

Dark Soul of the Millennium

by

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MIRACLE AT MALLORY SQUARE

Characters:

The Magus (5 years old): M-5

The Magus (15 years old): M-15

The Magus (25 years old): M-25

The Magus (45 years old): M-45

The Magus (75 years old): M-75

Papa: P

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Upstage a flowing painting of the Gulf of Mexico and a red sun stretches across the entire stage. There are two vendors upstage on the makeshift docks at Mallory Square. It is an hour before sunset and the crowd has not gathered yet. M-5 stands downstage center. Behind him stands M-15. Behind M-15 stands M-25. Behind M-25 stands M-45. Behind M-45 stands M-75.

P: In an hour, son!

M-5: A miracle, Papa?

P: Yes. The most beautiful sunset a beast like man can see. The Lord's a majestic Magus.

M-5: What's that, Papa?

P: The greatest magician in the universe. Master of Divine Magic!

M-5: Wow! Can I become a Magus when I grow up?

P: Sure, son. Anything is possible if you believe in yourself. Sky's the limit!

Papa and M-5 walk off-stage. M-15 walks downstage and speaks to the audience.

M-15: Papa was a writer. Mama was a painter. They had dreams. Magnificent dreams. Papa came to Key West in the thirties to meet Ernest Hemingway. He said he wanted to talk to the great writer whom he called: *A giant!* And his *personal god!* Papa wanted to be inspired. Believed greatness was contagious. Hemingway refused to meet him. Papa watched him from a distance.

Often waited for him at Sloppy Joe's. Hemingway never showed when Papa was there. Yet Papa swore he felt Hemingway's presence. Never gave up. Even when he was dying and needed a heart transplant. Papa was a true believer. And I? I dreamed of becoming a Magus. Yet my magic was weak. Couldn't save Papa. I remember the day before Papa died. We watched a glorious sunset-right here-at Mallory Square. Yet the day he died I can hardly recall.

M-15 walks off-stage. M-25 walks downstage and speaks to the audience.

M-25: Mama and I returned every summer to Key West. She loved to paint every magical part of it, especially the landscape and the sea and sunset at Mallory Square. She also died here, one August day. She drank too much. I loved her. Couldn't save her though. Yet I made her glow. She loved watching me perform at Mallory Square. I miss Mama!

M-25 walks off-stage. M-45 walks downstage and speaks to the audience.

M-45: I am the Magus! Master of illusion, sleight of hand, legerdemain. Creator of Miracles! Now it's time to vanish.

M-45 walks off-stage. M-75 walks downstage with a cane and speaks to the audience.

M-75: I was the Magus! Creator of Miracles! I believed! Yet...Never performed a real miracle. Not one genuine supernatural phenomenon. Not one! I wish...If I could see...If...

M-75 starts to walk off-stage. He grabs his chest. Screams. Drops his cane. Falls to the ground. Lies still, his cane by his side. M-5 appears upstage, walks downstage to join M-75. Standing over M-75 he shouts.

M-5: Get up!

M-75 grabs his cane and rises. He shouts at M-5.

M-75: Why did you return?

M-5: Never left. Tried to speak to you for years. You didn't hear me. But I heard you. You called me. So I'm here. Look at that sunset. It's a miracle!

M-75: Yes. The most beautiful sunset a beast like man can see. The Lord's a majestic Magus!

M-5: So are you! I love you!

M-75: You do?

M-5: Of course.

M-75: Even me?

M-5: Yes.

M-75: You make me feel beautiful!

M-5: You are.

M-75: You must be the true Magus!

M-5: And so are you. You filled Papa and Mama with love and joy. How many people did you fill with awe? How many did you touch and transform with your beautiful magic?

M-75: No one knows me now. No one remembers.

M-5: I do. Look Papa and Mama are waiting for us.

Upstage, Papa and Mama wave at M-75 and M-5. Holding hands, M-5 and M-75 walk off-stage.

Curtain

HEMINGWAY'S GHOST

Characters:

Rabbi: R

Priest: P

SCENE

A rabbi and his friend, a priest, are in Hemingway's studio on the second floor of the cottage behind his house in Key West. It is an August day, 11:55 AM.

R: I've come here to learn from the Master.

P: What can you learn from this dead man? In his life, he was obsessed with violence and death.

R: Whatever his Spirit reveals.

P: What?

R: What are ghosts known to reveal?

P: Never spoke to a ghost.

R: Not the Holy Ghost? Not Christ?

P: I felt their presence. Nothing more. Have you talked to a ghost?

R: Once.

P: You never told me.

R: You never asked.

P: What did the ghost say?

R: It's a secret!

P: Forget it! So you're gonna speak to Hemingway's ghost?

R: Yeah.

P: If he appears, what will you ask him?

