

CHARACTERS:

Black

White

Bride

Groom

Mother

Son

Folk from the Fishing Village

Soldier

Chorus of the Lonely

Dancers for a star

Red King

God-Man

Chorus of the Immortals

SETTING:

A man-made cave by the shore, the penthouse of a sky rise, a secluded tropical island, and outer space.

The Play

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Act 1, Scene 1: Mr. Black and Mr. White

(Through violent flashes of lightning we see a man-made cave mouth, its wall obviously dug by shovels and picks. Religious images cover the rock, the paint already peeling. A moon hangs above the scene. A man dressed elegantly, BLACK, stands over another man named WHITE tied to a wheelchair and could also be described as elegantly dressed if he had not just been dragged through the mud. The second man's mouth is gagged. Thunder and the crashing of waves boom out from the scene. After a few moments, the lights and the elements settle.)

BLACK *(Sits on a rock)* Are you awake now little brother? No. That's alright sleep for a while longer. We have a long way ahead of us.

You almost look beautiful that way. Peaceful. You remind me of when we were younger. But that was a long time ago, and now we are both so old. So tired.

So very tired. You know, I sometimes dream. Dream of a place without windows or doors and there patiently, with a cigarette, I wait for death.

(WHITE comes through. BLACK dishevels his hair, quite literally he becomes a different man. The eye of the storm passes and the torrent continues.)

Awake now huh little brother? Are you comfortable? Would you like something to drink? Speak when you are spoken to little faggot fucking brother! *(Punches him. He falls to the ground)*

Ah now look what you made me do! You know how I hate rudeness. Are you bleeding? Are you hurt, little fucking fucker brother?

Did you not hear me? I said I hate rudeness. *(While kicking WHITE in the stomach)* What would people say of me? They'd say I let you run naked fucking faggots. Speak when you are spoken to. *(Delivers the last kick)*

(Notices that WHITE is gagged) Oh. I'm sorry. Terribly sorry. You know how big brother is sometimes stupid, little brother. *(Proceeds to remove the gag)*

Are you alright now? Can you talk?

WHITE How did you find me?

BLACK I always knew where my little faggot brother was hiding, Mr. White. Even when we were younger you were stupid at hide and seek. That's how this all began, don't you remember?

WHITE You followed me? How? I was so careful. I didn't leave a trail this time. It has been seventy years...

BLACK It has been too long. Don't you think so? Didn't you miss me?

WHITE No.

BLACK Well. That's rude. And you know I hate rudeness. I am sorry little brother. Time to go. *(Gets a gun from his coat pocket and shoots WHITE in the head, he dies)*

Now look at that! Look at that little brother! Does it hurt? Are you alright? You idiot! You know I hate rudeness. I play my part, you play yours; victim and executioner. You should've put a lot more heart to it, more begging. More umph. I said it over and over again. Little brother please, please be alright! Breathe please little brother please breathe.

(To the heavens) Now see what you made me do? Is that what you want, you Mother Fucker.

(Lightning.)

Stop with the fireworks and fight me like a man! Come down here, lemon bellied fag, and I will blow your brains out! I say if you don't want a fight, then just stop this! Free us! Free us from your so-called love.

(BLACK shoots at the sky. The shots ring with lightning after five consecutive shots. The storm retreats as hastily as it came.)

Coward. *(Drops the gun)* You can't touch me, I'm marked! I'm untouchable even to you, Big Guy!

(WHITE comes back to life.)

WHITE *(Gasping for air)* Why did you do that?! What the hell did I do to you?

BLACK *(Runs to WHITE)* You're alive little brother. *(Kisses him on the mouth)* I can touch you, hold you, are you alright? Did it hurt?

WHITE Please big brother just let me go. We don't have to do this! We don't have to go through it all over again.

BLACK Now, don't you say that. We have to. Them's the rules. His rules. You know it. I know it. So don't try to weasel your way out of it. It's our responsibility, for all eternity.

WHITE But. I'll just come back, and then I'll have to run and you'll have to catch me, and then again and again.

BLACK Round and around. Until we hit dead end at full speed.

WHITE Aren't you tired big brother Black? Isn't it stupid that we have to do this again and again just because of something that happened when we were kids? Please get some sense in that head of yours. Stop it now and let's just live freely from now on.

BLACK Sense. Yes. I have gotten some time to think.

WHITE You'll let me go? That's good big brother. Now we can both just go home and forget all that's happened.

BLACK You know why I haven't touched you for seventy years? Seventy long years, little brother. I missed you. Well, as I was saying, it was because I was thinking, getting some sense into my thick head. I'm not that smart you see and it has taken me seventy long years to come up with something.

WHITE So you'll let me go?

BLACK No. (*Punches WHITE across the face*) You should let your big brother finish. I was thinking, you know how you always come back. Always. Maybe it's because I've let you stay whole. I mean even the last time when I threw you off the

Empire State Building you were whole. Broken, yes, but still whole. Gunshots, stabbing, burning, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, every cruelty I've employed thus far in this unbelievably long cat and mouse game of ours never had that finale feeling. That "that's it" umph. So I realized, big brother realized, that maybe it's time I tried something different.

WHITE *(Nervously)* What are you planning?

BLACK Well I thought that I should feed you to the sharks.

WHITE What?

BLACK Listen to this, this is sheer genius. Well we don't really know how you go back right but you do and you heal quickly. You can put yourself back together again. But let's see you do that when your head is in shark A and your genitals are in shark B and your, well you get the picture. I'm sure it'll hurt but the best thing in this plan is if you do come back, even if you're not whole, it will be a new thrilling torture to wake up in shark A while you need to piss in shark B. You can't even jack off since your hand would probably be in shark F. That's if it's not torn to shreds. Maybe I'll keep shark A, open up its guts and pull your head out and shoot you from time to time just for old time's sake. Oh no! No! Better yet, maybe you'll get digested and you can come back as shit. Imagine that you'll be shark shit floating in the sea. How do sharks shit anyway? Well whatever. What do you think?

