

## **Garcin from "No Exit"** **By Jean-Paul Sartre**

*No Exit is a play about three souls trapped in Hell who find that they are to torture each other for all eternity in a never-ending circle. The characters; sadistic lesbian Inez, socialite and baby-killer Estelle, and Garcin the war-deserter chase each other around a Second-Empire drawing room - an existential version of Hell. In this scene, Garcin has just entered hell and is talking, one-sidedly, to a guard as he tries to figure out the situation.*

### **GARCIN:**

[More calmly.] Yes, of course, you're right. [He looks around again.] And why should one want to see oneself in a looking-glass? But that bronze contraption on the mantelpiece, that's another story. I suppose there will be times when I stare my eyes out at it... That's their idea, isn't it? ... No, I suppose you're under orders not to answer questions; and I won't insist. But don't forget, my man, I've a good notion of what's coming to me, so don't you boast you've caught me off-guard. I'm facing the situation, facing it.

[Garcin starts pacing the room.] So that's that; no toothbrush. And no bed, either. One never sleeps, I take it? ... Just as I expected. Why should one sleep? You lie down on the sofa and - in a flash, sleep flies away. So you rub your eyes, get up, and it starts all over again.

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This bronze. [Strokes it thoughtfully.] Yes, now's the moment; I'm looking at this thing on the mantelpiece, and I understand that I'm in Hell. I tell you, everything's been thought out beforehand. They knew I'd stand at the fireplace, stroking this thing of bronze, with all those eyes intent on me. Devouring me. [He swings around abruptly.] What? Only two of you? I thought there were more; many more. [Laughs.] So this is Hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the "burning marl." Old wives' tales! There's no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is - other people!