

HADES

A Short Play

Written by

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## **HADES**

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Characters:

Bram (20), male from the Middle East

Anise (20), female from the United States

Michael (20), male from Canada

Setting:

A room, perhaps for waiting in, with a row of chairs. The back wall is of ancient stone.

Time:

Today and everyday

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Bram paces back and forth while Anise, his girlfriend, sleeps on two adjacent chairs. He's exhausted but can't let himself sleep. He sits but can't stay still. First he begins to jiggle his leg and then resumes his pacing.

Bram sings quietly to himself: Buffalo Soldier by Bob Marley. He cannot recall the song and hums the missing words. He is not unduly bothered that his rendition is irritatingly and monotonously limited to Marley's title.

BRAM  
(sings to himself)  
Buffalo soldier . . . Buffalo  
soldier . . .

Anise stirs. The coat that is covering her slips off. Bram gently replaces it around her.

There is a NOISE of someone opening and closing a door and feet descending steps. Bram freezes.

MICHAEL walks in, at first oblivious to the presence of Bram and Anise.

MICHAEL  
(to himself)  
Assholes.

He stops, surprised, when he sees Bram and Anise.

BRAM/MICHAEL  
Sorry, We/I--

MICHAEL  
I'm--

BRAM  
We're waiting for . . .

Bram sits down next to Anise.

MICHAEL  
I didn't mean you guys. Them.

He points above his head.

BRAM  
We're just resting. The door was open and--

MICHAEL  
You shouldn't be here. This area isn't open to the public.

BRAM  
Oh. Sorry. We thought . . . We'll go--

MICHAEL  
The door was locked. It's always locked.

There's a long silence.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You didn't sneak in here through a . . .

BRAM  
No. The door was--

MICHAEL  
I'm only joking. I'm a joker. Something those assholes up there don't appreciate. My boss is a total fucking asshole.

He sniffs the air. Sniffs again. He approaches Bram and sniffs him. He grins at Bram.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You got some weed on you?

BRAM

What?

MICHAEL

Come on!

Michael takes off his coat, lays it carefully on a seat and sits in a nearer one.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(whispering)

You want to light up?

BRAM

Down here?

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL

All sorts goes on down here.

BRAM

I was saving it for later.

MICHAEL

What later? There's only now.

Come on, man.

BRAM

I don't know.

MICHAEL

A bit of weed isn't going to bring the house down. This place is so full of tunnels and caves and quarries and excavations . . . I'm surprised the whole thing hasn't collapsed by now.

BRAM

Crushing your employers?

MICHAEL

Assholes.

Michael gets up and paces.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I make one little joke and BOOM they explode. Talk about walking on fucking egg shells.

BRAM

Land mines.

MICHAEL  
Exactly.

BRAM  
Where you from? I mean originally?

MICHAEL  
Canada. You?

BRAM  
Here.

MICHAEL  
Where's here?

Bram motions to the room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
No one's from here. I mean down  
here. You just pass through.

BRAM  
Yeah. I'm just passing through.

MICHAEL  
How 'bout that smoke?

BRAM  
You know that song by Bob Marley?  
Buffalo soldier?

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

BRAM  
(sings)  
Buffalo soldier . . .

He hums the next few bars and looks expectantly at Michael.  
Bram nods encouragingly at Michael to fill in the blank.

MICHAEL  
(sings)  
Buffalo soldier . . .

They now both hum the blank, nodding their heads but neither  
can recall the following words.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Yeah. I know it. Hold on.

BRAM  
(sings)  
Buffalo soldier . . .

MICHAEL  
Soldier . . . Buffalo . . .

They each try to recall the words.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Good song though.

BRAM  
Great song.

Michael leans over and offers his hand.

MICHAEL  
I'm Michael.

Bram shakes his hand.

BRAM  
Bram.

MICHAEL  
What?

BRAM  
I'm Bram.

MICHAEL  
Bram? I've never--

BRAM  
You have.

MICHAEL  
No. I don't think--

BRAM  
You have.

MICHAEL  
OK.

BRAM  
Bram Stoker. Wrote Dracula?

MICHAEL  
Oh, yeah. Right.

BRAM  
My parents are English professors.  
They thought literary names for all  
their kids would do something for  
them.