WHITE I think you're insane.

BLACK Insanely genius, you mean.

WHITE No. Just insane.

BLACK Little brother that's not nice. Manners. Manners. What is a man without manners? Well I'll have to punish you. *(Loads his gun)*

WHITE Please don't! I come back but it hurts! It's painful. Please don't hurt little brother, please don't!

BLACK Shut up faggot. *(Shoots him. He dies, again)*

(To himself) Should I do it now? No. Not yet. It's boring if I do it when he's like this, and *(Checks his watch)* it's not yet time.

(Strokes WHITE's face) I love you little brother. I hope you know that. It's just that I have to do this. There's no other way. At least, maybe, I hope, this is the last time. I just want to end things. That final dot in this amazingly long run-on sentence, and then we'll go our separate ways, and that will be that. You won't ever have to see big bad brother again. And then perhaps a dreamless sleep, for the both of us.

I am so very tired, little brother.

(WHITE comes back to life, again. He bites BLACK's hand. BLACK recoils and nurses his hand.)

WHITE *(Spits blood away)* You know what! I think you're the coward. You're the faggot! Why not just do it now? Why the ritual? Why the 3 AM? Why always 3 AM? What? Jesus-fanaticism? Idolatry? Plea-ase! What I really think, what I really think is, you won't go ahead with this shark thing. You know why? I think you'd be scared. You'll be afraid because you'll have nothing to do anymore. No more stalking. No more cat and mouse game. And I tell you what, eternity is too long for boredom, heck, even a day is intolerable when you have no life purpose, no goal. You're terrified shitless aren't you? Tell me the truth.

BLACK Maybe you're right. Maybe not. I'm betting on the latter. Let's just do it now.

(BLACK grabs the back of WHITE's wheelchair and rushes him forward to the shore. He stops just before the end of the stage.)

WHITE *(Obviously terrified shitless himself)* See? See? See what I told you? You're nothing but a coward.

(Silence.)

BLACK *(Sits on the ground)* It's not yet time. *(Picks up a pack of cigarettes from his coat)* Smoke?

WHITE No thank you.

BLACK That's right. You don't smoke. Always the Papa's boy. You don't mind do you?

WHITE No. Be my guest.

(BLACK lights a cigarette and puts the packet back into his coat pocket.)

You won't really do it? Will you? I mean... What will happen to you when I'm gone? When I'm really gone, I mean.

BLACK Let's tell stories.

WHITE Stories, big brother?

BLACK Yeah... Stories. Like when we were younger. We have to do something to pass the time.

WHITE Isn't that what we're doing now?

BLACK *(Snickers)* Yeah. But humor me. It's a boring one hour to the finish line.

WHITE It's two?

BLACK It's two.

WHITE What do you want to talk about?

BLACK Uhm... I don't know. People like us, little brother.

WHITE The others?

BLACK The cursed. The marked for the real life sentence.

WHITE I hate jokes, especially when they're not funny.

BLACK Yeah me too. *(Crushes his cigarette, stands)* I'll go first. Then you.

Then me again. Will you listen?

(WHITE does not answer.)

What choice do you have? You're a captive audience.

WHITE *(Sarcastically)* Ha-ha.

BLACK Yeah, I know. I have to work on my comic timing. *(A beat)* Listen. *(Shoots WHITE on the head, he dies)*

Act 1, Scene 2: The Dive

BLACK My story begins as all stories do, with an introduction. It is set in a city, like any modern city, full of concrete and steel and dreams, some broken, the rest soon to be. A lazy moon hangs above, watching, peering, everyone's lonely companion.

(The BRIDE, the GROOM appear on the head of the cave when they are called, they hold a tableau. The BRIDE is dangerously teetering over the edge, and the GROOM watches from the back.)

This story is about a bride, and her groom, a couple newlywed, and supposedly happy. This is their reception, on-top of the highest sky rise in the city. The groom's father paid for this, they do not know it yet but this opulent gesture will eventually ruin their family. There is a third character but he apologizes that he cannot come, he has already died a good week before the series of events we are about to see. Maybe it is better that way. And of course, this story has a title as all stories do. It's not important, but maybe I should still say it. This story is called The Dive.

(The GROOM exits.)

Watch, little brother, watch, I have something very important to tell you. *(BLACK moves WHITE's chair to face the BRIDE.)*

(Lights indicate that the BRIDE is on top of a high sky rise.)

BRIDE Pardon my attire, my heart, this is but a lie. This is all but a dream. Do not listen to them inside, toasting and congratulating a woman with a name I share. Tonight I am yours as I have always been, all yours, my flesh, my soul, my entirety, all yours.

(A gentle breeze blows.)

Yes. I feel your touch, and I accept your kisses. I am ready for bed, my heart. *(Tries to step over the ledge, retreats post-haste)* Maybe not yet. *(Breathing heavily, she crouches down)*

GROOM *(Oblivious, drunk)* Here you are, come in, everyone's looking for you.

BRIDE I am sorry. I cannot.

GROOM Don't be a party-pooper, come on. We haven't even cut the cake yet. And there's a lot of alcohol. Daddy really opened his wallet for this one. Let's enjoy the party. After all, it is your night.

BRIDE My night? Yes. My night. My last and final night.

GROOM What are you acting so prissy for? You just got married! That's something to celebrate for.

BRIDE Celebrate? Ha! This is not a wedding feast, this is a wake. Laugh, and I hear crying. Those are not dance songs but funeral dirges.

GROOM What's your problem?

BRIDE Wouldn't you like to know?

GROOM *(Blows a fuse)* Let him go. He's gone, I'm here. Please for the love of God, let him go.

BRIDE How can I ever let him go?

GROOM He ran away. You can never do anything to change that, he's gone. Please try to understand that. I am here, and I am offering you everything, a life, a family. Look at this, all this is for you, and I will work hard to give you more, if you just come in, I promise that I will make you happy, I will give you everything.

