

A FUN NEW KIND OF APOCALYPSE

A Short Play

by

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Runtime: 15 minutes

Synopsis: One woman's daily grind continues, despite the end of days, and unfolds into a chaotic quest for understanding.

CHARACTERS

AVILA	Consummate professional
CAYUCOS	A wild realist
TOM	Sweet but secretive
CAMBRIA	Motherly
ONE	Unknown
TWO	Unknown

SETTING

An office

TIME

Mid-morning. Some time in the near future.

(AVILA sits at a desk. She stares off for a long moment, never glancing at the mannequin in her office. She has dark bags under her eyes. She looks lost. A crash is heard offstage and a light flickers. Avila picks up a briefcase that was lying next to her. She opens it toward herself and takes a big whiff of something in the suitcase. CAYUCOS stumbles onstage and knocks over the mannequin. He is grizzled and disheveled.)

AVILA

Hello Cayucos!

CAYUCOS

Dammit Avila. This ain't no time for hellos.

AVILA

(She looks at her watch.)

It's 10:15. Seems as good a time as any.

CAYUCOS

That's not what I mean?

AVILA

I have a meeting. Can I help you?

(Avila keeps organizing things, all pantomimed, as she goes through the motions of going to work.)

CAYUCOS

Have you been outside?

AVILA

I had breakfast at Meta's.

CAYUCOS

Meta's diner ain't there no more! What're you going on about?

AVILA

I had scrapple pie. It was delicious!

CAYUCOS

Damn. You need to snap out of this!

(Avila looks at her watch again. As she does, her watch and Cayucos belt start getting pulled around the stage as if choreographed by an invisible magnet. Cayucos and Avila mime more and more intense magnetic forces as they continue talking.)

CAYUCOS

I came back for ya and this---

(Cuts himself off as the magnet force gets stronger)

Shit!

AVILA

I feel like a puppet on a string.

CAYUCOS

It's their magnets man. They've got giant magnets or something!

(Avila's arm starts moving more aggressively and she continues reading a work document and continuing to work.

Cayucos movements are more full-bodied and eventually Avila's hand meets Cayucos' face hard. He falls to the ground.)

CAYUCOS

Watch!

AVILA

I'm sorry but I can't control it.

CAYUCOS

Get rid of the watch!

AVILA

This was a gift from my mother.

(Cayucos starts taking off his belt.)

CAYUCOS

Avila, trust me and take off the watch!

AVILA

You've been so rude ever since you came in this morning and I don't understand why.

(Cayucos grabs Avila's watch and tosses it offstage. Then he removes his belt and throws it offstage as well.)

CAYUCOS

We should be safe now.

(His pants fall down.)

AVILA

Safe? We're fine. And I thought you requested off today?

CAYUCOS

I came back to help you, Avila.

AVILA

What are you helping me with?

CAYUCOS

Whatever has been out there! And I feel like with all the stuff that's happening, I need to get out what's been in my brain.

AVILA

You're in my brain!

CAYUCOS

Thanks, Avila! I knew you cared but... I n-need to tell you-

AVILA

(Glancing offstage.)

Have you noticed that sign isn't working.

CAYUCOS

No signs are working! Nothing. Not now.

AVILA

At Carousel Kid's Center across the street, the C isn't there anymore and now it just says-

(A siren alarm goes off in the distance. Avila perks up from her desk.)

AVILA (Continued.)

The meeting is starting now

(Avila grabs her briefcase and a poster that was next to her.)

CAYUCOS

That was not for the meeting. It means we need to evacuate.

AVILA

(With a tone that implies 'Such a kidder'.)

Always trying to skip out of work early.

CAYUCOS

No, that's not it at all.

AVILA

Come on, you should be there too.

CAYUCOS

This makes no sense.

(Avila and Cayucos walk to a part of the stage with a few chairs arranged in an office configuration as if around a conference table. Avila walks away from Cayucos and addresses the crowd.)

AVILA

Good morning everyone.

(Cayucos snaps his head around and looks for other people, confused.)

