

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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Grievous Circle
by Jerzy Gwiazdowski

Time: June 12 2015, 7:35pm, during a performance
by the Juilliard Pre-College Symphony.

*The David Rubenstein Atrium, Lincoln Center Campus.
Evening. The space is illuminated by a massive screen,
which scrolls through slides advertising what's
happening around the campus that week- Lincoln Center
Theater: The King And I, The Juilliard School: The
Pre-College Symphony, The Atrium: Lincoln Center
Originals, The Met: "New season this fall!" A
disheveled **JARVIS** bolts into the Atrium from the west
entrance, dressed in outdoorsy gear. In pursuit is
BENNETT: equally geared up, equally unkempt, more
comfortable with it. Their worn jeans and boots are a
stark contrast to the Atrium's orderly, calm interior.
They are covered in a fine layer of dust. Jarvis holds
a smart phone.*

BENNETT

Jarvis!

Jarvis doesn't look back. Bennett groans.

BENNETT

Yo! Come on!

*Jarvis heads directly for the trash. He turns to
Bennett, holding up the smart phone with a flourish.*

JARVIS

It's called *airplane mode*.

Jarvis throws Bennett's phone in the trash.

BENNETT

Jarvis.

JARVIS

We are doing this *now*.

BENNETT

Doing what?

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JARVIS

Ending the trip. I'm calling it. June twelfth. Time of death: Seven thirty-something PM. Finito. That's the end of our Easy Rider cosplay. Rotate.

BENNETT

Jarvis.

JARVIS

Swivel. Do a one-eighty. Or a five-forty. Just end up facing that way. And then go far away from me.

BENNETT

Hold on. We don't need to decide *right now*.

JARVIS

Yes we do.

BENNETT

I'm sure Cedric hasn't played yet. Come on, let's go back in there.

JARVIS

It's too late.

BENNETT

No it isn't! They'll think we went to the bathroom or something.

JARVIS

Who cares what they think?

BENNETT

You do. You stormed out.

JARVIS

You left your phone on. We walked into a Juilliard concert- *late*- looking like *this*. And instead of hearing Brahms, Canning, and Shostakovich, we were subjected to three cycles of your dumb-ass ringtone.

BENNETT

It's not "dumb-ass."

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JARVIS

It's Camptown Races.

BENNETT

My dad liked Looney Tunes.

JARVIS

It's literally a minstrel tune. That's common knowledge.

Bennett looks around at the Atrium crowd.

BENNETT

Calm down.

JARVIS

I want to end it.

BENNETT

Okay, just- hold on. Let's recharge. Let's go back in and see Cedric. Let's sleep it of for like, a whole day. We can AirBNB. It'll be great. Berkshires in June. Trust me. Best roads in the region. My home turf. And you know, Mom's expecting me. She's expecting us.

JARVIS

No. I want to end it. Bennett.

Beat.

BENNETT

What?

Silence.

BENNETT

Why?

Jarvis shakes his head.

BENNETT

Because my phone went off?

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JARVIS

Because you don't- because we're having the same fight.

BENNETT

I don't want to have *any* fight. I want to talk about this later.

JARVIS

No. Now.

BENNETT

After the concert. I just rode for three thousand miles to get here.

JARVIS

That was *your idea*.

BENNETT

This was our idea.

JARVIS

The musical motorcycle journey across America was not my idea. It was your idea. And that's all it was. An idea.

BENNETT

Yeah. An idea to do something together.

JARVIS

That you came up with on your own. But I supported you because it was something you seemed really excited about.

BENNETT

He's your brother. I put together this whole trip for you.

JARVIS

Put what together? You had a big idea, and no plan. "Hey, let's do this thing together that will require a lot of money and time and planning and coordination! I haven't thought about any of that, but here's a motorcycle with a bow on it!"

BENNETT

You sang "Leader of the Pack!"

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JARVIS

All my friends started cheering. And it was a nice gesture. And it was my birthday, of course I was excited. But it was all for you. This trip was one hundred percent on your turf. I always meet you on your turf. I yield to your pleasure and disposal.

BENNETT

I thought you would like it.

JARVIS

I did. It's the best birthday gift I ever got.

BENNETT

It isn't, and that's fine.

JARVIS

Not the bike. The trip. The idea of it, anyway. What it could have been.

BENNETT

Could have been? The trip was great!

Jarvis responds with the full-body equivalent of an eye roll. He makes for the exit.

BENNETT

You have no idea what I did for you.

Jarvis stops and turns.

JARVIS

No. I don't.

BENNETT

All I did was try to make you comfortable. That's why we took seven weeks. Easier routes. I didn't say anything when you wanted to bring all that extra shit.

JARVIS

What extra shit?

BENNETT

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I packed my bike with two, or *double*, of every piece of gear we would need. My gear, and *your gear*. You brought a bunch of perishables that weighed us down.

JARVIS

Are you talking about food and water?

BENNETT

It wasn't a survival mission, Jar. We can get those things anywhere. Look at the bigger picture. We took water out of California. And increased our fuel costs.

JARVIS

And you didn't say anything.

BENNETT

No, I didn't say anything. I *did* something.

JARVIS

And yet you couldn't do the one thing I asked for.

BENNETT

My phone is a potentially lifesaving piece of technology.

JARVIS

And yet, the human race managed to survive for millennia before its invention.

BENNETT

You develop apps for a living.

JARVIS

And I needed a break from code, and scripts, and programming, and so I asked you to do something for me. No screens. And you couldn't do it.

Bennett heads to the trash can to retrieve his phone.

BENNETT

It's a GPS. It's an emergency signal. It's a light. It's a weather service.

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JARVIS

We have a map. And flares. And lights. And the ability to tell whether or not it is raining.

BENNETT

Those things fail. Roads get closed. Bulbs burn out.