R: I'll ask: "Why did you stand up for hours and write on the top of your bookcase?"

P: He did that?

R: Yeah. *(He starts to nod off.)*

P: Did you get enough sleep last night?

R: No. I was busy writing a sermon for the Sabbath.

P: I'm getting tired just looking at you.

R: Don't look. *(He pauses.)* And I'll ask: "Why did you write in the morning from 6 AM till noon? Occasionally, till 2 PM, not later?"

P: What did he do in the afternoon?

R: He had fun. He swam or fished or...*(He starts to nod off again.)*

P: How many ours did you sleep?

R: Three.

P: Make it four tonight. We have a big day tomorrow.

R: Sure. What's the occasion?

P: Life!

R: Yes, it's inevitable. Both familiar and unfamiliar. Sometimes uncanny. *(He pauses.)* And I'll ask: "Why so many wives? Why did you love hunting and bullfights and war? Were you a religious man? Why did you love cats?"

P: Won't you ask him why he committed suicide?

R: No! He told me this morning. *(There's a long silence. The rabbi sways back and forth like a branch on a tree struck by a powerful wind that continues to beat and bend it and make it bow to its whirling will.)*

P: How many pills did you take?

R: A lot. Yet not enough. Just enough to climb and swing from birches and return. It's a sin to swing all the way to the other side.

P: Why?

R: Blame it on Hemingway's ghost and all the incomprehensible evils on earth and my absence of faith.

P: If that's the case, I should have done the same. But...

R: We'd better go now. I've got to sleep this off. If I sleep all day, wake me for supper. Wanna sleep after midnight.

P: What about Hemingway's ghost?

R: Just spoke to him again.

P: You did?

R: Yeah.

P: What did he say?

R: He whispered: "A man who reveals secrets is a dead man!"

P: Anything else?

R: Did you hear what I just said?

P: Well, at least tell me how he looked.

R: Marvelous! Like a majestic cat! More beautiful than an African game trophy! Wanted to shoot him and mount him on the wall!

P: Yet you didn't.

R: No! When he revealed his secrets, a giant cat clawed me. Severed my soul from my body. Ripped my brains out. And fed me to myself. After the metamorphosis, I was too tired to shoot.

P: And now?

R: He's gone. I'd better leave too.

P: Of course. Get some sleep!

R: Four hours tonight.

P: At least. We have a long day tomorrow.

R: Tomorrow is always long.

P: Until it exists no more. *(They walk off-stage. Suddenly, the rabbi moves gracefully, as if the wild wind that had subdued him were now a prisoner too of the invisible and omnipotent universe.)*

CURTAIN

THE RING

Characters:

Man in love: MIL

Woman in love: WL

SCENE

A couple is in a deserted park after midnight. They sit on a park bench under a street lamp.

MIL: Do you remember this place?

WL: Yes.

MIL: We came here...

WL: On our first date. Then again and again. You were nostalgic. I was touched.

MIL: But I never told you...

WL: I knew.

MIL: Did you?

WL: Of course.

MIL: Sorry I waited all these years.

WL: You had to. Things happened.

MIL: Darling, there's something I must say!

WL: Yes?

MIL: Will you marry me?

WL: Yes!

MIL: I've always loved you.

WL: I've always known.

MIL: Here's the ring, darling! *(He places the ring on her finger.)*

WL: It's beautiful!

MIL: Now, we're officially engaged. And tomorrow, we'll be married.

WL: My impulsive sweetheart! Can't you wait?

MIL: Not another day. It's been too long...

WL: How long?

MIL: More than a decade.

WL: Yes, I died many years ago. Just before...

MIL: I was about to propose. So long ago...

Suddenly there is darkness. The light of the street lamp is turned off. When it goes on again, the woman, a ghost, has vanished. Looking out at the audience, the man says:

So long ago...

CURTAIN

REUNION IN UNION SQUARE PARK

Mark and Carl, two estranged friends in their sixties, who have not seen each other in ten years, are reunited by Carl's wife, Gail, who contacts Mark the night before the unexpected reunion. She asks him to meet her in Union Square Park at the northwest entrance near Barnes & Noble. It is a matter of the utmost urgency. Yet she will not reveal the purpose of the rendezvous. Nevertheless, he agrees to meet her the next day at noon.

SCENE 1

Before entering Union Square Park, Mark, a tall thin man with gold-rimmed glasses, gazes at a solitary man sitting on a bench inside the park. Then he turns around and faces the audience.

