

The Apparition of Hooker Oak  
a one act play for four people

by Christian Lovgren  
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Characters:

Simon the Derelict: a broken hobo who rambles by lantern light.

Omega: a doofy, horny and malicious idiot with an Omega symbol on his chest.

Inna: a young seductive siren with an ulterior motive.

Hooker Oak: the burnt specter of the stump of Chico, California's great Hooker Oak tree.

Synopsis:

A derelict named Simon narrates from Chico's downtown subterranean tunnels. Soon met by a horny flunky frat boy named Omega and a deceptive siren named Inna, a murder ensues before Simon's eyes. All the while the apparition known as the ashes of Hooker Oak whispers in the ears of her unwitting subjects.

INT. CHICO SUBTERRANEAN TUNNELS - NIGHT

*A gruff and disheveled transient shambles in from the shadows and slams himself into a seated position with little regard for his person. He laboriously unfolds his bed roll and meticulously places his only belongings around him in a manner that says that he has done this before. He unpacks a lantern, turns it on, and begins to speak to the ground through a voice like gravel.*

SIMON

I go by the name of Simon the Derelict. Not too many people know my name. Not too many can even see me. Must be invisible, I guess. Must be some kind of... sailor, perhaps. Or maybe the ship itself; passing between two worlds. The first is that of man. The latter is that of the netherworld. Sailing out farther than any sunset. Certainly father than any memory of me. A forgotten relic, I am. Forgotten like these tunnels.

*Simon raises his eyes to the audience for the first time and he opens his arms awkwardly to them while flashing a disconcerting grin. He again lowers his eyes to the ground.*

SIMON

Urban legends cannot house men. Urban legends cannot keep prying eyes from discovering the atrocities that I've seen down here. The Chinese died down here, you know. The men that built these tunnels, these caverns of doom that race beneath your feet as you binge and purge above me on the tree lined streets of downtown Chico; John and Annie Bidwell's "little boy" as it were. Good men died here, yes Sir! And, they continue to do so. Yes, Sir.

*Simon buries his face in his hands and rubs his eyes awfully.*

SIMON

God, I could use a drink.

*As if called by Simon, a dark and creeping apparition dressed in all black with soot and ashes smeared across her face tip-toes toward him like a velociraptor with a frightening and unchanging smile pasted across her face. Her body is made of a burnt tree stump that sways and lunges as she approaches Simon who is completely unaware of her presence. She reaches into her stomach and reveals a flask which she supplies to Simon and without skipping a beat he cracks the cap and sucks half the flask into*

*his belly. She leans into him and whispers a message into his ear. Simon begins to cry, but he shakes it off and continues as the creature meanders before the audience and quietly leaves.*

SIMON

Too many damn ghosts in this town, you see? Too many damn deviants like yours truly. Awash in pride and greed and decadence, they are. Your vomit washes down here, you know. The blood you shed from your senseless knife fights and transplanted gangster warfare; it all washes down here, down here to my home. For Christ's sake, have another drink why don't you. Well, thanks friend. Don't mind if I do.

*And, with that Simon finishes his flask, clicks his lantern off, and nestles into his bed. From off stage we hear cans and bottles crashing and a pair of flashlights come bouncing into view. A boisterous and idiotic noise fills the room as a drunk and bumbling young couple enters. The first is Omega, a "bro" of a frat-boy with an omega symbol narcissistically stenciled on his chest. The second is a scantily clad harlot named, Inna (pronounced e-nuh). Both appear extremely intoxicated.*

INNA

Come on, Omega. Why did you bring me down here? It's fucking creepy as hell and it stinks like rotten old bums and Kona's sandwiches. All those things are good for are door stops and hangovers. Respectively, of course.

OMEGA

Shit, Babe. I thought you brought me down here. And, what's with hating on Kona's? I love their trivia board. Those brain teasers are so freakin' hard!

INNA

Brain teasers, huh? Has anyone ever told you that it's absolutely adorable just how stupid you are?

