

Termagant

by

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

When evil comes and lays down its bet, what is a Quaker super-hero to do?

CHARACTERS

- KRISSEY HEINZ
- BIDDY SOWELL
- HE

MISCELLANEOUS

- Props, set, etc. are all in the script.
- Stagehand will be needed for set changes.

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Scene 1

Lights bump from black to early fall.

Upstage is the porch of a plain, well-built house, with two Adirondack chairs and a small wooden storage box, which could just be the two Adirondack chairs and small wooden storage box or something more elaborate, as budget permits.

KRISSEY HEINZ, wearing an unbuckled bike helmet, holds a decorated coffee can for donations to something.

Facing her is BIDDY SOWELL, owner of the house. She is dressed in jeans and wears work boots. An olive tee-shirt dangles from her left back pocket. Under a bloodied apron, BIDDY is shirtless. She wears a blue-and-white striped conductor's hat, sweat-stained. She carries a small hatchet for killing chickens, bloodied.

They look at each other.

BIDDY

Who are you and what do you want?

KRISSY is a bit shocked at the shirtless BIDDY. BIDDY tosses the hatchet to the ground, slips off the apron and tosses it to the ground, slips on the tee-shirt.

BIDDY
Better?

KRISSY
Thank you.

BIDDY
Who are you and what do you want?

KRISSY holds out the can. BIDDY cocks her head to read it.

KRISSY
We're collecting. For the victims of the shooting. Some were from my college. Friends.

BIDDY
"Victims."

Said as if spitting out something distasteful. BIDDY picks up the apron and hatchet from the ground.

BIDDY
I've got no time for you.

* * * * *

Scene 2

Lights shift to downstage left, where this is set up a wooden stump, four stained white 5-gallon buckets, and a small empty chicken wire coop. Two of the buckets move, as if dying chickens were flopping around inside them—which is true.

BIDDY walks to the stump, drives the hatchet into it. She slips off the tee-shirt, slips on the apron, stuffs the tee-shirt in her back pocket.

KRISSY follows.

KRISSY
Why do you say that? That's what they were. Victims of the crazy guy.

BIDDY gestures for KRISSY to give her the can. KRISSY hands it over.

BIDDY puts it on the stump. She turns out one of her jeans pockets, or the apron pocket, takes whatever lint and dust is there, and puts it in the can. She hands the can back to KRISSY.

BIDDY

From dust to dust. We're done.

KRISSY shakes out the can.

KRISSY

That's disrespectful.

BIDDY picks up a whetstone from the stump and starts sharpening the hatchet blade.

BIDDY

What's disrespectful is you calling them victims.

KRISSY

What would you call 'em?

BIDDY

Look in the bucket. Go on.

KRISSY looks into one of the moving white buckets. BIDDY continues to sharpen the blade.

BIDDY

What's in there is what they were. All those people chose to be there—

KRISSY

To watch a movie.

BIDDY

The late-summer blockbuster massacre flick—they got what they paid for.

KRISSY

You can't say that!

BIDDY

They got what they paid for. And the guns came home to roost.

As KRISSY watches inside the bucket, the bucket stops moving. So does the other bucket. BIDDY looks at the empty coop.

BIDDY

Looks like I'm fresh out. Got others waiting in the wings. You want to watch?

KRISSY

What about the six-year-old?

BIDDY

At a midnight show.

KRISSY

Maybe a special night out—

BIDDY

Special. The last thing she saw six minutes in—

BIDDY slams the axe head into the stump with fierce emphasis.

BIDDY

People being butchered. Bought and paid for by her parents.

KRISSY

You've seen the movie.

BIDDY

Yesterday, over in the capital—we're still a crime scene around here. I like to know what I'm talking against.

KRISSY holds out the can.

KRISSY

So for the little girl—she bought nothing. Didn't have a choice.

One of the buckets gives a final kick, which startles KRISSY.

BIDDY

Persuasive.

KRISSY

So be persuaded.

BIDDY

No.

BIDDY wrenches the axe out of the stump.

BIDDY
We finished?

KRISSY
Fine.

KRISSY turns and leaves, carrying her can, her helmet straps jingling. BIDDY follows. Lights shift, and they are back in front of the porch.

Stagehand moves off stump, buckets, coop.

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Scene 3

BIDDY
I like that you don't back down.

KRISSY
Fat lot of good it does me.

BIDDY
Makes you better than that can you're holding.

KRISSY
I'm okay with this can.

