

HORST AND GRABEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNFINISHED MAN

Comedic Duet

by
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At Rise: The stage lights are low and the lighting simulates the alpenglow of early twilight. An underscore of a foreboding, unsettling nature is heard. There are mountains in the far distance on a canvas that stretches the entire width of the stage. A lone man, HORST, stands next to a sign in the middle of the stage. HE stands there for some time. Then, a voice offstage calls out to him:

GRABEN: *(offstage)* Hey there! *(HORST looks around. GRABEN continues from offstage.)* Hey! You! *(comes onstage, out of breath)* How's it goin'? *(drops his possessions to the ground and reaches out a hand)* Graben's the name.

HORST: *(doesn't shake his hand)* Horst.

GRABEN: Fancy meeting someone way out here.

(Long beat while HE's rummaging through his stuff.)

GRABEN: What're you doing out here?

HORST: Waiting for the bus.

GRABEN: *(distracted, not paying attention)* The what?

HORST: The Bus.

GRABEN: What bus?

HORST: The bus.

GRABEN: What are you talking about?

HORST: Sign here says bus. I'm waiting for the bus.

GRABEN: You've got to be kidding me. Bus.

HORST: Sign says bus.

GRABEN: I know what the sign says. Ain't no busses around here.

HORST: Then why would there be a bus sign here?

GRABEN: I don't know. Just know there ain't no busses around here. Sorry, fella.

HORST: I don't know why anyone would put a sign out here indicating a bus if there ain't no bus around here.

GRABEN: Lots of things in this world don't make any sense.

HORST: But to put a sign out here for a bus, when there is no bus, is just plain cruel.

GRABEN: It's a cruel world.

HORST: I don't believe you.

GRABEN: Believe what you want.

HORST: *(beat)* What are you doing around here?

GRABEN: Just getting from point A to point B.

HORST: Without a bus.

GRABEN: That's right. Without a bus.

HORST: Well, it should be coming along any time now.

GRABEN: Right. Do you see any tire tracks?

HORST: No.

GRABEN: There you have it: No tracks. No bus.

HORST: It doesn't make any sense to me.

GRABEN: Lots of things in this world don't make any sense.

HORST: I know. You already said that.

GRABEN: *(beat)* What do you do, Horst?

HORST: Not much right now. Unemployed.

GRABEN: Thought so.

HORST: Presumptuous, aren't you?

GRABEN: It's a judgement call. Don't take it personally.

HORST: Arrogant too.

GRABEN: You make it sound like an affliction.

(A pregnant pause ensues. GRABEN approaches the sign and looks at it in a roundabout fashion.)

GRABEN: *(beat)* Sign's pretty old.

HORST: Yeah. I noticed that.

GRABEN: You would think that if there was a bus company that they would at least maintain the sign.

HORST: **(short beat, as if thinking)** I'd rather have them use that money for the operation of busses.

GRABEN: I hear ya! **(beatlet)** Or just busses altogether. **(short beat while HORST looks at him, irked)** Where're you going?

HORST: Out of town.

GRABEN: From a small town?

HORST: Yeah. Small town.

GRABEN: First time?

HORST: Yeah.

GRABEN: I understand. **(beat.)** Leaving?

HORST: No. I'm going to visit my daughter.

GRABEN: Dating age?

HORST: Not for long.

GRABEN: Getting married?

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