

CASTLE VON DEATH

A Ten-Minute Play for Stage

Based on "Hansel & Gretel" by The Brothers Grimm

By

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LIGHTS RISE.

Lying on the floor are two bodies. One is WILL, wearing a suit and a necktie; the other is GINGER, in skirt and loose blouse.

Long pause; the two bodies remain motionless with eyes shut.

Suddenly! WILL sits upright and gives a loud, frightened yell.

Despite the noise, GINGER doesn't stir.

WILL crosses on his knees and pushes her.

WILL
Wake up. Please wake up.

She doesn't move.

He stands, paces, wipes his face, shakes it off.

He goes to the sink and washes his face and hands.

At last, he returns to GINGER and looks down at her. He kneels slowly. He begins to lift her skirt. When it's nearly up all the way, she stirs and wakes.

GINGER
Dear Will. How long have you been awake?

WILL
I had a nightmare.

GINGER

I was dreaming, too. A man came to see us. He wanted us to buy his house. But he was lying. He really wanted to eat us.

GINGER stands, dusts herself off.

GINGER (Cont'd)

It wasn't really a nightmare, though. It just sort of happened.

She moves away into the corner, bends and begins to change her clothes. When her shirt is off, she stops and turns. WILL is staring at her.

GINGER (Cont'd)

Stop looking at me.

He doesn't stop. He stands expressionless.

GINGER (Cont'd)

What do you want? What do you want, o brother dear?

He slinks away, biting his nails.

She finishes changing. As she starts to do her makeup...

SOUND: Knocking offstage.

GINGER (Cont'd)

He's early.

WILL

Who is it?

GINGER

Candidate number *ein*. He phoned about fifteen minutes ago.

WILL

But you were asleep.

GINGER

I can still answer a phone, can't I? Will you let him in?

WILL answers the door. Enter JACOB, a dapper looking young man. He gives a shy wave and takes a position between the two of them.

GINGER continues to do her makeup.

GINGER (Cont'd)

Are you Jacob?

JACOB

I am.

GINGER

Thank you for joining us. Let's start with this: qualifications?

JACOB

I studied at Columbia College. Under some really talented teachers. I played Wally Webb in "Our Town." I can tap dance. I'm able to stand still for long periods of time.

GINGER

Oooo. How long?

JACOB

"Iceman Cometh" long.

GINGER

Do it.

JACOB

Uh, right now?

GINGER

Yes, Jacob. I want to see this special skill.

JACOB takes a position, holds it.

GINGER rises and circles him. While JACOB is frozen, she puts her hand on his butt.

Pause.

GINGER (Cont'd)

(soft)

Do you like candy, little boy?

JACOB does not know if he should move to speak. At last, he breaks.

JACOB

I... I like candy.

GINGER

Would you like a bite of me?

JACOB

I'm sorry - what? Is this part of the audition?

GINGER abandons him and goes back to doing makeup.

JACOB starts to break his pose-

GINGER

No, no. Stay. Jacob, this is my brother Will. He's directing "Castle Von Death." He's the one you have to impress.

Pause. Jacob holds.

WILL

(breaking)

Oh, for fuck's sake, you can move already! There's no call for statues in "Castle Von Death." Look, we're on a low budget and it's a six week shoot and for most of it you have to be cold and miserable. I don't think you'll survive it, to be honest. You're kind of desperate looking. But you're also skinny. So I'm interested.

JACOB

What's the part?

WILL

Wait here.

WILL storms offstage.

JACOB turns to GINGER, who is done now with her makeup. She rises.

JACOB

Are you the casting director?

GINGER

I'm just the one who put up the fliers around the college. I see you followed our little trail.

JACOB

Most of the fliers have been taken down. You know how much they actually hate the arts when they take down your fliers. I put a few up myself back in the day. Actor for hire. Independent movies. I saw yours and saved it before it got swiped. It said eight o'clock this morning. I'm a little early. Don't think me too anxious. Look, I'm really hungry. I graduated and haven't had a single credit since. I'm just... just trying to get my face out there. So, if I seem-

GINGER

Shut up.

JACOB

(fast, humble, head down)

Okay.

GINGER circles him.

GINGER

Oooh, I could just eat you. Jacob. Is that your real name? Stage name?

JACOB

I'm a Jacob. Just plain ol' Jacob.

(Pause)

Why, should I change my name?

WILL enters, holding a teal flapper dress and a sailor's hat. He crosses and holds them up to JACOB, checking for fit.

JACOB

(confused by the dress)

Wait - you said I, I look the part?

GINGER

We should have him try it on. Just to be sure.

JACOB

What kind of a movie is this?

Pause. They stare at him.

At last, WILL gestures at the floor. JACOB doesn't understand.

WILL

Will you please lie down?

JACOB

Sure. Lay on the floor?

They nod. He complies.

When he's down, WILL and GINGER lay beside him, quiet for a moment.

At last...

WILL, hands out, paints a picture.

WILL

We open in a forest! There's the sound of a man chopping wood. Cut to: a large castle. Doom-laden. Foreboding. A full moon. It's night. Pan to reveal: two swans, in the castle's mote. Fade to black. Dissolve. Slow pan up to a dolly shot of-- Tracking, tracking, tracking. Now a crane shot. Are you getting all this?

GINGER

Beautiful, my darling Will. Gorgeous.

WILL

Not you - him.

JACOB

And I'm... wearing a flapper dress...? Where does that-

WILL

JUMP CUT! The forest. It's not a man chopping wood, but a carefully... set... branch, clacking against a tree, in a steady wind.

JACOB

Oh, like in Hansel & Gretel!

WILL slow burns then stands.

WILL

No, no, no no no no no! Not like fucking "Hansel and Gretel!" It's nothing like "Handles and fucking Bettle." It's exactly like "Castle Von Death" and only like "Castle Von Death."

WILL kicks at JACOB's side.

WILL (Cont'd)

Get up, get up.

JACOB sits up. Before he can fully stand, WILL starts dragging him by the arms towards the exit.

WILL (Cont'd)

I want you out, OUT, OUT! I don't care if you would look hot in the goddamn dress!

JACOB struggles. At a point near the exit, he nearly holds his ground, but at last he's pushed offstage, leaving only WILL to straighten his tie, and GINGER still prone on the floor, a look of puzzlement on her face.

WILL comes forward. He stands above his sister.

She pulls him down by his necktie until his face is between her legs.

GINGER

Do you want to know what I think?

(pause)

I think it's exactly like "Hansel und Gretel."

She lays back and he begins to kiss her stomach, going lower, and lower, and lower, until...

LIGHTS FADE.