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## **The Rose and Crown**

J B Priestley

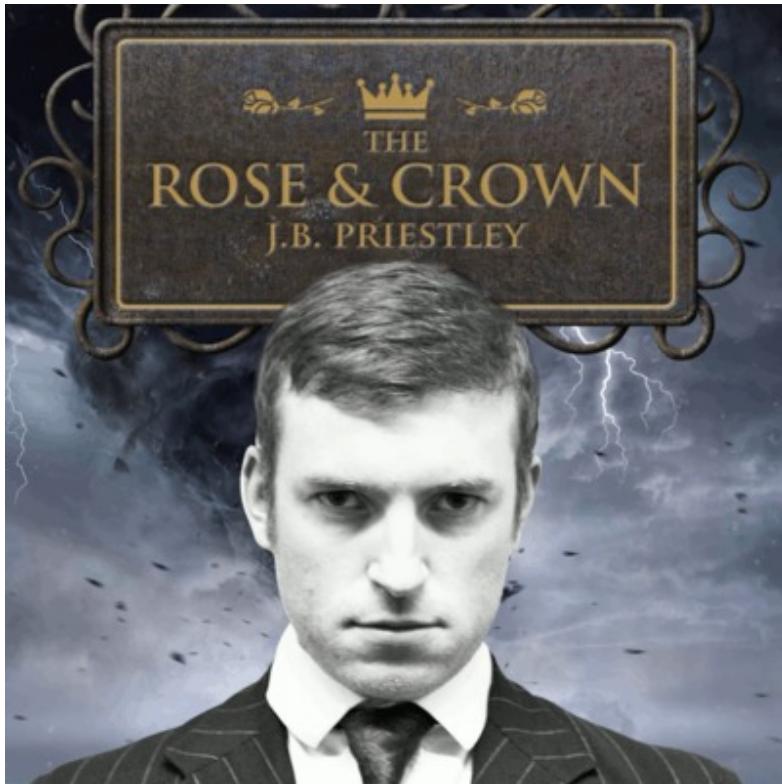
Arbery Productions

theSpace on Niddry St

From 22 August 2016 to 27 August 2016

Rating: \*\*\*\*

Review by [Graeme Strachan](#)



The Rose and Crown

*The Rose and Crown* is a one-act teleplay from J B Priestley written for BBC in the post-war years of grim austerity, envisioned as a morality piece as well as a flirtation with his usual tinkering with time and reality.

The play revolves around the patrons of a typical London pub, who each arrive in the establishment, order a drink then mostly grumble or snipe at each other with petty recriminations until a strange suited and clearly supernatural man arrives with an ultimatum. One of them must come with him and between them they must decide upon who goes.

Priestley's little-known teleplay has been freshly adapted for the stage by Arbery Productions with an apparent view to drawing more of the humour and humanity from the piece. Drawing from the text with a playful banter between the actors, they squeeze a great deal of laughter and jocularity from the lengthy establishing pre-amble to the conflict.

Between the grumpy plumber, the cheeky curtain twitcher and the cheerful spiv, the cast manage to paint a recognisable evocation of post-war England in all its murkiness and commonplace grind. It's only when the spectre appears that they each scramble to point out their own worth and reasons for survival.

It's a well acted and craftily staged performance, with only a couple of niggling issues bringing down the whole. One is that the adaptation seems to have removed some of the explanation behind the appearance of the spectre, leaving the nature of where the people are being taken assumptive rather than explicit, leaving a tantalisation of a particular twist which hangs for a long time over the plot.

That said, it's a work that ought to be better known and Arbery has proven it has the chops to bring it to the masses.

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