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SCRIPT SAMPLE

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The Third voice of the nightjar

a play

by Karin Diann Williams

Characters

Peter - a mathematician

Amy - Peter's wife

Shawn - a waiter/drug dealer (male)

<Shawn> - Shawn's alter ego (female)

Jaz - a runaway

Lynch - a computer programmer/criminal

Setting: various locations in cyber-space, real space, and dreamscape.

Act 1. Scene 1. The stage is dark and empty. A spotlight on PETER, alone at his desk, typing on a laptop. AMY enters, stands watching him.

AMY: It's three in the morning.

PETER: (not looking up from his work) Hmm?

AMY: Three.

PETER: Three what?

AMY: Three-oh-eight.

PETER: The time. Is that what you're on about?

AMY: I'm going back to bed.

PETER: Go.

AMY: Are you coming?

PETER: What does it look like?

AMY: Are you ever planning to sleep again?

PETER: (finally looking up) Planning? That's a strange way of putting it. I don't know that I've ever actually planned to sleep. I've slept. Sometimes, I've slept.

AMY: Getting into bed might help.

PETER: It might. But right now I'm awake.

AMY: You can't keep this up forever.

PETER: Really?

AMY exits.

PETER: I suppose we'll see about that.

PETER continues typing. He stops and laughs to himself, then continues as the lights reveal <SHAWN>, lounging in suggestive lingerie on a crushed velvet couch.

PETER: My wife says I can't keep this up forever. And she's right, of course, in the literal sense. I can't keep anything up forever. None of us can. Mortality. The sins of the fathers,

etc. Nevertheless, I can keep it up for a period she might easily describe as forever. In one of her more agitated moods. In fact, I imagine I already have. Kept it up.

<SHAWN>: I'll bet you can keep it up as long as you feel like it.

PETER: You'll bet?

<SHAWN>: I certainly will.

PETER: And what will you bet, my dear?

<SHAWN>: I'll bet anything you'd like.

PETER: What I would like is a dinner date.

<SHAWN>: A dinner date? What's that?

PETER: Just the two of us. Face to face across an actual table in an actual restaurant. Candles. Cocktails. Oysters on the half-shell. Wine. A nice thick steak, on the bloody side. And dancing.

<SHAWN>: You dance?

PETER: You don't?

<SHAWN>: I used to slam.

PETER: Oh, my.

<SHAWN>: But that was a few years back.

PETER: Not too many years.

<SHAWN>: That depends on your perspective.

PETER: Well I'm talking about dancing. I'll lead.

<SHAWN>: And what will I do?

PETER: You'll just do what comes naturally.

<SHAWN>: You're on.

PETER: But who will be the judge of our little contest?

<SHAWN>: We'll need to find someone objective...Lynch?

PETER: Lynch is about as objective as a Newtonian physicist...

<SHAWN>: Now you're going over my head.

PETER: Sorry, bad aim.

<SHAWN>: Or good timing.

PETER: I've already forgotten what we're betting about.

<SHAWN>: Whether or not you can get it up...?

PETER: Something is starting to smell like Jasmine...

<SHAWN>: Jaz is about as objective as a hit of ice-nine.

PETER: What?

<SHAWN>: Are you getting sleepy?

PETER: I don't sleep any longer. Didn't I ever tell you that? As my wife is so fond of reminding me, I stay up nights working myself into an early grave.

<SHAWN>: Working? At what?

PETER: I'm trying to unravel the mysteries of the universe.

<SHAWN>: A nomad on the netscape...trying to unravel the mysteries between my creamy thighs...

PETER: Not to discount the secrets of your creamy interior, my dear, but this is only a diversion.

<SHAWN>: A diversion?

PETER: I'm formulating a unified set theory...

<SHAWN>: And how many hours of online charges have you racked up formulating this theory of yours?

PETER: I don't think you understand. My mind is constantly racing...from cardinals to algebra...sometimes I need some distraction before I can see things clearly again...

<SHAWN>: And all those lonely nights you spent cuddled up with Jasmine on a cozy private channel you've been sipping Chardonnay and whispering sweet formulae in her ears?

PETER: Jaz is a computer programmer...she has a very fine mind...

<SHAWN>: And a creamy set of temporal lobes no doubt...

PETER: Are you jealous?

SHAWN: Not now.

PETER: Now that I'm finally alone with you?

<SHAWN>: Now that Jaz is gone.

PETER: Gone?

<SHAWN>: Jaz is gone. She took off.

PETER: What do you mean she took off?

<SHAWN>: I mean she finally left that lunatic sculptor, and she hit the road... (pause)
Peter?

PETER: Where...which road did she hit?

<SHAWN>: Who knows? I can't believe she didn't tell you. Didn't she even say goodbye?
(another, longer pause) Peter, are you okay? You haven't fallen asleep, have you?

PETER: No. I haven't fallen asleep.

Scene 2. JAZ is perched on a stool at a truckstop diner. SHAWN serves her a cup of coffee.

SHAWN: You're up late, little lady.

JAZ: Need fuel. I've got to make Paso Robles by dawn...

SHAWN: What's your hurry?

JAZ: What's it to you?

SHAWN: I'm just making conversation.

JAZ: How 'bout you make another pot of coffee.

SHAWN: Funny, you don't look much like a trucker.

JAZ: And what is a trucker supposed to look like?

