

Black Flamingos

by

Julius Galacki

- 10 Page Excerpt -

CAST (in order of Appearance)

ACT I: (late June)

CECILIA *"She who drives."*

Late 20's, early 30's; tough and fiercely determined, her movements are quick and nimble; she is attractive in an unconventional way, and wears comfortable, clean travel clothes; she is on a quest.

JAKE *"A fucking black hole."*

Late 20's, early 30's; a walking id, concerned with the immediate fulfillment of his needs and wants; he is lithe, but fairly muscular with rugged good looks, but he is not particularly well-groomed.

MOSES *"A baby grown to man size."*

An apparent desert hermit of indeterminate age - from 45 to 55 - salt and pepper hair, sun-leathered skin, but possessed of a surprising physicality; he is smelly, unkempt and dirty.

ACT II: (3 days later, early July)

EV *"Just got one extra voice in my head."*

A child-woman, who maintains a disarming innocence; she is physically identical to Cecilia, however her hair is uncombed and she wears soiled clothing - like an untended little girl.

ISAAC *"Kind of lost my place in the world."*

The physical counterpart to Moses, however he manifests his evil in a far more sly, dapper even joyful way; while also a mountain man, he is vain about his appearance.

TOBIAS *"The written over type."*

A man of thought not action, trying to drive away from a bad situation; he is physically identical to Jake, however he is the picture of casual, yet tasteful, Southern California middle class.

Note: *These roles are meant to be double cast, i.e.*
Cecilia and Ev; Jake and Tobias; Moses and Isaac.

And the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself you shall not put forth your hand. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

The Book of Job

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish, and it swallowed up Jonah.

The Book of Jonah

I am that food which eats the eater of food.

from the Tattiriya Upanishad

The Atman is Eternal.

Atman is made of consciousness and mind: it is made of life and vision. It is made of the earth and the waters: it is made of air and space. It is made of light and darkness: it is made of desire and peace. It is made of anger and love: it is made of virtue and vice. It is made of all that is near: it is made of all that is afar. It is made of all.

from the Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad

Oh God said to Abraham, "Kill me a son"
Abe says, "Man, you must be puttin' me on"
God say, "No." Abe say, "What?"
God say, "You can do what you want Abe, but
The next time you see me comin' you better run"
Well Abe says, "Where do you want this killin' done?"
God says, "Out on Highway 61."

Bob Dylan

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*(The stage is black. A droning sound builds in intensity, then suddenly stops.
An isolated light focuses on Cecilia.)*

CECILIA

Not any voice, do you hear? Not just any voice I'm hearing. It's the Voice of God coming through a big snow-cone. One of those plastic orange snow-cones you see on the road. So His Voice - and God is a He, let me tell you, but not that cuddly Jesus on your dashboard. No, this Voice is loud and in the nose like it's coming through plastic. When you *see* that many mangled bodies, you hear God. And He's not too happy. Or, He's real happy. I just haven't figured out which.

*(Blackout. The sound of a car stopping and then a door opening. Lights up.
Cecilia is sitting, upstage, on a large flat "rock".*

Around this "rock" is the West - a dry, empty, open West.

*She is currently in the Nevada desert driving East on Route 80. Note, however,
she does not mime holding a steering wheel, nor does anyone else in the play.
The time is late afternoon, the end of June.*

*Jake enters carrying a duffel bag and holds a sign with only the word "East"
written on it. He is dressed in a white T-shirt and white painter's pants that
have become a bit stained and dusty from traveling.)*

CECILIA

If you feel safe in my car, get in.

*(Blackout. Lights up. Another part of desert. Jake and Cecilia are sitting on the
rock.)*

JAKE

Why are we stopping here?

CECILIA

I don't know where I am unless I can smell what's on the side of the road.

JAKE

You could just roll down the window.

CECILIA

(Standing and walking away from the "car.") See that grass move?

JAKE

Yeah.

CECILIA

Before the grass and us were moving at the same speed. You've got to stop to feel the earth move.

JAKE

You know I've never been picked up by a single woman. Single women never pick up men.

CECILIA

Oh, I got a knife.

JAKE

But are you fast?

CECILIA

(Shrugging.) Fast enough.

JAKE

Not that it matters to me.

CECILIA

You don't worry me.

I'm not harmless.

JAKE

Good. I like a challenge.

CECILIA

Yeah, whadda'ya got on your mind?

JAKE

(Slight pause.) You wear all white for a reason?

CECILIA

It's ancient hitch hiker lore.

JAKE

It shows the dirt.

CECILIA

Yeah, but more people will stop for ya'. They trust white.

JAKE

There are all kinds of white.

CECILIA

I'm the good kind.

JAKE

Uh, huh.

CECILIA

You ready to go?

JAKE

CECILIA

Not yet. My legs are stiff. I've been driving straight through.

JAKE

I can massage them real good.

CECILIA

No thanks.

