

WHITE NIGHT

by K. Brian Neel

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CHARACTERS:

Imogen - A First Wife
Elinore - A Fifth Wife
Terri - A Fifth Wife

SETTING:

A field in front of a farmhouse in Indiana.
The women wear modest long summer dresses.

Opening music might be a 60's hippy chant that moans-out as if the band is dying a slow, painless death to a happy afterlife.

Imogen wanders out, shaken, but solid as a rock. She looks out to the possibilities of the future.

A very loud gunshot goes off!

Shocked, Imogen looks back to the farmhouse.

Elinore rushes out. She is startled by the sight of Imogen, whom she didn't expect to see. She looks out to the distance.

ELINORE: Do you see anyone?

IMOGEN: Was that a gunshot?

ELINORE: Do you think anyone heard it?

IMOGEN: *(looks out with her)* I don't know.

ELINORE: *(in shock)* I don't want to get caught. What if I get caught?

IMOGEN: what did you do?

ELINORE: It wasn't an accident.

IMOGEN: Did you hurt him?

ELINORE: I'm not afraid. I just don't want to get caught.

IMOGEN: Is he okay?

ELINORE: I should go to the farmhouse over and see if they heard the gunshot.

IMOGEN: If they come, it won't matter what was the gun and what was everything else.

ELINORE: Would you go for me?

IMOGEN: No.

ELINORE: But they'll find me.

IMOGEN: And they'll find me.

They stop mid-thought and realize:

IMOGEN: You didn't drink.

ELINORE: You didn't drink.

TERRI: I drank.

Elinore and Imogen scream, startled by Terri who has been lurking upstage for a time now. Her eyes are like in another dimension. She has a grapejuice stain running all down the front of her dress.

TERRI: Did we make it to the Comet? Is this salvation? Nothing's really changed, it kind of looks the same. That's the Temple, right?

IMOGEN: It's not a temple anymore. It's just a farmhouse.

ELINORE: I need to do something with the body. *(overlapping)*

TERRI: I heard a loud noise and I thought my consciousness was zooming off into the cosmos.... *(overlapping)*

IMOGEN: Is he dead? *(overlapping)*

TERRI: ... Breaking the sound barrier like a jet airplane... *(overlapping)*

ELINORE: I should hide him. Wipe up the blood. *(overlapping)*

TERRI: ... But then I opened my eyes and I saw all the Husbands and Wives laying all around me. They weren't moving. *(overlapping)*

IMOGEN: Is he dead? *(overlapping)*

ELINORE: I'm not sorry. *(overlapping)*

TERRI: Aren't we supposed to be genderless? We still have breasts.

IMOGEN: If he's right, you've ruined everything. For all of them.

TERRI: What's going on?

IMOGEN: We didn't make the journey. We're still on Earth.

TERRI: But I drank. Father said we'd exit our human vessels and strip our need of possession and live in autonomous equality with transcendent, delirious happiness.

ELINORE: Well it ain't gonna happen now, honey. Even if you go back and drink a gallon of juice and slit your wrists and lock yourself in a garage with the

car running, you're not getting to the comet now.

TERRI: None of us will reach the escape.

ELINORE: There is no escape.

TERRI: why?

ELINORE: Father was taking advantage of us. He was making men castrate themselves, Women have sex with him, and letting us give all our money, tax-deductible, so he could build a mansion on a beach in the Caymon Islands.

TERRI: He was a profit.

Elinore circles Terri.

ELINORE: He was a snake.

TERRI: You shot Father?!

ELINORE: In the face!

TERRI: why?!

ELINORE: So that you wouldn't be saved.

TERRI: Me?

ELINORE: Anyone.

TERRI: why?

ELINORE: It wouldn't be fair.

TERRI: Yes it would.

ELINORE: No.

TERRI: You're saved if you believe.

ELINORE: If I can't go, no one can!

Elinore has pinned Terri on the ground.

IMOGEN: He was my husband.

They look at Imogen, who is looking up at the stars.

ELINORE: He was everyone's husband. Even the men.

IMOGEN: I was the First Wife. We met in the lobby after a movie in Santa Barbara thirteen years ago. *The Breakfast Club*. He was very charismatic. He was brilliant. He foresaw the rise of technology. He felt sincere pain for the endless cycle of inhumanity in this world. He loved me. He loved all of us. I want a beer. You want a beer?

ELINORE: No.

TERRI: No thank you.

Imogen leaves.

TERRI: I was a Fifth Wife. I was hoping make my way up to Third, but in some ways I'm glad that salvation came early for me. Or was supposed to anyway. Why don't you believe?

ELINORE: He touched his mouth. *(beat.)* Before all this I was married to this businessman. He owned clothing stores. He was rich. And I was empty, you know. Just like everyone else here. So one night I saw this newsstory on TV about this cult called "The Sirius Temple" -- about how crazy they all were. And this needle nested in my head. So I drove out here to see for myself. And it all just made sense. I believed, I believed so hard. And then three days ago at the temple meeting, he was telling us about the White Night, when he would sacrifice himself by staying behind -- He was so charismatic -- and then he ran his finger over his mouth. And I flashed on something I read once: Never trust a politician who touches his ears or eyes or mouth. So I didn't drink.

Imogen has entered in the above monologue with a beer.

IMOGEN: I was afraid. *(beat.)* I couldn't do it. I believed, and I put the cup to my lips, and couldn't drink.

TERRI: I drank.

ELINORE: No, you spilled it on your dress.

TERRI: No. A Husband spilled this on me. So I helped him drink from my cup and I got another cup. I drank it all. The husband fell asleep on my lap. It was really sweet. Everyone fell asleep. That was kind of eerie. Father looked right at me and left the room. I closed my eyes tight. But I didn't sleep. Then I heard the noise and I came out here. It was really loud.

Beat.

ELINORE: Okay. We have to do something. Hide the body... bodies.

IMOGEN: Hide seventy four bodies?

ELINORE: We could burn down the farmhouse.

TERRI: That's the Temple.

IMOGEN: They'd see that for miles.

ELINORE: We could just leave. No one would even notice.

IMOGEN: It's a beautiful White Night.

ELINORE: What is wrong with you?

IMOGEN: I feel good.