

A Toast to Our Enslavement
A Play
by
Alyssa Torralva

Characters

TALBOT, Administrator of Earth and Voice of The Tower, resident number R3MP3R0R

SAM MARTINEZ, A middle aged latino man working as security for The Tower, resident number R5UN

UF00I, blindly following the way of the world, doesn't care too much. Naive

DASH ONE, loves the way things are, possibly naive, married to DASH TWO

DASH TWO, at odds with their spouse, hates the TOWER and everything it stands for, at the edge of their limit, married to DASH ONE

TOWER, oppressive force that dominates the world, ?

Setting

Post apocalyptic world run by an organization simply called The Tower. Semi-Retro/Modern. MARTINEZ's apartment after work on the anniversary of The Towers takeover.

Lights up to reveal an empty apartment. Parts of the surrounding wallpaper have since ripped and peeled to deliberate lack of care. Alcohol bottles line most if not all of the countertops. All furnishings hold a visual greenish hue and stain marks, as well as wear and tear. The only thing in the room boding for attention is a radio in the corner of the room, it emits a low hum of static and shines a dim light into the room.

A secondary sound emits, delivering a slow rumble that grows closer and fades as a light passes by the darkened window.

There's a thump at the door. Followed by another heavier impact. With a third the door swings open with a small spray of fractured wood, causing SAM to stumble through the doorway, barely catching himself. He rights himself, showing off his uniform with the words TOWER written across the chest like a SWAT vest. He turns around to close the door. He struggles to do so but eventually the door comes to rest.

He turns and stares blankly into his dark apartment for a moment before taking off his uniform.

SAM

(Taking off his top) God fucking-

The rest of his uniform comes off with a visual jolt, stopping his speech. SAM now wears a simple yellowed t-shirt and pants. He moves to the kitchen and unholsters his service firearm and tosses it into the silverware drawer with a crash. Afterwards he moves across the kitchenette and immediately pours himself a drink and puts the bottle down with a thud.

The Radio then flicks itself to life.

TALBOT

(Over the radio) Hello inhabitants of Sector 16 and a Happy Entrallment Day to each of you! Before we get into tonight's festivities and comradery, we want you all to please stand for the Pledge of Obedience!

The Radio drones on with a cacophony of children and young adult voices. The pledge contains the occasional stutter in speech and brief static. The dialog from the radio fades slightly as surrounding audio picks up revealing

the sound of muffled voices speaking to the vague tempo of the radio.

Sam looks up at his ceiling, sighs, and pours more of the drink into his glass and walks towards the dilapidated sofa. His fingers hold on the tip of the bottle causing it to tip slightly in his direction before his hand grasps around the neck and is dragged with him in his movement.

TALBOT

(Clapping emits over the radio as The Pledge of Obedience finishes.) Wow, a quick thank you to our lovely Sector 16 Chorus group for coming by to lend their wonderful voices to the TOWER.

SAM

(Scoffs)

TALBOT

Now with that out of the way we can continue our night of revelry! For the first order of the night, we have some fireworks prepared to go off as our broadcast plays, so for our adults, be ready to take a shot everytime one goes off! These will end with a wonderful firework show brought to you from the TOWER itself, what a treat! *(A chuckle emits from the radio, accompanied by slight static)* Next, in the middle of our broadcast we will have a guest questionnaire where we will be calling a few lucky residents, whereupon you will be asked a series of questions. Getting all of them right will earn them and their family two weeks worth of ration packs! *(“Oooo” sound effect plays over the radio)* And lastly, as our broadcast concludes, we will get a brief word, spoken directly from the TOWER’s inner circle.

Clapping emits over the radio once again accompanied by hoots and hollers from the apartment above.

A moment passes before TALBOT continues speaking.

TALBOT

Now speaking of fireworks, I think I hear-

A firework echoes loudly in the distance,
causing the window to glow a radiant magenta
light.

TALBOT

Yes indeed, you know what that means residents! Raise your glasses and give a big toast to our subjugation!

SAM raises a glass in the air disheartedly.
Before the glass moves to meet his lips. The
radio then plays a short classical piece.

The stage lights dim, leaving the stage in
darkness. Another flash of magenta light crawls
along the apartment walls. We see SAM stand as
the stage returns to darkness. Another flash; we
see SAM moving rightwards towards the
kitchenette. This time we see more bottles start
to appear lining the counters and tables. The
stage once again returns to dark. A final
explosion of the sickening pinkish hue coats the
room in its filth. This time, as SAM stands
facing the Counter in a pose of anguish we see
the window being silhouetted by the image of a
tower in the distance. The lights then return to
normal as we see SAM attempting to pour a
bottle into a glass only to find it empty.

