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Head
First Printing, 2008
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Stone, Parchment, Saber or
Hamlet: Episode I, The Phantom Menace
by Jason Aaron Goldberg

5 Males

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis: After being reassigned to night duty by King Claudius, guards Bernardo and Francisco devise a plan to get him back by dressing up as the ghost of the deceased King, Hamlet's father. Things go terribly wrong when Hamlet shows up, therefore setting in motion the true story of "Hamlet."

Suburban Peepshow
by James Comtois

6-8 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: Bill is a husband, father, and professional. But this week, a cross dressing social deviant gets fired at the office and Bill is poised to step into his position. The promotion all but guarantees new dishtowels for the wife, and the in-ground pool for son Jeremy. But a New Girl in the office has designs for Bill, and he ain't gonna pass it up... if you know what I mean. Who can blame him with his wife contemplating jumping the Pool Guy, a strange Carnie Barker interrupting dinner, and the occasion Gladiator battle waiting at home. It all depends on how the Playwright is feeling tonight.



a play by
Karin Diann Williams

HEAD

Cast:

Kevann: a prostitute

Laura: a corporate climber

Susan: a filmmaker

LAURA sits in a chair. SUSAN is filming her. KEVANN watches.

How's my makeup?
LAURA

Your makeup looks fine.
SUSAN

What about the lipstick?
LAURA

What about it?
SUSAN

I couldn't decide between the Plum and the Taupe.
LAURA

It's fine.
SUSAN

It doesn't match your blazer.
KEVANN

Which doesn't?
LAURA

The one you're wearing.
KEVANN

LAURA

Of course it does.

SUSAN

Can you please look at the camera?

LAURA

Does anyone have a mirror?

KEVANN

(taking a pill) You want one?

LAURA

Could you hand me my bag?

SUSAN

Look at the camera!

KEVANN

Suzie?

SUSAN

I'm coming in for a close-up...

LAURA

I should have gone with the taupe.

SUSAN

That's it. Keep talking.

LAURA

I'm trying to jazz up my image. Cranberry. Day and Night. Six years of cranberry. With navy suits. When I lost the VP slot I decided to hire an image consultant. And do you know what she told me? *You're in marketing*, she told me. *This is what you're paid for. Didn't it ever cross your mind that you have to market yourself?*

KEVANN

Famous last words.

LAURA

Sex sells, is what she told me.

KEVANN

It's true.

LAURA

Of course it's true.

SUSAN

I've got your lips now...

LAURA

It's not bleeding, is it?

KEVANN

You wouldn't believe what some people have paid me to do. Just to kiss it. Just to touch it. Just to look at the goddamned thing. I'm not kidding. A hundred bucks, and when we were in the room he just takes all his clothes off and lies on the bed. *Look at me*, he whispers. So I stand there. A hundred bucks. I stand there for half an hour, and then he takes me out to Scallini's.

LAURA

We could have done without that, Kevann.

SUSAN

Don't move. Just look at me. Keep your eyes on my eyes.

KEVANN

Is anybody hungry?

SUSAN

This is it. We're rolling tape. Now why don't you tell us the whole story, the way it really happened.

LAURA

Can we try it again with the taupe?

SUSAN

This is beautiful.

LAURA

My pager's going off.

KEVANN

I didn't hear anything.

LAURA

It doesn't make a sound. It vibrates.

KEVANN

Really? Where do you keep it?

LAURA

None of your business.

SUSAN

That's it. Perfect. Hold that smile...

KEVANN

I'm hungry.

SUSAN

Now let's have the story.

KEVANN

How long do you think this will...?

LAURA

I don't know what to say.

SUSAN

Just tell us how it started.

KEVANN

Tell her the same thing you told me.

LAURA

How it started.

SUSAN

From the beginning.

KEVANN

I could really use a steak.

LAURA

He said. What he said, was that there was one thing I could do. I'd asked him. Point blank. I want to make Vice President of this firm before I turn thirty, I said. But I wasn't sure if he was serious. I want to be the first woman Vice President of Harwood and Harwood, I told him. He said we could meet over dinner. He said we could meet over dinner at Scallini's. To discuss my prospects, he told me. This was while I was still up for the promotion. And we met. Over dinner. At Scallini's. Which was curious, because Scallini's is not somewhere we take clients. It's slightly off the beaten track.

KEVANN

I adore Scallini's

LAURA

On the edge of the business district.

KEVANN

The veal is ridiculously tender.