To begin, I'd like to directly address an internal concern. A new office language called Ptydepe was under consideration for use in our office. It was believed to expedite workflow but after an exhaustive study and Memorandum by a Mr. Havel, it was discovered to be ultimately as unnecessary and utterly nonsensical as this sentence.

CAYUCOS

(Whispering heavily.)

We need to leave ASAP!

(Avila and Cayucos both overlap so quickly yet carefully that each seems to be speaking independently of the each other.)

AVILA

Our clients in North Korea have enjoyed working with us.

CAYUCOS

Those bastards are tryin' ta kill us!

AVILA

We've become friends, really.

CAYUCOS

Who knows what they'll do?

AVILA

Our partners are committed to...

CAYUCOS

...probing our bodies...

AVILA

...investigating all options for...

CAYUCOS

...enslaving the human race!

AVILA

...renewable energy.

CAYUCOS

They'll probably eat us!

AVILA

A great fuel source!

CAYUCOS

This is insane! How many times must I stress the impo-

AVILA

Give me one moment while I sort through my presentation.

(Avila opens her suitcase and again takes a deep sniff. Cayucos smiles as TOM enters. Avila continues to go through her briefcase as Tom and Cayucos talk.)

TOM

Why are you two in here like this? It's depressing.

CAYUCOS

I'm so glad to see you. She doesn't seem to know where she is?

TOM

Hm. Do any of us really know?

CAYUCOS

What?

(While Avila is still obscured by her briefcase, she begins throwing papers and random office objects out of it.)

TOM

What is 'Where?'

CAYUCOS

We're in the office, man! Are you losin' it too?

TOM

This could be an office or some alternate plane of existence.

CAYUCOS

When did you become a cosmologist?

TOM

Since everything went all sideways.

(Avila notices Tom and—)

AVILA

Our project manager, Tom Brooks has joined us. He'll walk you through his presentation to our clients.

(Avila waves Tom toward the front of the conference room.)

TOM

Who are you presenting to?

CAYUCOS

(Nudging Tom.)

Look, just go with it if it'll get her out of here quicker.

AVILA

Tom?

TOM

(He walks up. Avila sits. Awkwardly he begins.)

Thanks Avila. An introduction and welcome along with a comic jab at our client's profession.

CAYUCOS

Huh?

(Avila smiles ear to ear.)

TOM

A few boring statistics followed by an awkward attempt at a joke to maintain interest.

CAYUCOS

Come on. Wrap it up!

TOM

Overall, I have said many things you should accept as true and accurate despite the fact that I am trying to win you over to the dark side and ultimately you should be our client and give us lots of money.

CAYUCOS

Do you smell that?

(Avila stands in awe and starts a slow clap.)

AVILA

It's the smell of success!

CAYUCOS

(Getting sick.)

No, it smells like one of those things took a crap outside our office!

AVILA

The North Koreans'll eat that shit right up!

TOM

(Definitely talking to only Cayucos.)

We should get out of here.

AVILA

Guys, we need to celebrate!

CAYUCOS

We need to go somewhere we can hide.

TOM

That's what I was thinking, somewhere private. End of days and all...

(Tom grabs Cayucos' ass.)

AVILA

(Orgasmically excited about the meeting, simultaneous with ass grab)

Oh Yes! That really gets my blood pumpin!

CAYUCOS

(To Tom.)

Are you bat-shit crazy?

AVILA

I'm crazy in love with my sales team!

(She puts her arms around both their shoulders.)

TOM

Cayucos, we seriously need to talk.

AVILA

I'm gonna go out on a limb and say, I think this is Mimosa-worthy.

CAYUCOS

We need to get Avila somewhere safe right now.

AVILA

I'm meeting my mother for lunch. You guys are joining me, right?

CAYUCOS

Hell yeah! Yes!!

(Turns to Tom.)

She's getting worse. If this gets her out of here, we can get on our way.

TOM

(Melodramatic.)

She's a lost cause babycakes, let's lose her.

CAYUCOS

You can't.

(Pauses and looks longingly into Tom's eyes.)

TOM

I can't?

(Beat.)

AVILA

We all cant for ice cream!

(Avila jabs Cayucos jokingly.)

