

Doesn't He Look Natural?
by
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LIGHTS UP:

Slow, melancholy music plays. Standing alone in a pool of light is HIRAM BOORLIK, a pale, nebbish fellow with a dark suit and greasy, slicked back hair. Behind him sits a flowered casket. It is obviously a funeral. He turns to the audience and speaks in a low, even, soothing monotone.

HIRAM

My life stops here. Right here. In this place, on this hour. My hopes, my dreams, all my earthly desires have come to a sudden and screeching halt. My name is Hiram Boorlik. I'm a mortician here in the small town of Ruth's Toe, Nevada. Oh, I'd like to say I didn't ever think I'd end up as a mortician. That I'd always dreamed as a boy I'd be a fireman or an astronaut or a traffic light repairman. But it just wasn't so. You might say, ever since I took my first breath of life, I've been fascinated with death.

The lights change. We flashback to Hiram as a young boy. His MOTHER enters wearing a country dress and wiping her hands on a towel.

MOTHER

(Calling.)

Hiram! Hiram Mustard-Gas Boorlik!

Hiram enters carrying a stuffed cat.

HIRAM

(Energetic like a boy.)

Here I am, Mother!

MOTHER

Well, land sakes, what you got there, child?

HIRAM

It's Fluffy-Balls, Mother. Doesn't she look wonderful?

MOTHER

Well I should say so. She's never looked cleaner or happier since we got her as a kitten.

HIRAM

All I did was scoop out her brains, slit her up the gut, spoon out her entrails, fill her up with a mixture of sawdust, bread crust and turpentine, sew her back up and she's good as new.

MOTHER

Mercy me!

HIRAM

And she'll keep for at least 50 years.

MOTHER

Now Hiram, you know Fluffy-Balls was a pretty healthy cat.

HIRAM

Aww Mom...

MOTHER

She was chasing a mouse across the kitchen just yesterday.

HIRAM

She fell down...

Mother looks at Hiram disapprovingly.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

Into a...jar of formaldehyde.

She stares at him harder.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

And hydrochloric acid...

She looks harder.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

And rat poison.

She sits him on her lap.

MOTHER

Oh Hiram, what am I to do with you? I suppose I should look on the bright side. Why, with skills like yours, you could grow up to become a...a chemist--

HIRAM

--or a mortician.

MOTHER
(Deflecting.)
Or a butcher--

HIRAM
--or a mortician.

MOTHER
(Deflecting again.)
Sure, or a tailor--

HIRAM
Or a mortician!

MOTHER
(Giving up.)
Yeah, all right, whatever.

HIRAM
Yippee!

Hiram heads off. Mother calls to him.

MOTHER
Hiram!

He stops and turns. She hands the cat to him.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Put her in the pile with the others.

He takes it and runs off.

Light change.

Adult Hiram enters.

HIRAM
And I never looked back. Of course, a young man with big dreams of processing the dead in a little, one corpse town can run into a lot of obstacles. Money, opportunity...and his first love.

The lights change. BEATRICE enters. She has on a neck brace, carries two short metal crutches and walks with a labored limp, her toes pointing in and her spine a weak, unstable curve. She speaks with a gushy, lateral lisp.

BEATRICE
Hiram? Hiram, are you there? Speak to me.

Hiram appears from the shadows wearing a high school letter jacket.

HIRAM

Here I am, Beatrice.

She limps and struggles over to him. He meets her. They awkwardly embrace.

BEATRICE

Oh Hiram...it's so sweet secretly swooning here under the swaying sycamores.

HIRAM

Let's make this our special place, Beatrice. Look, you can see the whole town from up here. There's Blandson's store.

BEATRICE

And there's Parkinson's Farm.

HIRAM

Yep...that's about it.

BEATRICE

I suppose so.

HIRAM

Oh, who am I kidding, Bea? I can't make it as a mortician in a little dirt water burg like Ruth's Toe. You marry me and you'll starve, do you here me? Starve, go hungry, experience malnutrition, not get enough to eat. Starve!

BEATRICE

Oh Hiram, don't be like that. You'll make it here, I know you will. Why...why just the other day I heard that Mrs. Mallory had a bad chest cold. And old man Fricker's pushing 95. Why you'll be rolling in dead people before you know it.

