

Marionettes, Inc.

written by

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EXT. CITY STREET - LATE EVENING

BRALING and SMITH are walking down the middle of a wide street where it had evidently recently rained. They are both bundled up in long coats, scarves, gloves, and hats. There is visible steam coming from their breath to show the cold. It is mostly silent, but there are faint wind sounds in the background and their shuffling footsteps are audible.

BRALING

(Puts his hand on SMITH's shoulder)

Well, it's been an excellent night, Smith, but I have to retire.

SMITH

(Rolls his eyes, and puts his hand on BRALING's shoulder, as if to mock him)

Braling, It's barely ten o'clock, what does your wife need you for this time?

BRALING

(Turns back to facing forward)

Nothing in particular, I just should be heading home.

SMITH

You understand that she's being unreasonable.

BRALING

(Dismissive, muttering)

Yes- I mean no- well-

(sighs)

I'm not too worried about it either way.

SMITH

(Laughs out loud and looks at Braling)

What's that supposed to mean?

BRALING

(Looks down)

Oh, nothing

(Glances up at SMITH, and turns down again)

(MORE)

BRALING (CONT'D)

Anyway, you're no one to judge, with the marriage that you say you're enduring. How is it going with Nettie?

SMITH

It's alright, but it's true that I would love a moment of respite. I'm genuinely fatigued by her hugs and kisses.

BRALING

(Chuckles)

SMITH

I know it sounds silly, I do, but if you knew the extent of her love for me, especially over the past month, you would fathom my exhaustion.

BRALING

Oh, I believe you, I just think I have something that might fix both of our problems.

SMITH

Oh?

BRALING

(Grinning)

Well first of all, I'm going to Rio.

SMITH

(Face lights up)

Finally! I can't remember how long you've been wanting to go, but your wife-

(becomes visibly confused again)

What about your wife?

BRALING

(Gestures for SMITH to come closer to hear, speaks quietly)

She won't know.

(Chuckles excitedly)

SMITH

(Backs away from BRALING)

Braling, you're confusing me increasingly every minute.

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

How won't she know, and what does this have to do with solving our problems?

BRALING

(Rolls his head and waits for a moment before sighing again)

Alright, I may as well tell you.
(Pauses again and takes a breath)

SMITH

(Surprised, interested and impatient)

Well, what is it, Braling?

BRALING

This is where you have to swear not to go haywire and make a scene.

SMITH

Yes, yes, of course, now tell me.

BRALING

Alright, look up there at my apartment window.

(Points up to a window with a man through which one can see a man that looks exactly like BRALING)

SMITH

(Looks up, squints, then widens his eyes and opens his mouth)

Wh-

BRALING

(Covers SMITH's mouth with his glove)

Shh!

SMITH

(Pushes BRALING's hand away)

But that's-

BRALING

(Speaking through his teeth, aggressively wide eyes, trying to tell SMITH to keep it down)

(MORE)

BRALING (CONT'D)

I know.

(Waves the man in the window down)

2ND BRALING

(Walks through the building entrance to greet SMITH and BRALING)

BRALING

(Politely)

Hello, Braling.

2ND BRALING

(In the same manner as Braling)

Hello, Braling.

SMITH

(In disbelief)

D-Do you have a twin or-

BRALING

(Smiling, amused at SMITH's confusion)

Nope.

SMITH

(Looks at BRALING, turns to 2ND BRALING, and turns back to BRALING)

Then how-

BRALING

Here, put your ear to his chest.

SMITH

(Nervously glances at BRALING, and hesitantly puts his ear to 2ND BRALING's chest. Hears a constant ticking sound, Eyes widen again)

No.

BRALING

(Smiles, nodding with crossed arms)

Yes.

SMITH

You can't be serious!

BRALING

Smith, it's true. I bought him a month ago from a company called Marionettes INC, which has been secretly in business for two years. They can duplicate practically anything. Braling, give him your card.

2ND BRALING

(Pulls a small, white business card from his coat pocket, and hands it to SMITH)

SMITH

(Looks down at the card and shakes his head)
I-I can't believe this! I mean, surely, there must be a catch.

BRALING

(Shrugs)
Nothing so far.

SMITH

Incredible. So, this is how you plan to go to Rio, I suppose.

BRALING

(Grins and raises his eyebrows)
For as long as I want.

