

foxhole

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ACT I

Young voices. Imaginary battle. MARJORIE and BARNACLE.

MARJORIE

Take inventory, Barnacle, what's left?

BARNACLE

Our radio. One sack of onions. Rope. Cap gun.

MARJORIE

Loaded?

BARNACLE fires the cap gun. Pow!

BARNACLE

Loaded.

MARJORIE

What else?

BARNACLE

Nothing else.

MARJORIE

Onions, rope, cap gun.

BARNACLE

That's it.

MARJORIE

If we're going to win war today we'll have to come up with something real turbo-clever.

BARNACLE

We could rig up some kind of sling and shell them with onions. Or we could slip the caps into the onions themselves, and when the enemy tries to eat them, they'll detonate.

MARJORIE

What else?

BARNACLE

That's all my crafty ideas. My advice, we ought to bargain. We've lost. Concede today for advantage tomorrow.

MARJORIE

We can't concede, not today. Think harder!

BARNACLE

I can't!

MARJORIE

You're so dumb sometimes, Barnacle.

BARNACLE

Well, I'm trying to give you smart advice now.
Conditional surrender, like you get an extra pick when
you choose armies tomorrow. Or you get to fight from
the fort by the park bathrooms, so your army doesn't
have to pee in the alley.

MARJORIE

Not today. I'm not conceding. Today I'm sticking to
principles.

BARNACLE

Does that ever win wars? Or will that just condemn you
to die heroically? I'm advocating for ruthless
pragmatism.

BLISTER

(over radio)

Come in, hello! Hello, General Marjorie!

MARJORIE

Blister?

BLISTER

General Blister, yes. Let's enjoy decorum, this day
especially, right, General? Over.

MARJORIE

What do you want?

BLISTER

The sun's all the way behind the church steeple. It's
time to declare a victor and discuss terms. Over.

MARJORIE

Not yet, Blister. We want to declare an extension.

BLISTER

I veto the extension. The Action Bowling West Coast
Qualifier is live on channel seventeen tonight. My
dad'll break shit if I'm not home in time. Over.

MARJORIE

Barnacle's last day is more important than the bowling
tournament.

BLISTER

That's cute. You don't know my dad.

MARJORIE

Fine. Send someone over. We'll talk terms.

BLISTER

Stand by. Blister out.

End radio transmission.

BARNACLE

I know it sucks.

MARJORIE

What sucks?

BARNACLE

How I have to move away and stuff.

MARJORIE

It's not your fault.

BARNACLE

I told Mom a bunch of times I didn't want to. Every day before school I said, 'I feel sick but I bet I'd feel better if we didn't have to move away this summer.'

MARJORIE

Yeah.

BARNACLE

But it didn't work. School ended. Now summer's ending too.

MARJORIE

Yeah.

BARNACLE

You can come visit us in Cleveland sometime. Ask your parents.

MARJORIE

So you think it's time to give up, huh?

BARNACLE

Perry and Reynaldo never came back from morning raid. They're prob'ly captured. Just us now.

MARJORIE

Captured, maybe. Or they were never on our side to begin with.

BARNACLE

What do you mean?

MARJORIE

Perry and Reynaldo have always been in our army, every day this summer. Every day one of them has got captured. Then, it seems like Blister's army knows exactly where our flags are and how to get our other soldiers out.

BARNACLE

You think Blister's rigged the game?

MARJORIE

Not just Blister.

BARNACLE

Shit.

MARJORIE

Yeah.

BARNACLE

Shit!

MARJORIE

It's almost funny. All of them. All summer long, all of them against Marjorie.

BARNACLE

Not me.

MARJORIE

I know. Not you. You stuck to principles.

BARNACLE

You're right.

MARJORIE

But these are the new rules of the game. And I'm not gonna concede to crooks.

BARNACLE

Alright. Alright, so let's fight back. You got a plan?

MARJORIE

Not yet, so think hard.

BARNACLE

We still got nothing but onions and rope and a--

BLISTER.

