

The Last in the Doom Series

performance draft

by Marya Sea Kaminski

in collaboration with Aaron LaPlante and Sara Porkalob

CHARACTERS:

WIFE*: 20s, Filipina

SOLDIER*: 20s, funny

SETTING: A suburban American kitchen in 1948 and a bachelor's studio apartment in 2008.

* This young wife has been in the States for just over a year. She married an American soldier and moved from the Philippines after the liberation in 1946. She has watched everyone she loves become disappeared or destroyed. The last member of her family, her older brother, was shot in the doorway of their house by the Japanese Imperial soldiers two and a half weeks before the Allies and the Filipino guerillas liberated the country. She does not talk about it and she will never talk about it.

* This soldier has never seen battle or served in the military. He is the kind of soldier who simply fights the good fight. He is a guy you know.

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Lights up.

A very young, beautiful WIFE is leaning against her kitchen table. It is late November, 1948. She is wearing a dress of the era and an apron. Her kitchen is an exercise in dream-like minimalism, ala Tennessee Williams. A table. Two chairs. Perhaps a counter behind her for cooking supplies and ingredients. There is a television set on a short stool in front of her. It faces upstage, so we can see that it is on but we cannot see the images that she occasionally looks up to watch.

She watches something on television.

Or maybe she watches something passed the television.

We can hear Peggy Lee's version of "Black Coffee" play softly.

She clutches a locket.

She sings to her unborn baby.

WIFE has an effortless and soulful voice.

This is her monologue.

I'm feelin' mighty lonesome
Haven't slept a wink
I walk the floor from nine to four
In between I drink
Black coffee
Love's a hand-me-down brew
I'll never know a Sunday
In this weekday room

Lights up.

There is someone sleeping under the covers of a single bed. The floor is scattered with magazines, DVDs, and dirty dishes. The time is now and the place is in the apartment down the street from the theater.

As WIFE begins to sing, the SOLDIER slowly begins tossing and turning in his bed. He is having trouble sleeping.

I'm talkin to the shadows
One o'clock till four
And Lord, how slow the moments go
And all I do is pour
Black coffee
Since the blues caught my eye
I'm hangin' out on Monday
My Sunday dreams to dry.

This thinkin' 'bout my baby
But maybe he's gone away
Gone away
Gone away
Gone away...

As soon as the SOLDIER starts to speak, WIFE comes out of her spell and turns up the television set. We hear a soundbyte of news.

Towards the end of the song, the SOLDIER springs up out of bed. We may notice that his bedsheets have images from The Goonies or Back to the Future on them.

Okay.

He starts digging around under his bed and eventually resurfaces with a video camera and a tripod. He sets them up right next to the pillows on his bed.

She skims some channels and when the SOLDIER begins recording, she finds one that catches her attention. She turns down the sound and returns to her work in the kitchen. She is baking. Maybe lemon meringue cheesecake. There are lemons, flour and eggs.

He fiddles with the camcorder and eventually turns it on. He wraps himself up in his sheets again and faces the camera.

I've been thinking about something. I've been thinking about something a lot actually. Um... Imagine. If you will. A seven foot tall black guy. With duct tape around his shoes, stonewashed cut off jean shorts, shirtless with a black sports coat and hot pink 80s sunglasses the kind that look like Venetian blinds. This is a guy I used to see walking down the street in Lower Queen Anne in the middle of the night. When I lived there.

Seeing someone dressed like a psychopath walking down the street in the middle of night in the city, in any city, is not a rare occurrence. But there's a lot more to this story.

Let me – I'll just tell you about when I first saw him. I was walking down the street in the middle of the night which I used to do a lot during those days and... I heard this music. Kinda soft but I could tell it was James Brown, coming from far away. And I thought it was just somebody driving their car and that I would hear it for a second and then it would just fade away. But the music started getting louder. Exponentially louder. Louder and louder and I didn't know if I was coming closer to it or it was coming closer to me.

But as soon as it reached the peak. Of its volume. All of a sudden, I hear a human voice screaming over the top of it. Like, "I don't give a shit... About dick... Motherfucka... Ah,

shit! Naw, lemme tell you something... I'm ready for Freddie. Ya know what I'm sayin... Haha. Yah!"

It was this guy that I'm talking about.

Walking down the street. Screaming over this James Brown music. Now, again, seeing someone dressed like a psychopath screaming down the street is not a rare thing. You know, you look at it, it's shocking. And then you just get over it. But here's the kicker.

Coming down the street behind him was this emaciated white woman, very short, with long blonde hair and huge aviator sunglasses. She looked kind of like one of the Olson twins at about forty years old. And she was holding this giant fucking cd boombox, about yea (*he holds out his hands to indicate an enormous cd player*). Turned all the way up. Blaring James Brown music. Dutifully walking behind him. Like she was his fucking theme music.

