

LIMINAL DEVIL

Act 1 Sample

written by

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"What we believe, determines what we take to be true."

-Gary Zukav

EXT. DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER (OR BIG CITY) - SIDEWALK - DAY

LANCE, (Black, Late 40's, Australian), rolls on a SKATEBOARD with the carefree swagger of a bearded surfer dude refusing to grow up.

His long, brown hair - a combo of wavy locks mixed with dreads - falls beneath a BACKWARDS BASEBALL CAP and frames AVIATOR SUNGLASSES.

A LOOSE-FITTING HAWAIIAN SHIRT AND KHAKI PANTS round out the getup.

INT. BISTRO PEGEAT - DAY

GEE GEE, (20's) is ethnically hard to distinguish. Mixed? Mediterranean? Black Asian? RACIALLY AMBIGUOUS.

She sits alone at a table wearing a WHITE TANK and WHITE YOGA PANTS.

Lance strides in.

Gee Gee glances at a WALL CLOCK.

2:59 pm.

GEE GEE

Thought you were a no show, Lance.

He slips in across from her.

LANCE

(heavy Australian accent)

And miss all the fun and games? I don't think so.

A distinguished-looking man sits pondering at the table next to theirs. MR. TALBOTT, (Caucasian, 50's) speaks into a CELL PHONE.

TALBOTT

Hey, it's dad. We need to talk. I want to apologize...but not over the phone. I'm going to make it right, okay. I know I haven't told you in a while, but I love you, son.

A WAITRESS stops at Talbott's table.

WAITRESS
Refill?

TALBOTT
Just the check.

AT GEE GEE'S TABLE.

LANCE
You got the list?

Gee Gee slides a PIECE OF PAPER across.

GEE GEE
You know the rules?

LANCE
We've been over this, Gee Gee.

GEE GEE
Humor me.

AT TALBOT'S TABLE.

The Waitress scribbles the total and tears THE CHECK off.

WAITRESS
I only charged you for one coffee.

KA-BOOOOOMM!!!!

A THUNDEROUS (UNSEEN) EXTERIOR EXPLOSION SHATTERS WINDOWS and RATTLES FURNITURE!

Everyone SCREAMS IN AN UPROAR!

Talbott and several RESTAURANT GUESTS run out of the bistro.

Lance stands.

GEE GEE
I'm watching you.

LANCE
Gee Gee, I'm asking you nicely.
Don't interfere, it's a bit of a bother. And none of your tricky stuff!

EXT. THE L HOTEL - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

INSERT: 15 Minutes Ago

THE L HOTEL punctures the Vancouver sky.

PEDESTRIANS stream through the ground floor doors.

A UNIFORMED DOORMAN greets AFFLUENT PATRONS.

A LESBIAN COUPLE zooms up in a CONVERTIBLE SPORTS CAR.

NORA, (Latina, mid 20's), is a quick-wit, lipstick lesbian with a defiant face.

She leans over to her girlfriend, LOU (Caucasian, 40's, rich) in the driver's seat. They kiss long and deep.

Lou pulls away breathless.

LOU

Marry me.

NORA

Why do you have to ruin perfect PDA?

LOU

Because you're killing me with this vag-teasing limbo.

NORA

Limbo? I thought this was the heavenliest sex you ever had.

DOORMAN (O.S.)

You can't park here.

The Doorman stands by the passenger side.

LOU

I was just leaving. See you inside.

Nora kisses her and climbs out.

NORA

Edible or peel-off panties?

The Doorman perks up.

LOU

He definitely wants to know.

Lou shifts into gear and skids into traffic.

INT. THE L HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Upscale.

COUPLES. FAMILIES. LUGGAGE.

ABE HEISKOPF, (Caucasian, 30 - 40 age range) a domineering, androgynous, [female-assigned] NON-BINARY Jew, is at the check-in counter berating TAMMIE, (Asian, 30's).

A line of IMPATIENT PEOPLE extends behind Abe.

ABE

You and me have a problem.

TAMMIE

Ma'am, I've explained to you...

ABE

I'm a They.

TAMMIE

Mr...Mrs...?

ABE

Move on.

TAMMIE

There are no available rooms on the top floor.

ABE

It's my little sister's birthday.
She loved the view from up there,
so you need to get me a TOP. FLOOR.
ROOM. NOW!