*Omega gets a sheepish look of confirmation and replies.*

OMEGA

Yeah, maybe. But, has anyone ever told you that you get meaner when, um, you get... damn it! Okay, just gimme a second, will ya'?

INNA

See what I mean? Just precious, really.

OMEGA

Alright, Sabrina. Knock it off. I'm not that stupid.

INNA

If you say so, Sugar. And, for the last time, the name is Inna. You do it again and I may just put a bullet in your stomach.

OMEGA

Woah, that seems pretty harsh. What the hell's that supposed to mean?

INNA

It's a joke, Omega. Don't worry about it, okay? Just hush your pretty little mouth and follow me. There's a reason I brought you down here...

*Inna shakes her body enticingly.*

INNA

...something I want to show you.

OMEGA

Oh, man! I knew it. This has got to be the best damn night of my life. Wait a minute... I thought you said that I brought you down here.

INNA

Oh yeah, that's right. You did. Has anyone ever told you that you think too much?

OMEGA

No.

INNA

I didn't think so, Honey. Just follow me, alright? And, remember to put one foot in front of the other.

*Omega chuffs.*

OMEGA

Sheesh, I can do that, like, all damn day.

INNA

Of course you can, Darlin'. Of course you can.

*The flashlights bounce off stage as the two wander off and Simon wakes from his tortured slumber. Again he clicks his lantern on.*

SIMON

Oh God, not again. I can feel her growing closer. My siren sings to me of our love long lost. I thought I'd left her for good. Thought I'd sailed away; sailed past the rising sun and into the void from which no earthly man may be granted return. But, I forgot that the earth is round. I must have come full circle. And, now she calls to me again. But, what can she need of me? What more do I have to give her that I haven't already given?

*Simon begins to mutter to himself as the soot faced ghost enters and creeps toward him. She leans down and whispers again into his ear. Simon begins to realize her presence, but he does not make eye contact.*

SIMON

The oak you say? What about the great and terrible oak; the behemoth who whispers to me from across the sea? She's here now. Isn't she?

*The ghost howls terribly and Simon begins to shiver. He sees her now.*

SIMON

The ashes of Hooker Oak! You are here my apparition. But, they've burned you, haven't they? Burned you right up to a crisp. First the pests and locusts devoured and reduced you to a shell of yourself, a hollowed out risk and a danger to the people below your outstretched and desecrated arms. And, then a miscreant set you ablaze. Didn't he? Probably one of the same midnight hedonists that urinate into the gutters outside the Towne Lounge.

*The ghost screams in a shrill, witch's voice.*

HOOKER OAK

But, I thought the Lounge was supposed to be closing.

SIMON

Oh, but it is. It is closing. Closing in on me like my haunting love! The love that I lost to the sea. Oh God, she approaches. Not yet. I can't let her see me; not like this.

*Again Simon clicks the lantern off and Hooker Oak kneels down next to him in a lover's embrace. Omega and Inna enter with flashlights drawn.*

INNA

See now. That wasn't so bad, was it? We're almost there, Sunshine.

OMEGA

Not to be a little bitch or anything, Sabrina, but I'm kind of starting to get scared and I'm beginning to think I'm not going to get laid tonight. Why the hell are we down here anyways? How much further is it?

INNA

Look, I told you that my name is Inna. If you call me Sabrina one more time I'm going to stab you in the face with a fucking soldering iron, now stop sniveling and follow me. It's not that much further.