BRIDE I do not need anything you can give me. He might have ran away, but he just did what children do when they're hurt. He ran as fast as he could back to the darkness, back to where there is nothing that could hurt him.

GROOM If you don't come in right this instant...

BRIDE What? What? You're going to push me over the ledge. You're going to divorce me. Well I have only one thing to say to you, (*Well-punctuated words*) thank you very much.

GROOM (*Taken aback*) No. I'm sorry.

BRIDE I'm sorry. I am so very sorry, dear friend. We were friends, once, weren't we? Then we complicated things. (*Looks out to the darkness*) For a while we were mingling flesh, seeking secret folds, and then he saw us, and he ran, ran faster than apologies and grievances. And then I got pregnant and we married. I am so very sorry, old friend, but at least for a day, I was your wife.

GROOM *(Loses his cool)* Could you just stop being a bitch?

BRIDE Excuse me.

GROOM You heard me. You're a bitch. A bitch. I'm sorry. You're a bitch. Ungrateful bitch. Cruel bitch. You can't just live your life stuck to one moment in life, one person. He died, move on. It's not rocket science. But I don't know maybe you're also a stupid bitch.

BRIDE *(Quietly)* Maybe. *(Throws her veil)*

GROOM I didn't mean it. I'm sorry, please just go in and everything will be alright. A new start for the both of us.

BRIDE It's far too late for beginnings. It's the end of the line and I am so very anxious to go.

GROOM Wait, you don't have to do this.

(A strong gust of wind blows the GROOM off his feet. The BRIDE's dress flutters in the wind, giving the illusion of a bird, a ghost in flight.)

BRIDE *(Sings a simple lullaby)*

Come to me child, the monsters have all gone

It is safe by my side, I'm sorry for what I've done

Only you and I, we'll be together from now on

In the darkness no one needs to be alone.

(A whisper) Take me with your wings.

(The BRIDE jumps. The GROOM tries to catch her but is too late.)

BLACK And there you have it, a song, both old and forgotten, playing in an unending loop, an apology repeated since Eve ate the apple, a diatribe for an audience of none.

(The BRIDE miraculously appears behind the GROOM, mangled but alive.)

BRIDE *(Hysterical)* I'm alive? But why? Why won't you take me with you? Take me with you, please, I don't want to be alone anymore. Please, please, wasn't it enough?

BLACK No, it will never be enough.

BRIDE Take me with your wings!

(The BRIDE jumps once again. The song is played through the speakers. The GROOM tries to stop her but fails.)

BLACK At first it was absurd. Her jumping again and again, funny even like a vaudeville-circus act gone wrong, the Dive, but eventually it just became painful.

(The act is repeated a third time but the GROOM no longer tries to stop her, and just leaves.)

BLACK That's what I had to say. I'm sorry, little brother.

(WHITE comes back.)

WHITE What is your problem? Could you please stop doing that?

(BLACK moves away.)

Wait a minute, are you crying? What's wrong big brother Black?

BLACK It's nothing. It's your turn to tell a story now, little brother. You better make it a good one. You have to top my story.

WHITE Yours? What story?

BLACK The one I just said.

WHITE But I was dead.

BLACK Not my fault.

WHITE Of course it was, you pulled the trigger!

BLACK Oh you would have liked it! Full of sin, sex, and slavery, with a lot of burning Christians.

WHITE Your stories are always sick.

BLACK (*Cocks the gun*) Tell a story or you get another bullet.

WHITE (*Raises his arms in defeat*) Okay, okay.

Act 1, Scene 3: The Deaf-Mute Mother's Song

(Light shifts, we are taken to an isolated island. As sparsely as the production designer can indicate, we are in a lush tropical garden. The MOTHER enters.)

BLACK Who is she?

WHITE I once met her in my travels to the more secluded parts of Asia. She was alone as she always was, except for the few beautiful moments of her life in a hut not far from the fishing village where she was born.

BLACK She was exiled? I can't see why. She's certainly a beauty.

WHITE But not for long. Beauty is the curse of the young, it lifts as we age.

BLACK You can always count on a victim for a fancy prose style.

WHITE Hmm. Well, I have my way and you have yours, brother. She was left alone on a boat when she was born. A cursed child they called her, a child born of incest.

BLACK It's not her fault is it? That she was born.

WHITE No. But people can be cruel in their justice. Most of the time their anger is misplaced, and the wrong person suffers.

BLACK Are you trying to tell me something?

WHITE Do you want to hear the story?

BLACK Make her talk.

WHITE I can't she is mute and deaf. But wouldn't it be wonderful if she could, if she could just open her heart and spill forth all that hurt.

BLACK Are you sure you're not trying to tell me something?

WHITE (*WHITE evades*) Pardon me, I'll talk a lot during this segment, since I have to lend my voice someone who does not have one. A story in mime and dance.

BLACK Fine, go ahead.

WHITE She was beautiful, that is true, and the men of the village saw that she was beautiful in her simplicity and silence. They saw her while they went out every morning, washing her inhuman ivory flesh. It did not take long for one of them to dock his boat on the island and spend the night with her.

(A man enters and makes love with the MOTHER.)

She accepted him. Of course she did. Since the sad affair of her birth, she had never known the love of another living creature. She mistook lust and malice for genuine human care. While they made love she made loud awkward sounds as those afflicted like her do. The man did not care. She was beautiful and had a hole, that was enough for him. That night she made a nook on his shoulder, and her heart swelled, finally she has a home by the thick man smell of the fisher man's underarms.

The next day the man left.

(The man leaves.)

And the woman was sad but every night another (*men come to make love with her, an orgy*) man would come and that would console her troubled heart even though she knew she would eventually wake up alone the morning after. She never found out that she was took a different man to her arms every night since she only trusted her nose with the men, much like how a person instinctively knows what to eat by the sense of smell alone, and the fishermen all smelled of the sea. In fact she thought she was making love with the sea itself, the men's comings and goings like the tide. (*Men leave*)

(MOTHER's belly grows) As expected the woman eventually grew with child, and that bent her back. But it was the child that finally made her truly ugly. The child, basically a welcome parasite, did good work of suckling out her youth and her beauty. She had finally resembled the ghost stories mothers used in the village to scare their children from going to the island, and of course to sleep easier at night, knowing that their

husbands were probably making love with the hag of their gossip. The men ceased to come. But that did not dampen the woman's spirits since from that first kick inside her womb she knew that she would never be alone again.