BY THE SEATING AREA.

MADDIE STALLWORTH, (40, Irish) is eight months pregnant. A living portrait of nurturing pride.

She sits with her husband, MANY, (Mid 40's, Irish) in a LOUNGE CHAIR playfully bantering with HEAVY IRISH ACCENTS.

MADDIE

You're so sure of yourself, are you?

MANY

I'm not the one who's gonna be out of five quid when a strapping young lad comes kicking his way out in a pair of footy boots.

MADDIE

You mean a little princess in a pair of ballet slippers.

Maddie grows pensive.

MANY

What is it?

MADDIE

Nothing.

MANY

Stop thinking about them.

MADDIE

I can't help it.

MANY

We're not going through this again.

He stands.

MADDIE

Wait, Many, don't run-off.

MANY

I'm just gonna pop out for a fag.

BY THE ELEVATOR.

DING!

The ARROW ABOVE THE DOORS ILLUMINATES, pointing up.

The DOORS open. PEOPLE pile on and off.

A BELL HOP pushes a cart full of bags.

He passes a seated man whose face is concealed by a NEWSPAPER.

The man folds the paper, revealing his face.

He places it on the table next to him.

MOHAMED HENOSIS (40-yrs-old) is a FRENCH CANADIAN MUSLIM with steady, calm eyes.

He taps an index finger idly beneath the headline.

INSERT:

On Newspaper - "TERRORIST THREAT FOR YOM KIPPUR"

ON MOHAMED.

His eyes methodically scan the lobby.

They finally come to rest on Maddie.

He observes her sitting in a BUTTON-DOWN MATERNITY DRESS and A WRAP-AROUND SHAWL, lovingly rubbing her mountainous tummy.

EXT. THE L HOTEL - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Many steps outside and lights a cigarette. He exhales and loosens his shoulders.

KA-BOOOOM!!!

The (**UNSEEN**) EXPLOSION from inside the lobby rips through the first floor facade.

Many is thrown into a car that rammed into the back of another.

He lands hard but unharmed. Dazed, he pushes himself up, staring in shock at the chaos unfolding around him.

He runs into hotel lobby.

Lance exits the bistro adjacent the hotel entrance carrying his skateboard.

He stops to survey the mayhem.

Pandemonium!

PANICKED PEOPLE rush about chaotically!

The HORN of a CRASHED CAR BLARES unceasingly.

A MUSLIM WOMAN screams at her BLEEDING UNCONSCIOUS HUSBAND.

Lance is amused by it all.

LANCE
I love this game.

INT. THE L HOTEL - INSIDE THE ELEVATOR - DAY

BOOOOM!!!

A nearby (UNSEEN) EXTERIOR EXPLOSION ROCKS the cabin.

The FIVE PASSENGERS, Abe, Nora, Mohamed, and Maddie included, stumble around inside.

They bounce off the walls and the double doors.

Abe faces the doors by the BUTTON PANEL on the right side of the Elevator.

GRATING ELEVATOR MUSIC loops softly in the background adding to the tension.

ABE
That was another one.

NORA
What was it?

ABE
Sounded like a bomb.

MADDIE
Felt like one.

ABE
I knew I should have taken the stairs.

MADDIE
We're not moving anymore.

Mohamed is front left across from Abe.

MOHAMED
It's probably a safety precaution activated in an emergency.

ABE
I don't like this.

Abe presses buttons.

NORA
The lights on the buttons are out.

Abe jabs the EMERGENCY.

ABE
Shit!

MOHAMED

Hello!

Mohamed pounds the doors.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)

Anybody out there?

ABE

Step aside, slick. I got this.

Abe tries to pull the doors apart.

Nothing happens.

Grunts and more effort. Nope.

A SMACK of frustration.

Maddie groans and doubles over.

Nora is immediately at her side.

NORA

Are you okay?

ABE

You gotta be kidding me.

MADDIE

(recovering)

Don't worry. I'm not due for another month.

Abe moves closer.

ABE

So what was that then?

MADDIE

Probably just stress.

NORA

Do you mind? Giving us a little air?

Abe backs off.

A teenager cowers behind Abe.

CHAD, (African American, 16-yrs-old), is soft-spoken and aloof. He wears a schoolbook backpack.

