

ZONE

Written by

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DARKENED STAGE. LARGE STONE SR. SPOLIGHT CS.

SFX RAIN

ENTER RAOUL SL He is dressed in a heavy worn army coat and bundled against the cold. He is unshaven and walks in a stooped self protective way. He stops in the light, not moving, but his eyes go left and right. He listens. Comes downstage peers out. He looks worried, on edge. He listens carefully.

RAOUL

No birds.

Shakes his head

He sees the rock. Pauses

Ah!

He goes to the rock. Feels it. Seems pleased. Looks left and then right. Lifts it and with great effort moves it CS in the light. Sits on it with great relief.

Ah...ah....

He smiles and nods. A noise off stage
(fearfully crouches behind
stone)

Ahhh?

He peers into the wings then he sees who it is.

Ohhhh.....it's you.

Enter Boris. He is short and limps. He wears an army coat which is a different color to Raoul's and has mud stains. Half his head is covered with a dirty bandage. There's a reddish stain of dried blood.

BORIS

I hurt my foot.

RAOUL

He sits back on his stone

Huh?

BORIS

My foot. I hurt it.

Raoul does not react. Pause.

**Has anyone ever told you that you
lack compassion.**

Raoul grunts and reaches in his pocket and pulls out a crust of bread wrapped in newspaper, unravelling it carefully as Boris watches him.

I'm hungry too you know.

Raoul waves him away. Boris looks around

Made yourself comfy I see.... As usual...

RAOUL

Mm.... The rock was over there....I moved it.

He begins chewing at his piece of bread. There's a pause

BORIS

I have an injury which held me back.

RAOUL

(indifferently)

Oh yes?

BORIS

Yes... it's sore.

RAOUL

This is my rock. I lifted it.

BORIS

He looks around

You took the last one.

RAOUL

..... probably

BORIS

And I have nothing to eat.

RAOUL

Mmmmmmm.....

Raoul continues chewing on his piece of bread.

From a distance

SFX gunfire... a machine gun and then a few sporadic shots. Boris and Raoul go to ground. Fearfully.

It's... quite a way... away.. you..go and see...

BORIS

Me....?

RAOUL

**Yes. You. And take the bandage off.
It attracts attention.**

BORIS

I have a wound.

RAOUL

No you don't.

BORIS

I need the bandage.

RAOUL

It makes you stand out

BORIS

**That's the point. They don't shoot
people with bandages.**

RAOUL

Go and see what's going on....

BORIS

I need food.

RAOUL

I don't have any.

BORIS

He whines

A little bit will do.

RAOUL

**When you get back. If there's any
left.**

BORIS

He takes the bandage off his head.

**I always have to do the difficult
things.**

RAOUL

(angrily but without
getting up)

I'll go then.

BORIS

No. I have better eyesight than you.

RAOUL

Mmmmm....

BORIS

He takes off the bandage.

(proudly)

And I have the more adventurous soul...I will find out what's happening.

Exits

RAOUL

(shouts after him)

**I am relying on you.
This is very strange. I don't like it. It feels as if time is standing still.**

(pompously)

A zone of disquietude.

Maniacal laugh.

Pause. He gets up. Starts pacing back and forth

How long have we been walking? Let me see.

He counts on his fingers

**Days? It feels like days..weeks?
Months? Difficult to count.**

He gives up counting on his fingers

SFX Machine gun sound again followed by sporadic shots.

Oh dear. ...

(pause)

We must have a plan or we're doomed. With a plan we have hope.....

(he addresses the stone)

And you old Mr Stone.

He wags his finger

You should know better.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

You, who have been here since the beginning of time. You, who have witnessed the petty squabbling of humankind for six million years should understand that permanence is no excuse for moral indifference. What's more...

Pause. He loses his train of thought.

Huh?

Then sadly, his face trembling on the verge of tears

I'm upset I cannot hear birds. There should be birds. A cuckoo even a crow...that would be comforting....well, at least the rain has stopped. Wait a minute.

Looking out into the audience, he tries to see from different angles. Points it out into the audience.

What's that? The light?

(excitedly)

There between the trees.

(desperately)

There. Don't you see it? It could be a house. There may be some food... Boris?...Boris? Where are you? Boris. Come here.

Re-enter Boris crawling on all fours.

What are you doing? Why are you walking on all fours?

BORIS

I am?

RAOUL

Get up man.

BORIS

He stands up.

I didn't know.

RAOUL

**Listen, come, look, there's a light
over there It's maybe a house.**

He points

BORIS

(with great wonder))

You're right.It's a light.

He smiles

RAOUL

**A house where there may be food,
shelter and a warm welcome.**

BORIS

Oh please.....

Pause

Please..

He goes in the direction of the light.

RAOUL

Well.....?

BORIS

He stops

Well what?

RAOUL

What?

(angrily)

BORIS

What?

RAOUL

Did you see anything?

BORIS

The light?

RAOUL

No back there.

BORIS

Oh... back there.

Raoul points upstage to where he came from

Oh Yes.

Pause

RAOUL

And?

BORIS

You really think there's food over there?