MARK: Gold, orange and yellow leaves fall to earth, feeding my soul with Beauty. Winter is just around the corner and perhaps a heavy snowfall that will anoint the city with celestial whiteness, reminiscent of Yesterday when I was just a Brooklyn boy, still innocent, filled with joy, when the storms of winter arrived. Oh, sweet nostalgia! I was home! Schools were closed. And I trekked through deep snow with wonder and pure delight. Yet now, the sprawling sun bathes me in the golden heat of Indian summer. And my eyes deceive me, for the glare of the sun distorts my vision, almost blinding me. What do I see? Is that you, old buddy? My short, rotund friend with white hair? No, it can't be! Gail told me she'd be here. Never mentioned you. But...*Mark turns around and saunters upstage toward the makeshift park.*

SCENE 2

Inside Union Square Park, Mark approaches the man sitting on a bench. Still standing, he begins speaking.

MARK: Is that you, Carl?

CARL (looking quizzically at Mark): You? *A brief pause.* I can't believe...! Identify yourself!

MARK: It's me, Carl! It's Mark.

CARL: How long has it been?

MARK: Ten years.

CARL: That long?

MARK: Yeah. *He sits next to Carl. But Carl moves away from him, to the edge of the bench.*

CARL: Thought you'd be dead by now!

MARK: Why?

CARL: I wished it.

MARK: Thank God wishes can't kill.

CARL: Too bad.

MARK: Don't be antisocial.

CARL: Why not?

MARK: Cause you'll remind me how much I prayed for your death.

CARL: Prayed for my death? Why?

MARK: You were bad. Very bad. Thought you'd call and apologize. But you never called.

CARL: Yeah.

MARK: You should have called, Carl! I waited a long time for your apology.

CARL: Well, keep waiting. It's never gonna happen. Never!

MARK: Realized that years ago. Never would have come here today. But...

CARL: You missed me! You've come begging for my friendship. Well, you can't have it. Never!

MARK: Didn't come begging, Carl. Gail called me last night. Asked me to meet her here at noon.

CARL: Gail?

MARK: Yeah. Didn't expect to find you.

CARL: Gail?

MARK: Yeah, Carl. She called me. Said she needed to speak to me. Told me it was urgent. I couldn't refuse. She's always been...

CARL: Liar! You didn't speak to Gail!

MARK: Of course, I did. Came here as a favor to her. You've got a great woman, Carl. You...

CARL: No, I don't...

MARK: What do you mean? The two of you have always been close.

CARL: She died last night.

MARK: But I spoke to her...

CARL: So did I. She said I should make amends. You and me-we were close. Real close. And she always liked you. Last night, before she passed away, she said I should call you. Make up with you-no matter what.

MARK: She was an angel.

CARL: My Guardian Angel! Don't know how I'll live without her. *A long silence follows.*

MARK: What happened? Gail was never sick.

CARL: The Big C. Happened fast. Swept across her body like an alien army from Mars.

MARK: But she spoke to me... Well, maybe I was asleep. Maybe. In any case, she came to me.

CARL: After she passed away... After they took her body from me... Alone, I screamed... I cried...

But then I felt her presence. And I drifted off... Guess I was asleep. Yet it seemed so real. She came to me too. Told me to come here-to Union Square Park-at noon. Ordered me to live. Like a 4-Star General, she commanded me to forgive. And revealed...

MARK: What?

CARL: That I needed you.

MARK: Sounds like Gail. And yes, she was your Guardian Angel.

CARL: My Guardian Angel! What will I do without her?

MARK: Don't know.

CARL: The funeral's postponed. My crazy wife donated her eyes to a stranger.

MARK: She was a woman of vision. And she's giving her gift to someone else.

CARL: The funeral's in three days.

MARK: I'll be there-by your side.

CARL: But don't expect me to apologize...

MARK: What was the damn argument about, Carl?

CARL: Don't remember. Do you?

MARK: No.

CARL: Guess it wasn't very important, after all.

MARK: Guess not. *A long silence contains their sadness.*

CARL: She used to love Union Square Park. We came here a lot, especially when we were courting. I proposed to her-right here-in Union Square Park. Maybe on this bench.

MARK: I guess that's why...

CARL: Yeah. She wanted us to meet here. Wanted me to remember what's really important.

MARK: At our age, every moment counts. We're running out of time.

CARL: Yeah. No time to waste. *A brief silence follows.* I want you by my side at the funeral.

MARK: Of course.

CARL: She'd like that.

MARK: I bet she would.

CARL: She brought us back together.

MARK: A true visionary.

CARL: My one and only Guardian Angel! I feel her presence now. Do you?

MARK: Of course.

CARL: Look, Mark! Watch the leaves falling! Gold, orange, and yellow leaves falling to earth. Do you see them?

MARK: Yes.

CARL: They feed my soul...

MARK: With Beauty!

Mark and Carl look at the audience and beyond. They seem to be searching for something...someone...Perhaps, Gail. Perhaps, the meaning of existence...of their lonely lives.

CURTAIN