CHAD
Are we going to die?

ABE
Hey, easy kid!

CHAD
What about the air? We could run out.

MOHAMED
I don't think so. These doors are not airtight. Even if they were, someone would come find us before we suffocated.

ABE
I'm not waiting around for that.

MADDIE
What are you going to do?

ABE
Find a way out of here.

NORA
I thought all elevators had a phone.

MADDIE
Apparently not this one.

MOHAMED
This building was probably built in the '80s.

NORA
And they haven't updated the elevator?

Nora removes a PHONE from a LITTLE PURSE and presses some buttons.

ABE
Has everybody tried their cell?

MADDIE
I don't have a signal.

CHAD
Me neither.

ABE
You?

MOHAMED

No.

ABE

Any ideas?

MADDIE

Why don't we just all breathe.

ABE

I don't like this!

Abe jabs the Emergency button again.

Suddenly the elevator DROPS a few feet and STOPS with a jarring jolt.

Everybody screams!

NORA

What did you do?!

ABE

I pressed the emergency button.

NORA

It didn't work the first time!

ABE

I was just trying something!

MOHAMED

Perhaps it's better if we just wait until someone comes for us.

ABE

Waiting for others can get you hurt.

MADDIE

Panicking is not going to help us.

Abe looks up.

ABE

What about the ceiling?

NORA

What about it?

It has a 2-BY-2 SQUARE FOOT PANEL in the middle.

ABE

I think I can get that panel off.

MADDIE
It's too high.

NORA
And it's bolted down.

ABE
Maybe the blast knocked it loose.
Guys, give me a hand.

MOHAMED
What do you want us to do?

ABE
I'll sit on your shoulders.

NORA
Seriously?

MOHAMED
Is there a plan b?

Abe and Mohamed are about the same size.

ABE
Maybe you're right. Okay, why don't
you each grab a thigh and hoist me
up.

NORA
You're wasting your time.

ABE
At least I'm doing something
besides blowing hot air.

NORA
I don't blow.

MOHAMED
I suppose it's worth a try.

Abe faces front.

With their backs to the doors, Chad and Mohamed squat down
and wrap their arms around one thigh each and hoist Abe up.

It's a wobbly and unbalanced effort.

ABE
Whoa, steady! Get me a little
higher.

They double their effort.

Abe claws at the the panel.

ABE (CONT'D)
It's not moving.

NORA
I told you.

They list on Chad's side.

ABE
I need more from you, Junior!

CHAD
I'm trying.

ABE
Move back a bit.

They back up towards the doors.

Abe yanks the panel, trying to pull it loose.

MOHAMED
Is it working?

ABE
Can't tell yet.

CHAD
You're getting heavy.

ABE
Hang on kid!

Pound! Yank!

CHAD
I can't anymore!

ABE
Hang on!

Chad lets go under the struggle.

Abe comes crashing down and falls on top of Nora.

They land on the floor with Abe between Nora's legs.

Their faces are close together. They stare into each others eyes.

The elevator song LOOPS RELENTLESSLY.

Abe sniffs.

ABE (CONT'D)
What's that you're wearing?

NORA
Get off me!

Nora shoves Abe to the side and stands up.

Abe pulls-up laughing.

ABE
That was worth the effort.

Nora goes and stands at the back of the elevator.

MADDIE
What do we do now?

ABE
I'm running out of ideas.

Mohamed pounds the doors again.

MOHAMED
Hello! There are people stuck here!
Can anybody hear us? Hello?

Chad backs into his corner behind Abe.

Maddie rubs her tummy in the corner opposite Chad.

ABE
Guess we're stuck here 'til
somebody comes for us.
(to Nora)
So. Where you from babe?

NORA
No. My name is not babe. It's Nora.
And where I'm from is not your
business.

ABE
Just makin' conversation.

NORA
Why don't you make like a ghost and
disappear.

ABE
Alright. That's cool. That's cool.
(to Mohamed)

ABE (CONT'D)
How 'bout you, slick? What'll they
call you?

MOHAMED
My name is Mohamed Henosis.

Abe assumes an aggressive tone.

ABE
Oh really? Well my name is Abe.
Like biblical Abraham Abe. Abe
HEISKOPF.

Mohamed extends a hand.