BIDDY
What's your name?

KRISSY
Krissy. Heinz.

BIDDY
The "B." in "B. Sowell" on the mailbox at the end of that road
stands for Bidy, which is short for—
(in an Irish accent)
-- "Brigit," the saintly Brigit.

KRISSY
Enjoy your butchery, Brigit.

BIDDY

Done in your memory, Krissy.

BIDDY gives her a "Queen Elizabeth" wave goodbye.

BIDDY

Be careful riding back to campus.

Lights shift: upstage in darkness, downstage tight and bright. BIDDY exits. KRISSEY moves center stage.

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Scene 4

Stagehand places a single mattress center stage. Lights shift there.

KRISSEY puts the helmet and can by the head of the mattress, then stretches herself out. Before long, she's napping.

Lights become weird. Screams and gunshots and a garbled movie track as underscore.

BIDDY enters, dressed as the Shooter. She presses a gun against KRISSEY's cheek. KRISSEY jerks awake, sees BIDDY as Shooter but does not scramble to get away.

BIDDY speaks in an altered voice—mechanical, robotic.

BIDDY

The time has come.

KRISSEY kneels on the bed, facing BIDDY. BIDDY presses the gun against KRISSEY's forehead.

BIDDY

Your time has come.

Instead of moving back, KRISSEY grabs the gun barrel and holds it tight against her forehead, eyes closed, breathing deep, backed arched in submission and arousal.

BIDDY slides the barrel out of KRISSEY's hands.

BIDDY backs off. KRISSEY collapses onto the bed, splayed as if fallen from a great height. The cacophony fades away.

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Scene 5

Lights shift to early evening.

KRISSY pops her eyes open, looks around the room.

She reaches into her shorts, pulls out her hand, smells it, wipes it on her shorts.

She kneels at the edge of the mattress, shaking her head as she stares at the floor. KRISSY breathes deep, both terrified and post-coital. She grabs the helmet and the can.

Stagehand moves off the mattress.

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Scene 6

KRISSY back at BIDDY's. BIDDY is seated in one of the Adirondack chairs, sanding rust off an adze. A thermos stands near her chair. The second chair is nearby.

KRISSY marches to the porch. If she were a cartoon character, she would have steam shooting out of her ears.

KRISSY

You were going to kill me in my dream, you were the gunman—
you pressed the gun right here!

KRISSY jabs a rigid index finger against her forehead.

BIDDY stops sanding, gives KRISSY a tender look.

BIDDY

I apologize for that.

KRISSY

That's it?

BIDDY

Come on up—that chair's got your name on it.

KRISSY hesitates, then tromps to the chair, sits, puts the can down by her foot like a patient dog, lays down the helmet.

Somewhere, a raven caws.

BIDDY places the adze onto the porch, pulls up the thermos.

KRISSY

Why would I dream—I don't even—

BIDDY unscrews the top, pours hot tea into the cup.

BIDDY

Something to soothe you—

BIDDY hands it to KRISSY, who cups the warmth.

BIDDY

My germs on it, but they're pretty harmless.

KRISSY sips. The tea calms her.

KRISSY

That's an adze.

BIDDY

Most people wouldn't know that.

KRISSY

I'm not most people.

BIDDY

Found it in the back of the barn—good, just rusted. Like me. Tea okay?

KRISSY raises the cup like a toast.

BIDDY

Whenever you're ready.

KRISSY looks at her hands holding the cup.

KRISSY

I come from Quaker, Brigit. Real Quaker, not flannel Quaker, like my father would say.

I like your father. BIDDY

And I guess we're in meeting. KRISSY

The Society of Friends. BIDDY

You said my time had come. The gun— KRISSY

KRISSY presses her finger against her forehead again.

Your face—but not your voice—all mutated— KRISSY

The movie's voice. BIDDY

KRISSY's voice goes silent but not her body. BIDDY pushes the conversation.

Horrible, yep, this face— BIDDY

But— KRISSY

Spit it out. BIDDY

Not one hundred percent horrible— KRISSY

What percent wasn't? BIDDY

In meeting—there are moments when the silence feels good to me— KRISSY

Golden— BIDDY

KRISSY
No, I mean good—you know—good—

BIDDY
You mean not saintly good.

KRISSY
No saints with Quakers—but, yes. The gun—against—

KRISSY points to her forehead again.

KRISSY
-- felt good.

BIDDY
You have an unsaintly percent.

KRISSY
You can't trust the body.

