

TUNDRA GAMES

By Patrick Gabridge

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**This script is written as a contest duet, where only two actors should play all parts. However, this play involves three separate characters, and if performed on stage, a third actor may be added. For contest purposes, SIMON will also play the part of MAX. If performed on stage with three people, it would be most effective to cast the part of MAX as a female, which would involve only a few pronoun changes. For forensics competitions, all props in this duet should be mimed.*

CAST: HICKEY and SIMON

AT RISE: *Hickey and Simon are pacing back and forth, shivering and trying to stay warm.*

HICKEY: Shut up, Simon.

SIMON: All right. All right. Boy you sure are—

HICKEY: Don't. Don't say it.

SIMON: What?

HICKEY: I don't wanna hear the word cranky again.

SIMON: Okay. **(beat)** You haven't been doing this very long, have you?

HICKEY: Doin' what?

SIMON: This wilderness guide stuff. I mean, you seem like a rugged sort of guy, but forgetting half the food? Inexperience, right? And normally, guides are a little more polite, I think.

HICKEY: Shut up. Do you have to talk every second of every day?

SIMON: I'm sorry, I know I can be annoying.

HICKEY: No kidding.

SIMON: But if I don't keep talking, all I can think about is the fact that we haven't eaten in two days.

HICKEY: Thanks for reminding me.

SIMON: You're right. You're right. Let's talk about something else. Want to see the pictures of my family again?

HICKEY: No.

SIMON: I think my little Sarah would really like you. She can find the best in anyone.

HICKEY: Great. Just great. Can we just have a minute of silence? Just one minute. Would that be too much to ask?

SIMON: **(beat)** It's cold in here.

HICKEY: Yeah, well, it's a heck of a lot colder outside.

SIMON: I'm cold.

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HICKEY: Put another log on the fire.

SIMON: Where is he?

HICKEY: He'll be here.

SIMON: It's a blizzard out there, Hickey. How is Max going to find us?

HICKEY: He will. Just stop worryin'.

SIMON: How can I help it? We don't have any food.

HICKEY: Don't you hear the wolves howling outside? That's food.

SIMON: I suppose you're going to kill a wolf with your bare hands?

HICKEY: Remind me again that we have no ammunition, and I'll kill you with my bare hands.

SIMON: Sorry. Don't get so excited.

HICKEY: Just shut up.

SIMON: **(beat)** Do we have any more blankets?

HICKEY: You're wearing all five of them.

SIMON: Are you cold?

HICKEY: No.

SIMON: I wish we weren't out of coffee.

HICKEY: Yeah. I get a little tense when I don't get my coffee.

SIMON: Oh.

HICKEY: Hear that?

SIMON: All I hear is the blizzard. Wait. I hear it. A snowmobile. It's him!
It's Max! We're saved! We're saved!

HICKEY: Get offa' me.

SIMON: We're not going to die! We're not going to die!

(SIMON rushes off stage. The actor re-enters, now playing MAX. HE should stand and speak differently and have a separate focal point for each character. MAX'S character is more decisive and more sure of himself.

MAX: Hickey

HICKEY: Uh, hi, Max. Did you see Simon?

MAX: He's trying to pry some grub from the saddlebags. They're frozen solid. Must be fifty below out there. Sucker's starving.

HICKEY: Yeah.

MAX: What happened?

HICKEY: Nothing.

MAX: Obviously. He's supposed to be dead.

HICKEY: I forgot the bullets.

MAX: I know. I found them on the table. Now you've got no more excuses.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

HICKEY: I can't do it, Max. He's driving me nuts, but I just can't shoot him.

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MAX: Come on, Hickey. It should be all the sweeter now. The money, plus he drives you crazy.

HICKEY: It ain't enough. I just...I'm sorry, Max.

MAX: I'll take care of it.

HICKEY: You shouldn't have to.

MAX: I know.

HICKEY: I don't know what's wrong. Maybe I'm losin' my edge.

MAX: Maybe you never had it to begin with. **(MAX exits. The same actor enters as SIMON.)**

SIMON: Man, it's cold out there. I can't move my fingers. You want some spaghetti-o's? Two cans. And some coffee. It's all I could get loose.

