

DEN of WOLVES

a short play

by

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**Setting.**

An abandoned, falling-apart reconstruction-era mansion with a wraparound columnade on an overgrown and blasted plantation surrounded by a forest of ash and dead tree trunks in a dry, dark and lonely part of a forsaken world. Ash and heavy clouds darken the sky to dusk. An apocalypse has come and gone. The only animals to survive are roaches and rats. And humans.q

**Cast of characters.**

**EVE.** Too old to be a child, but too young yet to be a woman. Fancies herself mother/ sister to ADAM. Protective of ADAM like a child of her doll.

**ADAM.** Manchild. Has forgotten what the world that was was like, forgotten how to interact with anyone besides EVE. Something of a feral child behind his eyes. A child beginning the process of manhood. Obsessive, clingy.

**CAIN.** A wanderer. The lone wolf type, but not by choice. Has gotten used to having to survive. Little hope for the future, as he sees there is no future. Prison-style tattoos on forearms, a scar on his forehead. Weathered. Wiry. Wolfish.

**Thug 1, Thug 2.** Bandit raider team. The hungry dogs flanking the pack. Sociopaths who relish in the wake of the world.

EVE crouches, scurries to the house. ADAM lingers behind, snapping twigs and branches. She looks back at him, hisses. He shuffles through the fallen leaves. He buries his nose into her windbreaker.

EVE (*whispering*)

Quiet. (*points up the hill, at the house.*) Look, Adam-- home. (*beat*) Stay close by me, low.

EVE runs with one hand gripping ADAM's arm and the other in the satchel on her hip.

Go 'round the porch, find something we can burn.

ADAM picks his way around the porch unhurriedly, kicking through broken shingles and chairs. EVE readies herself, pulling an old crusty revolver from her satchel. She pauses, takes a few breaths. She throws open the door and springs into the room, brandishing the revolver. By now, ADAM is at a

window looking on. A moment. ADAM  
rounds the fourth corner, to the  
front door.

ADAM (*dragging in a pile of debris*)

Are we safe now?

EVE

We gotta start a fire and find food, ADAM. What all did you find?

ADAM

I don't like this house. It's falling apart.

EVE

We're safe here.

ADAM

It's cold. And empty. It creaks and groans. I don't like this house.

EVE

Hush. Adam, baby. We're home now. This is where we're gonna be for a  
little while. Help me put this fire together.

EVE piles the debris. ADAM creeps  
up the stairs. Disappears into a  
hallway. Watches EVE. A moment.  
Heavy boots clunking outside on  
the patio. Both start, freeze up.  
EVE dives for the satchel as the  
door creaks open. CAIN peeks his

head through, shines a maglight.

EVE points the gun at the door.

CAIN stops dead, puts his hands in the air. The light clatters on the floor.

CAIN

Alright now, let's put that away, young lady. (*puts his bag down, slowly approaches EVE*) Look, I ain't got nothin' in my hands, no tricks up my sleeve. Let's put the gun down.

EVE

What are you doing here?

CAIN

Same as y'all, just lookin' for shelter. Tryin' to make a fire?

EVE's eyes dart to the pile.

EVE

Maybe. Who're you?

CAIN

I'm nobody. Now I'm gonna make a fire-- in the fireplace-- and welcome y'all to sit next to it. If you got somethin' to cook on it.

He grabs an armload of the wood.

He backs away to the fireplace, drops the wood, kneels, and pulls out a large and well-polished

Bowie knife from his bag. ADAM  
creeps down the stairs silently.

EVE

What's that for?

CAIN

chop up the wood into little bits first. See this one? *(holds up a match-sized piece of wood, whittled down so that slivers curl out from its base)* That's called a tinder-tree. A handful of these and *whoomph*. Hand me your satchel.

EVE

No.

CAIN

Well hand me your matches. And you might as well let me see your gun, anyway. Thing won't shoot. But I guess you figured that out already.

EVE *(inspecting revolver)*

And how would you know something like that?

CAIN

Thing's got more mud on it than your jeans, girl. I bet your bullets are soaked, too. Might as well use it as a hammer. Just let me see your satchel.

She hands him her satchel. He  
lights the fire. Dismantles the  
gun, cleans it gun with a shred

torn off his clothing and spit.

What's your name?

EVE

You gotta tell me yours first.