BIDDY
But what else can you trust? Here.

BIDDY gestures for the cup, which KRISSY hands over. BIDDY refills it and hands it back. KRISSY sips, puts her index finger against her forehead.

KRISSY
This? Not victims.

BIDDY
Nope.

KRISSY
Sacrifices.

BIDDY
Yep—chickens.

KRISSY
Terror feeling good, sacrificed like feeling alive—makes no sense—

BIDDY
Your Jesus, you know—

BIDDY throws her arms to each side, Jesus on the cross.

KRISSY

That's not us—

BIDDY

But many nail themselves in ecstasy to crosses—the body is a funny thing.

KRISSY

I'm laughing on the inside.

BIDDY goes to answer, but KRISSY gestures for her to stop. BIDDY gets out of her chair, steps to the porch rail.

BIDDY

You need a sign.

BIDDY lets loose three perfectly voiced raven's caws. She listens, then does it again two more times. Then, in response, three caws come back to her.

BIDDY

See up there?

KRISSY

Yes.

BIDDY

I nursed her back to health, and she stays nearby to do the same for me.

KRISSY

Will she come down here?

BIDDY

Not till you're better known. Means you'll have to come back again—she likes a chin rub.

BIDDY does a throat squawk, then three more caws. An answer, then off the raven flies.

BIDDY

Better than liquor sometimes. Speaking of which—

BIDDY goes to the wooden box, pulls out a dented hip flask.

BIDDY

Bring me the cup.

KRISSY does, and BIDDY pours out a smidgen of clear liquid, hands it back.

BIDDY

Home distilled palate cleanser—a raven.

BIDDY takes a sip, swishes it around, and swallows. After a brief hesitation, so does KRISSY—no flinch.

BIDDY

You have classes tonight?

KRISSY

Classes tonight! ART 210, Marketing for the Visual Artist. I'm getting a degree in graphic storytelling.

BIDDY

A Quaker comic-book maker.

KRISSY

You should see my super-heroes.

BIDDY laughs as she caps the flask and puts it back in the box. She takes the cup from KRISSY, shakes it out, recaps the thermos.

KRISSY

I have a tee-shirt—my parents love it, though it embarrasses my mother: "I am a Quaker who bitches."

BIDDY
(laughing)

Love it!

BIDDY sits, picks up the adze, sands.

KRISSY

Those are the villains that come to visit me.

BIDDY

You're welcome to stay if you want.

KRISSY sits. KRISSY's heel nudges the can out of the way, and the rocker begins a slow back-and-forth, a gentle knocking against the porch floor.

A raven caws. Sandpaper sands.

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Scene 7

Lights bump to downstage. Stagehand brings on a mattress. BIDDY comes to the mattress, lies down, is asleep.

The knocking of the rocker against the floor turns into the mutated drumming of a clock.

KRISSY appears dressed as a disheveled Quaker super-hero—sweats, a half-mask, definitely a cape, which looks more like a blanket.

She pokes BIDDY, who stirs but doesn't wake. KRISSY pokes her again. Nothing. One more time, really hard, does the trick.

KRISSY

I, The Bitching Quaker, have come to gather your sacrifice.

BIDDY

Got nothing. Go away.

KRISSY

You have to sacrifice your hatred of people.

BIDDY

I don't hate them—I just have no use for most of them.

KRISSY begins her Quaker kung-fu.

BIDDY

What the fuck is that?

KRISSY

Quaker kung-fu.

BIDDY

You look spastic. I'm going back to sleep.

BIDDY goes to lay down, but KRISSY intercepts her and through her moves forces BIDDY to move.

KRISSY never touches BIDDY but still gets her to move around the room—this is, after all, the essence of Quaker kung-fu.

KRISSY

People are not about “useful.” They just are. Who cares if they’re useful to you?

BIDDY

I care.

KRISSY

(thunderous and reverberating)

The Universe is not about you!

BIDDY

I didn’t know Quakers had an outside voice.

KRISSY

The Bitching Quaker does. Hu-SHIN!

BIDDY

It’s never worked treating people like precious elements.

KRISSY

Hee-YAH!

BIDDY

Leave me alone!

KRISSY

Cow-FONG!

BIDDY

I prefer to wash my hands—

KRISSY

Lay-FLIK!

BIDDY

-- of the whole zero-sum mess—stop it!

Nope. KRISSY

I'm going back to sleeping. BIDDY

They have circled the room back to the bed. KRISSY stands arms akimbo, super-hero pose. They glare at each other, then BIDDY relents.