CAYUCOS

The diner's prob'ly empty. It's a good place to set up camp while we figure things out.

TOM

Let's get this over with.

AVILA

(Singing horribly.)

It's din-er time! Yeah!

TOM

Meta's was so damn good.

AVILA

(Turns to Tom.)

Is good. It *is* good Tom.

(They all enter the abandoned diner. Tom pulls Cayucos back as Avila sits and looks at a dusty menu.)

TOM

(Small epiphany.)

Wasn't Avila out of work recently for a funeral?

CAYUCOS

Yeah.

TOM

Whose was it?

CAYUCOS

Her mothers.

(Avila pops open her briefcase and sniffs deeply once more. CAMBRIA suddenly walks out into the diner.)

CAMBRIA

Avila, my dear, it is so wonderful to see you.

(She hugs Avila.)

AVILA

Hi mom.

CAMBRIA

Are these the friends you've been telling me about?

AVILA

Of course.

CAMBRIA

Sit down, please. Relax.

CAYUCOS

This place is a disaster.

CAMBRIA

(Prophetically.)

Only to us.

CAYUCOS

(Confused and curious.)

What? What do you mean?

CAMBRIA

She's not all there you know.

CAYUCOS

I knew it.

CAMBRIA

She is caught up in her own mind.

TOM

Could you be more vague?

CAMBRIA

You could say none of us are here—

TOM

Cayucos, come here for a second.

(Tom forcefully pulls Cayucos aside as
Cambria consoles Avila.)

CAMBRIA

(To Avila.)

Ya know, you really oughta take a break from this
sometime soon.

CAYUCOS

(To Tom.)

I think her mom was going to tell us what is going on right now.

AVILA

(Speak-singing)

Break me off a piece of that—

TOM

I just have this feeling I need to get out.

CAMBRIA

You can come out of this any time you want.

CAYUCOS

I think I feel different too!

AVILA

I've got the power.

TOM

I love you!

CAYUCOS

Oh!

(Pause.)

That's sweet, but I'm—

(The lights flash off and strange noise can be heard. Someone squeals. Thuds and thumps can be heard. The lights flash back on. Cambria is gone. Avila is back at her desk and Tom and Cayucos are back there next to her. Avila is casually still reading her menu as though nothing has changed.)

CAYUCOS

What happened to Cambria?

TOM

Did you hear what I said?

CAYUCOS

Yes, but I—

TOM

It's really okay if you're... you know...

(Tom makes a few obscene gestures with his hands until Cayucos gets what he is suggesting.)

CAYUCOS

No. I'm not straight! But there are more important things at work. I'm a figment of her imagination! We both are!

TOM

Oh.

(Pauses and then the realization floods over him.)

OH! Crap!

CAYUCOS

I started taking it in earlier but I wasn't sure.

TOM

All the strangeness leading up to this moment; it makes more sense. I'm understanding it too. It's flooding over me!

CAYUCOS

That's good. It's great, really! Maybe if we're getting it then she's getting it too. And maybe she'll snap out of this trance soon—

(Lights cut out again and we hear all sorts of strange noises.)

When the lights come back up Tom and Cayucos are both gone and Avila is back at her desk and the mannequin is somehow back in its opening position.)

AVILA

I really need a vacation. Tom, do you think you can send me a vacation request form? Thanks.

(The lights start to fade. Avila has a new tone as she stands and walks DS.)

Oh, I've always wanted to see Florence. I could not have painted a more beautiful picture in my mind...

(The lights on stage fade ever so slightly more and the house lights come up a little as ONE and TWO, both in suits, come out from the audience or nearby the audience.)

ONE

Their brain works in very interesting ways.

TWO

It enralls beyond belief.

TWO

It's a bit addictive.

ONE

A bit?

TWO

Virtual Reality has nothing on this.

TWO

This is more powerful than any game engine out now.

ONE

Unfiltered imagination is so raw.

TWO

It has endless military and commercial applications.

TWO

No one could compete.

ONE

No one could compete.

TWO

It would fly off the shelves.

TWO

We need to capitalize on this now.

ONE

(Pause.)

We're going to hell for this.

(Blackout.)