RAOUL

What did you see for God's sake?

BORIS

People... in their underwear.

RAOUL

(totally amazed)

In their underwear?

BORIS

Yes.

RAOUL

But...but... the shooting?

BORIS

There were men shooting them.

RAOUL

Shooting?... Them.

BORIS

Yes. Men in uniforms.

RAOUL

**Shooting people in their underwear?
Are You sure?**

BORIS

Yes...

RAOUL
Are they still there?

BORIS
I suppose so...

RAOUL
Those doing the shooting?

BORIS
I don't know. I left.

RAOUL

He is very agitated

We must take control of this situation. It is time to move on. But, first you must investigate the light.

BORIS
Me? Why always me?

RAOUL
You are a man of exceptional courage and fortitude. A man above other men.

BORIS
I am?

RAOUL
We're starving. We have no bread left.

BORIS
I will not go.

RAOUL
You will not?

BORIS
No. I am.....too... upset.

RAOUL
Then I WILL. I will show courage. You will stay here. I will allow you to sit on my rock.

BORIS
Oh... how kind.

RAOUL
I shall return. You may sit temporarily.

Exits towards the light in a crouched position

BORIS
He sits on the rock.
Very comfortable. Isn't it lovely to hear the birds singing. Such cheeky things, so full of life. Without a care. Beautiful.

SFX: Birds singing
I do hope he finds something...I am very hungry. Food would be so welcome. At heart I'm an optimist. My parents taught that you can change the world with your imagination.

He closes his eyes and concentrates and speaks in a sort of trance.

He will find food. Fois gras, pigs trotters in aspic, snails a la bourgoigne, crevettes lightly tossed in olive oil with a touch of tarragon. And a warm baguette straight from the oven. And wine...oh the wine he will find. A Chateau Lafitte Grand cru classe 1945, rich powerful with the fragrance of blackberry. .

He opens his eyes
Perhaps too much to ask? A loaf of bread would be just fine....

Raoul returns... he carries a sack over his shoulder made from a tablecloth.

RAOUL
He is crying. The tears falling down his cheeks.
You wouldn't believe it.
(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

It was a house. A nice house. I looked in the window. The lights were on.. there was a warm fire burning in the hearth. And a table with a candleabra.. and there was nobody there. Nobody.

He whimpers

Nobody there. But there was food on the table. So I went in.... There wasn't a sound. There was nobody. So... I stole the food

BORIS
(accusingly)

You stole the food.

RAOUL

It was immoral I admit. But..it might have gone to waste... I didn't take it all.... Look...

He puts the sack down and reveals the contents.

I don't know what half of it is.. but the smell, oh the smell..there's this brown stuff..

He shows Boris a small bowl

BORIS

Fois gras

RAOUL

A jelly thing.

BORIS

Pig's rosters..in aspic

RAOUL

These look like snails or something..perhaps they're not edible.

BORIS

Escargots... in red wine

RAOUL

**Fishy things... they smell of
aniseed.. I hate aniseed but..**

BORIS

Shrimp fried with tarragon..

RAOUL

**Oh and bread... warm crusty bread.
Feel it.**

BORIS

And wine?

RAOUL

Fancy wine... look ...

He tries to read it

Chetter laft it...

BORIS

He looks around in terror. Suddenly very seriously

We must go.

RAOUL

I don't understand.

BORIS

We are in the wrong zone.

RAOUL

**But can't we eat now? Have a glass
of wine? The warm bread?**

BORIS

Not now. Put it away.

RAOUL

But...

BORIS

He screams at him.

**Put it away... we must leave...Now!
Don't you understand?**

RAOUL

All right.... Don't shout at me.

BORIS

I'm sorry. Here let me help. I'll carry some of it.

RAOUL

I can't wait to eat. That's good wine I know it is. A special bottle. It looks posh. I'm so excited.

Boris looks at the food smells each bowl with great delight and longing.

At last food. Yes? After so long, beautiful food and warm bread.

BORIS

I must find my bandage. Damn it. I've lost my bandage.. give me whatever you can't carry...

RAOUL

Your bandage is over there behind the stone.

(pause)

Do people really eat snails? You know we could have used my rock as a table.....

BORIS

He is rewinding the bandage round his head

Come. Follow Me. This is regrettable. But this zone is not safe. We have to get away from here otherwise we are lost. Hurry. I will lead the way. Let us go in that direction. Come as quickly as you can. I will lead.

He points to downstage right.

Exits

RAOUL

I'm coming. Couldn't I at least taste it. The food. It will keep us going for weeks.

(MORE)

RAOUL (CONT'D)

**I left the glasses but we can drink
the wine from the bottle. I didn't
want to bring them... the glasses.
They might have broken There.. I'm
ready.....I think**

He struggles to get everything wrapped in the table cloth.

He stops.

**Wait a minute. Oh no... would you
believe it. I forgot the
corkscrew....Do you hear me...?**

He shouts as he leaves the stage.

**I forgot the corkscrew. Wait for
me...no corkscrew.**

The stage is quiet. Then a bird starts singing....15 seconds

SFX The sound of gunfire... a little closer than before.