The classical piece comes to an end with the
notes F-E-F-D-E-C. (The Dies Irae)

TALBOT

And we're back! Thank you to all the wonderful composers who were able to lend their talent to tonight's festivities once again! (*TALBOT applauds*) Now, let's get into our questionnaire and ring our first resident.

A ringing sound echoes within the apartment as
SAM turns to face the radio. He stumbles
forward, clearly inebriated.
SAM reaches the couch next to the radio and
leans closer to it in a slouched position. As he

does the ringing stops. A younger voice then comes over the broadcast.

UF00I

(Nervously) Uhm, hello?

TALBOT

Hello! Is this Resident U-F-0-0-I?

UF00I

Yes it is! Oh my gosh, hi! Is this for the questionnaire?

TALBOT

Indeed it is! Do you think you have a chance to win tonight's prize?

UF00I

Uh maybe! I can at least give it a go!

TALBOT

Alright well you better be because your time starts now!

Static blares from the radio for a moment causing SAM to wince away slightly. The sound quickly turns into cheerful background music.

SAM

(In annoyance) Ah! Fuck you...

SAM puts the empty bottle to his lips for a second before remembering it's empty to his frustration.

TALBOT

First Question - How many years has it been since the TOWER so gracefully gave us our new lives?

SAM

(Monotone and deadpan; as if he's sick of answering the question) 43 years.

UF00I

Uhm... I think it's been about 43 years?

TALBOT

That is... *(Pauses deliberately to build tensions)* Correct! Next question - Four years after our enthrallment, what substance was outlawed by the TOWER?

SAM

(Monotone and deadpan) Autonomy.

UF00I

Gosh... uhh...? I think it was salt? *(with uncertainty)* Right?

TALBOT

That answer is... *(Pauses again but somehow does it in a way that makes you wanna punch him)* Correct! You're 3 questions away from winning that prize! You ready for the next question?

SAM

Prick.

UF00I

(Excitedly) Yes! *(Deeper; Trying to appear less excited)* Yes.

TALBOT

Next question - What flavor of Spaun Soda is the TOWERS most popular beverage?

At this point SAM stands up with his fingers rubbing his eyes. He moves to the kitchenette and opens a couple drawers before stopping and taking out a small pill bottle. He reads the back of the bottle as the radio continues.

UF00I

Oh gosh! I don't know... To be honest I'm a fan of the yellow ones but I know my co-workers aren't. Uhm... I think it's the blue one? No! Red!

TALBOT

Is that your final answer?

UF00I

(Hestience) Yes!

TALBOT

That answer is... *(pause like an asshole)* Incorrect! I'm so sorry! Better luck next time!

UF00I

Gosh damn it! I was- *(is cut off)*

SAM finishes reading the bottle and rubs his eyes again. He holds the pose for a second before moving to open the container and throws a single pill into his mouth.

TALBOT

Alright, let's get our next resident on the line.

The sound of ringing is heard again. This time a secondary ringing is heard, though more muffled. SAM looks up at this revelation. Both ringing stops and an older woman's voice comes onto the broadcast.

TALBOT

Hello, is this Residents R-10-V-3-R-5?

DASH ONE

Oh goodness me! *(Her voice turns away from the phone and is clearly talking to someone else now)* Sweetheart, Mr. Talbot called us for the questionnaire! I told you this would be our year!

DASH TWO responds, though unintelligible.

DASH ONE

(Her voice comes back in full clarity; and with an old woman charm/flirt in her voice) Hello, Mr. Talbot.

TALBOT

Hello. I take it by your beautiful voice that you're Resident R-1-0-V-3-R-5 dash one?

DASH ONE

This is her, yes.

TALBOT

I take it you're ready to answer a few questions, then?

DASH ONE

(With confidence) Yes! Absolutely!

TALBOT

Well let's get started, shall we? Your first question - In last year's announcements, the TOWER used what metaphor to describe “liberty”?

DASH ONE

Oh I know this one! It was-

DASH TWO responds in the background again.
His tone clearly showing disapproval. Though
once again the specifics are unintelligible.

DASH ONE

(Turned away from the phone) Oh hush. *(Returning to the phone)* It was “cattle believing they knew how to run a farm.”

TALBOT

That is... *(pause)* Correct! Well done! Now let's move on to question two - What is the symbolic significance to the triple chain present in the TOWERs flag?