MICHAEL  
Get them out of a tight squeeze?

BRAM  
How'd you mean?

MICHAEL  
Dracula: gets in and out of a  
coffin? Tight squeeze?

BRAM  
Yeah: I don't know.

MICHAEL  
It works.

BRAM  
OK, it works, man.

MICHAEL  
It does. I'm named after the arch  
angel.

BRAM  
Oh.

MICHAEL  
Not that I have to live up to it,  
him, whatever.

BRAM  
No.

MICHAEL  
Big ask. But . . .

BRAM  
But?

MICHAEL  
I do my bit.

BRAM  
What's that?

MICHAEL  
This, here. I'm a tour guide. I'm  
the--

BRAM  
Best tour guide.

MICHAEL  
I am!

BRAM  
They don't appreciate it.

MICHAEL  
No. I--

BRAM  
You show the way.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. I do it my way: I reveal.

BRAM  
You're like--

MICHAEL  
Exactly!

BRAM  
You'll be sprouting wings any time now. That'll show 'em.

MICHAEL  
Damn right. I like you, man. How 'bout that smoke?

ANISE sits up, pulls the coat around herself, shivers and stares as if into a dawn sky. She looks over at Michael and then at Bram.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Did we wake you?

Anise doesn't answer.

BRAM  
This is Michael. He's named after the angel.

MICHAEL  
Arch angel.

BRAM  
And he's a tour guide.

ANISE  
Aren't we going on the tour?

BRAM  
We'd thought about it, right? But we came through the wrong door.



ANISE  
Oh. Have we missed our time slot?

MICHAEL  
Probably. What's your name?

ANISE  
Anise.

MICHAEL  
You sound very American, Anise.

ANISE  
Bingo. Chicago.

MICHAEL  
Which is it? Bingo or Chicago?

ANISE  
(acidic)  
A tour guide *and* a comedian.

BRAM  
Ah, Michael, about that smoke.

MICHAEL  
You guys boyfriend, girlfriend?

ANISE  
No. But we might be girlfriend,  
boyfriend.

MICHAEL  
You don't know?

BRAM  
(to Michael)  
We should go now.

ANISE  
(to Michael)  
It's none of your business, is it?

BRAM  
Nice to meet you, Michael.

MICHAEL  
(to Anise)  
But you're here. That is my  
business.

ANISE  
Tourism?

MICHAEL  
Are you like me: from here and  
there?

ANISE  
The magic carpet ride?

MICHAEL  
(to Bram)  
And poor you, you're just from  
here.

BRAM  
Well, nearby.

MICHAEL  
In the heart of America!

Bram and Anise, who have got to their feet, stop, wait for an  
explanation.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
(sings)  
Buffalo soldier/In the heart of  
America.

Bram nods.

BRAM  
We'll see if we can book another  
tour, another time.

Bram and Anise move toward the door. Michael jingles some  
keys attached by a chain to his belt.

MICHAEL  
I told you: it's locked. But you're  
in luck: I can be your guide! I'm  
the best.

BRAM  
You said.

MICHAEL  
You know, I sort of get into the  
zone and just float along in the  
history. People float with me.  
Everything just sort of glows with  
meaning . . . it's all bright and--

BRAM  
You smoke too much weed, man.

Michael is increasingly excited. He pulls out two chairs and motions for Anise and Bram to sit. They don't move.

MICHAEL

No, you're not listening to me.  
It's at that moment that I feel it:  
I plug into this purity, this  
purity about us, even if it's crazy  
or whatever.

ANISE

(mocking)  
Whatever.

MICHAEL

That's childish.

ANISE

You said it.

MICHAEL

I said it differently.

BRAM

Anise.

Michael suddenly and viciously kicks the two chairs out of the way.

MICHAEL

You two. I mean you guys have no .  
. . Weight.

BRAM

Weight?

ANISE

Or . . . right?

MICHAEL

(slapping his own chest)  
Weight. No solidity.

BRAM

Fine. We'll take your tour.

Anise approaches Michael, who stands his ground. She squeezes his biceps, feels his stomach.

ANISE

You've been working out.

MICHAEL

I go to the gym four times a week.

ANISE

I see.

