

CALZADA DE LOS MUERTOS

by

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Performed at Pharmacy Presents: Mutiny in Heaven, the
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SIMMONS

MARA

EUGENE H. BUTLER

LARA PHILLIPS

CALZADA DE LOS MUERTOS

(Hotel room, outskirts of Mexico City, near the ruins of Teotihuacan.)

MARA What then?

SIMMONS Now?

MARA What then?

SIMMONS I don't know. I'm tired.

MARA You didn't sleep well.

SIMMONS I'm so very tired.

MARA You were up all night.

SIMMONS My prostate.

MARA You should see Doctor Chen when we get back.

SIMMONS Can't piss.

MARA You worry me.

SIMMONS Nothing to worry about.

MARA I do.

SIMMONS It's a bitch when you gotta go, and you can't piss.

MARA You could take an nap if you'd like. A siesta.

SIMMONS Siesta.

MARA I could do some shopping.

SIMMONS Take a little siesta.

MARA It's not something you enjoy, anyhow –shopping.

SIMMONS I don't know what I enjoy anymore.

MARA You should try to relax, That's what we came for.

SIMMONS You know what? –I've come to this realization.

MARA What?

SIMMONS It doesn't matter.

MARA Of course you can come if you wish, shopping.

SIMMONS I'm getting old. That's what I realized.

MARA You're not old.

SIMMONS I'm old enough to be your father.

MARA I'm not that young.

SIMMONS Young enough.

MARA For what?

SIMMONS For me. But I'm just too goddamned old.

MARA I wish you'd stop saying that.

SIMMONS I don't understand it.

MARA What?

SIMMONS Any of it?

MARA What don't you understand.

SIMMONS Mara-

(beat)

Why the fuck do you stay with me?

MARA Do I have to say it?

(Simmons responds with vehemence)

SIMMONS No! Don't say it. Don't say anything. I don't want to hear any of it!

MARA You can say it to me.

SIMMONS what?

MARA But you won't.

SIMMONS you want me to say it?

MARA I know you won't.

SIMMONS Jesus Christ, you're turning my head all round.

(beat)

How did we end up in this shit hole?

MARA I think this room is nice.

SIMMONS I mean here, in Mexico.

MARA You wanted to see the pyramids.

SIMMONS Yeah, I wanted that. I always wanted to see the pyramids.

MARA You made it almost half-way.

SIMMONS Half the way up. Jesus. Pathetic.

MARA Maybe it was a bad idea, in your condition.

SIMMONS All the way down here to see the fucking pyramids. Climb to the fucking top. Survey the land. A year ago, no problem. It creeps up on you like that, then wham!

MARA You've been sick.

SIMMONS But I got better. Fuckin' doctors.

MARA It takes time to recover.

SIMMONS You know what happens, I've seen it, this is how it happens

MARA Don't get yourself all worked up.

SIMMONS Listen, I'm fuckin' telling you. I've seen it. Up close. First it's one little thing, then another.

MARA It's one little thing and soon you'll be all better.

SIMMONS (*cruelly*) You sound like a nurse.

MARA I don't mean to.

SIMMONS A nursery school teacher. Just 'cause I've got these problems doesn't mean you can talk to me like I'm a little kid!

MARA Why do you say that?

SIMMONS I don't know. Jesus.

MARA You're stressed.

(*Simmons sits down in a chair*)

SIMMONS I don't feel right. I thought I'd be alright for this trip. I thought it'd invigorate me. Last night I couldn't stop shitting, now I can't even piss.

MARA just a mild case of turista.

SIMMONS (*gently*) Yes, nurse.

MARA That's why you don't have all your energy.

SIMMONS I'm just a broken down old car. Maybe they can break me down for spare parts?

MARA You just need a little attention. Here.

(*Mara massages Simmon's neck and shoulders*)

SIMMONS Ohh.

MARA okay?

SIMMONS Yeah.

MARA Better?

SIMMONS Much better. This is not what I planned you know, how I saw it going. It was going to be... I thought it'd be nice getting away. You always liked to travel.

MARA I still do.