SMITH

Don't you think it's slightly unethical?

BRALING

Not necessarily. My wife wants me, so she'll get me, or at least the next closest thing. Braling here will act just as I would.

2ND BRALING

It's not difficult. Your wife is quite pleasant.

SMITH

(Studies 2ND BRALING closely)
That's just fascinating. Do you think I could buy one for myself as well?

BRALING

Oh, easily. Though, I'm not clear on why you would need it so badly. Your wife loves you so much!

SMITH

Oh, and I love her dearly as well, but as I was saying, I'm simply tired of all the affection.

BRALING

Well, this will surely be of help.

SMITH

Yes, it certainly will. I'm going to take the money I need out of our bank account as a business venture. Nettie won't have to know anything.

BRALING

Alright, good luck, Smith, but I should warn you, it is a felony to use one of these marionettes, so please be careful.

SMITH

I will, thank you so much, Braling, I'm forever indebted to you.

BRALING

Take care, SMITH.
(waves, and walks into the building alongside 2ND BRALING)

SMITH

(Turns around and walks towards the bus station)

INT. SMITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The light in the entrance of the apartment is on, but the bedroom where NETTIE is sleeping is mostly dark, and only lit by the moonlight and streetlights through the window. It is quiet, but SMITH's movements can be heard.

SMITH

(Peeks into the bedroom to see NETTIE sleeping. Looks down at the white card and slumps down with regret.

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

He looks longingly at
NETTIE, but then starts
walking towards her,
winces, and clutches his
ribs in discomfort. He
turns around and starts
walking down the hallway
towards the library. Once
in the library, he opens
the bankbook and gasps)
What!? Ten thousand dollars is
missing? What did Nettie buy?
(Storms into the bedroom
and turns on the light.)
Nettie! What have you done with our
money? Nettie!

NETTIE

(Stays still, doesn't wake
up)

SMITH

(Looks confused. Then,
visibly has a
realization, widens his
eyes with worry, takes a
step back, shakes his
head)
No, no, no, she couldn't have.
Nettie?
(Steps towards her again
and puts his ear to her
chest. He hears the
ticking sound that he
heard on 2ND BRALING and
pushes her away, shocked
and shaking)

INT. BRALING'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

BRALING and 2ND BRALING arrive in the basement. It's dark,
small, and crowded with a lot of storage. One can tell that
people don't go down there very often because there are
cobwebs and dust everywhere. There is a large, black,
rectangular box in front of BRALING and 2ND BRALING.

BRALING

Okay, Braling, into the box you go.

2ND BRALING

I don't want to.

BRALING

Excuse me?

2ND BRALING

It's not fair. How come you get to chose when you're active and awake, and my life is decided by you? I don't just stop living in this box, I want a real life too.

BRALING

This was not what I payed for. Now, get back into the box. I need you later to be with my wife, when I go to Rio.

2ND BRALING

Yes, that's not fair either. When will it be my turn to go to Rio, and why don't you want to just spend time with your wife?

BRALING

I don't know, I thought you liked filling in for me with my wife.

2ND BRALING

I do. I'm in love with her.

BRALING

In love? Is that even possi-

2ND BRALING

And I'm going to take her to Rio with me.

BRALING

(Starts slowly walking backwards, reaching for a phone)

I'm sorry, I'll treat you better, I can let you out a bit more, or-

2ND BRALING

What are you doing? Who are you calling?!

BRALING

(Starts visibly panicking)
N-nobody, I just-

2ND BRALING

(Smirking)
You're not going anywhere.
(MORE)

2ND BRALING (CONT'D)
(Grabs BRALING by the
wrist)

BRALING
What are you doing? Does my wife
know about you?
(Gasps)
Was this her idea?

2ND BRALING
(Smiles and shrugs)
I don't know, maybe.

BRALING
(Crying)
You can't do this, please! I'll-

2ND BRALING
Goodbye, Braling.

BRALING
No-

INT. MR. AND MRS. BRALING'S BEDROOM - LATER

MRS. BRALING is sleeping in her and MR. BRALING's bed, alone.
A man's shadow is cast over her. It is still fairly dark.

MRS. BRALING
(Stirs awake, puts her
hand on her cheek and
looks up and smiles)
You haven't kissed me in
years.

2ND BRALING (O.S.)
We'll see what we can do about
that.