MICHAEL

You're attracted to me.

BRAM

What?

MICHAEL

Bram: Anise is attracted to me.

ANISE

Bram?

Bram shrugs at Anise's look of enquiry.

MICHAEL

You are, aren't you.

ANISE

I do like crazy. But Bram's a lot crazier than you.

MICHAEL

You've only just met me.

ANISE

And a lot more exotic.

MICHAEL

He doesn't strike me as crazy.

ANISE

Trust me.

MICHAEL

Or particularly exotic.

BRAM

I'm not.

ANISE

But you. You're a pumped up Canadian wannabe tour guide who just happens to have the keys to that door.

Michael grabs her by the throat. She stares at him. Bram advances.

MICHAEL

(to Bram)

Don't!

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I smelt you as soon as I walked in  
here. I'll have you back behind  
that wall quicker than you can say  
Bob Marley. Now sit the fuck down.

Bram sits. Michael releases Anise. She sits also.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Did I hurt you?

ANISE  
I live in Chicago. Wind's got a  
tighter grip than you.

There's a long silence. Finally Bram strikes a chair with  
the palm of his hand; Anise looks at him, interpreting his  
signal.

BRAM  
Anise, shut the fuck--

ANISE  
Don't tell me what to do.

BRAM  
You're gonna get us--

ANISE  
You can be such a pussy.

BRAM  
Fuck you.

ANISE  
What'd you say to me!?

BRAM  
Fucking Americans.

ANISE  
You wish. Jerk.

BRAM  
You'll always be a tourist over  
here and you know it.

ANISE  
Eat shit at your pity party,  
asshole.

MICHAEL  
Hey, hey! Peace. Shalom. Jesus,  
you two! This is a holy place.

There's silence. Michael continues to pace.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You flew in to see Bram here? Who is temporarily out of his coffin?

ANISE

What are you talking about?

MICHAEL

Dracula here.

ANISE

We're on our honeymoon visiting family. Can you imagine a worse place to go on honeymoon?

MICHAEL

Yes.

ANISE

I don't even like his family, let alone standing around for hours in order to visit them.

BRAM

Bitch.

ANISE

And this stupid idea of a tour, which is, Bram, basically breaking a boycott I'm sure.

MICHAEL

What boycott? No, no. This tour is fine, it's purely educational. It's history. You can't object to it.

BRAM

(to Anise)

Well, I just thought it'd be nice--

ANISE

You don't think. You never think about anything but yourself. You're a--

Angry, Bram begins to rise but Michael intervenes, gently leading Bram to another chair.

MICHAEL

Bram, Bram. Take it easy.

ANISE

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Anise. Enough.

BRAM

Yeah.

MICHAEL

OK. OK. Bram, man, you're right.  
It is nice. I'll show you. And  
Anise, you're getting all bent out  
of shape about nothing. Nothing.

He goes to one side and pulls on a trolley on top of which is a model. It's a model of Mt. Moriah: a green, elongated hill, empty of any human marks except some signs of a village at the bottom.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

This is what we practice on. So,  
attention, please. We start the  
tour with where everyone's from  
etcetera.

ANISE

You're from Toronto, right?

MICHAEL

Anise, I live here.

BRAM

We've always lived here.

MICHAEL

That's nice. Right: Mt. Moriah.  
And . . . rolling, action: King  
David conquers the area and founds  
Jerusalem. Bit about the mighty  
Davidic empire and then Solomon's--

ANISE

Who'd David conquer?

MICHAEL

What?

ANISE

Who did David conquer?

Michael looks especially blank; he just grins at Anise.

BRAM

Here we go.

ANISE

You said he conquered the area so there must have been someone living in the area to be conquered.

BRAM

Who cares? It's ancient history.

ANISE

You know, don't you?

Michael still gives her a blank stare.

BRAM

Onto Solomon's temple, man.

ANISE

You know that there were Canaanites living here for a millennium or so before the Israelites turned up. You should let people know.

MICHAEL

Fine! David conquered some Canaanites--

ANISE

Jebusites in fact.

MICHAEL

And founded Jerusalem.

BRAM

Satisfied?

ANISE

I don't know about "founded"--

MICHAEL

Hey! I'm the fucking guide here!