(A dance both beautiful and grotesque) The day finally came when she had to bring the child into the world. It was storming that night as if the heavens were empathizing with her pain. It was a happy burden for the soon-to-be mother. She smiled as she cried, which made her look silly, a poster girl for the deaf mute. She laughed as she banged her head on the rocks and trees to dull the pain inside her sex. And after a night of agony, she brought the child into the world.

(The SON enters and connects an umbilical cord to the MOTHER's belly.)

The child loved her, and for a while both mother and child were so happy. The mother taught him what fruits were safe to eat, how to wash one's self when dirtied, the simple truths the mother learned from the island.

Sometimes the mother would sing, a deaf-mute singing can be a wonderful thing.

(The MOTHER sings, the same tune from 1.1.)

The cord between mother and child had not even been cut. But like beauty, all bonds die with time. One day, the boys from the village, as all boys are wont to do at some part of their boy lives, dared each other to destroy the witch in the island, to finally rid their village of the monster that had been haunting their families. *(Three boys enter,*

hunting, ready) Three of them, the bravest of them all, set out on a stolen fishing boat and docked it on the island as their fathers had done not long ago. They were set to stone the witch to death but they never really expected the monster before them, her dumb deaf-mute moans sounded like mad cackling, her skin mapped with wrinkles, and finally the vile flesh that connected to it this abducted boy-thing. The stories were true. The witch exists.

BOYS *(Step back)* Mangkukulam...

WHITE The boy-thing looks and moves like them. It was one of them, poor thing. The monster was probably keeping the boy as a pet before eating him. They dropped their stones and ran as fast as they could. *(Boys run out)*

(MOTHER readies the makeshift bed) The mother was of course happy her boy remained safe from the interlopers but little did she know that a spark had been set to his mind. The boy had been introduced to the concept of the Other and for the first time in his short life, he had wanted freedom. *(MOTHER sleeps)* That night the boy took the pus ridden chain between him and his mother and bit it, *(SON bites the cord)* pulling and tearing himself away from the woman who bore him. That night he left the woman in the island, like his fathers before him.

The woman woke up alone, and she knew. She was not even sad, did not even shed a tear. She had understood long before that she did not deserve anything beautiful in life, and had resigned herself to this lonely fate. She had nothing to live for anymore so she

decided to die. (*MOTHER follows as narrated*) She walked to the sea, sighed and tried to go to sleep.

Like us, brother she cannot die. She is still there floating in the sea, embraced by the water that gave her a child and eventually took it away.

(BLACK stands. He walks to the MOTHER)

What are you doing brother?

BLACK *(Ignores WHITE)* Time to go, beautiful.

(He picks her up, and brings her off the stage.)

Act 1, Scene 4: The Remorseless Soldier

WHITE O, big brother why? Why do we have to run the Mobius and power the water wheel? Isn't it enough? I see it through your crass disguise, your monstrous smile, you have a bird's heart, small but the same time so very powerful. I would not be surprised if one day you flew the farthest reaches of space. I see it, you are more tender and loving than even I. But I guess this is for the best, after all it has been said, and therefore it must be. There must be a reason behind the violence. You play the executioner's part but the mask does not hide your tears. If, brother, you would only tell me why and then perhaps I would understand.

(BLACK enters.)

BLACK Reason? Meaning? There is none, little brother. I must do because that is who I am.

WHITE No. That cannot be. What could force you to such monstrosities? Look at what you just did? Giving a tortured woman reprieve. I know you are better than this.

BLACK Please. She was just in the way.

WHITE Do not lie brother, stop with the games. If there truly is no meaning, if you just enjoy the violence then just get it over with. It is nearly time, come on, do your worst. I am ready.

(WHITE closes his eyes.)

BLACK O little brother White, how foolish you are. You pray to a deaf god. You wish for a grand scheme to all your puny deeds, this tiny game of ours, but there is none, I tell you. Good, evil, truth, they are all just comfortable lies.

WHITE No brother, you lie.

BLACK I do not.

WHITE There is goodness in you. You are after all, the first human birth. You are the first and perhaps the last paragon of humanity. You are what it means to be human. So very strong, but also so very afraid.

BLACK Stop this.

WHITE I see your tears, big brother of mine, I see your love, I see the masks you wear, and I see the face inside. Brother of mine, go ahead send me to the sea, I will embrace it as the deaf-mute did, all its cruelty and wonder.

BLACK I will shoot you, again, and again, and again. I have no shortage of wrath.

WHITE Go ahead.

BLACK There is no meaning! None! It is purely human invention!

WHITE Perhaps but an invention from human necessity. We need the lies.

BLACK O stupid ignorant brother of mine. There was once this man, he was cruel, far crueler than I.

WHITE Another story? This is no time for stories. Come on, shoot, big brother, shoot little brother good and dead.

BLACK Listen! Perhaps this time you will understand.

(The SOLDIER enters, his arms tied, his body beaten.)

SOLDIER I sent them all into the ovens so that they may better love their god. All of them, women, children, the old, the infirmed. It did not matter, I heard them all

scream prayers to their deaf god. While they cried, I laughed, playing scenarios in my head. What if? What if? What if their god did appear, thirty feet taller than them, an ubermensch, and ripped the bolted iron doors apart, wouldn't they be more afraid than they already are? Scared stiff in the face of salvation. Ha! And what tortures would the god-man do to me? Would he step on me? Would he pick me up and pop my head with his two giant fingers? It did not matter. I was not afraid.

BLACK As a war criminal he was tried after the bombs fell silent.

