

Name of Play

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A full-length play

By Your Name here

Contact:

Your Name

Address

Phone

Email

<< OR >>

Represented by:

Mary Agent

The Mary Agency

123 Main Street

Anytown, USA 11111

## PRODUCTION NOTES:

About our narrator, THE READER: his words and selected stage directions, are the ones in the right hand margins in **BOLD** font.

The three asterisks mark ( \*\*\* ) the on-stage physical actions of the actors which immediately follow THE READER's descriptions of those actions to the audience. Finally, THE READER should read with slight amplification. Design-wise. It might be fitting if The Reader's microphone is wired into a maritime short-wave radio set's handset. Or not.

The Reader's description of REX should be altered to reflect the actual characteristics of the actor playing Rex.

The character designation of RENE/RENEE reflects a gender-flexible character.

The character of SHE should be as minimally costumed as possible. Think a female Caliban or even Sycorax herself. An animal power. Chthonic. Something Elemental and raw. Feral. Power-full. Bodysuit, bodypaint, mud and even nakedness is not out of the question. Whatever She is, is in sharp, visual contrast to REX & RENE/RENEE's very recognizable world.

The wired enclosure under Rex's platform should be loosely (?) constructed or put together in a way so that every noise made in it (bangings, grabbing of the wire screen, thrashings, the actor's physical movements) will be maximized, louder-than-life, jarring.

"Al Abaji Gwe" is an ancient Wabenaki/Abenaki song from the Northeast traditions. It is a valedictory song built around the verb "to return", though whether it is a command or a wish is unclear. ( As in "Let him return here" vs. "You, return here". ) You can find examples of it and its distinct melody at [mediacommons.org](http://mediacommons.org) through the works of scholar Ann Morrison Spinney or through the songs themselves, recorded by native recording artist and singer, Watie John Atkins.

NDA, June 2020

Pre-show music...ambient and tonal loomings, deep, sustained rollings of sound. (Reference: the opening movement of Laurie Anderson's "Songs & Stories from Moby Dick" or the Youtube recording "Deep Cello Meditation Music, Dark". )

At some point, after the doors close and the house lights fade, the players enter.

A LONG PERIOD OF SILENCE. Then, we hear a voice:  
THE READER'S.

IN THE DARKNESS, WE WAIT.

ME AND YOU.

THEY WAIT, TOO.

HE.

SHE.

SHE WAITS IN THE DARKNESS.

THE PLAY HAS BEGUN IN THE  
DARKNESS.

IN THE DARKNESS, A PERSON SITS  
BEFORE YOU

READING DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION  
OF THE PLAY.

IN THE DARKNESS

WE HEAR a low, foghorn sounding  
from a stationhouse. Close.  
But not loud. A half mile of  
warning. IT SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

\*\*\*

20 seconds pass.

THE HORN SOUNDS again...

\*\*\*

...repeating throughout the play.  
Insistent and ever-present as  
weather.

In the darkness...

...we wait some more.

THE HORN sounds a third time...

\*\*\*

...and the LIGHTS come up just a  
bit - - Morning light spilling on  
the stage in slashing bands of  
shadows...

... revealing THE READER  
 downstage left, dressed  
 completely in black...speaking  
 these words as if you were  
 reading to yourself. Flat,  
 measured, emotionless.

Now, the LIGHTS come up a bit  
 more -- revealing the shape and  
 silhouette of a grey-bearded man  
 in layered Carhartt overshirts  
 and a watch cap. He sits down  
 center, on a big, ill-used  
 Coleman-type cooler. The man and  
 the cooler sit on a small  
 platform of old, rough, wood.  
 Ill-fitted, ancient, and worn.

Beneath the platform, BELOW him,  
 is a crawl space faced and  
 covered in black-coated wire  
 mesh. AN EMPTY SPACE. The lights  
 creep up some more on

REX LARSEN...

...a man north of sixty, south of  
 eighty. REX has hands the size  
 of heads, arms the size of legs.  
 Gravitas in Grunden orange oil  
 pants and muck boots.

He sits there, rigidly rock-like--  
 a crudely sharpened stick of ash  
 is clenched in one hand, the  
 other hand is busy--absently  
 pulling a fish knife's blade  
 through the bark. If the action  
 wasn't so angry and spare and  
 slow, it might actually look like  
 whittling. He stops. A few long  
 slivers of shavings lie at his  
 feet. Also down there, a pumpkin,  
 uncarved, left forgotten on  
 Sunday's newspaper. Waiting for  
 sacrifice in the October cold.

The LIGHTS creep up a bit more  
 now on the man and on the half-  
 dark quiet of the second-story of  
 the old community Fish House.  
 Part Yankee work shack.

Part meeting house and occasional  
poker den. A place where work  
gets done. Island work.

Behind Rex, we see an  
imagination of walls, just a few  
wood rails jutting off into  
shadow. Jammed between them, a  
nuts & bolts smattering of useful  
clutter: yellowed old maritime  
photos, spray cans, tools and a  
sunbleached Playboy centerfold.

