

British Theatre Guide

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Children and Animals

Florence Read

Forward Arena

Pleasance Dome

3–29 August 2016



A hotel bedroom is a fittingly vague place for a couple to wait for someone to show up, someone they are paying, but for what services we're not entirely clear.

Clearly nervous, they practice being "normal", fall out, make up, play games and taunt each other. This level of persistently high energy torment spurs on their imaginations as they wind each other tighter and tighter. Finally, their visitor arrives, offering her services and with the power in their hands things take a queasy turn.

Broken into sections, there is vivid storytelling here: a Christian preacher healing the blind, a hostage situation with a spoon as a gun and finally a dramatisation of the moon landings. These are grown-ups whose inner child is taking over, the first clue the fact they are both fully dressed under their duvet. To what extent the game is a way of life and how they've been drawn into it remains a secret and, reflective of the title, they seem trapped, like animals, in their own sport.

This is a script brimming with promise, the characters are jittery, coiled up and ready to spring and the situation ambiguous enough to render it intriguing. However, this air of mystery becomes monotonous as there is little light and shade for this restless pair and the piece builds to an unsettling but ultimately unfulfilling conclusion.

The imagery is excellent and the performers give it their all but this is too melodramatic to be chilling and trying too hard to be edgy to be a convincing black comedy.

Reviewer: [Amy Yorston](#)