

into light of canaan (olive oil play)

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Scene 1: OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO

*Sounds of typing. A sigh.
Noises of an 8-bit video game. Chiptune soundtrack
and retro sound effects. Buttons clicking and
clacking.*

*A door swings and the attached bell rings. The
setting: OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO, a specialty
olive oil shop in Vermilion, Arizona. Umberto is
there, playing a video game, as Clarissa enters.*

CLARISSA

Umberto. Are you busy?

UMBERTO

Yes. I mean no, Clarissa. No.

Video game noises cease.

CLARISSA

Good.

I came to Vermilion to open an olive oil shop, in that
it would be Vermilion's only olive oil shop. OLIVE
YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO, Vermilion's solitary one-stop
specialty olive oil shop. You see this? Come here. My
hands. My hands are quite literally quaking with rage.

UMBERTO

No they're--

CLARISSA

I did not come to Vermilion to write a chapter of rage
and rivalry in the annals of olive oil history. You see
that? They finished their sign today, that shop across
the street. LADY DOYLE'S ROYAL OILS.

UMBERTO

What are you worried about? We have a bigger selection
and a nicer facility. We have the market locked down.
They'll be gone in two weeks.

CLARISSA

We also have a more friendly, robust, and productive
staff.

UMBERTO

I know. They'll be gone in two weeks, surely.

CLARISSA

Surely?

"Surely" the good will be rewarded and the wicked
punished, yes? "Surely" the sun will set tonight and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLARISSA (cont'd)

rise again tomorrow. "Surely" LADY DOYLE'S ROYAL OILS
will be gone in two weeks.

The video-game noises begin again.

CLARISSA

Not a one of these is certain. They are ensured by
various forces. The judgment of heaven, the cycles of
gravity... what will ensure that our shop shall persist
and that one shall perish?

UMBERTO

I don't know. Capitalism? The invisible hand?

CLARISSA

I stick my hands into the sleeves of my sweater. Are
they invisible? No. They are fists, and as I said, they
are literally quaking with rage.
Nothing is certain, Umberto. Nothing is certain but
death, oblivion, the ceaseless millstone of time
operated by the steady hand of god.
What shall we do?

UMBERTO

Do? I don't know. I'm busy. Let me work. Aren't you
busy?

CLARISSA

I'm going out. Mind the store. The customers. You know.
Carry on.

UMBERTO

Carry on?

CLARISSA

Carry on.

UMBERTO

As I am?

CLARISSA

Both of us.

They carry on.

CLARISSA

The fucking audacity!
There are seven hundred citizens in Vermilion. They
shop here. That is the order of things.

UMBERTO

What about tourism?

CLARISSA

Look how smug they look, over there, arranging their boxes and shit. Scum-peddlers. I hate them.

UMBERTO

You don't even know them.

CLARISSA

I take what I hate in myself, and I use it to create my perceptions of others. Take a letter.

UMBERTO

K.

Typing.

CLARISSA

Dear proprietors of Lady Doyle's Royal Oils:

UMBERTO

(interrupting)

Marissa.

CLARISSA

What?

UMBERTO

Her name is Marissa, Clarissa. Marissa Doyle.

CLARISSA

You met her?

UMBERTO

Yeah.

CLARISSA

Disloyal!

UMBERTO

No! I just met her!

CLARISSA

(interrupting)

(typing resumes)

DEAR PROPRIETORS OF LADY DOYLE'S ROYAL OILS:

We welcome you to the small-business community of Vermilion. In this township, we celebrate the virtues of the free market. We place our trust first in God,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLARISSA (cont'd)

then in the sacred work of kapital. Business must serve community. And while we appreciate your appreciation for--no, strike that--while we applaud your appreciation for the proliferate gifts of the plumpest fruit, we trust you will recognize that Vermilion's specialty olive-oil needs are well-met by OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO, conveniently located across the street from your new property. Therefore, we demand that you cease operations as LADY DOYLE'S ROYAL OILS and prepare a business the community really needs, or we will be forced to evict you immediately.

UMBERTO

That it?

CLARISSA

Signed, Marcus Jefferson Davis Belgium, Mayor of Vermilion.

UMBERTO

Are you sure?

