

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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Black Sleigh Down, or White Christmas in Machu Picchu

a very short holiday play by Jim Fagan

(13.07° S, 72.35° W)

A Valley Near Machu Picchu, Peru, South America

December 24

23:50:00 (PET)

Sound of a helicopter getting closer. LEAH sprints and dives into A CLEARING and settles on the edge of a MOSS-COVERED ROCK. From her pouch she quickly pulls a blanket of moss-like material-- throwing it over herself seconds before a large helicopter searchlight passes over her.

Stillness as the sound recedes. She pulls off the moss, opens her pack, and cocks her Glock 26 pistol, strapping it to her ankle. Then, she assembles a M82a1 / M107 Barrett Sniper Rifle, slings it over her shoulder, checks the scope, and fixes it on the distance. She swaps it with a pair of night vision goggles, checks her target, then, sighing, still not satisfied, removes a candy cane from a small breast pocket and chews on it unceremoniously.

Helicopter sounds. She drops her candy cane in the dirt. The chopper doesn't get close. This ticks Leah off. She slings a long tube off her back and effortlessly pieces together her M3 Carl Gustav Rocket Launcher. She lays a missile next to it, eyeing the sky as if to say, "Just try it."

Suddenly, she freezes. No breathing, no blinking, just listens. Then, in one fluid movement she whips her GLOCK out and aims it, locked and steadied, at the MOSS-COVERED rock.

Leah Out.

A very proper British voice responds from the MOSS.

Moss I see they gave you the full set of kitchen cutlery for Christmas.

Leah OUT.

Moss If you're going to crash my spot, I'd appreciate it if you didn't alert the entirety of the Shining Path to our presence.

Leah cocks her weapon. PETER pulls off his own moss-like blanket. He wears a full tuxedo.

Peter *(cont'd)* Nice to see you again, Agent.

Leah *(holstering her gun)* You've got to be kidding me. *(beat)* Agent.

Peter You look fetching as always.

Leah We can't all look like James Bond.

Peter *(looking at himself)* Right. Tonight was a black tie affair hosted by the public front of the Shining Path Party. I thought I'd have a night cap by paying their private backers a visit. Pure intel. And you? Starting an all out drug war or are we just blowing up Machu Picchu?

Leah Classified.

Peter Really. An actual assassination? Who's pissed off America this week?

Leah gives him a look that says, "If I told you, I'd love to kill you," and goes back to scoping out the territory below. Peter settles in close, but not too close.

Peter *(cont'd)* So what are we doing here? Smoke them out? Classic rocket launcher into the mess hall? He comes running out into the open and in the confusion you give him the old "King and Country," or whatever you call it... "Presidential Mandate?" You know if you end up setting fire to that compound you risk making half of South America high as a kite.

Leah If you're going to be here, shut up.

Peter Well well well well now. We're allies. Last I checked.

Silence.

Peter *(cont'd)* Is this about Kathmandu? Because really...

Leah I am here working. If you continue to act like an obstruction I will treat you like one and *remove* you.

This has some effect. A helicopter sound, but far off. Leah loads the rocket launcher.

Peter What do we think? Security, or trafficking?

She glares at him.

Peter *(cont'd)* Well reasoned.

The two sit in silence. Leah is fixed on her target. Peter is fixed on her.

Peter *(cont'd)* So you're proper freelance now. Word gets around. I'm here with NATO, actually. I'm a genuine peacekeeper so let's keep it peaceful huh?

Almost imperceptible, Leah scoops a handful of dirt.

Peter *(cont'd)* So... After the quick strike, then what? Hop the border? Hide out? Since you're on your own and all, if you need a place to sta—

Leah throws the dirt in Peter's eyes.

Peter *(cont'd)* Ahhhh!

She swiftly kicks Peter directly to the chest, but he's ready for the next blow. They exchange a volley of punches, kicks, parry and counters—

Leah Stay the night? As if I'd—

She punches him rather than finish her thought.

Peter I only meant to say if you were freelance then that meant you took the Assignment on your own free will... Gah woman, my eyes!...