LAURA

A candlelit sort of hole in the wall...

KEVANN

The prices are ridiculously high.

LAURA

He ordered a pricey cabernet. I was planning to pick up the tab, of course, because here he was, the head of the firm, taking an hour of his valuable time to meet me here and discuss the Vice Presidency...

SUSAN

And you didn't suspect?

LAURA

I thought of this man as a father figure. Not like my father at all, who was actually a plumbing contractor for thirty years before he retired to raise ferrets in the Sonoma desert, illegally, and refuse to pay taxes in the name of Libertarianism, which has given my mother psoriasis. This man was something different entirely. This man was my true father. That was how I thought of him. And when we sat down, his first comment caught me off guard.

SUSAN

Look at me.

LAURA

He said. Isn't that a new shade of lipstick you're wearing?

KEVANN

You should have worn the taupe.

LAURA

Yes, I said, lying, not knowing why I was lying, thinking perhaps in the candlelight...

SUSAN

What would you call that color?

LAURA

Cranberry.

SUSAN

That makes me hungry.

LAURA

He said.

KEVANN

It doesn't match your blazer.

SUSAN

I'm starving. Absolutely.

LAURA

He said he wanted to order a wine with the exact color and the precise bouquet and the delicate finish of my lipstick. And he leaned very close to me as he said it. Leaned across the table, so close I imagined he must have been climbing up on the table; I imagined I could hear the gentle bump of his Italian wingtips landing in the plush red carpeting...

SUSAN

Look at it this way.

LAURA

He told me. We're business people. You and I. Let's drop the formalities here. Let's skip the social graces. Let's lay it right out on the table. Let's you and I lay it on the line.

SUSAN

I'm a professional.

LAURA

We're doing business. You want something. And so do I. Which is when I asked.

KEVANN

Like a good little girl.

LAURA

I wanted to make Vice President. He said. What he said, was that there was one thing I could do.

KEVANN

It doesn't make any difference to me. Often I'll come upon a man in a bar, in a hotel room, and the man will say to me, this is what I want. I want you to do this or that, for some more or less defined length of time. A half an hour, or three hours, or whatever. And in return I will give you fifty dollars, or a hundred dollars, or whatever, minus the commission for the escort service. And we come to some arrangement. And "why" is never part of it.

SUSAN

I want you to look at me.

KEVANN

Why?

SUSAN

I'm coming in tight.

KEVANN

What do you mean, why? Who gives a shit, it's a business deal. We've laid our cards on the table. We know where we stand. It's a very comfortable feeling. There's an aura of...security in that kind of conversation. (*she takes a pill*) Everyone knows what's expected of them, and all that remains is to take off our things and, whatever.

SUSAN

But is it exciting?

KEVANN

Exciting?

SUSAN

Does it stimulate you...erotically?

LAURA

I never get off when I'm with a man.

KEVANN

Me neither.

SUSAN

You're saying you're into women?

LAURA

Never.

KEVANN

Only for an extra hundred bucks.

SUSAN

What does it? What excites you?

KEVANN

Money.

LAURA

Power.

KEVANN

These pills.

LAURA

This lipstick.

KEVANN

Another kind of pills I've got at home, too.

LAURA

That camera.

SUSAN

You're getting turned on by this camera?

LAURA

It reminds me of my tax accountant.

KEVANN

Have you got any pills?

SUSAN

Some aspirin.

KEVANN

Hmm...I don't think that would work.

SUSAN

So basically you're saying you were not at all attracted to this man.

LAURA

I called up the escort service and I asked them for somebody who looks like me.

KEVANN

Notice the resemblance.

LAURA

I couldn't see it.

KEVANN

The eyes.

LAURA

Hair.

KEVANN

Legs.

Breasts. **LAURA**

Look at our hands. **KEVANN**

Waistline. **LAURA**

Shoulders. **KEVANN**

Neck. **LAURA**

Lips. **KEVANN**

Teeth. **LAURA**

KEVANN
They asked me to dye my hair. I'd done it before.

LAURA
I was willing to pay. I was willing to do anything.

KEVANN
Except to do it yourself.

LAURA
I was willing to do anything. But I wanted to do it on my terms.

KEVANN
They asked me to wear a suit. Navy.

LAURA

Conservative.

KEVANN

They asked me to wear Chanell.

LAURA

A given.

KEVANN

They asked me to trim my nails.

LAURA

The typing.

KEVANN

All of this was going to cost her.

