

## BLUE MOON

### *The Place*

Room number 7 of the Blue Moon Motel on a freeway bypass.

### *The Time*

The play begins at almost exactly 1:00 am on a sticky August night during a hot and dirty rain, the first in eight months.

### *The Characters*

DALE – late forties  
KRISTIN – mid teens  
OLEG – late fifties  
ANJA – mid thirties

### *The Setting*

The motel room is small, with cinder block walls painted the color of neglected grave grass. The furniture consists of a decades-old double bed with an attached nightstand; a combination desk/dresser with two stuck drawers; a wobbly non-matching desk chair; a stained upholstered armchair, torn and burned; and a 1980s television on a shaky TV tray. An overhead fan with its blades stuck at the lowest speed has one exposed 150-watt bulb. A few ugly thrift store lamps – working and not – might also add partial illumination.

In addition to the motel room door (with the number ‘7’ on the outside, a framed list of motel rules screwed to the inside and a chain lock), there is a folding door that opens to a very small closet and another door to the bathroom that holds a coffin-sized shower, a toilet and a sink. What we see of the bathroom walls is the color of Velveeta.

The only window is beside the door, curtained with a sagging fabric that blocks out all but the most insistent sunshine or headlights. When the drapes are parted, red, blue, purple and yellow neon floods the room. A broken air conditioner is installed below the window.

Also in the room are two trash baskets, a rotary phone on the desk, an alarm clock radio on the nightstand, and a single framed print of a butterscotchy sunset, bolted to the wall. A puce bedspread with warty tufts hides exhausted pillows and a multitude of sins.

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*The motel room interior is lit only by thin shafts of neon light from a nearby sign that filter in and around the sides of the window drapes.*

*The only sounds are a steady pounding rain, an occasional lightning crack and, after a few moments, the lumbering vibrations of a lost 18-wheeler on the freeway bypass. A quick horn blast, then it is gone.*

*More rain, more thunder and lightning.*

*On the side of the bed sits DALE, late forties. He wears jeans and a grey sweatshirt. He has about four days growth of beard and keeps having to push his eyeglasses up off his nose.*

*Also on the bed, resting against the headboard, is KRISTIN, 15 or 16 years old, and having the worst night of her young life. She is blindfolded, her feet and hands bound with rope, and she is gagged with a bandanna tied around her head. She wears a long t-shirt and cotton socks.*

*A long time passes. A full minute may not be too much.*

DALE: When I was a teenager, about your age, both my ears got plugged. I woke up one morning and could only hear just very distant, very muffled sounds out of both ears. I hadn't been to the pool, so I knew it wasn't swimmer's ear. My brother got that once. But me, I figured it was a buildup of ear wax. But both ears? The same mornin'? What are the odds? It was the weirdest feelin'. Standin' in the shower, the water sprayin' my head, the sound was like rain hittin' the side of a barrel you're sittin' inside of. Then I'm puttin' my shoes on and I just can't stand the feelin' no longer. I stick a finger in one ear and start goin' at it like a jackhammer.

*DALE demonstrates by thrusting a forefinger in and out of one ear. He pulls it out and examines the tip.*

DALE: Nothin'. But it gives me the idea that if I build up suction, like a vacuum, maybe that might free up some of the wax. Like a toilet plunger, y'know? So I use my pinkie to really get an air-tight seal.

*He does, inserting a pinkie in the same ear, and doubling the speed of his thrusts.*

DALE: And you know what? It worked!

*DALE removes his pinkie and looks at the tip.*

DALE: Stuck to the tip of my pinkie was a big glob of dark and shiny ear wax the size of a corn niblet. *(laughs softly)* So I'm starin' at this molasses-colored hunk of ear wax and suddenly Clarence jumps in my lap. Clarence was our calico cat and he must have been about thirteen years old and twenty-five pounds when this happened, so a body was well aware when he landed. Clarence immediately went for my pinkie, lickin' off the glob of ear wax like it was tuna cracker spread. I'd never seen Clarence go after *anythin'* like that, not even rats or mice or hamsters. So when he cleaned off my pinkie I went plugin' for more. Cleaned out both ears, with Clarence lickin' up every bit of it. The wax was like meth to that stupid cat. For a week after he'd wake me up in the middle of night, lickin' the inside of my ears. *(lost for a moment in the memory)* The point is, I know what it's like to not be able to hear. And I can only imagine how much worse it is to not be able to see and only breathe through your nose. With your wrists and ankles tied up. But I gotta put these in anyway.

*DALE picks up two earplugs from the nightstand and gently pushes one into each of KRISTIN'S ears.*

DALE: Can you hear me?

*There is no reaction from KRISTIN, so DALE speaks louder.*

DALE: CAN YOU HEAR ME?!