CAIN

Alright, then. Call me Cain. Hmmh. Strange, now, hearin' my own name again. You're lucky you got that brother a' yours. You forget your own name after you go long enough without nobody to say it to you.

EVE

Adam's not my brother.

CAIN

So he's Adam? That makes you Eve.

EVE

No! Except yeah, but it's-- look, he's just--

CAIN

No, I get it. Nothin' strange about stickin' together, times like this. Little kid like that needs somebody, help him get along.

EVE

Me too. *(pause)* My name really is Eve, though.

CAIN hands EVE her gun back.

Their hands touch.

CAIN

Alright. So that gun should work better now. But those bullets were damp, probably duds now. Woah! Still, don't go swingin' that hammer around, John Henry! *(he grabs her hands)* Always, always treat a gun like it's loaded. And itchin' go off. *(he thumbs the safety)* Safety. Stays. On.

ADAM grabs a plank, charges CAIN. He swings for the gun, as if to knock it out of CAIN's hands. CAIN kicks EVE away, taking the plank to the shin. The gun drops, goes off.

CAIN

Holy shit, holy shit! What the fuck, kid?

CAIN stands, hobbles towards ADAM. So this here's Adam, huh. What the fuck are you doing? You wanna KILL somebody? Jesus Christ!

ADAM keeps swinging at CAIN, backpedaling. CAIN stays just out of reach of the plank. EVE tries to stop him.

EVE

Please, Cain, he didn't know!

CAIN shrugs EVE off him.

CAIN

Whelp!

CAIN knocks the plank out of ADAM's hands, picks him up, and throws him across the room. ADAM whimpers, but lays still. EVE rushes to his side, holds his head, looks up at CAIN with an expression of horror and disgust. CAIN moves to the pair.

EVE (*snarling*)

Get back!

CAIN backs up a step, just so he's out of EVE's reach, kneels down.

CAIN

Ssh. Eve-- Eve, look. I'm sorry. I-- I just, I'm sorry. He really fuckin' pegged me. I didn't mean to get so rough. Let me see if he's badly hurt. Okay?

CAIN checks ADAM, passing over his neck, ribs, arms, and legs. ADAM whimpers a little. CAIN checks his shoulder. There is a large bruise.

That's from where he landed, I bet.

CAIN rummages around his pockets,  
retrieves a flask. Puts it to  
ADAM's lips, but EVE stops him. A  
look. CAIN drinks a gulp.

Give him some of this. That shoulder's gonna kill him, and this will help. *(Beat)* It's just whiskey. Hell, it'll quiet him down, some, too. Hopefully. God knows we don't need this kid running around, hittin' people, making guns go off. Oh shit. They probably heard that gunshot.

EVE

Who's they?

CAIN

Bandits. Highwaymen. Fuckin' barbarians. What, you think you were alone in this forest? That kid stompin' around, breakin' every twig he could reach, y'all were as easy to track as the sun. You're not so quiet either. They definitely heard that gun go off. Take the boy. Put him up somewhere. Now. Hide.

Heavy boots on the porch, two  
gruff voices.

THUG 1 *(voice)*

What the fuck are you doing? Go 'round back, ya dumb asshole.

THUG 2 *(voice)*

Well fuck you, too. If I gotta go all the way 'round, you gotta deal with the kid. I got dibs on the bitch.

THUG 1 (*voice*)

Shut the fuck up and go 'round back!

CAIN (*slowly, sternly*)

If they find you, first they'll kill Adam. If he's lucky. If not, they're going to make him watch what they do to you.

EVE

What are they going to do?

CAIN (*snarls*)

Hide.

EVE and CAIN drag ADAM into a large closet. EVE and ADAM crouch inside. CAIN dives for the satchel and gun, tosses them into the closet before EVE closes it and shuts the door. He fumbles for the flashlight and huddles behind a broken-down love seat, cabinet, or rubble pile. The door swings open, and THUG 1 enters brandishing a crowbar.

THUG 1

Yoo-hoo! Anybody home? You come out quick, sweet thing, and I'll play nice!

THUG 1 prowls around the main room, rifling through the things there. Finds CAIN's things.

Come out, come out, darlin'!

THUG 2 enters, creeps up the hallway to the closet where EVE and ADAM are hiding, sniffing. He motions to THUG 1.

Where are you, baby? You in there?