CLARISSA

Do it.

(more typing... a printer, paper folding, a stamp.)

UMBERTO

You're just going to take this over and stick it in their mail slot, now?

CLARISSA

No.

UMBERTO

Good, because that kind of sounded like a stupid plan.

CLARISSA

You're going to take it over and stick it in their mail slot.

UMBERTO

Why?

CLARISSA

Would you do it for a bottle of Jack and a raise? \$8.40?

UMBERTO

I'll do it for a case of Jack and \$10.15.

(CONTINUED)

CLARISSA

Ambitious worm!

UMBERTO

There is a leak in my ceiling, over my bedroom. It drips on my head as I sleep. I move out of the way, but my wife in her sleep moves closer to me, because our apartment is cold. Then the leak begins to drip on her head.

With this raise we can move to a two-bedroom in West Vermilion. I will sell the Jack Daniels to college freshmen in order to make the security deposit.

CLARISSA

Fine. Done. Take the letter and go.

The door opens. The bell rings.

SCENE 2: LADY DOYLE'S ROYAL OILS

*Sounds of a nail gun. It strikes four times.
Pause. Four more times. Pause. Four more times.
Pause. MARISSA is working.*

The door opens, creaky and slow. UMBERTO enters.

UMBERTO

Marissa?

MARISSA

Hey. I'm almost done with the specialty sandwich board, to show the special solutions on sale, out on the sidewalk. What's up?

UMBERTO

I have a letter for you.

MARISSA

From Clarissa?

UMBERTO

Actually, no. It's from the Mayor.

MARISSA

The mayor?

She takes the letter and reads it.

MARISSA

What is this?

UMBERTO

I don't know.

MARISSA

You get this from the mayor, punk?

UMBERTO

I don't know!

MARISSA

You level with me, Umberto.

UMBERTO

The mayor is a formidable man. I would not want him as an enemy. He visits a school, the children become silent, he has only to walk around the building once. He makes to leave, and he finds that his car has been washed by the children in detention and the cafeteria staff has left him a gift of cannoli and muscato. People do what he asks and more. They fear his threats yet half as much as they fear his promises.

MARISSA

He can't just shut my store down.

UMBERTO laughs at length.

UMBERTO

He can. He can do worse.

MARISSA

I've been to OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO. It is a place where rats would refuse to shit. Two weeks from now he'll be shutting down that awful establishment and evicting that awful woman.

UMBERTO

Clarissa.

MARISSA

What?

UMBERTO

Her name is Clarissa.

MARISSA

Disgusting. That is a snake's name. You know her? Stop touching my display case. Get out. Out, I'm busy, I'm busy, get out, get out, I'm busy, get out!

The door creaks and slams.

SCENE 3: OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO

CLARISSA
Colza oil.

UMBERTO
What?

CLARISSA
Get a bottle of industrial colza oil. Take it over there and contaminate all her sample bottles.

UMBERTO
Why?

CLARISSA
You didn't read your employee handbook.

UMBERTO
No.

CLARISSA
In 1981 700 people died from eating olive oil contaminated with industrial colza oil. Take a bottle, contaminate her samples.

UMBERTO
You just have this?

CLARISSA
She probably does too.

UMBERTO
You want me to kill her?

CLARISSA
And every citizen of Vermilion who visits her establishment.

UMBERTO
I'm going to need some guarantees.

CLARISSA
Free oils for life.

UMBERTO
Come on. Something that matters.

CLARISSA
Fuck you. This doesn't matter? Fine. "Not important", to you, sure, fine. I provide a service to the people and to my self. It is important because it is important to me. The market dictates.

(CONTINUED)

UMBERTO

I want your Mazda.

CLARISSA

When the job is done.

UMBERTO

The raise, and the Jack.

CLARISSA

When the job is done.

UMBERTO

People will die.

CLARISSA

People die. Even me.

UMBERTO

Will I get the store when that happens?

CLARISSA

If you earn it.

UMBERTO

Hm.

Okay.

CLARISSA

Go at night.

UMBERTO

Yeah.

SCENE 4: Vermilion Plague

Soundscape.

