

The Dancing Man

by

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Cast of Characters

MAX: 35
BREE: 20's
MAN: 60's

Place
Open highway

Time
Day

2.

Setting: The play takes place outside along a two-way road, surrounded by the desert. There's cactus and mountains in the distance.

At Rise: The play opens with Max pulling off the road in a car.

LIGHTS UP. The car draws to a halt.

MAX steps out of the car and takes about seven or eight paces behind the vehicle.

MAX spins around and taps the trunk of the car.

BREE opens the passenger door and steps out.

BREE: Where'm I supposed to go?

MAX: Anywhere.

BREE: I can't pee with you near me.

MAX gives BREE a grimacing look.

BREE: You are right there. (points at MAX)

MAX: Pee behind the car where I can't see ya.

BREE: Don't look!

MAX: (looks away shaking his head)

BREE squats behind the car.

MAX takes out his smokes but he's out of cigarettes.

MAX (to himself): (sighs and throws the empty pack)

BREE (from behind the car): What?

MAX: I said SHIT.

BREE: What shit? WHERE?

MAX: Just pee and let's go!

BREE: Stop talking to me then!

Pause.

MAX takes off his white cowboy hat and wipes his brow with his sleeve.

His attention turns to his car tire.

MAX (out-loud): What in the hell fuck...?

MAX pushes the car tire with his foot.

Popping out from behind the car comes BREE.

BREE: What's wrong?

MAX: Caught us a flat.

BREE: (looking at tire) That's a flat?

MAX: Uh-huh.

BREE: Looks like we can still go a ways.

MAX: Can't.

MAX opens the trunk and a man who is gagged with his hands tied (from his front) leaps out.

BREE screams.

The tied up man is holding a crowbar and swings it wildly at MAX.

MAX: Easy fella! Easy fella!

MAX dives into the man, tackling him to the ground and resting a heavy blow to the man's face, knocking him out cold.

MAX stands back up with the crowbar in his hand.

MAX: Now who in the fuck is that guy?

BREE: Are you insane?!

MAX: Insane? What the hell--

BREE: WHO IS HE?

MAX: I have no idea---

BREE: Can't leave him in the road--

MAX: Ain't nobody 'round here for half a state long and wide and WHO IN THE FUCK IS THIS GUY???

BREE: He's in YOUR trunk! Only one here who should know who the fuck he is, is YOU!

MAX: Darli, this ain't my car!

BREE: Says who?

MAX: I stole this ride.

BREE: You stole this ride?

MAX: I needed a car, I broke into the car, I stole the car.

BREE: WHY?

MAX: To get you over state lines!

BREE: How you gonna take me in a car that's stolen?

MAX: Now won't you stop askin' questions!

BREE: Don't you already have a car?

MAX: ...I gotta...help me get him off this damn road...

BREE: I ain't touching him.

MAX grabs the man by the arms and drags him
in front of the trunk.

Heavy son of a bitch.

The MAN stirs awake and panics.

MAX: Now, now hold your horses fella. Just hold 'em! I ain't the
guy who put you in the trunk, alright? I have no clue who the hell
you are. If you gonna be chill, I'll take the tape off your
face...you gonna be chill?

The MAN nods.

Okay. Let's stand you back up...slowly.

MAX helps the man stand and get the tape
off his mouth.

What's your name crowbar?

MAN: Huh?

MAX: Got a name?

MAN: ...No...

MAX: Everybody got a name.

MAN: I can't say.

MAX: Why not?

MAN: Don't remember.

MAX glances at BREE.

MAX: You don't remember your name?

MAN: ...No.

MAX: Well, your nickname is gonna be crowbar.

MAN: Crowbar?

MAX: Gotta call you somethin' for the time being.

Awkward beat.

BREE: Maybe he hit his head real hard. Maybe when you punched him.

MAX: I didn't hit him that hard.

BREE: You did. I saw it. You knocked him cold.

MAX: I knocked him cold, but it weren't no death sentence.

BREE: You hit him hard as shit.

MAX: I hit him hard enough to knock him out, not kill him or give him brain damage or anything.

BREE: I heard the sound of impact.

MAX: You what?

BREE: When you hit 'em.

MAX: And what it sound like?

BREE: (makes sound effect with her mouth)

MAX: Yeah?

BREE: (she does the sound effect again with equal intensity)

MAX: And that's the sound that could have caused this man to forget his fucking name?

BREE: I imagine it would.

MAX: You imagine it would.

BREE: Mm-hmm.

MAX: What about you, Crowbar? You imagine it would?

MAN: Maybe.

MAX: Tell me something about yourself...anything.

MAN: Anything...uh...I don't know anything.

BREE: Check his pockets.

MAX: Yeah, I'm gonna search your pockets, you don't mind?

MAN: Okay.

MAX searches the MAN'S pockets. They are all empty.

MAX looks in the trunk, sees nothing of interest.

MAX: No shoes or socks, either.

MAN: (looking at his feet) No, sir.

BREE: Want some water? Got some water in the car.

MAN: Okay.

BREE grabs a bottle of water from the car.

She pours some in the MAN'S mouth. The man has a coughing spurt.

BREE tries to tap his back.

BREE: Must have went down the wrong pipe.

The MAN coughs loudly but quickly regains his breathing.

BREE: Better?

The MAN nods.

MAN: Can I dance?

MAX: ...You say DANCE?

MAN: I want to dance.

MAX: ..Fuck you wanna dance for?

MAN: I need to dance.

BREE (jumping up and down): Oh, I wanna see him dance, Max. Can we? Can we cut them ropes off him and watch him dance?

MAX: It's hot as molasses out here. You sure, buddy?

The MAN nods yes.

MAX flips open a knife and cuts the rope from the MAN'S wrists.

The MAN walks to the center of the road and closes his eyes.

The MAN suddenly breaks out with a ballet dance. What starts out as jovial and free begins to darken.

The soles of the MAN'S feet begin to bleed.

Bloody footprints become more vivid as he continues twirling and hopping.

MAX and BREE begin to get nervous.

MAX (to the MAN): That's enough now...your soles are bleedin' fella. Your feet! HEY! (Max grabs the man) Your feet are bleeding!

The MAN pushes MAX and continues dancing.

MAX takes hold of the man and the two tussle but MAX gets overpowered and begins dancing with the MAN.

This ballroom dance begins to become jovial and free again and MAX looks over at BREE smiling and laughing.

The MAN lets go of MAX and goes back to dancing his solo. He suddenly becomes melancholy.

The MAN stops the dance and takes a bow.

MAX and BREE applaud.

The MAN collapses and dies.

BREE shrieks.

MAX slowly approaches the MAN and checks his pulse. He looks over at BREE and shakes his head.

BREE shrieks again.

MAX: I tried to tell him not to dance, I tried to stop him from dancing.

BREE: He's gone?

MAX: Ain't nothin' left of him...

BREE: We couldn'ta stopped him! If someone needs to dance, they have every right to dance Max...we couldn'ta stop him from dancin'.

MAX: But he; under these weather conditions; he coulda come with us and we could've taken care of him some; we could have washed him and given him new clothes and food...he could have showed us his dancin' much later in the day, when things were cool, when the cool air washed over his shoulders and whispered him some better thoughts; this unnamed man coulda, he coulda danced the night away and we would've engaged with him, despite our misgivings about him, we would have liked his dancin', wouldn't we? We would have given him a try...not like this, not in this dry heat; why'd he refuse to...why didn't he wait for the opportune time...why didn't he know his fucking name? I hate when I can't put a name to a face, all I'm left with now is this man's face.

BREE: And his dance.

MAX: ...And his dance.

END OF PLAY