

The Last Evening on Earth

A Play in Two Acts

By

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Cast of Characters

Eli; a man in his early twenties.

April; his sister, in her late teens.

Gift; a middle-aged musician and former heavy-weight boxing champion.

Mrs. Halloway; a middle-aged widow.

Mr. MORT a self-proclaimed messiah figure who starts his own cult based on a fictional planet.

Police officer 1;

Police officer 2;

Orderly 1;

Orderly 2;

Guy; a member of the cult who forms a relationship with April.

Patient; a patient in the asylum that helps Eli escape.

Scene

Various locations.

Time

The present with flashbacks to the past.

Act 1

Scene 1

Setting:

(right of stage) It is late at night and we are looking into a train cart. The train is standing still the door is fully open and we can see man sitting alone on a bench. A candle is burning next to him and he is reading form a large binder book. We can see him waving his arm in the air and humming a tune to himself. A whistle sounds and the train starts to move slowly.

Off Stage: from a distance, we can hear the sound of heavy, hurried footsteps and a man shouting breathlessly in a panicked voice.

ELI

(Off stage)

(shouting) Hey, hey! Help me. I have dogs chasing me and these people...these...men...they want to put wires in my brain. They think I am insane.

A young man jumps into train car. He is filthy, disheveled. His clothes are torn up. As he is gaining back his breath from the run, he looks up and sees Gift in the car. He startles and moves himself as far away from Gift as possible. He pulls out a small blade which he points at Gift with a trembling hand.

ELI

(manically in a scared, breathless voice) Stay back! Stay the fuck away from me!

GIFT

(Remains silent, still holding the book in his hands. He looks at Eli indifferently and laughs mockingly at his weapon) You'll lose this fight.

(Starts to calm down a bit, realizes Gift does not want to hurt him, puts down the blade. But he is still restless, starts drilling his fingers on the floor, moving around nervously)

GIFT(cont'd)

(Slams down the book. He has run out of patience)
Would you stop doing that? You're going to drive me mad.

Eli

I'm nervous.

GIFT

Well you're making *me* nervous, so quit it.

ELI

Do you know where this train going?

GIFT

How the hell should I know? I'm a vagrant just like you.

ELI

When did you get on?

GIFT

When are we done with the interrogation?

The train slows down, its horns blare and comes to a halt. Gift gestures to Eli to keep quiet, the light on them fades out. A police siren is heard off stage, red and blue lights flash on the train car.

POLICE OFFICER 1

(off stage) Coldest bloody night of the year and we're looking for who?

POLICE OFFICER 2

Some psycho bitch with green hair. Hitches rides with men and then pops them in the head it seems.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Green hair? That's all they're giving us?

POLICE OFFICER 2

All we have is the one witness. Poor kid was so scared it was probably the only thing she could remember.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Jesus. Kills the parents then leaves the kids to watch. And to think tonight is my wedding anniversary

POLICE OFFICER 2

Wasn't their kid.

POLICE OFFICER 1

What?

POLICE OFFICER 2

Yeah, some sick fuck snatched her right outside their house. Parents wanted to see if they could ID him, but there isn't much left of a man's face after two .38s at point blank range.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Where's your Doomsday Watch?

POLICE OFFICER 2

I don't like it; I keep on staring at it every two seconds. It will just drive me insane. What does it say. How much time until the lights go out?

POLICE OFFICER 1

I suppose you've got a point. But I mean can you imagine a world with no electricity?

POLICE OFFICER 2

Shit! Do you hear that?

Off stage we hear a large mob, they are chanting some sort of song that sounds like a war cry.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Shit, it's one of those bloody mobs again. This what they've been warning us about. This whole country has lost its mind and we're looking for *one* woman? I say we get the hell out of here. This night is only going to get worse.

They drive off.

The light fades in and we can see Eli and Gift again.

ELI

(*pacing*) Could it be? No, that is impossible. It cannot be her. All I wanted was to set her free, but now have I have created a killer of men?

GIFT

Or a vigilante.

ELI

Huh?

GIFT

Haven't forgotten about me, have you?

ELI

No.

GIFT

You know this woman?

ELI

Why do you ask?

GIFT

Because if it is justice she seeks, she should know that there is no such thing. Even for those who try and hand it out.

ELI

She is looking for salvation. A way out.

GIFT

For that no one has to look very far. It didn't take me very long to find it.

ELI

You're talking about drinking. I can smell you from here.

GIFT

Watch yourself. If you've squandered everything you've ever had, it's the only thing that's left. And right now, you look like you could use some yourself.

ELI

I haven't lost everything yet. But I need to think.

GIFT

What's there to think about? Look around you, look outside. There's nothing left out there. But, if you don't mind, I'm gonna take a nap while you come up with your little plan.

ELI

(opens a letter and starts to read) what have you gotten yourself into?

(FADE OUT)

Act 1
Scene 2

Setting: (the past, flashback, left of stage) We see small room with a small couch and a radio. April is playing on her saxophone. Eli enters the room, goes to the window and peeks through the blinds, he is visibly nervous.