Glass breaking. The door creaks. Footsteps. Wood splintering. Liquid flowing. Wood splintering. Liquid flowing. Wood splintering. An arrangement of crates and glass bottles. Door creaks.

A cacophony of alarm clocks. Door creaks. A great bell rings, not the door-bell, but a bell to signify the Grand Opening of DOYLE'S ROYAL OILS. The door creaks open. A crowd gathers, murmuring, muttering, making the noise that crowds make when anticipating a great release of joy.

MARISSA

Thank you all so much for coming! Free samples of any specialty olive oil and twenty percent off this week only! Please, tell your friends! Take a card! Referral discounts! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

(CONTINUED)

The crowd bustles and moves around her and the store.

CITIZENS OF VERMILION

Wow!
Delicious!
Beautiful!
Complex, unprecedented, rewarding flavors!
Thank you!
Thank you!
Like nothing I've ever tasted!
Like nothing we've ever seen!
Wow wow wow!

MARISSA

(slowly, and slower, and slower,
beginning to weep as she finishes her
successful first day)
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!
Thank you! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you...

*The door creaks shut.
Silence.
Soundscape.
Coughing and heaving. A baby cries. Cars speeding.
Sirens. Coughing and heaving grows worse. Gurneys
rolling, heart monitors. Voices of medical
professionals.*

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS OF VERMILION

Stabilize
Symptoms unprecedented
These readings are all over the place
Another dose of
Help me lift up his
Another dose of
Another two doses of
We're losing him
Doctor
Doctor
We're losing him
Nurse?
Hold down this end of
Get me another pack of
Stay with me, stay with me, stay with me, stay with me,
nurse, nurse, doctor, doctor

(CONTINUED)

Silence.
A bodybag zips.
And then another. And another. And another.
Silence.
A choir. Something epic and Latin, such as
"Miserere Mei, Deus" by Allegri or "Lamentation"
by Thomas Tallis.
The singing goes on for a long time. It fades,
though not quite to silence...

Scene 5: OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO

In OLIVE YOU/OLIVE YOU TOO. UMBERTO is shuffling
cards over and over. CLARISSA is there, silent.

UMBERTO

I want \$12.25 an hour.

CLARISSA

You earned it. I hope your new apartment is nice.

UMBERTO

Don't come visit me.

CLARISSA

I wouldn't.

The bell rings. MARISSA enters. Her voice is
changed, high and shaking with fury and fear.

MARISSA

Clarissa!

Gunshots.

UMBERTO

Oh my God!

CLARISSA

Holy fuck!

MARISSA

You did this, Clarissa, you slaughtered the people and
you doomed Vermilion! You doomed us both!

CLARISSA

You should have listened to the mayor, Marissa, he
warned you. I warned you.

MARISSA

It was never the mayor.

(CONTINUED)

CLARISSA

Of course it was never the mayor!

She laughs.

CLARISSA

Pack up your store, Marissa. The authorities are coming. They figured it out. Only the ones who went to your opening got sick, and now most of them are dead. Run, Marissa. Get out of Vermilion. I'm willing to watch you walk away. The rabble will not be satisfied with that.

MARISSA attacks. They struggle. Gunshots. Glass breaking. A body falls.

CLARISSA

Don't you look at me that way! Only the gods can judge me, only the gods, the market, and the mayor, and that was self-defense, her life or mine, her life or mine!

The choir swells.

UMBERTO

The oil presses run red with blood. Sautee pans run red with blood. A pestilence descends on the kitchens of Vermilion, and it's your hand, no hand of gods or markets, you, always you, who will forgive me?

Sirens in the distance.

UMBERTO

Clarissa. Clarissa. Who will forgive me? My wife will not. My priest will not. My wife will not.

CLARISSA

Umberto, please, no

A gunshot. Sirens and choir swell. Another gunshot.

The bell rings. The MAYOR enters with a CORONER.

MAYOR

Three more bodies in here.

CORONER

(approaching)

Gunshot wounds, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR

All of them?

(CONTINUED)

CORONER

All of them, sir.

MAYOR

Get them out of here. Identify them and notify a relative, right away.

CORONER

Yes sir, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR

I hate this job. Do you hate your job?

CORONER

Really? No sir, Mr. Mayor. I love my job.

End.