Of course— BIDDY

Can't hear you! KRISSY

They shouldn't have been slaughtered! BIDDY

Darn right! So grieve for them. KRISSY

To breathe is to grieve, one and the same. BIDDY

Bullshit! Just mouth music. KRISSY
(outside voice)

KRISSY advances on BIDDY, who is forced to sit on the bed.

Hee-YAH-YAH-YAH! Your heart aches for mankind only in private. KRISSY

KRISSY kneels down, their faces in profile, close. KRISSY pushes up her mask.

I breathe. I grieve. But I don't do it alone like you. I sit in meeting. KRISSY
That makes all the difference.

I think I'd rather take a drink. BIDDY

The flask appears in KRISSY's hand.

Go ahead. KRISSY

BIDDY takes it, shakes it.

Empty. BIDDY

Try it. KRISSY

BIDDY opens the flask and turns it upside down. Out comes glitter.

Better than home-distilled. KRISSY

Look at that. BIDDY

The flask drops out of BIDDY's hand as she collapses forward into KRISSY's arms.

KRISSY guides BIDDY back, swings her legs around, makes BIDDY comfortable. She does a few more kung-fu moves—

KRISSY
(whispering)
Hi-LOW! Up-SCALE! Ha-HA!

-- which resemble gestures of blessing, then stands with arms akimbo like Superman.

KRISSY
Biddy Sowell, we have work to do! Whoosh!

KRISSY picks up the flask and mock-flies into the darkness: up, up, and away!

Light shifts to morning. Clock ticks.

BIDDY sorts herself awake, sits up.

She looks at the floor for the flask, but it isn't there. She smiles, shakes her head, stands. She shakes out her body, then does a few Quaker kung-fu moves, laughing.

BIDDY
Need-COFFEE! De-fi-nite-LY.

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Scene 8

Stagehand brings on two stools and a backpack. He sets the stools, hands BIDDY the backpack, and takes off the mattress. BIDDY sits.

Lights up to a nice fall day. KRISSEY comes by.

BIDDY
Didn't know if I would catch you.

KRISSEY
Good guess, hanging out by the department offices—

BIDDY
But who knew where you'd be.

KRISSEY
Graphic Storytelling III, MGD 225.

BIDDY
Night class, then a day class following—tough schedule.

KRISSEY
There must be a reason why you're here.

BIDDY pats the bench.

KRISSEY
I have studio in 15 minutes.

BIDDY
I couldn't sleep because of you. Yours was a lot more gentle: The Bitching Quaker.

KRISSEY is suddenly all a big smile and sits.

KRISSEY
Really?

BIDDY
That was your super-hero—The Bitching Quaker.

KRISSY just laughs.

KRISSY
That's the best thing I have heard all day.

BIDDY
Still early.

KRISSY
I'm confident. The Bitching Quaker.

BIDDY
Wanted my sacrifice.

KRISSY stares at her shoes, smiling.

KRISSY
The Quaker super-hero prime directive. Betcha it wasn't a bloody one.

BIDDY
Depends. The sacrifice for this cranky old woman: give up hating people. "I have no use" is what I said.

KRISSY
What does that even mean. You couldn't pee in the morning without other people.

KRISSY uses her index fingers to outline an imaginary rectangle. KRISSY takes a pencil from her backpack and draws.

KRISSY
Here's Brigit Sowell trying to pee without any use for anyone. Of course no toilet paper—

BIDDY
I can use newspaper.

KRISSY
You won't.

BIDDY

Could.

KRISSY

Even then, paper products—see that squirrely face when you use newspaper—

BIDDY

Hilarious.

KRISSY finishes with a flourish that is probably her signature on the picture and leans back, tucks the pencil behind her ear.

KRISSY

Tah-dah. Nonsense defeated. The Bitching Quaker triumphs again.

BIDDY

The flask—color came out when I tried to drink.

KRISSY

The divine spark comes out of you.

BIDDY

You were dressed in sweats—

KRISSY

Quaker comfort dress.

BIDDY

-- and doing weird kung-fu-ish stuff—

BIDDY demonstrates.

KRISSY

Bet I never laid a finger on you. No gun to the head. No nothing to the head except an idea.

KRISSY gets ready to leave.

KRISSY

Studio.

BIDDY stands up as well.

BIDDY

What about evil for the Society of Friends?

KRISSY

Twelve Quakers, twelve theories. Here's mine: it comes when you have no use for people.