BLISTER

Hello up there! Barnacle? General Marjorie?

BARNACLE

Is that Blister?

MARJORIE

Yeah.

BARNACLE

He came himself?

MARJORIE

I guess so.

BARNACLE

I got my plan.

MARJORIE

But envoys have safe passage.

BLISTER

Can I come up?

BARNACLE

You want to win this war?

MARJORIE

Yeah.

BARNACLE

Come on up, General Blister.

BLISTER climbs up into their space.

MARJORIE

You came yourself?

BLISTER

Yeah.

MARJORIE

Why?

BLISTER

Big day. Wanted to handle it myself. Like Lee and Grant at Appomattox. Like any of the famous endings, you know?

BARNACLE

Yeah. Big day.

MARJORIE
Yeah.

BLISTER
So I'm here to accept your surrender.

MARJORIE
Personally.

BLISTER
Yeah.

BARNACLE
And alone.

BLISTER
My guys are carving a memorial in the mesquite tree next to our fort. The rest are recovering our flags from the hiding places. Cleaning up.

MARJORIE
We'll have some terms.

BLISTER
Terms? What terms?

MARJORIE
Terms for surrender. Your victory. Whatever.

BLISTER
Summer's over, Marj. Maybe another time you'd get an extra pick or a better position, but this is the end.

MARJORIE
We haven't shook on it. War's still on until we shake, and you and me have got some business to resolve.

BLISTER
Why are you making this difficult? Have some respect for your enemy. And for yourself; it's ugly, drawing things out this way. It embarrasses everybody.

BARNACLE
Marjorie.

MARJORIE
What?

BARNACLE
Get ready.

BLISTER
Hang on--

BARNACLE
Now!

They jump on BLISTER. They struggle. They knock him to the ground and kick him until he quits struggling. MARJORIE gets the rope around his hands.

MARJORIE
Now you're our prisoner. Now we have something to bargain with. Barnacle, dump out that onion sack. Put it on him like a hood.

BARNACLE does so; the onions tumble out; BLISTER's voice is a bit muffled.

BLISTER
You can't do this!

BARNACLE
Who's your second?

BLISTER
You can't do this. We have rules. Envoys get safe passage, every day, no matter what.

MARJORIE
Who's your second?

BLISTER
This sack smells like onions. It stings my eyes.

MARJORIE
I'll take it off after you tell us. Second-in-command. Who?

BLISTER
Reynaldo.

MARJORIE
Reynaldo was my pick. He was in my army. You up to some shit, Blister? Hmm?

She waits for BLISTER to respond, but he has nothing to say.

MARJORIE
In my army, silence is an admission of guilt. Barnacle.

BARNACLE
Yeah.

MARJORIE
Go talk to Reynaldo. Set up an exchange: we'll give back Blister for all their flags.

BARNACLE
You want me to go alone?

MARJORIE
Who's gonna go with you? I have to stay with him.

BARNACLE
But what if they just take me prisoner too?

MARJORIE
Then it's going to be a long night.

BLISTER
I have to get home.

MARJORIE
Oh, for the bowling broadcast? I hope your boys know that. Barnacle, go.

BARNACLE
On it.

BARNACLE goes.

BLISTER
He'll be safe. They won't risk anything happening to me.

MARJORIE
Anything worse, you mean.

BLISTER
Yeah. Anything worse. Can you please take this hood off?

MARJORIE
If you promise to shut up. Promise?

BLISTER says nothing.

MARJORIE
Good start.

She takes the hood off. He's silent. But only for a second.

BLISTER

I told you, my dad. He's prob'ly already drinking. I need to get home.

MARJORIE

I promise I don't care. Shut up or it's the onion hood.

BLISTER

Look. I tried to tell my boys to let you have this one. Leave our flags undefended. Let you and Barnacle get some easy outs.

MARJORIE

Why?

BLISTER

We've won all summer long.

MARJORIE

You cheated all summer long.