DASH ONE

Oh that's simple! It's symbolic of our united and bound purpose. Is it not?

TALBOT

Ooo, sorry that is only partially correct. But I'll tell you what - If you can clarify a little more, I'll give you the point, deal?

DASH ONE

Oh thank you! Uh... Let me think...

DASH TWO

(Muffled and far away) Ask the muppet if he likes sitting in the booster seat daddy gave him.

DASH ONE

Oh hush now, I'm not gonna say that!

DASH TWO

(Slightly closer) I bet he needs to wear diapers after having so many hands shoved up his ass.
(Speaking directly into the phone; in a mocking tone) Hey have you heard of muppet necking?

DASH ONE

(Pushing DASH TWO away) (In annoyance) Oh god damn it Hugh! *(The sounds of a light scuffle)*

TALBOT

I presume that would be dash two? Care to put him on the line?

The scuffling on the line stops. SAM seems unable to determine whether to look up or at the radio. Eventually the silence is broken.

DASH ONE

Uh sure...*(DASH ONE hands DASH TWO the phone)*

DASH TWO

(A moment passes) Hello...?

TALBOT

Hello R-10-V-3-R-5 dash two. Do you have anything you'd like to say?

DASH TWO

(Now sheepish) No... Not really...

TALBOT

It's alright. You're able to disclose your opinions here.

DASH TWO

(DASH TWO waits a moment) Well. You haven't been exactly easy on us lately. I mean ration packs were increased to double the price they were just two days ago! Not to mention half the people at my work have been let go. Sure I'm lucky I wasn't let go with em, but that ain't exactly the point there, chief.

TALBOT

That's entirely understandable. Tell you what, I'll send some people over to your residence and we will make sure that you get the extra help you need. Does that sound good?

DASH TWO

Uh... Yeah Sure! That would be wonder- (*Cut off*)

TALBOT

Well, we will be sure that they will get the help they need, anyway back with our next caller-

The radio is tuned out as SAM walks around his apartment. The sound of DASH ONE and DASH TWO arguing can be heard above. SAM moves about his apartment, trailing the voice of DASH ONE. Another firework goes off, once again illuminating the silhouette of the tower in the window curtains. A dull thud vibrates through the apartment. SAMs head shoots down at the floor below him. His face in a state of knowing dismay. A dozen or so footsteps muffled by the walls rebound continuously as his gaze slowly lifts upwards facing the back right corner of his apartment. Eventually his eyes stop as they come to rest on the ceiling directly above his door. Three thuds are heard. DASH ONE and DASH TWO stop for a moment as SAMs head spins to face the spot that he heard them last. DASH ONE says something and her footsteps move towards the spot above the door as SAMs gaze follows. DASH ONE says something before chaos echoes from the floor above. SAMs head is glued in the upright position as he hears DASH ONE and DASH TWO get tossed about their apartment. DASH ONE and DASH TWO try to cry for help but their speech is interrupted and goes silent. The sounds continue for a moment, clearly still a struggle, but soon all noise stops. SAMs eyes unable to break from the unknown chaos upstairs.

Slow and methodical footsteps walk about the upstairs apartment. SAM moves as if to not get caught in its way. This movement pushes him to

the very corner of his kitchenette. The footsteps then walk out.

Sam stands there in shock for a couple seconds before moving to the drawer he found the pills. He takes out the container and downs a couple extra before seating himself on the ground by sliding his back down the wall. SAMs eyes are wild, staring forward. Another firework explodes sending pink light across the room like a smattering of blood.

TALBOT

Question one - Do you think they'll make it til' morning?

SAM leans to his left and looks into his living room where the radio is.

TALBOT

Or do you think they're already gone?

SAM

The fuck...?

SAM slowly gets up with a grunt and walks towards the living room.

TALBOT

Is that your final answer?

SAM

I don't understand.

TALBOT

(Having fun and toying) Of course you understand. I mean you do it basically every day! I'm sure you have theories on what they're doing to them.

SAM walks closer to the radio. Each step he makes is deliberate. When he reaches the radio he cautiously picks it up.

TALBOT

(Yelling) ARE YOU LISTENING?

SAM jumps back and falls to the ground as he throws the radio which lands in the chair next to the couch.

TALBOT

(TALBOT laughs; There is an underlying genuineness to how he laughs while also feeling sinister)

SAM

What the FUCK is happening?

TALBOT

Well your times up anyway. The answer was that they probably are already dead. But if they are alive you just KNOW what kinda fun comes next, huh?

