

FROM MARS TO PARIS

A short play by
Jeremy Sony

Casting: 1 M, 1 W

MAN 20s-40s

WOMAN 20s-40s

Note: Actors should be cast to play a couple. It helps if they have a good sense of beat as there is interweaving poetry for part of the play.

Drama. Run-time: 5 min

Climbing the highest mountain in the solar system might seem like the way to a woman's heart, but sometimes the distance between two worlds isn't as vast as the space between you on the couch.

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AT RISE: Two blocks. WOMAN is sitting on the floor, MAN stands nearby. They do not look at or touch each other. For now. Stage is washed in reddish light.

MAN

You said you wanted red. Damn, just look at that view. Breathtaking isn't it?

WOMAN

Not literally, there's no air to breathe.

MAN

You were excited about this, I thought. Should I keep going or do you want to -- ?

WOMAN

Where are we again, how many clicks?

MAN

Tharsis region of the Red Planet, Olympus Mons: tallest mountain in the solar system.

WOMAN

I miss you.

MAN

From where we're standing to the Martian sea level -- which is actually based on atmospheric pressure since there are no oceans on Mars -- it's taller than --

WOMAN

Did you hear what I said?

MAN

I'm right here. It's taller than --

WOMAN

Lecturing on the red sands of Mars.

MAN

A topic I find fascinating. If you're not going to try then what are we doing?

WOMAN

I don't know anymore, but I don't like this. Can we do something else? Why don't we read some poetry?

(WOMAN sits on her block.)

MAN

Paris then.

WOMAN

You said we'd try something different.

MAN

That's why we'll go to Paris. You love the City of Light, that's a fact, I know this. Hang on.

WOMAN

This isn't working.

MAN

We did something I like, now let's --
(pause, in response)
I'm downloading the environment, Paris is tricky, you have to give it a minute to render.

(MAN sits on his block.)

WOMAN

Render?

MAN

To process, to create a representation --

WOMAN

You're not dating a luddite.

MAN

I don't think you're using that word correctly.

WOMAN

Render this, I'm logging off.

(LIGHTS SHIFT to natural wash. They can interact. WOMAN gets up.)

MAN

Well, that's just wonderful. You killed Mars --

WOMAN

What are we doing?

MAN

-- and probably Paris, which is a shame because --
(Pause)
We're hanging out. Like you wanted.

WOMAN

This is actually how you think I want to spend every Friday night with you? Me on my laptop. You on yours.

MAN

Exploring the universe together --- yeah.

WOMAN

We used to read poems together. When you asked what I wanted to do tonight, what did I say to you?

MAN

Hang out?

WOMAN

"We're in a rut." I just wanted something different.

MAN

I tried. You said you wanted "something red". That kind of lacks specifics.

WOMAN

You asked me to define different. That's what came out. I thought I was being playful. But you give me --

MAN

You say red, I give you red.

WOMAN

A tour of Mars? You're a hot-blooded American male and that was what you came up with?

MAN

What did you want then, red silk panties?

WOMAN

This isn't about sex.

(MAN gets up.)

MAN

Then what? You didn't like Mars and you don't want sex -- What else can we do?

WOMAN

-- is spending time with me so black and white for you?

MAN

There are shades of gray.

WOMAN

And that's okay with you? I want vibrant. Something bright and powerful, bold, and alive.

MAN

Something that makes hearts race.

WOMAN

That excites the mind. Do you know how hard it is to sit in the same room with you, not look at each other, not connect?

MAN

Interact.

WOMAN

Online, playing games, watching TV, laughing at stupid jokes made by people about whom I don't give a shit, that's about as gray as you can get.

MAN

We used to look at each other.

WOMAN

I miss you.

MAN

We used to connect.

WOMAN

It's not working. We're breaking down, lost our way.

MAN

Is that what we're doing? Spiralling out --

WOMAN

-- into the nothing --

MAN

--into the gray. Two people --

WOMAN

-- two machines --

MAN

-- who have lost it --

WOMAN

-- caught in routine --

MAN

-- lost our red --

WOMAN

-- lost ourselves --

MAN

-- and this is how it all goes down --

WOMAN

-- taller than Everest, he says --

MAN

-- from Mars to Paris, she replies --

WOMAN

-- We lost our red --

MAN

-- And so it dies.

(They move to their blocks and sit on their last lines of the poem.)

WOMAN

I miss you.

MAN

Did you hear what I said?

WOMAN

If you're not going to try then what are we doing?

MAN

The flush of my cheek the first time you kissed me.

WOMAN

What was that?

(LIGHTS: From here to the end, the RED wash begins to filter in slowly.)

MAN

A Shakespearean sonnet over burnt eggs and toast. How the sunlight dances on your hair. That you'll go to Mars for me, even if you didn't want to.

(By this point, MAN stands on his block.)

MAN (cont'd)

I'm looking at you now, and the red, it's not gone -- it's everywhere. Can you see it?

(WOMAN stands on her block.)

MAN (cont'd)

The dinner I'll take you to tomorrow night. That dress you'll wear, the one that puts a spring in my step. And we'll walk home. You'll take my hand.

(MAN extends his hand, WOMAN takes it.)

MAN (cont'd)

And everything... is red.

WOMAN

It's breathtaking.

(LIGHTS DOWN. END OF PLAY.)