ELI

(Aside) If I don't do this, our lives will never be normal. We can't keep on running like this forever. Now is the only chance I have if I want us to live our own lives, not hers. (To April) put that down for a second, will you? We need to talk.

APRIL

(defensively) Dad would've wanted me to practice.

ELI

Yes, he would have, but he's gone now, April. (serious tone) But now I need you to listen to me, and you need to listen carefully; I am getting you out of here.

APRIL

And how are you going to do that? Wherever we go she *will* find us. There is no escaping this shit-show of a life.

ELI

I was able to collect some things for you on her last robbery (walking over to a book shelf, pulls out an envelope) at the post office, I found a man who was able to make you a new microchip.

APRIL

No, Eli. I, I can't do that. You can't expect me to just leave you here alone with her.

ELI

Are you really going to give up on your life just like that? We can't keep on living like this. This isn't a life.

APRIL

I don't know what you expect of me.

ELI

Just trust me, please. Can you do that?

APRIL

Okay.

ELI

(*fetches an envelope from the bookshelf*) first we need to change how you look, you'll need to shave your hair. I've got a wig and some money for you. You need to be very

different from the person you are now. Everything you need is here in this envelope. And then you need to run. Go through the forest and keep going north until you find a highway, hitch a ride as far away from here as possible. There's a revolver for in case you run into any trouble.

APRIL

Where did you get all this stuff?

ELI

Did you listen to what I just told you?

APRIL

Yes.

ELI

Then go. Go now!

April goes off-stage to change her appearance.

ELI (cont'd)

(aside) This is the point of no return. For fourteen years, we have been dragged around this country by this bitch who calls herself our godmother. All we are to her are puppets and instruments of deception. One week we are orphans dying of cancer, and she the heroic philanthropist. The next, we are a desperate Mormon family in mourning.

Enters April in her disguise.

APRIL

What's going to happen to you?

ELI

I'll be fine, I promise. I'll come and find you.

APRIL

How?

ELI

I know you have a lot of questions, but you need to leave now before she returns. GO!

April exits.

Eli walks over to the radio, switches it on and dials into a frequency.

MAN ON THE RADIO

People of South Africa, this is a nation-wide public service announcement concerning the coming blackout that will leave country without electricity for the foreseeable future. You have all been provided with a Doomsday Watch that will inform you of its approximate arrival. Mass public hysteria and wide spread acts of violence are expected to sweep the nation. We advise that you gather food and water supplies, and keep yourself and your family indoors. God bless you all.

(FADE OUT)

Act 1

Scene 3

SETTING: (Present) In a trailer with a neon sign, we see man sitting at a table in a dimly lit room. It is raining outside. On the table is a deck of cards, a strange device and a heap of books. He looks tired and frustrated. He stands up and starts to pack up. Another man is standing outside as security.

MORT

Guy, you can go home, now. I don't think we'll be seeing any more customers tonight. Goodnight.

Enter April. She seems lost and walks up to the trailer.

GUY

Whoa, hold it! Where do you think you're going?

APRIL

I just want to get out of this rain. It's fucking freezing.

GUY

Mr. MORT is done for the night. You can come back tomorrow.

MORT

Guy? Is someone there?

GUY

Just some woman. I'm trying to get her to leave.

MORT

'Just some woman'? well, let her in, you clout. Its pouring out.

Guy opens the door and April goes inside.

MORT(cont'd)

I'm terribly sorry about that. My security can get a bit...excited. But please, do sit down.

APRIL

(hands her a towel to dry herself) Thank you. You won't believe the day I've had. I was just about to give up when by chance I saw your sign.

MORT

Chance? There's no such thing as chance. Only fate. And I believe it is your fate to have met me tonight. But, where are my manners? I haven't yet introduced myself. I'm Mort.

APRIL

April.

MORT

Now, April, you are probably wondering what set up I have going on here.

APRIL

I'm just looking for my brother.

MORT

Where have you come from, April?

APRIL

Quite far.

MORT

You've run away, haven't you?

APRIL

Like I said, I've had a rough day.

MORT

I can read people, April. It's my gift. Also, I have received a very important message about the future of mankind. That's why I'm here. To save what is left to save.

APRIL

What can you read about me?

MORT

I can tell that you do not know who you are, that you long for someone that will give meaning to your life, and that you have been hurt terribly. But I can help with that. I can help you discover who you are, and I can provide a way to stop your suffering. But first I need you stop pointing that revolver at me from under the table.

APRIL

Convince me first. Any fool can surmise what you have said by just looking at me.

MORT

It is not the first time you have operated that weapon tonight, is it?

APRIL

I did what needed to be done.

MORT

What about if I can demonstrate my powers to you by revealing the whereabouts of your brother.

APRIL

Indulge me. But my revolver goes nowhere.

MORT

I can assure that your paths will cross again before the end of this night. But first I need you tell me your story.

APRIL

What difference would that make?

MORT

It will make the visions clearer.

APRIL

What's the message?

MORT

Don't change the subject.

APRIL

I make the demands here. What was the message?