HIRAM

Oh Beatrice.

BEATRICE

And little tots are always falling down the stairs or choking on a sour ball. There's flu and malaria and New Year's Eve car crashes.

HIRAM

Oh Bea. You can always see the bright side of things. That's what I love about you.

They clumsily embrace.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

How did I luck out and get such a prized peach?

BEATRICE

Oh, not many fellas are lining up to court a gal with an underdeveloped spine, you know.

HIRAM

And not many girls are giving me two looks either. I'm shy, and sort of clumsy...

BEATRICE

And you have all those dead animals in your back yard.

HIRAM

Yeah. Oh, Bea, with you by my side I know we can make it. But there's one thing I have to do first.

BEATRICE

What's that?

HIRAM

I have to go to Las Vegas to The National Undertaker's and Mortician's Convention next week. I can make important contacts there and really get the business going.

BEATRICE

No, Hiram, no! Las Vegas is a town of sin and seduction. Roulette and topless showgirls and Cirque de Soliel. If you go, I'm afraid I'll never see you again.

HIRAM

Oh, Bea! My slurring, shuffling little kumquat. Don't worry, as God as my witness I will come back to you.

BEATRICE

Hiram...Hiram!

She backs off into the darkness. The lights change.

HIRAM

(To the audience.)

And so I went. To Las Vegas, the land of milk, honey, shows, slots, sluts and the cheapest prime rib dinner this side of the Rio Grande. I arrived at The National Undertaker's and Mortician's Convention just in time for the highlight of the week; the annual Dawn of the Dead Fashion Show. The event that would change my life for good...and for bad.

The lights change. Throbbing house music plays as the lights flash and spin. Hiram stands off to the side as an ANNOUNCER's voice is heard.

ANNOUNCER

Welcome one and all to the 17th Annual Dawn of the Dead Fashion Show for 2008. Hold on to your casket handles, honeys. It's time to get this party started!

A pale, morose FASHION MODEL walks on stage. She wears a flimsy, flowing dress.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

New for our Fall Fashion line is an evening gown for every deathly occasion. The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out, but the fabric breathes like an afternoon on the South Seas. Rigor mortis might stiffen things up, but the cotton/poly blend flows like embalming fluid on a hot driveway. From Slittini of Milan.

Another FASHION MODEL walks out.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

New from the Muerte line of Barcelona, a casual sun dress with a handy back entrance.

The Fashion model turns to show a flap in her dress. It reveals her bare bottom with a plastic plug sticking out of the crack.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

No more will you have to worry about slurried innerds flowing out at the inopportune time. Machowski underplugs make sure that what gets liquefied inside, stays inside. Guarenteed. Machowski Underplugs, 50 years of dry caskets...and counting.

The Fashion model exits. MAGDA, the next fashion model enters. The music fades and the lights change. She starts to walk in slow motion.

HIRAM

That's when I saw her. Floating down the runway like a leaf on the wind.

She turns slowly.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

She was perfect and delicate; her face like a small puppy gasping for it's last breath, held under soapy water in a rusty wash tub. I had to meet her...no matter what the cost.

The lights change. She walks in real time. He approaches her, his hand extended.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

Hello. My name's Boorlik. Hiram Boorlik. Golly, I gotta say, I really loved your show tonight.

She turns, blankly, and speaks in a low, dull, Russian accent.

MAGDA

I am Magda. I am from Ukraine. I will put your penis in my mouth for ten dollars.

He turns to the audience, smiling.

HIRAM

She was bright and funny and witty.

He turns back to her.

HIRAM (CONT'D)

Magda? Is that from Tolstoy?

MAGDA

I have severe anal warts.

He chuckles hard, turning to the audience.

HIRAM

Oh, how she could make me laugh. From that point on the sparks were flying. We hit the town; New York New York, the Flamingo, Ceasar's Palace, the Tropicana, Hooters, you name it. We did it.

He turns to her.

HIRAM

Oh, Magda, Magda. This night has been absolute magic. I hope you feel about me half as much as the way I feel about you.

MAGDA

I will lap dance you for heroin.

HIRAM

She always new just the right thing to say. They say you know when the moment is right. When you've met someone you know is your soul mate. The one you're sure you'll be with forever. I knew that moment was now. I knew I had to act.