MOHAMED
Pleased to meet you, Abe.

Abe ignores it.

ABE
Let me tell you something Mo-Ham-
Head.

MOHAMED
Mohamed. My name is Mohamed.

ABE
Whatever! There's like fourteen
different spellings.

NORA
Don't be a penis.

ABE
I'm having a really shitty day.

MADDIE
We all are.

ABE
This elevator just got smaller.

NORA
We get it, you're Jewish.

ABE
Do me a favor. That's your side of
the elevator. This is mine. Stay on
your side and you and I will get
along just kosher.

MADDIE

I'm Catholic. What side should I stand on?

NORA

This is a cozy coincidence. A Jew, a Muslim, a Catholic, and an Atheist get stuck on an elevator. Sounds like the beginning of a sick joke.

MOHAMED

You think this is a coincidence?

NORA

What else would it be?

ABE

What's your story, Junior? What, are you a Hare Krishna?

He looks cornered.

CHAD

I'm just Chad.

ABE

Chad?

CHAD

Yeah, that's my name.

ABE

That's a white name. Who gave you that?

CHAD

My dad.

ABE

Well he's obviously very mixed up.

NORA

Were you born a dick or did you grow into one?

MOHAMED

This is not a coincidence. Perhaps Allah is trying to tell us something.

ABE

That's the problem with you people.
Always with the "Allah Allah Allahu
Akbar!"

Mocking a terrorist.

NORA

Born that way.

MOHAMED

In spite of preconceived notions
you may have about me, I'm not your
enemy. We are brothers in the eyes
of Allah.

ABE

(rising anger)
You are not my brother.

MOHAMED

In the eyes of Allah, I am.

ABE

My little sister lost an arm and
half her face because one of your
BROTHERS had a bomb.

NORA

Can we dial it down, please?

MOHAMED

I am not the person responsible for
injury delivered upon your family.

ABE

You smell like him.

MOHAMED

Like who?

ABE

A stinking terrorist!

NORA

Alright, that's it. Stop it right
there. You don't even know each
other. Nobody's bombed villages or
severed limbs in this elevator.
Okay? And Abe, you should know what
it's like to be hated just for
breathing.

ABE

That's just it. I've taken shit my whole life, so I have no qualms with shitting back.

NORA

I'm sorry, but these quarters are too cramped for anybody to take a shit. Besides, what's the point of all this religious crap? God? Is a lie.

ABE

You mean to say you have no affiliation whatsoever?

NORA

A lesbian Latina in the church? Pigs will fly first.

MOHAMED

Are you not concerned with the afterlife?

NORA

I'm more concerned with this elevator music.

ABE

Answer the question.

NORA

You're born. You die. You're done.

MADDIE

And where do you go after?

NORA

Nowhere.

MADDIE

You mean like limbo?

NORA

If that means nowhere. You probably just sit in a chair somewhere and do nothing. Forever.

ABE

Somebody lied to you sister.

NORA

And I guess you know the truth?

ABE

At least I believe in something.

NORA

I'll tell you what I believe in.
I'll tell you what the truth is.

ABE

Oh, this is going to be
interesting.

NORA

The truth is personal. Whatever you
believe to be true, that's the
truth.

Beat.

ABE

Said the TikTok guru with the perky
nips.

NORA

Screw you!

ABE

We already tried that.

MOHAMED

Before this is over, you might
regret you ever felt that way.

NORA

I'll take my chances. It's all
worked out so far.

ABE

Yeah, and look where it got you.

NORA

We're all on the same barge.

CHAD

I thought we were in an elevator.

They all look at Chad. Ooops.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Sorry. Just trying to...

ABE

Why don't you crawl back to your
corner, Junior. Leave the
discussion to the adults.

RINGA-LINGA-LING!

An ALARM on Mohamed's WRIST WATCH goes off.

MOHAMED
Excuse me please.

ABE
Going somewhere?

Mohamed prepares himself as well as he can under the circumstances.

ABE (CONT'D)
How do you know which way is east?

Mohamed begins to sing an ISLAMIC RITUAL PRAYER.

It sounds odd and out of tune with the elevator song looping round and round.

Everyone just kind of looks at him, not sure how to react.

CHAD
This is embarrassing.

MADDIE
Aahhh!