ANISE

But, it's a start.

Michael shakes his head at Anise's perversity.

MICHAEL

(to Bram)

After this, let's have a smoke together.



Bram nods.

ANISE

No, we've got a bus to catch.

MICHAEL

King Solomon! OK. You guys are familiar with Solomon's temple, right? You've heard of it, right?

Bram and Anise nod.

ANISE

Seen a model of it. I forget where. But they say they've no idea what it really looked like or how big. I mean, it probably was pretty inconsequential--

MICHAEL

What?! Are you kidding me!

ANISE

Given that David and Solomon were small-time local chieftains; a bit like Arafat or--

MICHAEL

Arafat!?

ANISE

Minnows surrounded by whales.

MICHAEL

What the!

BRAM

(to Michael)

Universities in the US; they teach all sorts of--

MICHAEL

Bullshit.

He pulls out a model of the Dome of the Rock from under the trolley. It's tiny. He places it on the green hill briefly.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'll prove it to you. This is the Dome of the Rock mosque, right.

Bram and Anise both get up simultaneously to look at it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Right? To scale. Exactly as you  
see it today if you go up and walk  
around the Temple Mount or as you  
call it, Haram al-Sharif.

He passes the model to Bram who inspects it before passing it  
onto Anise. She looks it over. Michael gestures for its  
return.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Nice, eh?

BRAM  
Yeah, it's cool.

He puts the model away; fishes under the trolley and brings  
out a large model of Solomon's temple which totally dominates  
the green hill. He balances it awkwardly.

MICHAEL  
Ta da! See! And that wall behind  
you. Those stones, those very  
stones--

ANISE  
Can I see that model?

MICHAEL  
Well, I don't usually--

ANISE  
Is it exact? I mean to scale?

MICHAEL  
Of course. There's a much bigger  
one in the--

Anise takes the model from him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Careful.

BRAM  
Careful now, Anise.

ANISE  
It's heavy.

MICHAEL  
Give it back.

ANISE  
I'm just looking at it.

MICHAEL  
Yeah, but you're not supposed to--

ANISE  
Take a chill pill.

She withholds the model from Michael who is increasingly agitated.

MICHAEL  
Give it to me.

ANISE  
No.

BRAM  
Anise.

MICHAEL  
Bram fucking Stoker, tell your . .  
. Tell her to give it to me.

Michael has followed her around the room and lunged for it a few times, but now has lost his patience.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Give the model back or I'll--

ANISE  
Or you'll what? Kill the dragon?

Michael grabs a hold of Anise's arm and pulls her violently toward himself in order to snatch the model from her. She wrenches out of his grip and then swings the model back and hits Michael on the side of the head with it. He goes down on all fours, dazed.

BRAM  
Man, Anise, I think I heard the  
model crack.

He unhooks the keys from Michael's belt.

MICHAEL  
(dazed)  
Fighting for survival. That's  
another line from . . . From--

BRAM  
Buffalo Soldier. Yeah.

Anise begins to put the temple on the floor by Michael.

MICHAEL

(shakes his head to clear  
it)

You two. I smelled it all over  
you. From the start. You stupid  
piece of shit. I'm gonna have you--

Anise raises the model and brings it down on Michael's head  
again. He collapses. Lies still.

BRAM

Oh shit.

ANISE

He'll be fine.

BRAM

You sure?

ANISE

Take more than Solomon's temple to  
. . . Whatever.

Anise puts the temple back under the trolley. She picks up  
Michael's coat and places it over him.

Bram takes out his joint and places in Michael's pocket.

BRAM

An offering.

ANISE

Let's go.

They move toward the door.

BRAM

I didn't like it when you called me  
a pussy.

ANISE

I know. But Michael liked it.

BRAM

He did.

ANISE

St. Michael from Canada.

She stops, takes Bram by the arm.

ANISE (CONT'D)

Bram?

BRAM

Well, I thought it was a better fit  
than Ibrahim.

ANISE

For a tight squeeze.

BRAM

Coffins, coffins everywhere.

ANISE

And never a body to be found.

They move off.

BRAM

You said honeymoon. Is that a  
proposal?

ANISE

Maybe.

They leave.

FINIS