BIDDY

Ouch.

KRISSY

When you lose the inner light, Biddy, you can do the unspeakable.

BIDDY

I'm not sure we all have it.

KRISSY

Here.

KRISSY's hands frame another canvas. She takes her pencil and draws: stars tumbling out of a flask, signs it. KRISSY mimes folding the sketch and handing it to BIDDY.

KRISSY

You have it. But sometimes you have to shut your trap and sit in quiet so you can hear what's what.

BIDDY

Give a shove to my inner light: come to lunch—I can cook.

KRISSY

Deal. Never pass up home-cooking in someone's home. Gotta go.

KRISSY kung-fus her way off.

BIDDY

Sunday. 2 PM.

KRISSY

On one condition—a request—hee-YAH!

BIDDY

What?

KRISSY

We'll go to the memorial service on Sunday at the chapel—oo-
RAH! Well?

BIDDY

Deal. Chapel may fall down when I enter.

KRISSY

Jesus doesn't care about the real estate—fi-LEE! Gotta go.

BIDDY

Kick the devil's butt in a compassionate way.

KRISSY

Pee well with the help of the world—ooo-LAH!

They both turn to leave, but before they can exit—

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Scene 9

Flashing lights of emergency vehicles - police cruisers, ambulances, fire trucks. Sounds of chaos: shouts, helicopters, radio chatter, and so on.

BIDDY and KRISSY return to the two stools from the previous scene, now a bench near a parked ambulance. Stagehand brings each of them blankets, which they wrap around themselves.

KRISSY

Did—did they get him—

BIDDY

I don't know, don't know—this time—

KRISSY pounds her right thigh in frustration.

KRISSY

Did we get what we paid for tonight? It was a—f[ucking]—

KRISSY wants to swear but can't.

KRISSY

-- a—memorial—

BIDDY puts a hand on KRISSY to stop her, but KRISSY shrugs the hand off.

KRISSY
Quaker super-heroes—useless.

KRISSY launches herself off the bench. The blanket falls off her shoulders.

BIDDY
Don't—

KRISSY
Who needs 'em? If you hadn't pulled me down—I would have stood up. I would've stretched everything at him—

KRISSY extends all ten fingers.

KRISSY
-- I would have shot prayers back—a hundred thousand prayer rounds—Don't lose the light! Don't lose—

BIDDY
He would've shot you dead.

KRISSY
Who cares?

KRISSY stretches really hard.

KRISSY
(singing)
When The Bitching Quaker is in town / Everyone will throw their weapons down / She will break up every single fight / And peace shall dwell in the house of sweetness and light.

BIDDY stands up and laces her fingers into KRISSY's. The blanket falls from her shoulders.

BIDDY
He would have shot you dead. Quaker super-hero only has skin and bone.

KRISSY
Don't lose the light! Don't lose—

KRISSY and BIDDY stand there, arms outstretched and fingers interlaced, facing each other.

BIDDY
Don't lose the light. Don't. Lose. The. Light.

KRISSY unlaces her fingers, steps back.

KRISSY
I wasn't afraid.

BIDDY
You'd be dead.

KRISSY
So what? It's the way you die—you know that—you know that—

KRISSY throws out her ten fingers again, in BIDDY's direction, scrunches her faces, intones.

KRISSY
Don't lose the light! Don't lose the light! Don't lose the light!

Without warning, BIDDY faints dead away. BIDDY twitches while on the ground.

For a moment KRISSY is stunned—even stares at her fingers.

KRISSY drops to BIDDY's side—listens for a breath, feels the pulse in her neck, then yells for help.

But the sounds of chaos grow so loud that KRISSY's voice is drowned out—only her lips and mouth can be seen to move as she shouts for help.

Stagehand, as an EMT, runs over and kneels by BIDDY, examines her. Stagehand and KRISSY lay BIDDY across the two stools.

The sounds of chaos rise higher and higher to an ear-deafening pitch until they morph into the crash of an emergency room at full tilt.

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Scene 10

Voices cram the air: shouted commands, intercom broadcasts, and so on. People run the hallway, but KRISSY focuses on BIDDY, laid out on the gurney—across the two stools—eyes closed but breathing. KRISSY holds BIDDY's left hand in both of her hands.

KRISSY's lips move as she recites Quaker kung-fu: "HEe-YAH. Oo-RAH! Fi-LEE! Hoo-SHIN! Lay-FLIK! Hi-LOW!"