If you're wondering if there are any more parts to this story, it's... That's it.

I guess the reason why I'm talking about it is because it made me feel... Great. It made me feel terrific actually, I used to go out and look for him all the time. Every time I'd see him, I'd hide behind a building and watch him. I guess I just appreciated the randomness of the occurrence. How something was just placed perfectly in front of me. It was kind of like my therapy for a while.

Pause.

You know, I'd vote for that guy for president. Or put him in congress or whatever.

Pause, while the SOLDIER straightens out his blankets and curls up again.

You know, come to think of it, I'd also vote for Martin Sheen. Bare with me – Martin Sheen was on a tv show called *The West Wing* and on that tv show he played the President of the United States. Not only is he a great actor, but a great president because on the show not only is he very liberal but he also has a very strong moral compass and I like that. I mean, it's not Liberal/Republican – I don't give a shit about that. God. Dude would just make a great president.

Also, these days one of the criteria for running for president is that you have to have some kind of war record and I guess it doesn't really matter once you're actually elected but that's always kind of a subject of debate. And I don't know if Martin Sheen has an actual war record but if you've ever seen a little movie called *Apocalypse Now* – one of the best fucking Vietnam movies ever made. And, you know, if that's not a war record I don't know what is. I know it's just a movie but, it's traumatic watching it. And when you watch the special features on the dvd, it was a traumatic experience just making the fucking thing to begin with. For everyone involved. So, he understands war.

When the SOLDIER says "understands war," she freezes.

He freezes.

*Full stop.
She thinks of the father of her child.
She thinks about her older brother.
She tries to understand war.*

WIFE gets a carton of eggs.

As the SOLDIER begins his symphony of war sounds, the WIFE begins separating eggs.

With each bomb sound, she cracks one egg into a bowl.

Separating.

When all twelve yokes have been separated, she begins whipping them rhythmically.

*She must cheer herself up.
Change the subject of her interior monologue.*

She catches a rhythm.

STEVIE WONDER DANCE BREAK.

*Full stop.
He thinks about the news.
He thinks about his buddies who have joined the service.
He tries to understand war.*

*The SOLDIER makes the sound of a bomb dropping. Almost as a joke.
To relieve the weight of this thoughts. This crescendos into a symphony. War sounds. Bombs dropping.*

Once the WIFE begins separating eggs, the SOLDIER makes twelve individual bomb sounds.

Bombing.

When all twelve bombs have been dropped, SOLDIER looks around the room. He catches the rhythm of WIFE beating eggs. Runs his fingers through his hair. Maybe finds an old bottle of water under the bed or in the blankets and pounds back some water.

*He must cheer himself up.
Change the subject of his interior monologue.*

He starts humming again, but this time it's Stevie Wonder.

STEVIE WONDER DANCE BREAK.

As the dance break winds down, WIFE is happier. She continues whipping and starts to think. Of her baby.

She touches her locket. She thinks of baby names. She thinks about the size of a baby's fingernails. And how their faces look squished and funny when they are newborn. She thinks about the last time she held a baby, smelled a baby. It was a long time ago back in her home county.

She lists baby names in her mind and she begins to say them softly out loud. She does not rush. She tries them on, she imagines the baby the name is made to fit.

Jay.
Ryan.
Shane.
Jose Antonio.
Brian.
Matthew.
Damon.
Brandon.
Eric.
Thomas.

The SOLDIER imagines the faces of all the men and women who have been killed in recent wars. He imagines them very specifically.

The SOLDIER returns to his bed.

** : These are the first names of the first US fatalities in Operation Iraqi Freedom. For purposes of performance, this list can be used in parts or in completion and can be found at: <http://www.icasualties.org/oif/USDeaths.aspx>*

Jamaal. Hm, Jamaal.
Edward.
George.
Rob. Robert. Bobby.

She rests. That's the one.

On "respect for the dead," the WIFE begins whisking her meringue batter with a slow and steady beat.

*Fade to blackout.
End of play.*

After the WIFE decides on "Bobby," He turns back to the video camera.

Okay. Okay okay. So, you know, I don't know if Martin Sheen actually served in Vietnam. He might've as well have. He's old enough. He's as old as my dad and, um, my dad served. Two tours. When he was nineteen.

I didn't even find that out until about a year ago. I was going through some pictures and stuff... You know, my first instinct was to feel slighted in some way. That he kept it from me. That it wasn't something that I could brag about to my friends, as a kid.

For about a year now, I've been asking him. What it was like. My questions stopped the other day.

When he said to me, "I don't talk about it because I have respect for the dead."

Pause.

The SOLDIER somehow hears the WIFE's rhythm.

The soldier hums or improvises a melody.

A reprise of the music we heard in the dance break.

*Fade to blackout.
End of play.*