LAURA

But I was willing to pay.

KEVANN

When I went to her apartment, I was really high.

LAURA

She was all wrong.

KEVANN

I was perfect.

LAURA

I knew the minute I laid eyes on her that this would never work.

KEVANN

I told her to dim the lights.

SUSAN

We need the lights for the camera.

LAURA

This is never going to work.

KEVANN

I told her to give it a chance.

LAURA

Look at the way she's *walking!*

KEVANN

Heels.

LAURA

Heels!

SUSAN

Sex sells.

LAURA

I work at Harwood and Harwood, the most prestigious...

KEVANN

She pronounces it "prestigious."

LAURA

Most respected and newest and chicest...

KEVANN

Chicist?

LAURA

This is never going to work.

KEVANN

He was coming by at eight. I offered her a pill, which is something I seldom do outside of a social situation.

LAURA

I told her she was out of her mind.

KEVANN

I told her to relax. She reminded me of somebody I used to know...

LAURA

The plan was very simple. He would come in. Small talk. A couple of drinks. He was coming by to drop off a portfolio. A very important client. A presentation next morning, which I still would have to work on when all of this was over. But I wasn't worried about the presentation. I knew I'd pull it off. I always pulled it off. I had VP written all over me.

KEVANN

I took off my shoes.

LAURA

A couple of drinks, and I'd look him in the eye. I didn't think I'd have to say anything out loud. I'd just look at him, and casually glance at the bedroom door. (I still wasn't sure if he was serious!) I'd look at him, waiting for the smile. Waiting for my father to become something else entirely. For the sound of his Italian wingtips hitting the plush grey carpet. *Excuse me*, I'd say.

KEVANN

I made myself a drink.

LAURA

I'd go into the bedroom. I'd turn off the lights.

SUSAN

I need the lights for the camera.

LAURA

I thought that was a really good camera.

SUSAN

It is.

LAURA

I told you to get the best.

SUSAN

This is the best.

LAURA

I told you I'd pay...

SUSAN

I know what you told me.

LAURA

I wanted a camera that would do the *job*.

SUSAN

The camera needs light. *All* cameras need light. You cannot film in the absolute darkness. That is the story of cameras. My camera. Your camera. *Turn the fucking lights back on!*

LAURA

It has to be dark.

SUSAN

The camera needs light.

KEVANN

I took another pill.

LAURA

Darker!

Lighter! **SUSAN**

Darker! **LAURA**

Lighter! **SUSAN**

KEVANN
We came to a sort of compromise.

LAURA
I asked her to wait in the bedroom.

KEVANN
I wanted to put the TV on.

LAURA
I told her to be patient.

KEVANN
I wanted to listen to the radio.

LAURA
I told her to be still.

KEVANN
I took another pill.

LAURA
It was quarter to eight. I started work on my presentation.

KEVANN
Whatcha doing?

LAURA

It was an advertisement for milk.

KEVANN

It was a picture of a woman. A woman in a white bikini. Her skin was quite pale also. Which was not surprising, because she seemed to be sitting on a large block of ice.

LAURA

Summertime print ad. Milk.

KEVANN

Her lips and her nails were very red. But her skin was pale and her hair was bleached white.

LAURA

Psychological association. White, milk.

KEVANN

And there seemed to be a snowstorm.

LAURA

Milk, white.

KEVANN

And this woman was sitting at the heart of the storm, with her legs slightly parted...

LAURA

Snow, cool.

KEVANN

And her lips slightly parted.

LAURA

Cool, refreshing.

KEVANN

And her eyes fixed on the camera.

LAURA

A page in *Cosmo*, a page in *Vogue*.

KEVANN

As if to say.

LAURA

Milk.

KEVANN

Take me.

LAURA

Drink.

KEVANN

Overwhelm me.

LAURA

Buy.

KEVANN

Her eyes were laughing, as if she were above it all.

LAURA

Because of the milk.

KEVANN

I'll take you inside me and spit you out whole.

LAURA

Go get some milk.

KEVANN

You can worship me.

LAURA

Get some milk now.

KEVANN

You can touch me.

LAURA

You need it. You must have it.

KEVANN

But you'll never own me.

LAURA

You can't live another minute without a brimming glassful of...

KEVANN

Instead I'll own you.

SUSAN

Sex sells.

KEVANN

Where's the milk?

LAURA

There isn't any milk.

KEVANN

The old bait and switch.

LAURA

This is what we call high concept.