

# THE SURVIVALISTS

A play by

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# THE SURVIVALISTS

## CHARACTERS

MICHAEL: A survivalist  
 DAVID: Michael's father  
 REGINALD: A cellular phone salesman  
 THOMAS: A seminarian  
 ROSA: A woman from Venezuela  
 ROSE: A woman in a coma

## LANGUAGE

THOMAS speaks Spanish and English.  
 ROSA speaks Spanish.

Spanish translation provided by Kellen Kautzman, M.Ed.

## SETTING

A bunker in the sub-basement beneath a mall.

## SCENES

ACT I Dawn's Early Light	ACT II The Mists of the Deep	ACT III Twilight's Last Gleaming
SCENE 1 The bunker	SCENE 1 A morphine dream	SCENE 1 The bunker, a year later
SCENE 2 The bunker, a year before	SCENE 2 The bunker, the morning after ACT I SCENE 3	SCENE 2 The bunker, the next night
SCENE 3 The bunker, immediately after SCENE 1	SCENE 3 The bunker, later in the day	

ACT I  
DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

## SCENE 1

A bunker in the sub-basement beneath a mall. The space is full of large, anonymous barrels that have been arranged to create a partition between one side of the room and the other, creating a main room and a smaller antechamber, beside which is the entrance: a heavy door with multiple locks. A locked weapons cabinet filled with guns stands in one corner of the main area, and nearby there is a makeshift kitchenette one might construct when camping. Beside this there is a large medical chest.

Three military-issue bedrolls lay among this space, two in the larger area and the third inside the antechamber. While clean, the space smells of a combination of dankness and the locker room smell of men.

Near darkness. DAVID stands on a stool and mock-hangs from a noose at center which HE holds himself. HE yells "Play Ball!" A moment passes. DAVID takes the noose from his neck and sets it aside. HE takes his position. The lights rise.

DAVID sits on one of the bedrolls in the larger area, his back against the wall. HE wears black slacks, a black, long sleeve sweater and a pair of dark black sunglasses. REGINALD is at work nearby piercing diamond earrings onto the edges of a red tie. HE wears black slacks and a plain, white t-shirt.

DAVID

Oh say. Oh say. Oh say...

(A pause)

Words  
 Death  
 Life  
 Dog  
 God  
 Change  
 Survivalism  
     Sways  
     Sings  
     Brays

Oh say oh say oh say...

REGINALD

Can you see?

DAVID

No, as a matter of fact. I cannot. You know that!

(DAVID laughs.  
REGINALD  
continues his  
work with the tie.)

DAVID  
(cont.)

Bring me some water, Reginald.

REGINALD

Can you say please?

DAVID

Please, damn it. Bring me some water, Reggy.

REGINALD

Since you asked so nicely...

(REGINALD  
stands from his  
craftwork to  
deliver DAVID a  
bottle of water  
from the  
kitchenette.)

He's been gone awhile.  
Sure has been gone awhile.  
He's not normally gone this long.

DAVID

Oh he's just out hunting again. He loves to hunt. I  
really don't know where he got that from.

(REGINALD  
returns to working  
on the tie.)

REGINALD

Still I wish he'd come back.  
I feel safer when he's here.

DAVID

Me too.

## REGINALD

I don't know what he's thinking  
 going out like that for days on end.  
 We have everything we need here.  
 Except meat, I guess. And instruments.  
 Except meat and a girl and instruments and television  
 and a washing machine and a Swiss timeshare and  
 rollerblades and real sunshine without a glass barrier  
 and (I suppose he gets sunshine when he goes outside,  
 the brave bastard) and fresh air and live music and  
 meaningful human contact.  
 Oh sweet Jesus, for live music. The sound  
 of a guitar being strummed or a trumpet blown.  
 But I can't play anything much. I never learned how  
 and there aren't any instruments for me to learn with.  
 Just recorded music...  
 I play a little guitar.  
 I dabble. But that's it.  
 I wish I'd learned to really play.  
 Oh sweet Lord, for a singsong hour  
 and something nice like  
 liquorsweet singsong grace  
 like bowerborn smiles  
 and a baby's laughter  
 giggling laughter  
 babbling brooks  
 dancing daughters  
 laughing looks.  
 Anything but silence.

## DAVID

Laughing looks. Babbling brooks. And a baby's  
 laughter, liquorsweet singsong...

## REGINALD

Anything but silence.  
 Oh sweet God for any of that again  
     or just a drop of rain  
     on my face  
     and no fear

## DAVID

No fear. Or nightmares.

REGINALD

Or nightmares. Christ, we're going on like a couple of madmen.

DAVID

Who's listening?

REGINALD

True enough, my friend. True enough. But we could sing, couldn't we?

(A pause)

DAVID

Oh say oh say oh say/

REGINALD

Don't you know anything else? Let's sing something else, for Christ's sake.

(A pause)

I'm sorry I yelled, David.

DAVID

It makes me think about baseball. The Anthem. I miss baseball.

REGINALD

I know. That's fine. Baseball was a good thing.

DAVID

Springtime. Summertime. Falltime. Baseball.

REGINALD

Yes, David. I know. But it gets repetitive. You have to know something else.

DAVID

Row row row/

REGINALD

Your boat.

DAVID & REGINALD

Gently down the stream. Merrily merrily/

DAVID

Merrily/

REGINALD

Stop, wait. This can be more interesting. Let's do the round. Let's do it right.

(THEY proceed to sing the round until REGINALD bores. DAVID continues unabated until REGINALD holds up the tie in triumph. Already tied, its edges have been studded from top to bottom with diamonds.)

Voila!

DAVID

What?

REGINALD

See. I mean, here. Take a look. Take a feel.