*Still nothing. DALE strokes her hair a few times, then stands, considering what to do next.*

*DALE looks about the room for a TV remote. Not finding one, he walks over and pokes the television on. As he waits for it to warm up, he turns on a desk lamp and the lamp on the nightstand. He flips off the overhead bulb in the ceiling fan.*

*DALE stands in front of the TV, turning the dial to find a good channel. Most of them are static, but he flips through a local farm report, a used car commercial, the opening theme from "The Rockford Files" and a fiery TV evangelist.*

*There is a sudden knock on the motel room door and DALE immediately pokes off the TV. He freezes in place.*

*Another knock.*

*From the other side of the door we hear a voice with an Eastern-European accent.*

MALE VOICE: Mister Dale?

*DALE quickly surveys KRISTIN to ensure she is properly secured.*

DALE: *Just a minute!*

*More knocking.*

MALE VOICE: OPEN DOOR! PLEASE, MISTER DALE.

DALE: *COMING!*

*DALE unlocks the knob and unlatches the chain.*

*He opens the door to reveal OLEG, late fifties, wearing an expensive, dark three-piece suit and holding an umbrella.*

*It is now raining even harder than before.*

*As soon as the door is open, OLEG rushes inside, furiously flapping his umbrella to remove what rain he can.*

*Some of it clearly lands on KRISTIN'S exposed skin, as she recoils at the touch of the unexpected drops. OLEG takes no notice of her.*

DALE (*looking outside before closing the door*): I didn't hear ya drive up.

*OLEG checks to ensure a nearby trash basket is empty, then sticks his umbrella inside to dry.*

*He removes his suit coat, carefully draping it over the back of the desk chair, then looks DALE over, up and down, for several seconds.*

OLEG: Pockets.

DALE (*pause, then puzzled*): Hmm?

OLEG: Empty pockets.

DALE: Oh. Okay.

*DALE removes the contents of his pants pockets and places them on the desk: a wallet, car keys and the room key.*

*As he does, OLEG locks the door at both the doorknob and the chain.*

DALE: That's it.

OLEG: No phone.

DALE: No. You said to leave it at home.

OLEG: Good. Shirt.

DALE: No pockets.

OLEG: Off.

DALE: Oh. Okay.

*After a moment's hesitation, DALE removes his sweatshirt. Nothing is revealed except for DALE'S slightly doughy torso.*

OLEG: Pants.

DALE: I just emptied my pockets.

OLEG (*emphatically*): Pants.

*With a big sigh, DALE unbuckles his belt and slides down his jeans to reveal baggy, dingy white briefs. He waits for OLEG'S inspection, clearly uncomfortable standing before him nearly naked.*

*After a moment, OLEG nods. DALE starts to pull up his pants.*

OLEG: Stay down.

DALE (*slightly confused*): Oh. Okay.

*OLEG stares at DALE, making him feel ever more awkward, until DALE finally slips off both shoes and removes his jeans. He leaves the shoes and jeans on the floor where they land.*

*OLEG then turns his attention to KRISTIN. He looks at her from a distance for a long moment, then walks over to stand beside her at the bed. OLEG leans over and examines KRISTIN from just inches away, starting at her legs and traveling up her body. This clearly makes DALE uncomfortable.*

*When OLEG gets to KRISTIN'S face, he looks very closely at the sock, the bandanna, then the blindfold.*

OLEG (*shouting*): GOD BLESSING AMERICA!

*KRISTIN doesn't flinch.*

*OLEG continues to study KRISTIN closely for a long moment, then straightens and turns to DALE.*

OLEG: I am satisfied.

DALE: Good. That's good. (*considering*) My pants. Would it—

OLEG: —No.

DALE: Oh. Okay. (*more conversational than inquisitorial*) I'm surprised you're alone.

OLEG: Not alone.

DALE: No, here, in the room.

OLEG: Yes. Not alone.

DALE (*slightly confused*): Oh. Okay.

*OLEG sits at the foot of the bed, to one side, his eyes on DALE. OLEG pats the space on the bed beside him. DALE is unsure how to respond to this.*

*After a few more bed pats from OLEG, DALE tentatively steps over to the bed — wearing only his briefs and socks — and cautiously sits beside OLEG, but with as much distance between them as possible.*

*Both men face us, staring ahead.*

OLEG: We wait.

*OLEG looks at his watch.*

*He then closes his eyes and starts nodding slightly. He is hearing a soothing tune in his head. One foot begins a gentle tap.*

*The silent music in OLEG'S head continues for a while, until there is another knock at the door.*

*OLEG opens his eyes.*

OLEG: We eat.

*OLEG goes to the door, releases both locks, and opens it to the torrential downpour outside.*

*A KFC bucket is thrust at him by someone yet unseen.*

*OLEG takes off the cardboard lid and inserts his face into the bucket.*

OLEG (*from within the bucket*): That smell!

*From outside we hear the voice of ANJA, also Eastern-European.*

ANJA: I'm soaked to skin, Oleg.