SHAWN: Most of them have considerably more hair.

JAZ: My disguise must be working.

SHAWN: What's in Paso Robles?

JAZ: Who knows? Never been there.

SHAWN: Neither have I.

JAZ: I'll let you know.

SHAWN: You do that.

Pause. SHAWN refills her coffee.

SHAWN: Not many truckers use three packs of sugar in their coffee.

JAZ: I'll make a note of that. Useful information. You'd be surprised at all the interesting facts I collect.

SHAWN: Facts, huh.

JAZ: Actually, I'm a detective. I'm only posing as a neophyte trucker to misdirect the bloodhounds on my tail...

SHAWN: That how you got those bruises?

JAZ: I'm going to write a letter to Max Factor. Dear Max...you have failed me once again. Time after time I've returned to you. I've believed the sweet nothings you whispered in my ear, I've trusted you, against my better judgment, when I thought I couldn't trust a living soul. I've put my fate in your hands, Max. Is this how you repay me?

SHAWN: So what's his name?

JAZ: Is this how you repay my years of loyalty?

SHAWN: Somebody really after you?

JAZ: Is this how you squander our precious memories? All those sweet, intimate caresses reflected in the mirror of every beer stained bathroom in my misspent youth?

SHAWN: Do you need me to call somebody..?

JAZ: Max, you are a shit. An absolute fucking shit, and you know it, and I know it, and this fucking waiter knows it.

SHAWN: Shawn.

JAZ: Shawn. I have a friend called Shawn.

SHAWN: Is that his name?

JAZ: You realize this is none of your fucking business.

SHAWN: Sure.

JAZ: Then his name is Geral.

SHAWN: Gerald?

JAZ: He dropped the “d.”

SHAWN: Sounds like an asshole.

JAZ: That’s what I’ve been explaining.

SHAWN: And what’s your name?

JAZ: What’s it to you?

SHAWN: You seem like a nice person.

JAZ: Looks can be deceiving. That’s another topic I thought we’d covered.

SHAWN: Guess we don’t have too many topics left.

JAZ: Oh, there are a lot of topics.

SHAWN: Name one.

JAZ: Symbolic logic. Bertrand Russell’s paradox.

SHAWN: Afraid that’s a little bit over my head.

JAZ: You might be surprised.

SHAWN: Surprise me.

JAZ: Why don't you warm up my coffee?

SHAWN pours more coffee. JAZ takes out a bottle of bourbon and pours some in the cup.

JAZ: The Barber of Seville shaves all the men in Seville if and only if they do not shave themselves. Does the Barber shave himself?

SHAWN: I'll have to think about that one.

JAZ: How do you stay awake?

SHAWN: What do you mean?

JAZ: You're here, serving coffee to a bunch of drunk philosophers at three am...

SHAWN: Three-oh-eight.

JAZ: And this is something you do everyday...

SHAWN: Sundays and Mondays off.

JAZ: Something you've done everyday for...

SHAWN: Three years now.

JAZ: What do you do on Sundays and Mondays at three-oh-eight?

SHAWN: Honestly?

JAZ: I'm fishing for useful tidbits. Detective work.

SHAWN: I go out and I pick up whores.

JAZ: Interesting.

SHAWN: And I fuck them.

JAZ: That goes without saying.

SHAWN: Well...yeah.

JAZ: And this is at night?

SHAWN: You might say I'm a night person.

JAZ: I might. But more likely I'd keep my mouth shut.

SHAWN: More likely?

JAZ: Believe it or not. It's the coffee.

Pause. SHAWN reaches out and touches JAZ's bruised face. She lets him.

SHAWN: You want some more coffee?

JAZ: Yeah. I think I do.

Scene 3. PETER and <SHAWN> are making love on the couch.

PETER: You have incredible breasts.

<SHAWN>: Yes, I know. They're large.

PETER: But not too large.

<SHAWN>: Not too.

PETER: Like moons.

<SHAWN>: What?

PETER: Merciless orb, and all that.

<SHAWN>: Round and white.

PETER: But two.

<SHAWN>: Definitely.

PETER: And your hair is like lemons...

<SHAWN>: Round and yellow.

PETER: The smell.

<SHAWN>: I use an herbal shampoo.

PETER: I like it.

<SHAWN>: I like you.

PETER: The feeling is mutual, my dear.

<SHAWN>: Your dick is huge.

PETER: Monstrous.

<SHAWN>: Stupendous.

PETER: It's getting there.

<SHAWN>: Take your pants off.

PETER: I already have.

<SHAWN>: You tiger.

PETER: Goat.

<SHAWN>: Goat?

PETER: Like Pan.

<SHAWN>: Who?

PETER: Dancing thru the forest...plays a pipe...

<SHAWN>: Little horns?

PETER: That's me.

<SHAWN>: I thought that was the devil.

PETER: A previous incarnation.

<SHAWN>: Red and smoking...

PETER: Cloven hoofs...

<SHAWN>: And a pitchfork.

PETER: A pipe.

<SHAWN>: The devil smokes a pipe?

PETER: Plays a pipe. Music.

<SHAWN>: Sing to me.

PETER: What would you like me to sing?

<SHAWN>: Sing to me while you're doing it.

PETER: Something Bacchanalian...

<SHAWN>: Lick my toes.

PETER: I am.

<SHAWN>: You are?

PETER: I'm working my way up.

END SAMPLE.