HICKEY: That's fine.

SIMON: Max said he has just enough gas to get back with one person. He wants to do it while the sled is still warm.

HICKEY: Good. That's fine, Simon. Just fine. I know how miserable you've been.

SIMON: Max said he'll take care of me.

HICKEY: I'm sure he will.

SIMON: Well, I'd better go. He's waiting. Sorry you have to stay behind, Hickey. Guess sometimes these arctic adventures don't work out, huh? At least you've got some food now.

HICKEY: You'd better go.

SIMON: Well, hey, it was fun, huh?

HICKEY: Right.

SIMON: See ya', buddy. **(exits)**

(SIMON exits. HICKEY hums to himself as he pretends to make coffee. Finally, MAX ENTERS, stomping the snow off his boots and shivering.)

MAX: It's getting colder out there.

HICKEY: You were gone a while.

MAX: Got any coffee?

HICKEY: Yeah. Here. **(beat)** You did it?

MAX: Yeah. Not like you think, though.

HICKEY: How?

MAX: Elbow to the ribs.

HICKEY: You killed him with your elbow?

MAX: Just knocked him off the sled. Had to hit him twice, actually. That little weasel had a tight grip.

HICKEY: And that's it?

MAX: It's fifty below. He's frozen stiff. No more Simon to annoy you.

HICKEY: You check to make sure he was frozen?

MAX: It's a blizzard out there, Hickey. I turned around and came right back.

HICKEY: What was he doin'?

MAX: Just standing there in the snow. What was he supposed to do?

HICKEY: Maybe you shoulda' shot him.

MAX: Maybe you should shut up!

HICKEY: How do we explain him being out in the middle of nowhere?

MAX: He'll get eaten by tomorrow. Even if he doesn't, we'll just say he went hysterical and went running off into the snow.

HICKEY: Guess you're right... How we gonna prove we did the job?

MAX: Um...I didn't think of that.

HICKEY: I mean, they aren't just gonna trust us. People don't give much credence to professional killers. We're gonna need evidence. Did you bring the camera?

MAX: I forgot.

HICKEY: We gotta find him.

MAX: What?

HICKEY: We gotta find him and get some proof. Maybe a finger or an ear or somethin'.

MAX: You're sick. You know that. A real sicko.

HICKEY: You killed him...

MAX: Yeah, but I don't go around cutting people's toes off for souvenirs.

HICKEY: How else we gonna get the money if we don't have any proof?

MAX: I'll stay here. You go find him.

HICKEY: Come on.

MAX: I already went out and killed the man. It's your turn to do some work for a change.

HICKEY: Fine. Fine. I'll go. ***(HICKEY exits, and for 10 or 15 seconds, MAX mimes drinking coffee. HICKEY re-enters, shivering.)***

MAX: Any luck?**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

HICKEY: Couldn't find him.

MAX: Can't you do anything right?

HICKEY: It's dark and snowing out there. How am I supposed to find one frozen geek in the middle of the tundra?

MAX: Lost your nerve, didn't you?

HICKEY: I just couldn't find him. That's all.

MAX: Of all our jobs, how many times have you gotten your part right?

HICKEY: Almost every time.

MAX: Never. You always end up getting sick or the jitters. How many jobs have we taken on?

HICKEY: I dunno. More'n a couple.

MAX: Five jobs. How many times have we collected?

HICKEY: They wasn't all my fault.

MAX: We've collected one time. And the old man died of a heart attack.

HICKEY: I lured him into the place, set it all up.

MAX: Every other time, you're the one who was supposed to eliminate the target. You always screwed up.

HICKEY: That ain't true.

MAX: Like Slater. You crashed into his car. It cost plenty to replace our truck and get your head sewn up. Slater only scratched his knee.

HICKEY: I was tryin' to kill the man.

MAX: You were supposed to shoot him.

HICKEY: So I got a little creative and tried to do the job with the truck.

MAX: Well, you'd better be a little creative now and figure out how we're going to prove to our clients that we killed Simon.

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