(REGINALD shows DAVID the tie. DAVID runs his fingers up and down it gingerly. HE nods approval.)

Isn't that something?

DAVID

Oh it's something. It's really something. What color is the tie?

REGINALD

It's red. It's a red silk tie.

DAVID

And those are... real diamonds?

REGINALD

Diamonds. Actual diamonds. From your store. More than I can count.

DAVID

Oh that's going to look sharp, Reg. Really very sharp. Come over here. Let me touch them.

(REGINALD moves to DAVID, who reaches up and rubs his hand over the tie and the diamonds.)

From my store?

REGINALD

Yes, from your store.

DAVID

Like little babies, each of these. Each with their own little personality.

(DAVID slowly pulls on the tie such that REGINALD is forced to bend over, at first comfortably, then with growing awkwardness. HE tries to stand up, but DAVID holds on and yanks the tie toward his mouth. HE kisses the tie, then stands and slowly moves

to kiss  
REGINALD.  
REGINALD pulls  
away violently.  
DAVID slumps  
back down.)

REGINALD

You know I don't like that.

DAVID

I know. It's been a year, Reginald. I'm bored.

REGINALD

These are lovely diamonds, David. Do you want the tie?

DAVID

Oh no, you keep it. You made it. You should keep it.

(A long pause.)

REGINALD

Oh yeah. I almost forgot. I have to complete the picture here!

(REGINALD  
moves to the  
antechamber,  
where HE reveals  
a red velvet  
smoking jacket  
similarly studded  
garishly with  
diamonds at the  
edges. HE  
quickly puts on a  
white dress shirt,  
throws the tie on,  
and dons the  
jacket. HE returns  
to stand before  
DAVID.)

REGINALD

Now this is something I could have never done before.

DAVID

You're going to have to describe it to me.

REGINALD

Well I have the jacket on/

DAVID

The velvet one?

REGINALD

Yes. You may feel the edges of it, if you'd like.

(DAVID does.)

DAVID

Oh that's nice.

REGINALD

Quite, yes.

DAVID

And you're still wearing the tie?

REGINALD

Indeed. And that white dress shirt he brought back for me the last time he was out.

DAVID

Aren't you afraid to wear that? It's from outside.

REGINALD

I thought about that. But you know what... I'm trying to get over that. That fear. If he thinks it's okay for me to wear this white shirt, then it's probably okay.

DAVID

Yes. Probably.

REGINALD

I mean he wouldn't bring it back here if he thought it would be dangerous. He goes outside, and he comes back in, and he's okay. He wouldn't keep doing that if he thought he'd get sick and and and/

DAVID

Die.

REGINALD

No. Yes. Die. He wouldn't put us all at risk.

DAVID

No, he wouldn't. Gosh, yes. I bet you look like a million bucks in that velvet jacket and red tie with all the diamonds. I bet you look like you could hit the town.

REGINALD

Hell yes! Literally I look like a million bucks. I must have twenty thousand dollars worth of diamonds right here on my torso. I'm ready for the damned ball here. Mr. Buckingsnort, bring me my carriage! Oh yes, that's a good man. Why I think I would like to take some air first, thank you for asking. Oh yes I think I will have a G & T, if you will, with a squeeze of lemon. A firm squeeze of lemon. A nippy squeeze, if you'd please. You know how I like it. Oh thanks so very much for asking. Why yes, things are well at the bank. Very well. Oh so well, well, you know. Well! These? Oh this old tired thing? It's nothing, really. A gift from an unnamed Senator thanking me for my support. Yes, my support. Oh no I can't tell you his name, Mr. Buckingsnort. My God no. I work in confidence. But I can hint. You'll recall an unnamed Senator a few years back was running against... oh what's that group called? Yes, a libertarian. And this Senator's back was up against the wall. The goddamned wall, Buckingsnort. No, of course nobody knew about that. That's the point. Well I don't have to tell you what it's like for a three-term incumbent Senator to be found dealing inappropriately with a blue-assed chimpanzee. There were even photos. Can you imagine? And those libertarians, well... they're ruthless, you know? They're not like normal politicians. They don't play by the rules. They were going to use those photos to win a seat in the Senate, which would be like... oh I don't know... just wrong, do you see? Against the natural order. Upsetting the very gods, Buckingsnort, and if there's one thing I learned from my Greek myths: you don't upset the goddamned gods or the freaking natural order! Those seats are for Republicans and Democrats. The two party system is as American as apple pie and date rape. Or it was. So. Before the Sickness. But I digress, and anyway, Mr. Buckingsnort – this is a

REGINALD

(cont.)

fantasy, and in my fantasy there's still a senate filled with stodgy old white men, half of whom are batshit crazy from power. And in this fantasy world, who are these people taking pictures of my favorite Senator unbenknownst to him? It's un-American.

DAVID

Inhuman!

REGINALD

Unhuman, Mr. Buckingsnort! Who do they think they are, judging as august a personage as our esteemed Senator! Oh there I go. I suppose I've given it up now.

DAVID

Well there were many Esteemed Senators, before the Sickness took them.

REGINALD

Were there?

DAVID

Some were even women, but/

REGINALD

Oh yes, well. Mr. Buckingsnort, I can trust you. You're capable of keeping a secret. Not like some people I know.

DAVID

Mum's the word, Sir.

REGINALD

You understand how people like that... I mean people with power. Substantial power. Real power. Power over bodies and minds. People with their fingers on the goddamned trigger... they need a rest. And sometimes that rest comes in the shape of a baboon's ass. Heavy is the head, am I right? They need a rest, and they just aren't like the rest of us. Their souls are golden fleece and ours are leaden dross. I say "ours" ironically, of course, Mr. Buckingsnort, because of course you and I are among the initiated. That is, we ourselves are