Upstage right, one beaten-down  
refrigerator and a broken blue  
wire lobster trap.

REX digs the blade back into the  
ash. Stops. Suddenly, his knife  
hands begins to shake.  
Violently. The shudders run up  
his chest. Quickened, shallow  
breaths of panic.

He pins the blade handle against  
the stick with one hand while his  
other balls into a fist.

REX

NO!

He punches his thighs, once. \*\*\*

Twice. \*\*\*

REX (CONT'D)

No, no!

Three times \*\*\*

REX (CONT'D)

No.

Pounds himself once in the head.  
\*\*\*

He rearranges his cap, \*\*\*

his hand sliding down to cover  
his face. \*\*\*

He hyperventilates into it. \*\*\*

Suddenly, his head cocks. \*\*\*

His hand drops, absently finding  
the knife... \*\*\*

He glances upstage over his  
shoulder. Then down at the  
knife, still shaking.

He clears his throat, exhales,  
gulps in air.

...balls his fist back up around  
the blade's pommel, drops it in  
his lap, tightens his grip on the  
other, clamping down on the ash  
like a tiny spear.

REX (CONT'D)

Fuck.

In the small, dark confined space  
beneath the man, something moves.  
Thumping once. Violently.

\*\*\*

Rex doesn't flinch. He is  
unaware.

REX (CONT'D)

No.

He sighs. Breathes deep. Clears  
his throat. \*\*\*

REX (CONT'D)

No. Okay.

Okay, now.

I'm okay.

Underneath the platform, a green light glows to life.

Whatever is down there...lurches again. A bigger thump.

\*\*\*

Rex picks his head up. Listens.

HE DIDN'T HEAR THAT.

All *he* heard? Is what you do now: the loose-boarded plonk plonk PLONKING of someone approaching up a long ramp of planks...

...then, stopping. Outside our invisible door.

\*\*\*

Now, three loud, fisted knocks. Boom, boom, boom.

\*\*\*

RENE/RENEE

(O.S.)

Rex?!

Again. \*\*\*

(pause)

Rex, it's Rene.

Thrice. \*\*\*

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)

Open up, Rex.

\*\*\*

(pause)

Open up.

(pause)

Rexy? You in there?

**A long pause.**

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)  
(o.s)

Rex?!

REX

Yes!!

(pause)

RENE/RENEE  
(o.s)

Can we talk?

REX

Just did!

(a longer pause)

RENE/RENEE  
(o.s)

Hey, it's...it's cold as a bitch out here. Can I come in?

REX

As a friend or as the law?!

RENE/RENEE  
(o.s.)

Well. Both, I guess.

(pause)

REX

Just you! You alone. (beat) Y'hear me?!

RENE/RENEE  
 Yuh, just me. I'm comin' in, okay?

**We HEAR THE SCREECH AND CREAK of  
 a door that is not there, beyond  
 the light...**

REX  
 Enter the Fish House!

THE READER  
 Enter the Fish House.

REX  
 (to himself, as he works the  
 blade)  
 ...King Shit presidin'.

**Stepping in, out from the  
 shadows, is Marine Patrol Officer**

**RENE/RENEE LACHANCE.**

**Khaki shirt. Dark jacket,  
 tactical pants. Black gloves.  
 Black watch cap. On his/her hips,  
 a service belt with radio and  
 gear.**

**Rene/Renee enters cautiously,  
 hand on an unsnapped service  
 holster.**

**He/She stops near the  
 refrigerator.**

**He'll/She'll spend most of the  
 play right here. As will we.  
 Right here.**

**Rex doesn't move, just keeps  
 staring at his stick hand,  
 rubbing at the scars. RENE/RENEE  
 surveys the Fish House.**

RENE/RENEE  
 Hi, Rex.

REX  
 Hi, Rene.

RENE/RENEE

You okay? That's...the first time since I was twelve, you didn't call me "Frenchy".

REX

I'm fine, Frenchy.

RENE/RENEE

Fine.

REX

Fine, goddamnit.

**A long pause.**

RENE/RENEE

Well, I hate to call The Big Cheese out on his bullshit, but I can assure you, you are definitely not fine. (beat) You damn near killed him, Rex.

REX

S'pose if your Dad was alive, he'd say the Big Cheese is rotten, huh?

RENE/RENEE

I dunno. But... the situation sure is. (beat) And on good ol' mild-mannered Monhegan, too. That's *some* postcard. (sighs) Some homecoming.

REX

You could leave.

RENE/RENEE

Wish I could. Jesus, Rex. (Renee moves a step or two closer. Stops.) You gotta understand. This? Man, this is... kinda like arresting my father. So. Let's just...let's just take it slow. Think we both need a sec.

REX

How much time I have?

RENE/RENEE

As much as you need. We're gatherin' evidence outside, so... it's you-and-me. Okay? Smallest damn meeting in here ever tho. (beat) You sure called this one in style, chief. Real doozy.

REX

That so?

RENE/RENEE

Still gettin' my head around it. I was sure dispatch had it wrong. Kept telling myself that all the way over. "Skeeter Penley's been assaulted. Had his head stove in. EMS's en route. Suspect's...you. Barricaded." No way, I said. No way.