SOLDIER I did not know what to say? What could I say to those faces whose families I have indiscriminately killed? I did not enjoy it. I was acting under orders. A bigger, more evil man was pulling the strings. I was acting in a setting of war, kill or be killed. A weak imprisoned enemy is still an enemy. Perhaps those are all true, perhaps they are all lies. I do not really know. It does not matter.

BLACK So he kept silent, in front of the earth's juries and judges he kept silent. And at night when the world slept and dreamt of his death, he was beaten by his guards. They invented new and creative tortures, ways to hurt but would keep him camera ready.

(The SOLDIER falls to his feet. In pain, he keeps his face straight and stone-like.)

As the blows fell upon him, he thought the words of a man he studied as a child.

SOLDIER Forgive them, they do not know what they do.

BLACK And then he laughed. He did not know who those words were for. And his guards would beat him some more, slice pieces of flesh beneath his shirt line, drill holes into his thighs passing tissue, muscle and flesh. They even cut his genitalia clean off.

(In agony, the SOLDIER laughs harder.)

SOLDIER Forgive them, they do not know what they do.

BLACK And finally his fate was decided, the needle would be his way to the next world. People were angry, such a humane punishment. Pain, they said, pain! Torture the bastard. But it had already been decided, and the next day he was sent a priest.

The priest asked him if he would like to confess, if he was sorry for anything he had done in his life.

SOLDIER Nothing.

BLACK And so he was strapped, gagged, and shot up with poisons that could kill an elephant.

WHITE But he lived.

BLACK Of course he lived. No matter how many elephants could die from the toxins they put into his veins, it could not kill the question, his question.

SOLDIER What has all this been for?

BLACK He did not mean his death, for he knew he would die to satiate the world's anger. But he meant everything. Everything. The war. His crimes. His life. The world and its grotesqueries. What has all this been for?

(The SOLDIER stares at the audience.)

Today, he serves as a guard to people like him, baby killers, rapists to the geriatrics, insane prophet-genocidals among the nicer of the bunch. No one else could stomach the job. He does the work as he did his last one. He does it well, never sleeps, never eats, he just watches. And if today you ask him the question, his question, "What has all this been for?" He would say---

SOLDIER Nothing. Nothing has changed, and nothing was learned.

(The SOLDIER exits.)

BLACK You see, there is no reason. There is only nothing.

WHITE Then why?

Act 1, Scene 5: Abel and Cain

(A storm. Thunder and lightning.)

BLACK Why, little brother, why. "Why," you ask o brother of mine? It is because of love, sweet love. You and I, we loved each other so much that is why it hurts, it burns. And he is envious and puny, a green eyed god! He came to separate our love! Dear brother of mine, once there were two boys who loved more than brothers loved.

WHITE I already know this story.

BLACK O, so do I, and so very well.

WHITE Big brother why?

BLACK Yes, before, the world was bountiful and it was good, as he said, it was good. I had the soil's bounty to eat and drink, but I was very lonely. The woman was made for the man, but what of me? No, nothing, I was the very first boy in the world, and had played the very best games since that was the age of adventure. The world had been in its infancy and yet untouched, unseen. I saw it all. I went everywhere my feet could take me. But even that got boring, what is the use of adventure without company? Little brother of mine, I was so very alone.

WHITE And I was born.

BLACK Born for me. A gift not of god but of man. And I happily blaspheme, that He was enflamed of jealousy. You like I, were imperfect, broken, less beautiful than the first man, but for those very reasons all the more human!

(Lightning.)

(To the heavens) O shut up! Man was made by man! Just accept it.

And our love, little brother of mine, was more pure, more real. We did not need to copulate to be in love.

WHITE Yes I remember, the stories we made. The fun that we had.

(The storm grows stronger.)

BLACK Rage, storm! Rage, see if I care!

WHITE We were the very first pirates.

BLACK Captain.

WHITE *(Salutes)* First mate. *(A beat)* First knights.

BLACK First cowboys.

WHITE We were the world's first everything. We were the world's first stories. Yes, brother, I remember it all.

BLACK And that was why he sundered our love. He asked for a sacrifice, so that we may prove our faith to him. And what did he ask? The best of my crops. And you, the best of your flock. He favored you not because of your sheep. He wanted to

take you away from me! From me! He wanted to bless me with loneliness, despair. And I did not let Him.

WHITE You took me for yourself.

BLACK O yes. I took you for myself. On the ground, smiling your last smiles, you kissed me, little brother. Do you remember?

WHITE You are marked on the forehead, and I am marked by your love.

BLACK Which is why, little brother, I am cursed. Cursed, little brother, cursed by a benevolent god, who in His wrath set the wheels in motion, for me to do the deed again and again, searching through the entirety of history and finding no respite but only your blood. There is no reason, I told you before, none because this is nothing but a senseless ritual, a gift from a vengeful god.

(A silence.)

(Lights flicker, the earth shakes.)

WHITE What time is it?

BLACK *(Checks his watch)* Three o'clock.

WHITE You must do it. The storm is raging.

BLACK Let it rage, little brother.

WHITE You do not want to get Him mad.

BLACK I will not listen to His tantrums!

WHITE Please little brother please!

(BLACK raises his gun.)

To my heart, brother, shoot me where it counts.

(Trembling, BLACK holds the gun over WHITE's chest. He holds the trigger, tries to shoot but cannot. He falls to the ground.)

BLACK *(Crying)* Die little brother, please just die, little brother, die, die.

(WHITE stands up from the chair, releasing himself from bondage. The storm calms.)

How did you set yourself free?

WHITE You didn't tie the knot properly. *(Raises his arm to check)* It stopped raining.

BLACK Yes.

WHITE Maybe this is how He wanted it all along.

BLACK I don't know.

WHITE Yeah, me too. How could anyone understand Him?

(A silence.)

BLACK White, I am very sorry. So very sorry, for everything. I love you, little brother. I am so very very sorry.