*Omega stops and finally begins to show a bit of manly force.*

OMEGA

Hold on now. Stop. Just stop. Maybe I didn't properly introduce myself at Riley's, but my name is O-mother-fucking-mega. I am the beginning and the end. Well, maybe just the end, but you get the point. I have an entire house of horny young pledges just clamoring to get with me. I mean just chomping at my nuts, Woman. They all want to sidle up next to the super-stud and here I am, excuse my language, in a *gosh-darn* maze of tunnels filled with rats and raccoons and probably a slew of cannibalistic humanoid underground dwellers for all I know. But, I'm the big-man Omega, Girl. Do you know this? I do as I damn well please. And, this is not what I damn well please! I piss where I want. I screw who I want. I'll drink a fucking swimming pool of Jagermeister and top it off with a sweet, sweet apple-tini garnished with one of those tiny little umbrellas. I burned down the freaking Hooker Oak stump for God's sake. Over one hundred years went up in flames! Poom! Just like that. And, that's why they call me the Omega! You feel me? You feel me now?

*Inna stands completely unaffected, checking her nails and replies nonchalantly.*

INNA

Well, I was briefly considering feeling you, but now I'm just having second thoughts about the whole thing. And, you were so close too. What a pity. It was right around that corner there. Well, I guess you can get back to your hoard of nut chomping sluts now. See you around, Big-man.

*Inna turns to leave. Omega stammers and runs after her, grabbing her by the shoulder. He spins her around dramatically and pulls her in close. The tension builds as they stare deep into each other's eyes and ultimately they explode into a passionate kiss. Inna slowly pushes him away as her index finger sultrily slides down his chest and she smiles in a way that seems to suggest that she is still firmly in control, but willing to submit.*

OMEGA

I was just playing. I didn't mean any of that stuff. I was just trying to impress you. I was just trying to get you to see me.

INNA

Yeah, Omega. I know. I can see you. I can see inside of you; see past that dumb ass stencil and that broken little boy exterior. Past the callouses and the lifetime of folly and deep regret. I know who you are. I know that your real name is Josh, that you don't really belong to a fraternity at all, that you've never actually touched a female in your entire life, and that deep down you're just a really nice guy who wants genuine, unabashed, real-life-love. And, if you play your cards right, you're going to get it. You're going to get more than you ever bargained for, alright.

*Missing the insinuation altogether, Omega stupidly pumps his fists in the air and does a cheesy yet endearing victory dance. Inna steps threateningly into him.*

INNA

But, if you keep up the uber-machismo gimmick, you're going to be navigating the tunnels alone. So, what's it going to be super-stud: shut your mouth and get the girl or keep on yammering your jabber-jaw and brave the labyrinth alone?

OMEGA

Do you promise I get to touch 'em?

*Inna sighs and rolls her eyes then turns and walks quickly off stage. Omega follows hotly after while shouting.*

OMEGA

Come on, do I get to touch 'em or not? Inna! Do I?

*From off stage.*

INNA

Just follow me, dumb-ass!

*Suddenly, Hooker Oak springs from Simon's lap and howls.*

HOOKER OAK

He's here!

SIMON

That means that she's here too. Oh no, Hooker. I don't think that I can do this. I can't do this!

*Hooker Oak rushes into Simon and strokes his head. He nuzzles into her and begins to fall into a blissful trance. Hooker leans into his ear and begins to fill him with spells of compliance. She drags her hand slowly down her face, collecting ash and soot, and she smears it down Simon's cheeks. Slowly Simon breaks free and screams horribly.*

SIMON

Not this time, Hooker! I protected you. I kept you whole for a century. I shrunk myself to the size of a gnat and battled the great starving termite infestation for you. I became a mighty falcon and my talons shredded the backs of those that tried to cut you. But, not this time. My family line has preserved your kind for far too long. No longer will we sail the stars and traverse the cosmos under the cloak of invisibility just to sustain you. No longer will I train my blood to hunt your foe. I'm breaking the chain here and now. From now on, when I sail, I sail for me and mine, Hooker. Tonight and forevermore, I am forest-walker no longer.



*The crazed look in Hooker Oak's eyes floods from her and something worse takes hold. Hooker Oak begins to shake her head up and down wildly with fearful vengeance as she furrows her brow and extends her quivering finger towards him in a silent witch's curse. She slowly backs away until she is out of sight. Simon sighs and begins to pack his belongings. Just then Omega and Inna enter with Hooker Oak now whispering spells in Inna's ear. Simon is unaware and he continues packing.*

INNA

Well, this is it. This is what I wanted to show you.