He lands a punch.

Peter *(cont'd)* It would mean you're all alone tonight of all nights and that would mean...

Leah lands an impressive kick to the throat, which shuts Peter up for the moment. He staggers to the ground. She whips out her signature WICKED SAW TOOTH BLADES. Everyone in the espionage world knows her by these blades. You rarely see these and live to describe them.

Peter *(cont'd, struggling with his throat)* Abou..ughhh... Just...glahhh... Kath...man...du.

Leah *(pressing the flat end of the blade to him)* Just listen. I took this job for one very specific reason. One. Because I wanted to be alone tonight and this seemed to pretty much guarantee it. ALONE. That's first. Second, I did my homework. This area is an operative dead zone. NO NATO ACTIVITY Sanctioned. Completely, utterly, alone. Guaranteed. So, I'm going to ask you just one time, and if you lie, I'll kill you. And I'll *know* if you're *lying*. What are you doing here?

Peter I came for you.

Leah Well, you failed.

She lifts the blade above her head ready to drive it home.

Peter No, not like that... bugger. Wait! I'm Martin Keene!

Leah Martin Keene's an old man. He...

Peter He hired you. Which is to say, I hired you. Since I'm him. Well, I'm not actually him, as you know, I'm British Secret Service. Well, former, now, really. Defector. You know... "Off with his head!" and all that. That's news to you. I've assumed the identity of Keene. To, um, reach... to hire you. To get you here.

Leah Say more...

Peter I wanted to... Jesus this is embarrassing... I wanted to run into you. Again. Like Khatmandu, that night. That night was so...and you are so... I even dressed up for the occasion.

Leah Oh my god. This mission is made up.

Peter Sort of. Not really, I did *actually* hire you.

Leah I was going to assassinate Yatala!

Peter Well... He's not a good guy anyway...

Leah Are you out of your mind? I could have been killed! I could have—

Peter Please. You must understand. I've wanted... I've thought about you...and, after that night, I couldn't stop. Like you said, you said that night when we were... Which was incredible, by the way. Night of my life, really... But then you said how it can be so lonely... Which I never thought of before, so thanks a lot for that because after that I started crying in the middle of missions, totally unprovoked, until it really started screwing up my work. Fact is, everywhere I went on mission I just wanted to run into you. And I started to dream – we just run away together, screw the mission, you know – to Khatmandu – It got so... Well, I had to get out. See, I'd worked up a lot of money over the years, bit off the top, you know--and I quit. But then, I was *still* lonely, and... and the problem, turns out, wasn't the work at all, it was me. More specifically, me *without* you. See? So, I heard you went freelance from a buddy of mine at The Company. And I just had to see you. Only, you're not the kind of girl one just looks up. So I made this plan... I thought, just maybe, you're freelance now, you could get out, I'm defector, we're both free. Don't you see? Oh, and I *borrowed* this tux and I hadn't even thought about James Bond I swear.

Leah Lonely? I said that? Out loud?

Peter Dawn glistening off your back. It was just about my favorite moment ever.

They stare at each other in silence. Helicopter sounds go unheeded. The spotlight from the Helicopter settles on them. It's romantic, until it starts shooting. Leah shoves Peter, hits the ground, rolls to her launcher, and fires it up into the sky. It connects. We hear a massive explosion. Big globes of white come floating down from the sky.

Peter *(cont'd)* Huh. Festive.

Leah I think this is coke.

Peter Could be, could be. *(beat)* Happy Christmas.

Leah Yeah, Merry Merry. *(she's going to say... but then...)* We should run.

Peter Opposite directions.

Leah Probably. *(beat)* Peter, that night. For me. Um... too. *(beat)* But don't you ever pull this again, or next time I *will* kill you!

Peter Will there be a next time?

She aims her sniper at him, its neat, red laser dot settling on his forehead. He freezes. She approaches him carefully, lowers the gun, and kisses him.

Leah Next time, I'll find you.

They sprint off in opposite directions as we hear dogs barking and soldiers shouting.

END OF PLAY.