(he unzips his/her jacket)

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)

What the hell's going on this week? Somethin' literally in the water? Man. Up and down the whole midcoast-- I've had more warnings and arrests since Monday than I've had regrets. Or Dramamines. Scrubbed way too much Sheriff puke off my deck, too.

REX

That so?

RENE/RENEE

Yup and I mean not just violations. Violence.

(pause, sighs)

You know what Verrazano called Maine when he put it on his map? Verrazano. The explorer. The bridge guy. In Brooklyn.

(Rex just stares.)

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)

He called it "The Land of The Bad People." Beginnin' to think he was right.

**He/She puts the holster snap back on, eyes still on Rex.**

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)

"Explorations in" stupidity lately. (rearranges his/her cap) I mean, by Jesus, what gives with you people the past few months? Dick-swingin'. Scuttlings. Boat burnings, shots fired. I mean, Matinicus, okay, I get, it's Pirate Island.

REX

Yup.

RENE/RENEE

Know how I describe it over there, on shore? "A quaint, little *drinking* community with a *lobster* problem."

(pause)

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)

That usually gets a laugh.

REX

Over there. On America.

RENE/RENEE

Wow, nuthin'? Okay. I got Monhegan jokes too, ya know.

(Rex's jaw tightens, doing his best to ignore him/her.)

Didja hear about the Wyeth who painted in jail? He had a brush with the law.

**Rex's knife stops. He stares straight ahead. Resumes digging the blade in again.**

RENE/RENEE (CONT.)

I'd tell you a dirty one but, I mean, this is the nice island.

(pause)

And you're a "good guy", Rex. Hell, you're the goodest of the good guys. For the life of me, wh...

REX

You come to talk my ear off or d'you come to arrest me, Frenchy?

**Pause.**

RENE/RENEE

I'm here to arrest you, cowboy. Well, Deputy Lane's with me this trip, technically he'll do the honors, but...we're not too happy about it.

REX

That makes three of us.

RENE/RENEE

Four. If you count the guy you smashed in the head with the rifle butt. Jesus, Rex, you could've killed him.

REX

Didn't die.

RENE/RENEE

Nope. Otherwise, you'd have a lot more company than a seasick Lincoln Sheriff-man and this Quebecois Tonto. (beat) You're actually a lucky man.

REX

Oh, I am, am I?

RENE/RENEE

Yeah, lucky that hard-head *has* a hard-head. He's stable. You know--in case you were wondering. EMS should have him almost to the hospital by now. Fuckin' lucky for both of you. (beat) Can't believe you pulled a gun on him.

REX

I didn't! Rifle was *his*.

RENE/RENEE

Well, the Wits said they *saw* you pull a gun.

REX

Who?

RENE/RENEE

Witnesses. (beat) So. Did you?

REX

He started it with the pepper spray! Pointin' it in my face, rifle on his hip like he was John Fuckin Wayne.

RENE/RENEE

But did you pull a gun, Rex?

(Rex's head dips.)

REX

Sorta.

RENE/RENEE

What do you mean, "sor...?"

REX

(quietly)

It was a flare gun.

RENE/RENEE  
(half-laughing)

What?

REX  
Closest thing I could grab.

RENE/RENEE  
Alright. Well, I guess a flare gun could...do *something*.

REX  
Distracted him at least. I kinda pistol-whipped his other hand, grabbed the Remington and then I...

RENE/RENEE  
O.K. Later. Just. Stop talking.

REX  
Rifle's in the channel.

RENE/RENEE  
They told me that too. First *smart* thing you did today. I mean, why you guys carry firearms on board is beyond me. I know, I know. It's for the seals. "They're competition."

REX  
Competition, my ass. Blamin' a seal for your losses, don't mean nothin' except you're a shitty fisherman. Which he is. Fuckin' pup.

**A long pause.**

REX (CONT'D)  
Who's out there?

RENE/RENEE  
I think you know the answer.

REX  
Everyone.

RENE/RENEE  
Pretty much. Bout forty, give or take. A few leaf-peepers. Ferry crowd.

REX  
Shit. Bring their fuckin' easels?!

RENE/RENEE  
No. (beat) Well. One guy. Actually.

REX

Guess I paint a pretty fuckin' picture, huh? Some local color. Christ. Had their phones out too, snappin' away at me to beat the band.

RENE/RENEE

Look at the bright side: internet sucks out here.

**A long pause.**

REX

My wife?

RENE/RENEE

No. No sign.

(Rex grunts.)

RENE/RENEE (CONT'D)

No, Linda's got her under her wing. All...sequestered upta her place. There's nobody comin' up that walkway that's isn't welcome: you know Linda.

REX

Better than I know my wife. That's for fuckin' sure. Can't figure her out on a good day and now...I got no clue what she's gonna do.

(beat)

Women'll cut yer head off.

RENE/RENEE

Sometimes they should. Save the world some trouble. Cut down on the goddamn testosterone.

REX

Shut up, Frenchy.