He turns to her.

HIRAM

Magda, I know this is sudden. I realize we've only known each other a few hours, but...will you...will you be my wife?

MAGDA

You can spurt your love-juice on to my buttocks.

HIRAM

Is that a "yes" or a "no?"

MAGDA

You must talk to Ludmilla.

HIRAM

Ludmilla? Who's that?

LUDMILLA enters. She is serious, stern and extremely Russian.

LUDMILLA

I am Ludmilla. I am guardian, chaperone and owner of the Vladivostok modeling agency. If you want anything from my girls, you must talk to me.

HIRAM

I want to marry Magda.

LUDMILLA

Impossible! She has three runway shows next week and an opening of a Payless Shoe Store in Sheboygan. She has no time for something as trivial as marriage.

HIRAM

But we love each other. We want to be together forever, don't we Magda?

MAGDA

I need crack.

HIRAM

There, you see? We need to be together and nothing you can say will stop us.

LUDMILLA

Magda is my legal property. I bought her for 15 rubles and a cardboard box full of barbecued chicken feet. The law is the law.

HIRAM

How much will it cost to make her mine?

LUDMILLA

Fi--no fiftee--no, twenty thousand dollars.

HIRAM

(Defeated.)

Twenty thousand...But I'm just a dirt poor mortician from Ruth's Toe. I can't come up with that kind of money.

LUDMILLA

Then go home, Ruth's Toe mortician. Magda will be dead before I allow her to marry a good-for-nothing loser like you.

Hiram turns to Magda. Ludmilla exits.

HIRAM

Well...goodbye, Magda, my honeysuckle. As much as I love you, and I know you love me, I guess it...it just wasn't meant to be, my sweet. I'll never forget you, my little Ukranian lotus blossom.

MAGDA

Rim jobs are 20 dollars.

HIRAM

No, don't speak. I want to look at you as I walk away...and remember you, just as you are right now.

He backs into the shadows. Magda stands alone, confused.

MAGDA

I am confused.

Beatrice enters on her crutches. She carries a vial of liquid.

BEATRICE

Magda?

Magda turns to face her.

BEATRICE

Magda, you don't know me, but I've been watching you. You and Hiram. He loves you with all of his heart, I know that. And as much as I want him, I realize that his happiness is more important. I overheard your mistress say that death is the only thing that will release you from her service. One drink of this liquid and death will embrace you for twenty-four hours. After that you will awaken, and you and Hiram are free to pursue the life and love that you both deserve.

She hands the vial to Magda.

BEATRICE

Remember, one drink, and death will embrace you for twenty-four hours.

MAGDA

Threesomes are extra.

BEATRICE

(Exiting.)

Whatever.

Magda shrugs, drinks from the vial and collapses.

Lights Out.

Lights Up.

Ludmilla enters and greets Hiram on stage.

HIRAM

Miss Ludmilla, what are you doing way here in Ruth's Toe?

LUDMILLA

I have a job for you, Mr. Small Town Mortician.

HIRAM

A job?

Ludmilla wheels in a table on which sits the dead body of Magda.

LUDMILLA

You wanted her? She is now yours.

Hiram breaks down and starts to loose it.

HIRAM

Magda? No...no...no...NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Lights out.

Lights Up.

Hiram stands on stage facing the audience as from the beginning of the play. Magda's casket sits in the background.

HIRAM

(To audience.)

And that's my story. A tragic tale of love found, and lost...and found...and lost again. But I won't let it end like this. I am, after all, that little boy in love with death, aren't I? I owe it to myself to make the grand exit.

He approaches the casket and pulls a knife from his jacket.

HIRAM

I won't let you meet death alone, my sweet. We'll dive into his open mouth together...just you and I.

Beatrice enters and screams.

BEATRICE

Hiram, Noooooo!

Hiram plunges the knife into his chest and collapses in front of the casket. Beatrice shuffles over and collapses on to Hiram's dead body, sobbing.

Magda sits upright on the casket, awake.

MAGDA

Who wants blow-job?

Lights Out

Lights Up

The entire cast shouts

CAST
Screw you, Shakespeare!!!

Lights Out.

THE END