ADAM coughs. THUG 2 throws the door open. CAIN jumps out from cover. He brings the maglight down on THUG 1's head. He crumples.

THUG 2 doesn't hear.

THUG 2 (*growling*)

Much prettier close up. Much prettier scared.

THUG 2 thumbs his fly, kicks ADAM away. EVE brings out the gun, points it at THUG 2. She tries to shoot him, but the gun won't fire. She whimpers.

And you smell good too.

CAIN swings the maglight into the side of THUG 2's head, a full-body swing. THUG 2 falls. CAIN stand astride him and swings the maglight into his head several more times.

EVE (*shrieking*)

Stop! Stop it! Please!

EVE sobs. THUG 1 groans, shifts. CAIN kneels on his throat. THUG 1 weakly thrashes a little, goes limp.

CAIN

You can come out now. It's safe.

EVE

They're...?

CAIN (*sighing*)

Dead. Very dead.

EVE (*choking*)

He was about to-- the gun wouldn't--

CAIN reaches for the gun. She softens, gives it up. ADAM crawls

out from the closet on hands and  
knees. CAIN inspects the weapon.

CAIN

You left the safety on.

EVE

I feel sick.

CAIN grabs her shoulders. She  
stops shaking.

CAIN

You are braver than you think. *(brushes hair out of her face)*  
Stronger.

ADAM runs out the back door.

EVE

You're-- all bloody.

CAIN *(looking down)*

These rags are ruined.

EVE

The blood will never get out of your pants.

CAIN

I guess we can't use the washing machine.

EVE

You can't wear that out of the house.

The two, embracing, start to rock

back and forth. Dancing.

I wouldn't allow it.

CAIN

The wolves would find me, with all the blood.

EVE (*kicking THUG 1's body*)

I'm not worried about the wolves.

CAIN

What does worry you?

EVE

Nothin', anymore.

CAIN

I wonder if the master of the house has anything my size.

EVE leads CAIN up the stairs. ADAM

looks through the keyhole.

Retreats downstairs. Finds the

gun. ADAM throws the door open,

aiming the revolver at CAIN, who

is on top of EVE on the bed. They

are both topless, pants undone.

The maglight burns like a candle.

CAIN

Oh fuck.

EVE

Adam?

Cain puts his hands up. EVE covers herself with hers. They slowly, carefully, disentangle.

Adam, baby, what--

ADAM

What is he doing to you?

CAIN

Kid, put the gun down.

EVE

Adam, baby, please. What are you doing?

ADAM *(a hitch in his throat, crying)*

He hurt me. He's hurting you. I want him gone.

EVE

Adam, no!

ADAM *(screams)*

I WANT HIM OUT!

CAIN

Alright, kid, I'm gone. I'm gonna get some new clothes and I'll be gone. Just put. The gun. Down.

ADAM

No! Shut up! I hate you!

EVE

Baby, listen to me.

ADAM turns to EVE now. CAIN coils  
up.

ADAM

I'm not a baby! Stop treating me like one!

EVE

Okay, Okay. Just put the gun down, Adam.

ADAM

I'm a man now! I'm a man, Eve! And we don't need him--

ADAM brandishes the gun at CAIN.  
CAIN springs at ADAM. The gun goes  
off. CAIN and ADAM lie together in  
a heap on the floor. EVE screams.  
She runs to the pile of bodies,  
rips CAIN's from the pile, and  
grabs his face, still screaming.  
She looks down at her hands, her  
pants. She is covered in CAIN's  
blood, spurting out a hole in his  
upper chest near his neck.

EVE (*screaming*)

No! NO NO NO!

She sobs. ADAM watches her

nakedness. She pulls a suit,  
either gaudy prom-style or a  
simple tuxedo, out of the dresser.  
She dresses him. Her sobs slowly  
die down, the softness of her face  
gone. She drags his body down the  
stairs. A couple times she might  
start sobbing again, but stops  
herself. She cuts a sheet in half  
with CAIN's knife. Wraps it around  
him. She drags the shrouded body  
into the yard. With her hands she  
claws at the dirt. ADAM watches.  
She pushes the body into the hole.  
Pushes the dirt over it. She looks  
over the body, then out at the  
horizon. Several moments pass.  
ADAM reaches for her hand. She  
grasps it. Several more moments.

EVE (*coldly*)

Let's go home.

BLACKOUT.