

SEASIDE ROAD

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'The light of consciousness goes back a few phases, but then the object and our experience of it cease to be registered. They enter into a more definitive absence...the experience and its object have to fall into a forgotten stage before they can be recalled. Remembering is thus a kind of discrete new beginning, going back again to something that had fallen out of consciousness.'
(Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*)

'The 'objet a' is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking.'
(Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*)

Character:

A

B

Note:

1. There are no specific requirements in gender, age or status for A and B.
2. All kinds of items related to the personal life are placed on the upstage. But these items should not bear obvious personal aesthetic tendency, and through which the audience will not be able to make any judgement about the identity of the owner, including the age, gender, occupation and social class. These items are simply some productions, some of the most common and pure industrial productions.
3. The stage lights only shine on the items scattered around the upstage, and there is no light at the edge of the stage where A and B conducting conversation.
4. The 'Thingamajig' represents a prop made of air-dry clay and wax.

The stage lights up.

Piled in the upstage, there are a number of bedroom sundries, including an old wooden chest of drawers, several of which are open and filled with books, papers, and other daily necessities. It is also littered with items that could be perfume bottles, used-up cosmetics, books or vases.

The upstage is littered with common household items, such as bed sheets, pillow cases, clothes, cosmetics, books, cups and knick-knacks.

The stage lights always shine on these items.

After a period of empty stage. A, dressed in a pair of pyjamas, appears from the right side of the stage and walks straight towards the left side. A passes by the items placed on the upstage, crossing arms, heads down, and glances to both sides from time to time. A looks distraught, as if worrying about something while walking. A eventually comes down stage left.

And then B, dressed in a pair of pyjamas, appears from the left side of the stage and walks straight towards the right side. B passes by the items placed on the upstage, heads down deeper than A. It seems that B doesn't want to have anything to do with

things around, just hurrying up to walk though. B eventually comes off stage right.

Then, A appears from the left side of the stage again, crossing the stage with similar concern and comes off stage right.

B appears from the right side of the stage again, crossing the stage with head down and tries to avoid the eye contact with the audience, and then comes off stage left.

This time, A and B come on stage at the same time from both sides of the stage, and follow their own way towards the opposite side of the stage. So, they inevitably meet near the center of the stage. They don't see each other before the encounter because they lower heads while walking. They just subconsciously dodge as almost running into each other and raises head and looks each other.

They smile sheepishly at each other. It seems that they have known each other for a long time, and are not surprised in the unexpected encounter.

A *(Smiling)* go out?

B *(Smiling)* Yes.

A Just had the meal?

B Right, just had.

A How about going somewhere?

B Let's go.

A and B sit on the edge of downstage right, facing the audience. A sits on the right and B on the left. They are close to each other and smile sheepishly at each other after sit-down.

A Have you had the meal?

B Already had.

A You often go for a walk after meals?

B Yes, I quite like to go for a walk after meals.

A lowers head and smiles sheepishly. B also lowers head and smiles.

After a while, A pulls a small object out of right pocket, and plays with it for a moment. Then, it seems that A finally decides to pluck up courage to bring it to B.

B What's this?

A A thingamajig.

B reaches out to touch it, and then withdraws hands.

B It's lovely.

A Yes.

B What's it called?

A I don't know yet.

B It doesn't have a name?

A Not yet.

B It's better to have one.

A Right.

B Let's give it a name.

A What?

B Do you have any idea?

A It's up to you.

B It's better to take an interesting and impressive one.

A short silence.

B How about "Seaside Road".

A Seaside Road ?

B (*Giggling*) Yes.

A giggles after B.

A You mean the road built along the seaside?

B Yes.

A Sometimes there are cars driving past?

B Yes, that one.

A (*Laughing out loud*) A lovely name.

A takes the thingamajig back, holding it with hands on laps, smiling down at it. B also keeps head down, eyes resting on laps, with sheepish smile.

A pause for silence.

A gradually closes eyes, falling into drowsiness, and B smiles as looking into A's eyes, as if stuck into a beautiful fantasy—the fantasy of a seaside road.

A (*As if suddenly waking up, showing a smile and looking at B*)
How have you been recently?

B Pretty good.

A holds the thingamajig, lowers head and played with it intently with smile.