BIDDY snorts herself to consciousness, looks around, looks up and sees KRISSY. They smile.

Their hands grip tighter. Noise swirls.

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Scene 11

Lights bump to downstage. Stagehand wheels on a truck stacked with three boxes filled with petitions and camera gear sitting on top and a foam-core sign. HE places the boxes downstage, hands BIDDY the sign, then takes up the camera gear and becomes the media.

KRISSY and BIDDY step forward. BIDDY holds up a foam-core sign which says, "Proposition 185: Gun Registration, Information, Training, and Sanity," with a big red checkmark by the word "YES."

Stagehand takes pictures as KRISSY speaks.

KRISSY

Three hundred thousand signatures! It's on the ballot, and we are going to win!

Lights strobe like camera flashes.

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Scene 12

Stagehand takes off the boxes, sign, and camera. BIDDY and KRISSY bring the stools downstage. Lights have become the glow of some sort of screen. Their faces show that the initiative has lost.

BIDDY gets up, paces, mutters. KRISSY looks crestfallen. BIDDY throws out her ten fingers at the screen, but in a sarcastic way.

They look at each other. There is nothing left to say.

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Scene 13

Lights come to late autumn. Stagehand brings on KRISSY's suitcase.

KRISSY stands stock still, the suitcase next to her.

BIDDY sits in one of the Adirondack chairs.

BIDDY
Did you tell the taxi to come down the road?

KRISSY
I did.

BIDDY comes off the porch to join KRISSY.

BIDDY
No need to lug the suitcase out to the road.

KRISSY
No need.

BIDDY
What time's your plane?

KRISSY
You know the time.

BIDDY
And your folks?

KRISSY
You already know: glad I'm coming home. Anything else to avoid the obvious?

BIDDY
It just—

KRISSY
Go on—Quaker meeting.

BIDDY
(deep sigh)
It just—sticks, you know.

BIDDY taps her breastbone.

BIDDY
Right here.

KRISSY
We were close on the vote.

BIDDY
Horseshoes and hand grenades. No comfort to me.

KRISSY
Me neither.

BIDDY
Or anyone.

KRISSY
To no one.

BIDDY
Human stupidity. I know—more forgiveness in you about that than I have.

KRISSY
(shaking her head)
These days—

BIDDY
Butchery, twice—the same person—but we gotta bear our arms—

KRISSY
Sacrifices.

BIDDY
Slaughter—like it's a goddamn war.

*BIDDY paces, and as she does she shakes out her body with appropriate guttural sounds.
KRISSY smiles.*

BIDDY
(shouting)
This is Bidy king-fu. I do hate them, all of 'em who voted "no."

KRISSY jumps in with BIDDY and shakes out her body as well.

KRISSY

Hate hate hate hate—

The two of them, like a ritual dance, shake out the hates. BIDDY king-fu is, after all, a version of Quaker kung-fu.

The sound of a taxi pulling up. Taxi honks, but still they jump around and shout.

They wind down their dance.

The taxi honks again.

The look they share is both tender and sad. BIDDY opens her arms.

BIDDY

I have gotten much better at the hug-thing.

They embrace.

KRISSY

You have.

BIDDY

I will miss you.

KRISSY

Back in a couple of weeks—gotta soothe the folks.

BIDDY

Go, before they overcharge you too much. Go!

KRISSY grabs her suitcase and exits.

BIDDY watches. Car doors slam, car tires crunch against gravel and then fade away.

BIDDY

And away she flies.

BIDDY bends over, her hands on her knees, and breathes hoarsely, as if trying to breathe away a pain.

BIDDY kneels, her hands still on her knees—a race between the pain and the breathing to control the pain.

Finally the pain subsides and the breathing slows. BIDDY sits back on her heels, then stands and throws out her arms in a KRISSEY-gesture of salvation, stretching and straining to cast healing into the world. She stops, then does it again. Stops, then does it one last time.

Off in the distance, a gunshot.

BIDDY listens, half-smiles.

A gunshot from a different direction.

BIDDY

And there's my answer: deer season. Completely forgot it was
fucking deer season.

BIDDY opens the wooden storage box, rummages inside. She pulls out a neon orange vest and pants, which she dumps on the porch floor. Rummages some more, then pulls out a pot and wooden spoon. She slams the lid down.

She vests herself in neon orange.

BIDDY

(muttering)

It is time for The Bitch Who Bitches to go into action.