MORT

It was a message about the end of times. We all know that the world has seen better days. And I feel that you would know even better than me of the various scum that live around us. Civilization, for the past two hundred years, has seen a regression in its supposed 'evolution'. Our most atavistic qualities have now come to the fore and are accepted as normal. Any fool on the street can see this for themselves, but most people chose to live with blinkers on their eyes, chose not peer behind the blur of bullshit of nice speeches, and television programs that try and convince us that nothing is wrong; that everything is as it should be.

APRIL

And you have a solution?

MORT

I *am* the solution. My followers and I will embark on our journey tomorrow night, just before midnight we will shed our First Skin and then be joined on planet z in better bodies and in a much safer world.

APRIL

And who are these people?

MORT

People like you and me. This world wasn't made for people like us. Smart, sensitive, caring. No, instead it has been turned into a place where the wolves rule, and we are the precious fawns that they prey on and tear asunder, and then leave the rest to the vultures.

APRIL

What about the Blackout?

MORT

The Blackout will be the Final Event, and that's when we go.

APRIL

Okay.

MORT

So, you will join me?

APRIL

I have nothing to lose. But on one condition, you will help me find my brother.

MORT

You have made the right choice, April. You will meet the others soon.

(FADE OUT)

ACT 1

Scene 4

SETTING: (present) Eli and Gift in the train car.

GIFT

Those sick fuckers are popping up all over the place, and they are very dangerous. If you want your sister to survive you need to act smart and fast.

ELI

(Looks at his Doomsday Watch, to himself) Three hours left.

GIFT

Those watches are nothing but scare tactics.

ELI

I need to keep track of this thing.

GIFT

I refuse to accept trinkets from a police state such as ours. You're probably microchipped as well.

ELI

What's that book over there?

GIFT

(avoiding the subject, angry) It is because of those microchips that we find ourselves in this situation. We have doomed ourselves by trying to play God. We deserve every bit of what will come to pass tonight. You all thought the chips would make life easier. No more cash, no more ID's, no more bank cards. All of your information, everything about you stored in the palm of your hand. But the oil crisis changed all of that, didn't it? Now we are left with a police state that has no regard for life, and an entire population of people left to destroy themselves and each other.

ELI

Then why not just remove the chips. Why put us through hell?

GIFT

Because then it is already too late. Once you've been marked there's no saving you.

ELI

You really believe that?

GIFT

Then they started playing on everyone's fear. The micros were blamed for the Blackout, the violence, the mobs; everything. You were made devils in the eyes of the entire country.

ELI

And you just kept quiet?

GIFT

What can one man do? Besides, those who speak out against the State never see the light of day again. I had already sacrificed enough; I wasn't going to make myself a martyr.

ELI

We were herded like cattle into that asylum. God knows what they did to the others. Who am I that I was allowed to escape?

GIFT

Can't you see? It affords you what you have wanted all this time; to save a life.

ELI

And can I be saved?

GIFT

That is not up to me to decide.

(FADE OUT)

Act 1

Scene 5

SETTING: (flashback) The bedroom of a tenement apartment with a bed and a small desk. Eli is lying in the bed, next to the bed is Ms. Holloway sitting in a leather chair reading a paperback.

Eli wakes up looking confused. Looks about the room then looks at his watch which causes him to panic. He jumps out of bed but Ms. Holloway catches his arm, she frightens him but when he sees who it is he is relieved.

ELI

Ms. Holloway? Where am I? How did I get here?

Ms. HALLOWAY.

Slow down, slow down. You're safe now.

ELI

Where is she?

MS. HALLOWAY

You don't have to worry about here anymore. She's been taken in by the state.

ELI

What happened? Shit. The Blackout is closing in. Twelve hours now and I still have no idea where April is. I might have made things worse for us. I need to go. I can't stay here with you.

MS. HALLOWAY

Why not? You're safe for once. For once in your life you don't have to live in fear.

ELI

I don't think that's possible.

MS. HALLOWAY

Eli, stay with me.

ELI

I have to find April.

MS. HALLOWAY

I know you are not my son. But I can keep you safe.

ELI

I don't need to be kept safe! Sorry. I can't imagine what it must be like to lose a child like you did, but I can't make that pain go away. I will never be able to fill that hole.

MS. HALLOWAY

What makes you so sure she still wants to be saved?

All of a sudden we hear a loud banging on the apartment door.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Ms. Rose Halloway, this is the police and we have reason to believe you are harboring an enemy of the state.

ELI

You. You've set me up!

MS. HALLOWAY

I'm so sorry, Eli. I'm so sorry. But you have to believe me. I don't know these, men and I don't know how they have found you. Please believe me!

Police continue to bang on the door and shout commands.

ELI

What are they talking about? What do they want with me?

MS. HALLOWAY

The state is cracking down on all the Micros.

ELI

Why? I didn't choose to have this fucking thing put in me.

MS. HALLOWAY

These men are going to take you away. But I can still help you. I have a key I can give you. Take this key with you. My husband made this key just before he died. It's a skeleton key that will open every door in this city. This is all I can give you. It's all I have. I'm so sorry.