(Simmons gets up, walks downstage)

SIMMONS I don't travel much anymore. Not like I used to. I used to travel quite a bit. I've been to Bogota. That was a weird place. I should have been scared, I guess. With the cartels and guerrillas. I knew a guy who'd been kidnapped. He was trying to buy gems. They just picked him up, these guys, with guns. He was with them for three days, in the jungle. Sleeping on the bare ground. I guess they were guerrillas. I don't know what kind. Places like that you can't always tell. They could have been drug dealers. They just let him go, walked out of the jungle then walked back in. I heard other stories like that.

I've been to Venezuela.

I've been in jungles so big you don't know the end of it. It has a smell. The jungle smell. Like something damp. Like something rotting.

I've been to lot of places in South America. Peru. I didn't go to Peru. I could have seen the ruins. You have to walk up a mountain to get to these ruins. I could have done that then.

I couldn't now.

I can't even make it halfway up the Pyramid of the fucking Sun.

MARA the Moon.

SIMMONS What?

MARA We hiked up the Pyramid of the Moon.

SIMMONS Which one is larger?

MARA I don't know. Aren't they the same?

SIMMONS One is larger than the other. I know that. I read up on this thing.

MARA You read up on a lot of things.

SIMMONS My stomach feels a little funky.

(Simmons slumps into chair.)

MARA That seems normal.

SIMMONS I'm hungry. Starving. But I don't know what will happen. I don't want a re-run of last night.

MARA Try just a nibble first.

SIMMONS God that was shameful, something you don't want anybody to see. It's like your naked.

MARA I've seen you naked before.

SIMMONS I mean exposed. You can't keep what's inside you in. You have no control of your body. No woman should see a man like this. No one should be that exposed.

MARA I've seen you exposed.

SIMMONS And it doesn't disgust you? Doesn't make you squirm.

MARA I'm not like that.

SIMMONS I haven't always been like this. Remember that. Remember me how I was. I was tough as they get.

MARA I remember.

SIMMONS Yeah. You do?

MARA I remember how tough you were.

SIMMONS I don't. I don't remember anymore.

MARA You could be a real asshole.

SIMMONS Yeah? An asshole? You liked me that way.

MARA Yeah. I did.

SIMMONS An asshole. But tough.

MARA Tough as they get.

(Simmons stands.)

SIMMONS You know I was always the last one to get sick. On trips. I'd drink water out of the tap. No problem. I had a strong constitution. I could drink guys under the table and not get sick. These guys were crying. People were afraid of me cause they thought I didn't feel pain. I could be real intimidating. I was scared of nothing.

(beat)

Now I'm scared of everything..

MARA You don't have to be scared. The doctor gave you a clean bill of health.

SIMMONS I'm weak.

MARA You'll get your strength back.

SIMMONS I've seen what it's like you know, when it starts to get bad.

MARA Stop thinking about it.

SIMMONS It changed me. My perception. I have a different perspective, see things from a different angle.

MARA why don't you come with me shopping?

SIMMONS I saw how it's going to end.

MARA Christ already!

SIMMONS For me.

MARA You're not dying, Simmons!

SIMMONS We all are.

MARA Not anytime soon.

SIMMONS I wanted this to be good. For us. I wanted to show you the pyramids.

MARA That was great. Really great.

SIMMONS I wanted to walk with you down the *calzada de los muertos*.

MARA The what?

SIMMONS We were on it. I meant to buy a card in the gift shop.

MARA It was closed.

SIMMONS That's Mexico for you.

MARA I like the pyramids. It doesn't matter to me that we didn't make it to the top.

SIMMONS I wanted you to see the view.

MARA I saw enough.

SIMMONS You stuck with me.

MARA I always have.

SIMMONS I don't know why.

MARA I don't know either.

SIMMONS I'm too old.

MARA I know.

SIMMONS I'm weak.

MARA Yes.

SIMMONS I used to be strong.

MARA I heard.

SIMMONS You know that. It won't come to a good end.

MARA No.

SIMMONS It never does.

MARA It doesn't matter.

SIMMONS Not now.

MARA No.

SIMMONS You walked with me.

MARA Yes.

SIMMONS Down that avenue.

MARA Yes.

SIMMONS The Avenue of the Dead.

MARA For years now.

SIMMONS Will you keep walking?

MARA I don't know.

(beat)

Should I?

SIMMONS I don't know.

MARA Yes.

(pause, then quietly:)

Next year we'll climb the Pyramid of the Sun.