WHITE *(Smiles)* Hush. I forgive you, of course I do. But it's not me who has to forgive you. You have offended someone more than I, hurt him so much that he kneels and cries before me now. *(Takes BLACK's gun)* I know he will never forgive you, never ever set you free from the heaviness of your heart, it would be impossible because you have caused him such great pain.

BLACK Are you going to shoot me?

WHITE No. I will try to set you free. I know I cannot but maybe this will help.

BLACK What are you going to do?

WHITE Do you remember Babel?

BLACK Yes. I was there.

WHITE How do you think the gun compares to the bow? *(Raises the gun to the moon)* This is how, big brother of mine, the world ends. *(Shoots)*

(Lights out.)

---END OF ACT 1---

Act 2, Scene 1: The Last Day

(A spotlight hits WHITE on-stage. He is now clean, his clothes pristine. He begins his monologue.)

WHITE *(To the audience)* The last day of the world began like most of its days. For twenty-four hours it slowly tried to circle the sun, and rotated on its own axis, slightly tilted.

(The Chorus of the Lonely enters. They do a dance of simple gestures, of the mundane, and every day.)

Its people woke up, dragged themselves to work, drank coffee, had lunch, continued being bored and waited for 5 o'clock. Some went home, some went to drink. Those who did not have jobs consumed what they did not pay for, those who could not, consumed the inside of their stomachs. The more affluent families had dined out, those who were poor hugged each other and shivered in the dark. Philosophers continued to think. Artists continued to create. But, somehow, they all knew, that that day was the day. They lived it like most of their days, but beneath their eyelids, underneath the beating of their hearts, they knew that the day that began normally would be the end. They accepted it, they had lived long enough. And as endings go, this is what they said.

Lonely 1 I love you.

Lonely 2 I will miss you.

Lonely 3 Thank you.

Lonely 4 Good bye.

Lonely 5 Do you think there's a heaven?

Lonely 6 I hope not, I wouldn't be invited.

Lonely 1 We had a laugh didn't we?

Lonely 2 Do you remember... ?

Lonely 3 I never forget.

Lonely 4 I am sorry.

Lonely 5 It doesn't matter anymore.

Lonely 6 I hope it does. I hope I mattered more.

WHITE And so all the world's people, for once in the history of mankind, agreed on a singular action that reverberated through religion, race, country, age, social class, and everything else that in the past divided and brought war. They lived for five thousand years or so. And at precisely three AM of a day like any other, humankind closed its eyes.

(The members of the Chorus of the Lonely close their eyes.)

What was good, was made silent.

(After a moment, they open their eyes.)

C.o.Lonely And that was that.

(They shake hands, and exit.)

WHITE Of course not everybody concluded their journeys at the end of the world. There are some of us who had to go on, they continued like me and my brother. Some of them knew why, most did not.

(BLACK enters, dried from Act 1.)

BLACK Do we really have to go? I don't think I can, little brother, I am tired.

WHITE I am sorry. We don't have time to rest and there's still a long way ahead of us.

BLACK I understand.

WHITE Shall we? *(Offers his hand to BLACK)*

BLACK *(Accepts the hand)* Yes, there is so much more to see.

(BLACK and WHITE travel through space.)

Act 2, Scene 2 The Red King

RED KING *(A voice from the speakers)* Even the universe is a finite space, the largest playing field where I play my game.

BLACK Even after the close, after seeing the stars and travelling so far, I can still hear that voice.

WHITE Me too.

BLACK Even after all that, there is no escape.

RED KING *(Voice)* The universe is measured by tiles of light and darkness, those known and unknown, good and evil, right and wrong. Even after the end, there are still pieces to play with, beings from opposing forces, and even at times of peace ancient enmity cannot rest.

WHITE Do you still hear it now?

BLACK The beating of the drums.

RED KING *(Voice)* Black bishop takes white bishop.

(BLACK is suddenly moved like a bishop. He clobbers WHITE on the head.)

WHITE Brother why?

BLACK I do not know.

RED KING White knight tramples on black knight.

(WHITE jumps BLACK, BLACK falls on his back, WHITE stands over him and points a gun at him.)

WHITE I cannot control myself, my body has a mind of its own!

BLACK There is no reason, no meaning. Brother, will you finally take your vengeance now?

WHITE No, brother, I am not in command.

BLACK Brother, it does not matter, I understand. Maybe finally there will be rest for me.

WHITE Please brother do not talk like that!

RED KING *(Voice)* The game plays on until there is victor and loser, the saved and the damned. It is the way of world. There are no more pieces but the kings, and they must fight for those that died in their name. Black king meets white king. A stalemate. *(A pause, wonders)* A stalemate?

(WHITE moves freely, he falls on his back.)

WHITE Brother, are you alright?

BLACK It does not compare to what you have suffered. I am alright.

(Two lights emerge from the darkness, lights that resemble burning suns, the eyes of the RED KING.)

RED KING How dare you, brothers Black and White? Someone has to die in order for the other to live. This is the law.

BLACK Is anyone out there? I can hear you.

WHITE Who are you? Show yourself.

(From the lights' furrow, the RED KING emerges.)

RED KING Bow in the presence of the Red King, brothers Black and White.

BLACK The Red King?

RED KING I am the voice inside your head, Black. I am the rock that first smote your brother dead. I have always been there Black. I am the facilitator of every conflict, the singular player of all the games won and lost. I am both the victor and the loser. You know me, both of you, very well.

WHITE What do you mean, you facilitate?

RED KING I move the pieces, all of them.

WHITE You controlled us? How could that be? You are not a god.

RED KING I am much more than a god. Even He is just another pawn in a game. You do not believe me?

WHITE No.

RED KING White king to B7.

(WHITE moves accordingly, he tries to resist but it clearly pains him.)

BLACK Set my brother free!

RED KING Do you believe me now?

WHITE *(Catching his breath)* But why? Why did you do that? All human suffering for the sake of what? Your amusement?

RED KING I do not do this for my amusement. I do it because it is the law. It must be.

(BLACK goes to a corner.)

WHITE I do not understand.