JAKE

If ya' want, I *can* drive.

CECILIA

That's okay.

JAKE

You could even keep that knife of yours pressing on my skin while I'm driving. Honest. I'd actually enjoy the attention.

CECILIA

Would you.

JAKE

You haven't said more than 10 words to me in the car. It doesn't seem like you enjoy having company. Or is just me?

CECILIA

It's you. No, both.... Okay, I used to like company. Just not recently.

JAKE

Everybody has got needs. I'm very talented —

CECILIA

Where East are you headed?

JAKE

Lewiston, Maine.

CECILIA

Anything there?

JAKE

Not an awful lot. But I got a brother who will put me up awhile.

CECILIA

You been traveling a long time?

JAKE

Well, ya' know, I went looking for America.

CECILIA

You find her?

JAKE

(*Shrugging.*) I found a few good bars and some mean blues.

CECILIA

Delta or Chicago?

JAKE

Transplanted hybrid white boy shit. In Seattle of all places. But that guy blew a powerful harp.

CECILIA

Hungry?

JAKE

I could be if I think about it.

CECILIA

In the back seat, there's Pepsi and green apples. The apple will save your teeth from rotting.

JAKE

(Amused) That's all you eat?

CECILIA

Lately.

JAKE

I got some speed if you need it. Black Beauties. Very retro. Classic.

CECILIA

The caffeine's good enough.

JAKE

So where do you got to get to, that you can't stop to eat a proper meal?

CECILIA

I'll know when I get there.

JAKE

Just say, "None of your business." You don't have to bullshit me.

CECILIA

No bullshit. I've been South; I've been West. Right now, we're going East.

JAKE
No north?

CECILIA
That's next.

JAKE
Ah, so you're a human compass.

CECILIA
Ever seen the Badlands?

JAKE
Nope.

CECILIA
Neither have I.

JAKE
Now, *that's* a good reason.

CECILIA
Are we in tune?

(He moves in to claim his prey.)

JAKE
Oh yeah.

(She pivots gracefully and quickly.)

CECILIA
What are you looking for? What do you think you'll find in Lewiston, Maine?

JAKE

I thought I'd give leather repair a chance. I'm good with leather.

CECILIA

You're avoiding the question.

JAKE

Not at all. I don't have the least fucking idea. It just seemed I should *want* to stop moving. 'Cause I do *anything* I want, and the one thing I can't seem to do, is stop.

CECILIA

So you're trying to carve your own leash?

JAKE

Maybe. It's just been way too easy for me to get up and leave. I got this gut feeling that there's something missing in me. Something heavy that anchors you down. That's what I'm looking to find: weight, ballast.

CECILIA

So, you've only used those knives *just* for leather? Ain't carved nobody up yet?

JAKE

You saw my tools?

CECILIA

On the road. Earlier, when you opened your bag. I have excellent peripheral vision. You could gut a cow with that big blade.

JAKE

Sorry, honey, I'm a lover not a fighter.... You seem disappointed.

CECILIA

Not yet. I've heard that when you leash a junkyard dog, it only gets meaner.

(She pats his head or some other gesture that combines being dismissive and flirting, provoking and comforting and a myriad other similar dualities.)

CECILIA *(cont'd)*

Let's drive now. Then later, you can decide if you want to stay with me.

(Blackout. A few notes of the dry sound of a steel guitar are heard: Robert Johnson's "Crossroads Blues". That fades out while the buzzing, drone sound briefly re-appears. Lights up on Cecilia. Jake is sleeping.)

CECILIA

Yep, I'm a modern Orpheus, but I can't play any music. Except what's on my tape player. A little country blues, some rag time swing. I'm the patron saint of the sun baked, warped cassette tape....

(Glancing at the sleeping Jake.)

I told him, we'd be hitting Utah soon. *(Directly, to him.)* You're missing the moonlight on the salt flats, Jake. Nothing grows out here. It's a white dead world filled with statues.... We'll have to give each other names soon. I'll call you, "Badger Man," and I'll be...I'll let you call me...

JAKE

"She Who Drives."

CECILIA

Ah, you woke up.

JAKE

(Squinting.) With the reflection, it's like blue daylight out there.

(Cecilia's head suddenly to the left and she pulls over just as suddenly.)

CECILIA

Time to stop.

JAKE

Again?

CECILIA

Yep.

(She is out of the car. Jake stays seated.)

JAKE

You act like you're gonna wet your pants.

CECILIA

I feel it. There's a de- ...There's something out there.

(Jake stands up but he doesn't move far from the car /rock.)

JAKE

There's nothing out there.

CECILIA

You don't feel the hairs on your arms, do you?

JAKE

(Snorting, then...) I feel nothing but tired.

CECILIA

(Joyful) I hoped that you'd feel nothing!

JAKE

Is it worth asking you if, no, why you're crazy?

CECILIA

You're big and strong. What do you have to be afraid of?

JAKE

My curiosity.