And then A is accustomed to playing with it unconsciously. A turns attention elsewhere, but always with smile. Throughout this time, B looks over at the thingamajig in A's hand from time to time, with sheepish smile.

- A** Do you remember K?
- B** The boy who always grins.
- A** Exactly, I have not seen him for a long time.
- B** Me too.
- A** When did you last see him?
- B** I don't remember, but it was definitely a long time ago. It was afternoon that I encountered him on the seaside road. He was still alone there, grinning at me as soon as he saw me.
- A** He likes smiling even under such circumstances?
- B** I think he is just used to smiling, and he has no other facial expressions except smile.
- A** So, What did he think at the last period of time?
- B** You mean his own thoughts?
- A** Yes.
- B** He thought he is a dead weight.
- A** (*Giggling*) So much weight?
- B** (*Laughing out loud while drawing a human-sized circle with hands*) Yeah, so much weight.

A and B laugh together. But then they relapse to a silence. A puts the thingamajig on the right side and sits for a while. Then A takes it back, keeps the black side up and observes it carefully. And put it on the lap again and stare at it; After that, A faces it again, keeping the smooth side sup and observes it. And then A puts it on the lap again and stare at it. After much hesitation, A

hands it to B, and keeps the black side up to share with B. But B just shakes hand with smile. A has to take it back, carefully holds it and puts hands on laps.

A Do you like it?

B You mean this thingamajig?

A Yes.

B Pretty like.

A short silence. A smiles at the thingamajig and plays with it. B smiles too.

A I have heard that those roads that extend along the coastline are different from other roads.

B What's the difference?

A For example, what happened on the seaside road will eventually linger in our mind. Just like the tides ebb away everyday, but always coming in.

B It's true. Seaside road do have such amazing effect. No wonder people yearn for them, approach them, and then turn away from them.

A But after a long time away, people will still be attracted by them one day when they have to pass through by car.

B Exactly.

A It is fascinating, but hard to explain.

- B** It may be related to the feature of seaside roads. They are not very spacious, but always kept so flat and smooth. You can not imagine that the road can be so flat that you even feel an urge to lie down on it immediately. It is even flatter than my beds, which can bring people a sense of security.
- A** And experiences of driving on the seaside roads. They were so flat and endless. Therefore I felt for the first time that I could be so close to the freedom when I driving on such roads.
- B** And the curvature. They extend softly to a point so far away, clinging gracefully to the contour of the coast.

A pause for silence. A still fiddles with the thingamajig. B tilts head and looks at it with smile.

- A** Do you remember the sea mist on that road?
- B** It sounds familiar. Seems in hot seasons?
- A** Maybe. I only remember how quickly the mist came in. Sometimes, the road I was walking along may gradually be cloaked by the mist. Before long, the mist lifted and the road came through.
- B** Like nothing happened?
- A** Like nothing happened.

A short silence. A brings the thingamajig back again, looking at it back and forth, and touches it gently. Then, A places it between them . Throughout this time, B's eyes never move from the thingamajig, looking at it with a smile.

A How long has it been since we last went for a walk on that road ?

B I don't remember.

A I still recall the scenery on the road, and how the night falls on.

B An ephemeral blue. Then more and more cars flowed in the road.

A (*Smiling as if thinking of something exciting*) One car after another, travelled smoothly through the winding road with lights on.

B Whether substantial buildings along the road or quite flowers amid bushes, everything became blurred in such blue. Only the lights of cars were clear. There were moving light spots in such a blue seaside road.

A What happens after that?

B The night fell.

A Only sound of the sea could be heard on the road.

B The sound of tides ebbing away.

A The reef nearby was gradually left uncovered.

B But you could not see anything under such darkness.

A All you have to do is looking into the distance, the things that have disappeared.

A pause for silence. A gradually falls into drowsiness. B looks at the thingamajig placed between them, reaches out to touches it gently, and holds hands back. Then, B took it in hands very gently, as if being afraid of disturbing A who is asleep. B plays with it for a while, stares at it, and then puts it pack to the same place. B closes eyes with smile.

A wakes up, looking around as if searching for something. Then A's eyes fell on the thingamajig, takes it and holds in hands. After that, A looks over to B who is asleep.

A I miss K.

B is still asleep.

A I haven't seen him for quite a long time.

B is still asleep.

A pause for silence.

The lights in the upstage dim until full darkness.

