

History, the Play



2015

by Merit Coba

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Characters:

The man: (President Obama? We call him the President.)

The woman: Claire Redmund

Narrator [Reads the text between the brackets]

[Stage: A large room with a large conference table dominating the room. The conference table is clean and everything on it is neatly arranged as if in a hotel, with glasses and bottles placed in a proper pattern and the precisely placed around it.

The wall can be hanged with pictures of the world and plants can be placed.. these should be the kind that can be controlled. Everything should breath a sense of control and outward appearance. To one side of the room is a wall with windows, two doors that open to a small balcony. Another door is to the side on the left near the end of the stage.

The window should look out over a scene of small cars and buildings and it is dusk. The smallness can be overdone as to underscore the importance of the President towards the rest of the world.

Before one of the two doors to the balcony is the figure of a man with his back to the camera(audience), almost a silhouette of a man with a long wiry built, smoking a cigarette.

A woman enters from the side door. She is dressed in something resembling an uniform. It has a skirt that drops just over her knees. She stops on seeing the man. He has heard her entering so he turns around, so she can not escape the confrontation.]

Claire: "I had not expected you to be here, sir."

The President: "It is ok."

[Claire makes as if to leave.]

The President: "Don't leave...please join me for a moment."

[President makes an inviting gesture towards the window as if to make her join him in look through it to the outside world..

Claire walks over to him, stops next to him. They both look out of the window. Note that she will keep to a semi stiff posture as if she can't decide between being at ease or sticking to a formal stance. She is a civilian in a uniform.]

President: "There will be no stars tonight."

Claire: "No sir. It is going to rain."

[The President nods.]

(PAUSE)

President: "I have not seen you before."

Claire: "No sir. My name is Claire Redmund and it would have been unlikely that you would have seen me otherwise."

President: "Oh? How so?"

Claire: "We are not encouraged to."

President: "Meaning you are told to avoid me."

[He laughs.]

Claire: "That would be one way to say it, mister President."

[Note she addresses him with his title, she hovers between two states.]

[He nods thoughtfully.]

President: "What is it that you do, Claire?"

Claire: "I am a historian, mister President. You might also call me record keeper if you

want to be precise. I write down what happens here in this building.”

President: “Ah, you make history.”

[He smiles.]

Claire: “I would say you make history and I write it down.”

President: “That might be one way of putting it.”

Claire: “It is unavoidable, being who you are, sir.”

[He nods again.]

[Claire(continues..breaking the flow of the conversation, thus creating a moment of concentration for the audience)]

Claire: “Ever wondered about that, mister President?”

President: “About me making history?”

[Note: important: he takes a moment to studiously suck his cigarette.]

President (continues):“Whenever I see a movie about a President, like one about Kennedy or Nixon, I think about it. But when I am in the midst of it I often forget about it, but -then- sometimes I feel that it is... this is a historic moment, but then that one is actually just a small moment amidst all the moments. It somehow becomes a normal thing.”

[He breaks the flow of the conversation by smoking another cigarette.]

Claire: “And was this a historic moment? One where you have this melancholic moment where you stare out over the city to make a decision about bombing or not?”

[She should be getting more at ease now. Note that during this conversation the should turn towards each other more because we end up with Claire smiling at him.. this could in a movie or in a comic be done via the window, which artistically is more

interesting.]

President: "I was just enjoying a cigarette."

[President smiles.]

Claire: "Pity. It would have made a nice historic movie moment, mister President."

President: "It would have."

Claire: "Maybe I could alter history a little bit and make this a historic moment, for the benefit of us both?"

President: "You would be willing to write yourself into history?"

Claire: "A historians privilege."

President: "I would have to make a decision first, though. An historic one."

Claire: "True sir, but even... not making one could be a historic moment."

President: "Sounds like a done deal then..."

Claire: "...If I was narcissistic enough."

President: "And you are not?"

Claire: "No mister President:. I am a historian.. not a politician."

[She gives him a smile. He laughs, even with his eyes.]

Fade out.

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