*OLEG removes his face from the bucket and goes to the desk.*

OLEG: You get wedges?

*ANJA, mid-thirties, has now entered and is closing the door behind her. She wears a dark raincoat and a clear plastic rain bonnet.*

*OLEG secures both door locks as ANJA carries a small black purse and a large KFC bag holding several large containers.*

ANJA: Potato wedges, coleslaw—

OLEG: —Mister Dale, you remove things from desk.

*DALE is on his feet quickly, though he is clearly self-conscious standing in front of ANJA in just his briefs.*

*He picks up his wallet and keys. Then his shirt, jeans and shoes.*

*KRISTIN has become more attentive, likely from smelling the chicken.*

OLEG (*setting down chicken bucket on the desk*): Mac'n cheese?

ANJA: Yes, and corn on cob.

OLEG: Not corn on cob.

ANJA: Da.

OLEG: Nyet.

ANJA: Is what you asked for.

OLEG: Not corn on cob, Anja. Kernel corn.

ANJA: *All Colonel corn, Oleg. Man in white suit with stupid tie.*

*ANJA has set the KFC bag on the desk and OLEG is removing the various containers, then corn ears wrapped in foil.*

OLEG (*holding up the foil-covered ears*): No, *this* is corn on cob. I say kernel corn. Itsy.

ANJA: It's *corn!*

*OLEG tosses the corn ears aside.*

*ANJA gives a passing glance to KRISTIN then DALE, and removes her rain cap.*

OLEG: I won't eat cob corn. (*looking in bag*) Where are plates?

ANJA: In bag.

OLEG: No.

*OLEG holds the bag upside down. Napkins, plastic forks and spoons fall out, but no paper plates.*

OLEG: In car?

ANJA: No plates? Bitch girl. I told her plates.

OLEG: You don't check?

ANJA: I don't. Drive forty minutes in fucking rainstorm to only twenty-four o'clock KFC. You need no plates. Eat from containers. I'm not hungry.

*ANJA removes her raincoat, revealing a very sexy short black dress and heels.*

*DALE continues to stand silent, in nothing but his underwear and socks, holding his pants, shirt, shoes, wallet and keys.*

OLEG (*under his breath, with a glance toward ANJA*): Dumb dumbbo.

*OLEG scans the room.*

OLEG: You hungry, Mister Dale?

DALE: I didn't think so before. Smells good, though.

OLEG: What about girl?

DALE: I bet so, sir. I'm sure she is. Hungry.

*OLEG goes to the closet and opens the folding door. He pulls down from the rod three wire, paper-covered hangers with a dry cleaners logo.*

*OLEG returns to the desk, brandishing the hangers victoriously.*

OLEG (to ANJA): Use these.

ANJA: As what?

OLEG (*handing the hangers to ANJA*): As plates. (*to DALE*) You like corn on cob?

DALE: I do, sir. (*with a look to KRISTIN*) Can I untie her so she can eat?

OLEG (*to ANJA*): Small servings, so not heavy. Chicken we hold. (*to DALE*) Chicken is starting recipe.

DALE: Original. I like that better than the extra crispy.

*ANJA is using the plastic spoons to serve out small portions of macaroni and cheese and coleslaw onto each of the three hangers. She places several potato wedges onto each as well.*

OLEG (*to DALE, gesturing*): Sit. You sit.

*DALE stacks everything he is holding in a neat pile in the corner of the room and then sits on the foot of the bed where he sat previously.*

*OLEG moves the desk chair to the television.*

OLEG (*referencing the TV*): This work?

DALE: Not good.

*With one hand holding the TV tray, OLEG uses his other hand to shove the television off the tray.*

*It crashes to the floor, startling DALE and ANJA. OLEG quickly looks to KRISTIN for a response, but there is none.*

ANJA: Shit you, Oleg.

*OLEG places the flimsy TV tray in front of his chair, ready to dine.*

*ANJA brings OLEG plastic utensils, several napkins, and a wire clothes hanger stacked with food. She does the same for DALE, then gestures to the third food-covered hanger.*

ANJA: What to do with this one?

OLEG: Bring chicken.

*ANJA takes the bucket of chicken to OLEG, who makes her wait while he unfolds a napkin onto which he places the four pieces he selects.*

*Then she holds out the bucket to DALE, who takes just one piece and unfolds a napkin on the bedspread.*

*OLEG looks at the food before him, then turns to ANJA.*

OLEG: Soda can machine on sidewalk by motel office has orange drink. Mister Dale, you want orange drink?

DALE: No thank you, sir.

OLEG: You must drink beverage. And water here I not trust.

DALE: Well, then, a Mr. Pibb, if they got it.

OLEG (to ANJA): Mister Dale will drink Mr. Pibb.

*OLEG finds this funny and laughs.*

OLEG (to ANJA): May to use my umbrella.

ANJA: For what?