RED KING It has been designated that some substances in the world be opposites of one another, it is the nature of these things to fight, for one to win and the other to lose.

WHITE So because it was said, designated as you said, we must suffer, why did you oblige? Wars could have been avoided, and we could have worked together, o, so much time has been wasted over petty fights. We could have been so much more.

BLACK *(Controlling himself)* Stop it brother, please.

WHITE No. I demand an answer!

RED KING Ask your brother. He understands better.

BLACK White, please.

WHITE Look at him, he has suffered so much, to kill the thing which he loves. That is completely inhuman! Monster, I demand an answer! *(Points the gun at the RED KING)*

BLACK *(In tears)* He might have moved the pieces, but the anger was already there brother! I wanted to be moved! I wanted to kill you again and again!

WHITE *(Dumbfounded)* Why?

RED KING Because that is the way of the world. That is the law.

BLACK Because even though I loved you so much, I hated you because you hated me. I hated you because you ran away from my open arms. Because, I don't know! Brother, I have said it a thousand times, sorry, sorry, sorry, for me it is never

enough, and you said you have forgiven me. Just like that? I do not understand why, how you could have. Why, brother? How?

WHITE It is simple. Because I love you. Because you are my brother.

RED KING You, Black and White, you are the most ancient of the games of the world, even before the earth, even before god and the devil, you have already existed. It is rare for a king to be honest to his subjects but allow me this once. You have always been my favorite game. How dare you disappoint me so? How could everything have ended in a stalemate?

WHITE I said it before, sad king of war, he is my brother. Whatever enmity exists between us, there will always be forgiveness between blood, no, there will always be forgiveness in love.

RED KING This does not compute. A winner and the loser, I demand it! The Red King demands it!

BLACK Brother, thank you.

WHITE You don't have to thank me. *(To the RED KING, raises the gun once more)* But you will have to die.

RED KING Kill me. I have no more pieces for my games. *(Drops his staff of power)*

BLACK *(Gently puts a hand over the gun)* Brother, forgive him please. I have played his part to a lesser extent, and I already suffered so much. Do you not see? He is harmless.

(A tense tableau: the brothers discussing the life of the RED KING, and he awaiting his fate.)

WHITE *(Gives up)* Fine.

RED KING What will I do now? How is a king to live without his subjects?

WHITE Maybe you'll find that you are your favorite pawn.

BLACK Good luck on your travels, Red King, I hope to see you again.

RED KING Farewell brothers. I do not know what to say.

(The RED KING takes his staff of power and exits.)

Act 2, Scene 3: We are but Stardust

(WHITE and BLACK rest.)

WHITE In darkness we travelled, how many years we do not know.

BLACK Just like when we were children, but we no longer had mountains to climb or oceans to swim, the entire universe was our playground. *(to WHITE)* Look

there, planets and stars, brother, moons and suns! Look at the beautiful cadence of the spheres.

WHITE We will never be lonely again.

BLACK Never, brother?

WHITE Never, I will always be by your side, and I will mend what a few thousand years had done to us.

(A silence.)

BLACK White?

WHITE Yes brother?

BLACK You can leave me, I will be fine. In reality this is my journey, and I can travel it alone. You can go back to Him now, I know you miss Him.

WHITE *(Not quite sure)* Never, brother, never.

BLACK I love you brother.

WHITE O, I love you too. And look brother adventure awaits, we no longer need to tell stories. We can live them, brother! Living stories!

BLACK Like that time when we saved that crying dog from eating an asteroid.

WHITE Dumb dog!

BLACK Yes, or do you remember that ballerina, the one with the lame leg.

WHITE Her name was Belle, I think.

BLACK You think? Ha! I think she fancied you a lot, chased you around one of Jupiter's moons.

WHITE And you didn't even try to help me.

BLACK I was very proud of my little brother. I can't even imagine it, my little brother, the Casanova of outer space.

WHITE You're making me blush.

BLACK *(Stands up, jumps around)* So what do you want to do now? Where do you want to go? What do you want to see?

WHITE I just want to stay here. Hold me, big brother.

(BLACK sits back down, holds his brother.)

This is the only story I want to live, a story in complete stasis. Your hands are rough, big brother.

BLACK It's from all the times I strangled you.

WHITE That was before.

BLACK So very long ago.

(A silence. Music plays from a distance. Dancers enter. They slowly writhe to form what looks like a gaseous mass.)

WHITE Look at that, brother. The birth of a star.

BLACK It's from the explosion. Imagine that everything on earth gathering onto a fixed point in this grand blackness. They are meeting once more, saying their hi-hellos. Families, lovers, enemies, the dust that they have left behind are shining in space.

WHITE It's beautiful.

BLACK Look at that. No more fighting, no more wars. All the flags of the earth, forming a banner, a beacon in space. Even the atomic bomb has turned back into dust. And they're all here for us. Everything, shouting, screaming, shining brighter than even the sun, "We were alive! We were here!"

WHITE You know...

BLACK What?

WHITE You talk a lot.

BLACK I can still shoot you, you know?

WHITE Go ahead.

BLACK You know I won't.

WHITE I know you won't. I could stay here forever.

BLACK We can't. We've been here for a several millennia. Look. The star is dying.

(Music stops. Dancers separate. They exit.)

The star is dead. That's just sad.

WHITE All things have to end, big brother.

BLACK One day, maybe, they will gather again.

WHITE I just hope we're still here to see it. Come on. Places to see! *(Exits)*

BLACK Yeah, I hope we're still here to see it too. *(Exits)*

Act 2, Scene 4: The God-Man

(GOD-MAN enters, at his back, he carries the cross.)

GOD-MAN So no one is left. There is only black and silence. One day, one by one even the stars will all die, and then true darkness and true silence. When I first

picked up this cross, Golgotha had been so far but I have travelled farther than I thought my legs could bring me. This weight I can no longer carry. No more. Maybe now I can rest. *(Sits)*

(WHITE enters.)

WHITE *(Surprised)* Oh, hello.