Gleaming neon orange and holding the pot and spoon, BIDDY comes downstage. Lights follow her, and she is ready to cross the border from her cleared land into her forest.

She bangs the pot and yells.

BIDDY

Fly away fly away fly away now / the hunters want to turn you to
chow—

Bang bang shout shout—BIDDY is on her march.

BIDDY

Fly away now says Alfred Lord Tennyson / the hunters just want to
grind you to venison—

Bang bang shout shout.

BIDDY

Fly away fly away fly away—

Bang bang bang bang as the lights fade to black.

* * * * *

Scene 14

In the darkness the sound of hammering, screw-gunning, sawing.

Stagehand sets up an old camcorder downstage, extension cord running to offstage. Also sets the two stools.

Lights up. BIDDY stands in front of the camcorder. As usual, she wears her jeans, boots, and a blue-and-white striped engineer's cap marked with dirt and a sweat line. She is also shirtless. An olive tee-shirt drapes hangs out of her back pocket. She holds a hammer.

BIDDY

Can't believe this piece of crap still works.

She puts down the hammer, grabs the tee-shirt. Off comes the hat, on goes the shirt, fiddles with the camcorder, sits on the stool.

BIDDY

All right—practice run. My name is Biddy Sowell. Today is day one in the Sovereign State of Sowell. Already built my border sign—it's parked over there. I now declare my secession from these lunatic United States.

Upstage, HE appears from around what would be the corner of the house. HE wears a Guy Fawkes mask and carries a Wilson Combat Carry .45 ACP in HIS right hand, a leather rucksack over one shoulder. HE walks toward BIDDY.

BIDDY

I have my reasons, the primary one being the absolute lunaticity of the country that surrounds me. Not everyone, of course—not Krissy Heinz and the other Quaker super-heroes in life—but enough to—

BIDDY stops, sensing HIS presence. She does not turn around.

BIDDY

Who is it?

HE

You should turn around.

BIDDY

I'm okay for now.

HE

Maybe Bidy Sowell is. Maybe Bidy Sowell is not. How will she know?

BIDDY turns to face him. HE throws his rucksack to the ground, sits on the other stool.

BIDDY

How do you know my name?

HE

Who doesn't? Bidy Sowell, gun-control bitch, with her sidekick, Krissy Heinz. Makes you the right choice for me. The thing you posted in the pennysaver about your "sovereign state"—definitely my right choice.

The mask nods in affirmation, then drifts to the side, as if HE has lost focus.

BIDDY

I thought they'd gotten you.

HE

Wishful thinking.

BIDDY

Who wouldn't wish it?

HE

Me, for one.

HE is not at all vigilant—HE doesn't even hold the gun on BIDDY. HE seems indifferent to vigilance.

HE

I am tired.

BIDDY

Especially wearing that. Must suffocate you.

HE speaks without rancor.

HE
Why don't you shut the fuck up? I'm tired.

They sit in meeting. The air zizzes with insects buzzing.

BIDDY
I have food—

Again, without rancor.

HE
Shut the fuck up. Like I'm some lonesome traveler.

BIDDY
You are. Just happen to be a mass murderer.

HE places the muzzle against HIS temple.

HE
Oh boo hoo.

BIDDY
Go ahead—first death in the State of Sowell.

HE points the gun at BIDDY, mock shoots.

HE
Should be the founder's death.

HE then lets the gun droop between HIS knees. HE really is tired.

HE takes off the mask, dandles it.

BIDDY
How'd you get away—it's been a year—

HE slides off the stool, stands, sets the mask on the stool. HE nudges the rucksack with the toe of HIS boot.

BIDDY leans over, her hand reaching down for the hammer.

Without taking HIS eyes off HIS boot, HE points the gun at BIDDY.

HE
I'm not blind, and I'm not stupid. Stop leaning over.

BIDDY sits up straight.

HE
I shucked everything off, joined the mad rush for the exits—found my own sovereign state. Not hard to disappear if you want to.

HE looks up and locks eyes with BIDDY. This time the pointed gun is steady and demanding.

HE
Come on—we have work to do.

The gun indicates for BIDDY to stand. BIDDY doesn't stand.

BIDDY
I'm not on your payroll.

* * * * *

Scene 15

A car's horn offstage gets their attention, then the faint sound of a car pulling away. They both watch, and several seconds later KRISSY appears, pulling her suitcase.

She wears a pink tee-shirt that spells out in white lettering with a subtle drop-shadow "The Bitching Quaker." A cape ripples beneath the lettering.