Maddie has another contraction. Nora places a hand on her back.

NORA
Are you sure you're okay?

MADDIE
I think so.

ABE
Hey, home-ed! I don't wanna hear that.

NORA
Is this normal?

MADDIE
That's a loaded question.

Abe grabs Mohamed by the collar.

ABE
I said I don't wanna hear that crap!

Mohamed looks Abe squarely in the face.

MOHAMED
(HEBREW with subtitles)
You're on my side.

Abe shoves him and backs off.

ABE
So you know some Hebrew. That still
doesn't make you my brother.

CHAD
Guys.

The elevator doors have just begun to open.

THE MUSIC STOPS PLAYING.

Everyone stares at the BRICK WALL the open doors reveal.

ABE
Great! The doors finally open and
we're in the middle of nowhere.

Abe starts pressing and knocking on the bricks.

NORA
You looking for a secret opening?

ABE
Hello?

MOHAMED
Is there anybody out there?

They continue calling for help.

The SLOW DRAINING SOUND OF WATER DRIPPING onto the floor.

Nora looks down between Maddie's feet.

A tiny PINK POOL OF LIQUID has formed there.

Maddie has an apologetic, helpless look on her face.

NORA
Oh no.

REEEUUUMM!!!

The elevator PLUMMETS AT BREAKNECK SPEED! The brick wall
races past the front.

Abe hollers and clings to the walls in terror!

Chad stumbles back to his corner.

Mohamed drops to his knees and prays fervently in Arabic.

Maddie is GIVING BIRTH!

Her face contorts with moans and agony.

Nora screams at her to breathe and push!

PLUMMETING!

PRAYER!

HOLLERING!

LABOR MOANS!

NORA
Push! It's coming!

Suddenly the elevator is engulfed in TOTAL DARKNESS and comes to a THUNDEROUS halt!

At first, there is just silence in the darkness.

Then the SOUND of SOMETHING DENSE AND WET PLOPS onto the floor.

Maddie SCREAMS! A blood-curdling, skin-pricking SCREAM!

The LIGHTS FLICKER ON sluggishly with a sickening LOW DRONE.

The doors are closed again.

The elevator music gradually seeps back into a loop.

MOHAMED'S P.O.V. - His view is blocked by Nora standing over Maddie, who sits on the floor SCREAMING down at the thing between her legs.

He crawls over to them and immediately recoils in horror!

Abe and Chad stare down at Maddie, dumbfounded.

Chad turns away as Maddie's screams die down to convulsions and sobbing.

Nora helps Maddie out of her shawl and wraps it around the STILLBORN BABY.

Maddie rocks her dead infant.

The relentless loop is an agonizing lullaby.

Abe finally finds something to say.

ABE

The doors are closed again.

MOHAMED

How far did we fall?

ABE

How should I know?

NORA

We should have hit bottom. We're lucky we're not dead.

CHAD

Maybe we are. And we just don't know it.

ABE

Hey! What's the matter with you? Saying stupid shit like that!

CHAD

But this hotel only has...

ABE

What if I smacked you upside the head? Then you'd know if you were dead or not.

NORA

Leave him alone.

MOHAMED

We should remain calm.

Maddie moans softly.

ABE

How can I be calm with all this? I don't wanna die on this elevator.

Abe starts to throw a tantrum.

NORA

Pull it together, Abe!

ABE
This is madness. There's a dead
baby on board!

Maddie moans louder.

NORA
You're upsetting her!

ABE
I'm upset!

MOHAMED
Abe please.

He tries to touch.

ABE
Get your hands off me man! Did I
say you could touch me?

Maddie cries out loud.

MOHAMED
You should...

NORA
Hey! Hey! That's enough. That's...

BANG!

Everybody jumps and looks up at the ceiling.

BANG! BAM!...BANG!

THE MUSIC HAS STOPPED.

Maddie stands up with her baby.

BANG!

ABE
What the hell is going on up there?

BANG!

The panel knocks loose.

BAM!

MOHAMED
Look out!

It comes CRASHING to the floor!

Everyone stares up at the opening. Breathless.

Suddenly a head pokes into the hole.

It's a FIREMAN (Late 40's, Black), wearing a HELMET and dirt on his face.

FIREMAN

Hello ladies and gentlemen. I've
come to get you.