to me.

Four: What?

One: Give me your bear, get out of here.

Four: Really? You're, sure? Thanks! [Gives One the bear. One holds onto it.] Thanks. [Exits.]

One: [To Five.] You, too. Give it to me.

Five: I am forever in your debt. [Gives bear to One. One holds it as well, tucking bears under arms and between legs.] I feel privileged to have met you. I shall carry the—

One: Yeah, yeah, yeah, you're welcome. Go!

Five: You are right, no need to mince words. Brevity is the soul of wit. Thanks again. [Exits.]

Two: And me?

One: Fine. Hand it over.

Two: [Two approaches One but stops abruptly just out of reach.] Wait a minute!

One: What?

Two: Not so fast.

One: Huh?

Two: If I give you this, you'll have all the bears.

One: So?

Two: Oh, you're good. That was your plan all along! [Teasing.] "Oh, look at me with all the bears! Oh, I'm such a good person, letting everyone go. I'm such a selfless do-gooder helping everyone out." Asshole! Give them to me!

One: What? That's nuts! I don't care about the bears.

Two: Then give them up!

One: What? Look, you're not making any—

Two: Shut up! Give me those bears or I'll punch you in the face!

Pause.

One: Ok. Have them. [Transfers all the bears to Two under arms and between legs to hold them all.] I never meant...I mean I didn't want us all to end up like...[indicating body]. So I—

Two: Save it.

One: Look, you don't have to—

Two: Get out of here before I change my mind! Go!

Pause.

One: [Moves UC. Stops.] Thank you.

Two: Are you still here? Vamoose, would you? I have some bears to play with. Can't you see I'm busy? Go!

One exits.

Two: I thought they'd never leave. I win! [Drops the bears. Flatly] Yeah me. [To body.] It's a regular hall of heroes around here. ...No, it's ok, don't get up. [Takes out cellphone.] Fuck! Battery's dead. Figures. ...The office will have to suck it. [Starts gathering bears and making a pile against the wall opposite the body.] Who am I kidding, they're probably already interviewing for my position. Nobody cares about people nowadays. The world is going to Hell in a handbasket. [To bear] Right Teddy? Do you mind if I call you Teddy? What's that? Theodore? My apologies. Theodore it is. And your friend here? I see, well we might as well get acquainted, I have a feeling we're going to be working together from now on. [Sits against the wall R surrounded by a pile of teddy bears. Two is positioned to mirror the position of the body against the opposite wall L.]