

# Peace

by

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Characters.

Liz McNeill

Jim McNeill

Jane McNeill

Miguel Flores

Barb Waters

Ben Jacobs

Setting. The meeting room of La Paz, the kitchen of the McNeill's home, a prison, a military road.

Summer.

Author's note.

Some years back, I began receiving emails from a peace group in a college town. I was struck by the group's impassioned steadfastness and the enormous commitment of time and energy their activities implied. As great as my amazement was my curiosity as to what these constant missives did *not* share. How did they carry on when so many, like me, had given up? In any case, I had the feeling I might write about a group like this one day, to cheer myself up, to inspire, let's say, hope. That day came this summer, ten years into the demoralizing war on terror. The way the play evolved surprised me. These were not necessarily the characters I had in mind! This was not the way the story should unfold! The peace group battling inside me had taken on its own life. But the play is dedicated, with thanks, to those who go on, regardless of the odds, for the sake of peace.

Scene.

The meeting room of La Paz. Jim is putting out chairs. Jane sits against a wall, her iPod in her ears. She appears to be texting. Liz is on her cell phone.

LIZ. I do understand. Life gets in the way. Next week, then? You'll be away. . . . Well we'll miss you. Bye, bye.

(She gets off the phone.)

Fuck.

(JIM stops in mid-action, with chair.)

JIM. I don't think—

LIZ. What, Jim?

JIM. I'm saying, we don't need . . .

LIZ. What don't we need?

JIM. So many chairs.

LIZ. You don't say.

JIM. I'm only saying.

(She turns to him, confrontationally.)

It's summer.

LIZ. Could have fooled me.

JIM. It's summer vacation.

LIZ. If this is summer—

JIM. People take off.

LIZ. --someone up there is playing quite a joke on us.

(pause.)

Someone will come. They'll see the ad. They'll find us on Facebook.

JIM. The day semester ends, the town empties out. You know that.

(determined) You know that, Liz.

LIZ. Do I, Jim? Keep your negativity to yourself, okay?

JIM. I only said—

LIZ. (thunderously) *Put all the fucking chairs out.*

JIM. You never used to swear.

LIZ. (summoning a cheery optimism) Someone will come. They always do.

JIM. Before this peace group business.

LIZ. (ignoring him) Where's that table?

(to him) And make sure it's a perfect circle.

JIM. (obeying) Before La Paz you were a gentler soul.

LIZ. Where's the goddamn table?

JIM. All I'm saying is. Betty's gone. Lawrence. Jim and Milli. Jamaica and Will. Flora. Jo Anne. John. They've all gone—

LIZ. *Shut the fuck up, will you, Jim?*

JIM. On vacation.

LIZ. There's summer school. Barb's around. And next week, we've got Ben—

JIM. Ben's only coming because I hired him. Because you cornered him. At the faculty luncheon.

LIZ. Fuck you, Jim.

JIM. (gesturing towards Jane) Can you swear any louder?

LIZ. She's not listening.

JANE. Yes, I am, Gram.

LIZ. Fuck.

JIM. (To Liz) You see.

JANE. Don't worry, Gramp. I like it when you fight.

JIM. You do?

JANE. Pops and dad never fight.

LIZ. They don't?

JANE. It's boring.

JIM. "The tyranny of harmony."

JANE. They're always conferencing and working things out. I like that you fight.

LIZ. I'm not fighting anyone.

(to Jim) Before this 'peace group business' started, we weren't in two wars.

JIM. We're always at war. And we're in more than two.

LIZ. The gulf wasn't a dead zone.

JIM. (seeking alliance with Jane) Not sure what that's got to do with it.

LIZ. We are drowning in oil.

JIM. That doesn't explain your—

LIZ. We had fucking summer!

TO READ THE WHOLE PLAY AND FOR ANY OTHER INQUIRES, PLEASE  
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