GOD-MAN Hello. It has been a long time, Mr. White.

(WHITE tries to kiss the GOD-MAN's foot.)

GOD-MAN No. You no longer need to do that.

WHITE Why are you still here Sir?

GOD-MAN I do not really know. Maybe I just wanted to see everything to an end. I've been here since the beginning, why not?

WHITE Do you have anyone travelling with you?

GOD-MAN Once, an old friend who liked the color red. We've been fighting for a very long time but after the world ended, the fighting just seemed pointless. He eventually left. Now, I am alone.

WHITE If I may Sir, it is not good to be alone.

GOD-MAN Would you go with me?

(BLACK enters.)

BLACK White, come on, the Franks just found some altar wine floating by Saturn's rings! *(Notices the GOD-MAN)* O hello, Sir.

GOD-MAN Hello, Mr. Black. It has been a very long time, Mr. Black. Too long.

BLACK Pardon me, sir, I am ashamed.

GOD-MAN You don't have to be. Everything has already been weighed and measured. Come, Mr. Black, I have missed you so much.

BLACK Are you sure, sir?

GOD-MAN Would you like me to ask twice?

(BLACK approaches the GOD-MAN.)

It is about time I go, I think. But you, you will stay?

(BLACK does not answer.)

You are too hard on yourself, but I cannot change your mind. Long ago, I marked you, or a version of me did. Give me your face.

(BLACK kneels and tilts his head forward. The GOD-MAN smears blood on his cheek.)

I marked you once for your transgressions. But now I mark you for your power to change, to transform, and transfigure. If you wish, the world can be born anew. Why not? If even you can repent maybe this new brave world of yours could be a home for giants. Maybe.

BLACK Thank you, sir.

GOD-MAN I did nothing. In the end I did nothing, it was you Mr. Black, and I am so proud of you, first of my sons. It might have taken you a long time, but at least you reached the finish line.

BLACK The finish line?

GOD-MAN What am I talking about? Of course there's no finish line. *(Laughs to himself)* You must forgive this tired old man. *(Stands)* Well now, I must go. *(Offers his hand to WHITE)* So Mr. White, will you come with me?

(A silence. WHITE looks at BLACK, BLACK looks down.)

WHITE No. Sir, I apologize. I will stay for a while.

GOD-MAN I understand. It is better this way. *(Starts to exit)*

BLACK Sir, wait a minute.

GOD-MAN Yes, Mr. Black?

BLACK Before you go, could you answer me one thing? What did it all mean? What was it all for?

GOD-MAN Beats me. It's up to you really. *(Exits)*

(WHITE moves away.)

BLACK You could have gone with Him, you know? I would have understood.

WHITE It's not yet time, big brother.

BLACK Thank you, little brother.

Act 2, Scene 5: A Billion Pirouettes Towards the Sun

WHITE But the time eventually did come, and the stars slept, one by one and we were surrounded by darkness. The immortals all came to a place once visited, a cave by the shore.

(Lights on back-drop opens. The cave mouth from the 1st Act is lit.)

(The Chorus of Immortals enter, all of them holding candles.)

BLACK Do you remember this place, brother?

WHITE Yes, that was so very long ago.

BLACK It remained intact, whole. Amazing. If I close my eyes, I can still hear the rain, and the coming and going of the tide. It floats in space, a snow globe suspended in time.

WHITE That time, brother, why did you bring me here?

BLACK This isn't any ordinary cave, when the world was young, men and women, believers gathered by this rock and carved it with the tools of their trade. It took a long time but they did not tire. When the stage was set, they painted flowers and trees, a paradise, and perhaps a vision of heaven. They spent months here, singing, praying, laughing, and telling stories.

WHITE Why, brother?

BLACK They waited for the end of the world. But it did not come, and their number thinned, disappointed they went back to their everyday lives.

WHITE So they made it, just a couple of years too early.

BLACK Yeah. Far away, if anyone else is out there, what they must see is a beacon, a weak glimmer of candlelight in the vastness of space. They will come and here we can be together.

(A flare of light from the distance.)

WHITE Brother what is that?

Immortal 1 What is that?

Immortal 2 I can see it too. What is that?

Immortal 3 It is dazzling.

BLACK It is the death of the last sun.

Immortal 4 Beautiful.

Immortal 5 Warm

Immortal 6 It has been too long.

(The Chorus of the Immortals and WHITE watch the dying flames of the last sun, they stand mesmerized.)

BLACK *(To the audience)* In a cathedral floating in space, a group of lonely things, previously called human, look at the sun and think and re-think what they have thought for a countless millennia of lived lives. All of them, longing for comfort, an unnatural sleep, a dreamless escape from the nightmares of the past.

(A woman in a wheel chair moves forward. She does as instructed.)

Quietly, still, like posing for a photo no one will take, they wait for someone to---A woman on a wheel chair stands up and suddenly jumps and in space she makes a pirouette. Once again after age has robbed her of grace she is beautiful, a prima donna,

making a thousand billion turns in slow motion, as her ballet shoes are consumed by the endless night before burning in the sun.

(The rest follow.)

And then they smiled, a simple smile, all of them who watched, each remembering. Themselves in the light of youth, strength, and meaning. One by one, they jumped, and came home to happy darkness.

WHITE Brother come with us.

BLACK No. I cannot. Places to see, doors to close. I am the last witness, I will follow my duty to the letter.

WHITE But you'll be left alone.

BLACK As it should have always been.

WHITE Brother, I forgive you.

BLACK *(Smiles)* Thank you.

(WHITE shakes BLACK's hand. BLACK hugs WHITE, a tight last embrace.)

WHITE Farewell, Cain.

BLACK *(Salutes)* Abel.

(WHITE follows the rest.)

So this is the end...

(Alone, BLACK wipes the mark on his cheek, turns his back to the audience, lights a cigarette. Lights begin to darken.)

(Looks around) I once dreamt of a room without windows or doors. Now I have found it.
Here I will wait patiently for death.

(Lights out.)

END | November 2012