OMEGA

What's what you wanted to show me? There's nothing here. It's just the same old filthy tunnels that we've seen for the last hour.

INNA

Oh, but your wrong, Josh. You're dead wrong. For this is where you die. The bullet I spoke of? The soldering iron in the face? It happens here. It all happens here, Josh. For I am a forest-walker. I *am* the forest. And, now I begin to set sail beyond the sun.

OMEGA

What... the hell... are you talking about? Wait a minute, what? Sailing beyond the sun? I'm beginning to think that it wasn't really my idea to come down here at all.

*Inna rolls her eyes.*

OMEGA

I don't get it. Why me? And, just what the hell makes you think you could overpower me anyway? I mean, look at me and look at you. You're a fucking sewer dweller and I'm the king, baby. You don't stand a chance against the king, Sabrina.

INNA

For the last time, my name is Inna.

*Hooker Oak steps behind Inna and begins to mimic her every movement. They pull an imaginary bag from atop an imaginary shelf from which they pull an imaginary gun. Their fingers make the shape of the gun and they point it at Omega.*

OMEGA

What are you going to do with that?

(pause)

Shoot me?

INNA and HOOKER OAK

Precisely.

*They fire an audible shot and the theater lights entirely as Omega's mouth explodes in blood that smears all down his nicely stenciled t-shirt. Simon lurches to his feet at the sound of the shot.*

OMEGA

Oh shit, Inna! What the fuck just happened! How did you do that? Why am I bleeding, Inna? Why am I bleeding?

*Omega begins to quiver violently with his palms outstretched in a bid for mercy. Inna and Hooker both walk to him with their gun hands still extended.*

INNA and HOOKER OAK

For the last time. My name is not Inna. It's Hooker!

OMEGA

Like a prostitute? You're a fucking prostitute?

*Inna and Hooker Oak both outgas a deep arduous sigh.*

INNA and HOOKER OAK

Do we have to spell it out for you, J-O-S-H? You burn me? We burn you.

*One more shot is fired sending Omega through the air and onto his back. Again the theater lights wholly. Again an audible shot is heard. The shot rings out in a high pitched squeal and then drones on into a minute of complete and stark silence as Hooker breaks free and Inna and Simon clasp their ears, both falling to their knees. Hooker opens her stance wide like a blooming flower in the wind. She wipes her face as clean as she can, removes her burnt stump facade, and she smiles happily for the first time. She resumes her position at Simon's side and he sits down next*

*to her. She covers over him and they embrace. She again whispers in his ear.*

*All the while Inna is positioning Omega's body in a burial position, with arms and legs crossed. She looks longingly and sadly upon him and then departs to meet with Simon. She sits in Simon's lap and he holds her close like a child. She looks up at him happily and begins to whisper in his ear as Hooker rises and spreads over them as a canopy of swaying tree limbs. Inna kisses him lightly on the cheek and begins to leave. Just before going off stage she stops and looks back.*

INNA

Can you do that for me, Dad? Just this one last time and we're done? Can you do that for me?

*Simon again looks to the ground in mourning.*

SIMON

I can't. I can't go back. I cannot sail again. I will not bury this man. Not in this tomb, not in these tunnels. Not again. Nevermore.

*Hooker now speaking euphoniously, no longer a witch, steps into Simon and asks.*

HOOKER OAK

Not even for me, Simon? Not even for Inna?

SIMON

Farina? Farina, huh? Yeah, that's funny. But no, Hooker. Not for you. Not even for-Inna.

*Inna does not look back and she slowly walks off one side of the stage. Hooker does not look back and she slowly walks off the other. Simon sits for a moment and whispers to himself.*

SIMON

Not even for Inna.

*And with that, Simon sighs, he leans over and he quietly clicks off his lantern.*

**END**