SAM

(SAM grabs his head as if trying to knock himself out of a trance)

TALBOT

Trying to knock yourself out of it won't help and sure as hell won't get rid of me. So might as well have some fun, yea?

SAM

(Angrily) Be quiet!

The radio stops and the apartment goes silent. SAM breathes for a couple seconds before attempting to stand. He walks over to the counter and puts his hands on it to try and ground himself. After a moment he pushes a bottle off the counter and it shatters into the floor.

TALBOT

How about a toast? A quick toast. A toast to our subjugation... *(TALBOT laughs)* No no no. That's much too cheesy. And frankly only half true. How about a toast to our enslavement, huh?

I mean what did we do with our miserable lives anyway. I mean we were pieces of shit. Truly! People SUCKED.

SAMs turns back with an exacerbated expression.

TALBOT

But you know I think this whole lack of freedom thing is pretty freaking great! I mean granted I'm over here drinking champagne, which might I tell you (*he sips*) is fantastic, but you're you're over there drinking crappy beer mixed with piss. But still: freedom was much too stressful. It was awful. But now we're free to be chained as we please.

SAM

You are a fucking prick.

TALBOT

(*With food in his mouth*) So you keep telling me. Prick prick prick, it's all you call me. You seriously got to expand your vocabulary.

SAM

I would but you only deserve the one.

TALBOT

I don't know if I should feel special or offended. For now I'll go with "special" because you know what will happen to you if it's the latter.

SAM

Yeah and I don't exactly give a damn.

TALBOT

Oh it's not polite to lie now is it? I mean there's a reason that you are only telling this to a radio in your apartment, right? Why you come home everyday and drink yourself under the table. And then wake up and go do the same damn job, one that you're remarkably good at by the way, I mean like you deserve a (*emphasis*) promotion.

SAM walks about his apartment and moves to a spot, holding both the radio and the window in his periphery.

TALBOT

I mean if you're asking for my opinion, I'd say there's a part of you that likes it. Likes a world where the one thing you gotta hate is the big bad thing in the sky. Everything else can be filled with alcohol, sex, and more booze. I mean otherwise why would you do your job so damn well? Why would you- (*Cut off*)

SAM turns his head briefly to the radio.

SAM

(*Pissed off*) Are you finally done talking?

The radio doesn't make a sound. The apartment is filled with an oppressive silence. Another firework goes off, the pink grime plasters the walls again as the TOWER becomes silhouetted. SAMs head turns to the window, then back at the radio, then back out the window. The Radio once again springs to life, but not with TALBOTs voice.

TOWER

Trusted devotees and sycophants, we wish to thank you for your continued servitude towards our wonderful collective. Your effort has not gone unnoticed, nor will it go unrecognized. We hope to continue this trend as we move into our next year of continued and unwavering dominion.

Another firework sends its fluorescence curling around each corner of the apartment. The silhouette of the TOWER looks different, as if now only bearing a crude resemblance to the previous shape. SAM tilts his head to the side and takes a step back in the process.

TOWER

Your freedom was your cage, and now you are bound and free. Your bondage has become your salvation. Your enslavement has become your victory. Your fate was fraught with torment, but now it is one that will mold you into your most perfect self. Be not afraid - For it is beautiful.

Another echoing boom sounds as the gnarled radiant glow grips itself into the floorboards. The Tower now enters an uncanny appearance. Its sides twist and curl into an abnormal and

indescribable form. SAM steps back more hurriedly this time. He steps behind furniture as if thinking he could easily duck behind it and hide from the beast that only exists in flashes. The momentary darkness fills the room once again as SAM trips and stumbles back.

TOWER

As our new stage is set, we all take our roles - and you fill yours wonderfully. We will be sure to keep a watchful eye as we move forward. To ensure that our performance goes smoothly once again. But I can assure you-

The silent dark is soon interrupted by the discordant symphony of booms and crackles that rhyme so vaguely as to attempt to describe the monster present. Its form now is ever moving, ever shifting, and ever hungry. SAM continues moving back as the entire apartment is swallowed by the light. Its putrid color invading every cavity hidden by the shell of a soul. SAM pushes past knocking over a table in the process. His fingers dip into the floorboards effortlessly as he pulls himself to any glimpse of escape. The tower morphs again. Its writhing tentacles and malicious face give way to a circle at its center that malforms itself into the parody of an eye. A watchful being devoid of personhood.

TOWER

We will be (*Pause*) beautiful.

END OF PLAY.