

**Yasmina, Cloris and Gordafarid:
three views of war and peace**

a short play
by

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Yasmina, Cloris and Gordafarid

three views of war and peace

CHARACTERS:

Yasmina, early 30s

Cloris, 21

Gordafarid, 50

SETTING: A bare stage. The production is encouraged to use sound as much as possible to create the environment.

TIME: Approximately the present

synopsis

In *Yasmina, Cloris and Gordafarid* (18 minutes), three women -- a wounded war veteran, one about to leave for a war zone for her first tour of duty, the third making the choice to sacrifice herself to serve her country -- "write" letters to significant others describing their feelings about war, the experience/anticipation of it, and their part in it.

Playwright's note: The wars that are the settings for what is described in *Yasmina, Cloris and Gordafarid*, the women who describe them and the incidents to which they refer are, all, entirely fictional. War is not a thing of time, place, generation or specific circumstance.

Production history

Elite Theatre Company, Los Angeles - 2017

Honor

Winner, Elite Theatre Company 2016 One-Act Play Writing Competition

For Roxanna

AT RISE: The stage is dark. Lights rise slowly on YASMINA. [NOTE: It is suggested Yasmina begin her monologue in black and that she remain in shadows until she says “I think a lot about darkness.”]

YASMINA

Dear Rikki --

Good news at long last. They're sending me home! I tried to call you but I got the goddamn voicemail -- we have *got* to get rid of that message. *First* thing we do after I walk in the door. After you kiss me, of course, for what will probably be the thousandth time since I get off the plane. That message sounds *sooooo* sweet. So instead of me -- live from 5,000 miles away -- you get this, instead. E-mail isn't the comforting sound of your voice, and I'll try again later, but I'm so excited I couldn't wait to tell you. And, besides, I need to practice my typing. Ignore the mistakes: This keyboard is really small and no way I'm gonna let anyone proofread it.

The other good news, I s'pose, is that you won't have to come. And I'm grateful for that. I mean, it would've been awful goddamn hard for you to get *in* here, let alone just *get* here; and we couldn't've afforded for you to stay long enough to make the trip worth it. And, b'sides, I figure I still don't look so good. I don't know if I'm ready to have the world see me like this -- however “this” looks. There's still some pain -- the doctor says there will be *some* pain at least a few more months, maybe now and then after that, because of the nerves. You remember.

(Nervously reassuring)

But, really, I'm a lot better. *The bandages came off this morning* -- for good! When they said they were going to do it?, I kept thinking: The nurse 's gonna gasp like in that *Twilight Zone* show. I'll never know if she did: I thought they'd let me be awake for the “unveiling” but, no, I was under. And groggy as hell when I woke up. But now I get to feel my face again. Rik -- there are ... lots of scars. Lots. More than I guessed there was. I mean, I knew there'd be scars, it hurt so much, it was like my skin was gettin' tore up again and again, but God, I'm so afraid of what I look like. I'm afraid for *you* to see me. I *know* I'm ugly, and they can't do anything reconstructive for years, maybe never, and I don't want to look like this, I don't want to look like someone little kids will scream at when they see, like someone *you*'ll have to hide what you're feeling when *you* see. I know you didn't want me for my looks in the first place, and eleven years is a long time, but, you're so goddamn beautiful and hey: How people look, it's always made a difference to *me*.

(Laughs)

I guess it won't any more, huh?

I guess it's good I never had kids.

CLORIS

Hey, Paulie.

There are lots of stars out tonight. They make me feel silly. Like when you and me'd get in the car, go 'way out into the country, and just lie in some field, listen to the crickets, drink and smoke pot and *tickle* ... and *all* the rest. Tonight, before we got ready for bed, Mita and me sat on the rocks outside and looked at them. The stars, I mean. They're really cool, out here. I mean,

CLORIS (cont.)

like there's no lights, well, except for the ones around the base. But you can see, it's like, a hundred miles, across the water, across all the boats -- *ships*, I mean; I still call them boats sometimes, the officers get *real* p.o.ed. Mita thinks it's funny. Sure not like the city. *Or* the county. I *never* seen this much darkness back home.

I wonder if it'll be like this, there. They keep showin' us pictures, but I can't tell nothin' from pictures. I guess I'm excited about goin.' I mean, who ever thought *I'd* get to go somewhere on a dif'rent *continent*, on a plane and all. Some of the girls're scared. I mean, all the stuff you see on TV, that's in the papers. Mita's brother tried to talk *her* out of joining up. He comes here every week, and he always tries to get her to sneak away. "What you wanna *do* this for?" he says. "You gonna get your sorry ass killed." Mita just laughs. "Maybe," she says. But I know she doesn't think she will, get killed I mean.

Me neither. I mean, I know I ain't the sharpest crayon in the pack, but I been payin' attention -- real careful attention -- to everything. For the *life* of me I can't remember that boats 're *ships*. But I *do* remember the stuff that counts; and I know how to take care of myself. Hell, Paulie, I *always* took care of myself. War's just a dif'rent way of havin' to do it. *You* know. I been banged around; you get good at bangin' back.

GORDAFARID

My dearest Son,

Your uncle (whose name I cannot write here, of course) was very understanding. He left the decision up to me; he did not apply pressure. He is a good man. He explained how a woman would not arouse suspicion, as a man would, entering such a place. And he urged me to discuss it, with him, and with you and your sisters, because you are all old enough to understand. But you, my Son, are too far away and it was not something that could be discussed by letter; even this I must leave with someone whom I know you will think of when you hear what has happened, and that person will place it where you will think to look. Your younger sister does not understand why I would do this. She has babies herself and a husband who is alive and good to her, and who cannot go to war because he cannot walk. She only feels, not thinks. She did not come to see me today. Uncle said it was best if no one entered the house today who did not enter it every day.

Your other sister remains in the hospital. Her wounds are healing but she will, I think, never again be well. She has nightmares every night about the bombing, wakens screaming, her husband tells me. Of course I have not talked to her of this. She sees people die every day and to know her mother has planned her own death would be more than she could bear. Please explain to her when she is well enough just to weep.

Uncle fears the authorities will punish the rest of the family. I fear that too, but they will claim they had no knowledge of my act. Now that I have made the decision he said it would be all right for me to write this for you to find later, but he cautioned me: Do not use anyone's name.

YASMINA

Anyway ... I'm making progress in Braille. I still can't read *much*, but I got through a whole page today. Took me an hour, I had to go over some of the words three 'r four times, but there's what the therapist calls "context": If you figure out the first letter is "e" and the last one is "t" you can figure the one between them is prob'ly an "a." If it's a three-letter word, anyway. I get confused on the longer ones; I forget what letters I read. It's probably good I'm reading Stephen King. I think the longest word in *Salem's Lot* is "vampire." And *feeling* that word -- it conjures up lots of images. All of them having to do with darkness. ... Different kinds of darkness.