HE looks at BIDDY with a half-smile and a shake of HIS head, the gun still steady.

The cicadas buzz.

HE
You knew this?

BIDDY
Supposed to be my only guest. It's who you think it is.

KRISSY
He should put the fucking gun down.

HE
That how a bitching Quaker acts?

HE

Life after this life—the “after life”—is it yes or is it no.

KRISSY

Can't answer The Misfit's question. I can't. Because to The BQ, yes or no, the afterlife doesn't matter.

HE

It's gotta matter.

KRISSY

Only lonely sad people think it matters. That's not me.

BIDDY

Not me either.

HE

Shut up. Here's my dilemma—

HE holds the Guy Fawkes mask in front of HIS face.

HE

Jesus finding me was the worst thing that ever happened. I have always wanted to be in His mansion—but—I wasn't there, when he rose, third day, so I can't know for sure—can't touch the blood—

HE shakes the mask in disbelief.

HE

Maybe all a lie—those gospel guys just making shit up—but the lie started the hunger, and the hunger fought with the doubt—and all the while the wicked around me prospered—prospered—

HE tosses the mask onto the rucksack.

HE

So I thought that since I couldn't know—the difference between doing great goodness or great wickedness didn't matter. Didn't matter a fucking bit. So I chose great wickedness—seemed more in line with God's plan for His creation—

KRISSY

The BQ always tries to go for goodness.

HE

And that's what makes a horserace.

HE stands, and the gun is now steady in his grip.

HE

Stand up. Now. I have come to do what I need to do with whom I need to do it.

KRISSY and BIDDY stand up. KRISSY unzips an outer pocket of the suitcase and pulls out a BQ tee-shirt and tosses it to BIDDY.

KRISSY

Swap it out.

BIDDY takes off her hat, slips off her tee-shirt and tosses it to one side, puts on The BQ, and replaces the hat.

HE looks at the two of them, then indicates for KRISSY to step towards HIM. She steps up to HIM.

HE reverses the gun in HIS grip so that it is pointing toward HIM, thumb on the trigger. In the same moment HE grabs KRISSY's right hand and lays it over HIS own on the gun, gripping it hard. HE sticks the gun against HIS forehead.

For the briefest of moments their eyes lock.

Then HE fires, killing himself. Acoustic sound effect for the gunshot by the Stagehand. HIS body crumples, leaving KRISSY holding the gun.

KRISSY looks down at the shattered body, then at her right hand.

KRISSY squats down, then kneels, staring at HIM. BIDDY does the same on HIS other side. They look at each other. There is agreement between them.

KRISSY raises the gun, aims, and squeezes off one more round. Acoustic sound effect of the gunshot by Stagehand.

They stand.

BIDDY

You dotted the "i," crossed the "t."

KRISSY tosses the gun onto HIS body. BIDDY indicates the camcorder.

BIDDY

We can't look too crazy when shit and fan meet.

They embrace each other. They let their fear drain away.

KRISSY

No one is going to convict us.

BIDDY turns the camcorder off.

BIDDY

His afterlife. We've got a lot to do.

KRISSY

So what's new?

KRISSY stares at HIM on the ground.

BIDDY

You waiting for the body to disappear?

KRISSY

Never know.

BIDDY

This one is not going anywhere.

KRISSY

Odd how he wanted someone with him in his last moment.

BIDDY

He didn't know The BQ was not going to be his best choice.

KRISSY

I was his best choice. He got the best of my Quaker kung-fu. His question got answered.

KRISSY turns to BIDDY and gives her another big hug, which is generously returned.

BIDDY

You okay?

KRISSY

No. You?

BIDDY

No. But I'm not not-okay either—in-between. Come on.

KRISSY rolls her suitcase, BIDDY grabs the mask.

BIDDY

Let's get the scut work done so that we can enjoy the freedoms of the new nation of Sowell.

They move toward the porch. BIDDY has turned the mask over and is looking at something. She slows her walk, then stops, as she reads.

BIDDY

Look at this.

BIDDY shows KRISSY and together they read. Exchange a look.

KRISSY

Wow.

BIDDY

Yeah.

KRISSY

You said once you wouldn't write him out of the family of man.

BIDDY

Still mean it—though it's a pretty fucked-up family, isn't it?

KRISSY looks back at HIM. She leaves her luggage and walks back to the body, stands over it and stares. BIDDY joins her, holding the mask. KRISSY takes the mask, holds it over her face. They stare.

Lights bump to black.