BLISTER

They didn't want to take a dive. Not for you. But they might work it out with Barnacle. You'll get your win and we'll all go home. No war tomorrow, though. No more armies. No more summer, no more Barnacle. Cleveland's far.

MARJORIE

Shut up.

BLISTER

O, it's far. What will you do? The school year is long, and Cleveland is far, and many summers follow; and after Barnacle, I don't think we'll ever play this game again. Who will be in your army now? Abandoned by Barnacle, betrayed by the rest. I think this must be it. Even if we let you win today, this must be it.

MARJORIE

Maybe. Maybe not. I can fight alone.

BLISTER

You could. You could pledge your love and honor to Barnacle and fight alone, but I don't think you will.

MARJORIE

I can fight alone for days and summers and years and forever.

BLISTER

You might love Barnacle, but that undying eternal-torment type of love isn't real. That's movie

(MORE)

BLISTER (cont'd)

shit. That's kid shit. You might suffer for a while.
That's fine. Cherish your suffering while you have it,
because you'll lose that too.

MARJORIE

Enough. Onion hood.

She hoods BLISTER with the empty onion sack. He continues talking, muffled.

BLISTER

Because one day will come when you don't think about him, another day you'll realize it's been months since you did, and the final time, you won't even realize that's the end. Just Mopey Marjorie, finally all alone. Miserable, mopey Marjorie, all alone, she thought she was sad because Barnacle left, but her sadness was so lifelike she didn't realize it had simply replaced her soul.

Marjorie?

Silence.

BLISTER

(cont.)

Marjorie? Marjorie, don't leave me here. It's getting late and I can't see. Where are you? This isn't funny, Marj. Come back. I can't see.

BARNACLE returns.

BARNACLE

Marj. They won't make the exchange. They say we should do whatever we want with him.

BLISTER

Marj?

MARJORIE

Shut up, Blister, let Barnacle talk.

BLISTER

I knew you wouldn't just leave me here.

BARNACLE

They don't want him back. The carving in the mesquite tree says: Honor General Reynaldo. You're betrayed, Blister.

MARJORIE

So it goes when you make an army of spies.

BARNACLE

What now?

MARJORIE

That's it. There's nothing else to do. Blister's useless to us now, war's over. Summer's done. Honor Reynaldo, who beat us both. Where's that cap gun?

BARNACLE

What do you want with it?

BLISTER

Gun?

MARJORIE

What do you think happens to useless hostages, Blister?

BLISTER

Marjorie, no, we can still work something out.

MARJORIE

You want the hood on, or off?

BARNACLE

You're not supposed to point that at someone. It's dangerous.

BLISTER

Barnacle, take it away from her!

MARJORIE

On. Hood stays on. Less messy that way.

BLISTER

Barnacle, help me!

BARNACLE

Marj, no!

Bang!

Bang!

BARNACLE

What did you do that for?

MARJORIE

He made me. You made me.

BARNACLE

Just because you wanted to win?

MARJORIE

Not just because. But I did want to win.

BARNACLE

We never win.

MARJORIE

I thought if we did, once, then--

BARNACLE

Then what? I don't get to choose. I wouldn't choose Cleveland if I got to choose.

MARJORIE

Maybe you would have, though. Or next summer. Then what?

BLISTER

Then nothing.

MARJORIE

You shut up. I killed you. Pretend to be dead.

BLISTER

But I have to go. My dad, you know? Untie me.

BARNACLE

I'll do it.

BLISTER

No, don't. I want Marjorie to do it.

She does.

BLISTER

I'd have got you somehow. Reynaldo can beat me, but not you.

MARJORIE

You can't talk. You're dead. Go home and pretend to be dead.

BLISTER

Okay. See ya, Barnacle.

BARNACLE

See ya.

MARJORIE

You better go too. I'll kill you if you don't. Bury you down below and cover you with onions. Bang bang.

BARNACLE

Don't point that at me.

MARJORIE

Then fight or run. Stay or go. Hurry home or you might get hurt. Bang bang bang.

BARNACLE

Okay.

Okay.

He goes. He starts to run.

End of play.