JARVIS

You were making calls.

BENNETT

We had dates set up. We missed gigs. I needed to check in. I'm sorry.

JARVIS

And you were snapping photos. To what, send to the Federal Bureau of Instagram in case we went missing?

BENNETT

You know what, Jar? Sometimes it's nice to have photos. I wanted to be able to remember it.

JARVIS

Remember it? You were never there in the first place. You were so busy taking little shitty pictures of the meteor shower you never *saw the meteor shower*.

BENNETT

You're the one who wanted to stop for that.

JARVIS

I wanted to share it with you. And you missed it. A once-in-a-lifetime thing. I didn't do this to collect a bunch of photos to prove that we did it. I don't want *my relationship to be a performance for other people*.

BENNETT

(Re: the Atrium public) Of course you do.

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JARVIS

I don't care what they think. I care what you think.

BENNETT

I think about you. You're all I think about.

JARVIS

Then don't make me take a selfie in front of Alice Tully Hall.

BENNETT

You're photogenic. I like to show you off.

JARVIS

Thank you. Who is Godfrey?

BENNETT

What?

JARVIS

You weren't calling ahead to venues. You were calling one dude. Godfrey. Who is he?

BENNETT

You looked at my phone?

JARVIS

Why were you calling him twelve times? Why was he calling you in the middle of Cedric's concert?

BENNETT

Jarvis. You've been with me *every waking moment for the last seven weeks.*

JARVIS

In the crowd. Watching everyone buy you drinks.

BENNETT

The songs are for you. Half of them are *about you.*

JARVIS

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When we're alone. On the road, they're for everyone else.

Beat.

You would've stayed out there forever.

BENNETT

I'm here now.

JARVIS

And you're trying to convince me to go right back out there. You don't want to be here.

BENNETT

I want you to come with me.

JARVIS

Can't you pretend like you want to be here? Cedric wanted you to see him play.

BENNETT

You wanted me to see him play.

JARVIS

Of course I did.

BENNETT

And I agreed to come. Because it was important to you. Which I don't understand.

JARVIS

He's my brother.

BENNETT

He called you a faggot.

Beat.

JARVIS

He's a kid.

BENNETT

He'll be voting in the next election. You don't care?

JARVIS

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What do I do? If I cut off ties with everyone I know that used the word "faggot" as a teenager, I wouldn't know anybody. I said it. I'm sure that you said it.

BENNETT

I didn't.

JARVIS

Come on, a guy like you? Of course you did.

BENNETT

Fuck does that mean?

JARVIS

It's not a big deal.

BENNETT

It is a big deal. Not every kid talks that way.

JARVIS

Maybe not to you.

BENNETT

And these days, the people that do still talk like that do it because they *really fucking mean it*. Cedric really meant it. And you don't seem to care.

JARVIS

Of course I care. I've been hearing that shit since I was eleven. Put it back on the rack.

BENNETT

Put what back on the rack?

JARVIS

Your "activist" outfit. It doesn't fit.

BENNETT

It's not an outfit.

JARVIS

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You weren't talking about this stuff five years ago.

BENNETT

I had a wife five years ago.

Beat.

JARVIS

I know.

BENNETT

And you still hold that against me.

JARVIS

You waited until it was safe.

BENNETT

It wasn't easy. You know that.

JARVIS

It's never easy. I'm saying it was different for you.

BENNETT

Yeah. I wasn't sixteen. I had a father in law. I had joint assets. The timing was fucking awful. Emily was still recovering. We'd been through hell. Don't tell me it was easy. Don't say I didn't want this. And don't fucking say I won't leave my comfort zone for you. I left my life behind. You learned to ride a Yamaha.

JARVIS

Fine. You win.

BENNETT

I'm not trying to win. I'm trying to make things better.

JARVIS

You're trying to make them look better. And ignore the problem.

BENNETT

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Why does this have to be a problem? I'm trying to show you the things that are good. Because you keep forgetting that they exist.

JARVIS

And I got caught up in it. I always get caught up in it.

BENNETT

That's the point.

JARVIS

Well...

Jarvis pulls a small, worn notebook from his pocket. He tosses it at Bennett's chest.

JARVIS

It worked.

BENNETT

What is this?

JARVIS

There's a piece in the concert that we're missing right now. "Fantasy for a Hymn." By this guy Thomas Canning. He wrote music to be performed only once.

BENNETT

Tonight?

JARVIS

No, in 1944.

BENNETT

But they're playing it tonight?

JARVIS

Yeah, he'd be *pissed*. It was composed for a certain orchestra, to reverberate off the architecture of a specific building. (*Re: the book*) That verse is from another piece of his. An affirmation ceremony.

BENNETT

I am no longer my own, but yours.

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Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

JARVIS

It's how I planned to end the trip. With a proposal. After the concert. At the fountain.

BENNETT

Then do it.

JARVIS

No.

BENNETT

Why?

JARVIS

I don't want to.

BENNETT

Why not?

JARVIS

Because I never wanted to, Bennett.

BENNETT

That's not true.

JARVIS

I thought I was supposed to.

BENNETT

Why?

JARVIS

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Because that's what you do. You save us from the brink. And things are okay for a while. And then they're not again.

BENNETT

And then they are.

JARVIS

That's the problem. You're the master of the grand gesture. And it works. I wish it didn't.

BENNETT

But it does.

JARVIS

For a while.

BENNETT

Because your finger is constantly hovering over the eject button. Why does everything have to be a survival mission?

JARVIS

It doesn't. I don't want to live in crisis.

BENNETT

We don't have to.

JARVIS

We do. It's the only way we work. It's how we met. That's what we do for each other.

BENNETT

I don't know what I'd have done if you hadn't come along.

JARVIS

But what are we doing now? I need someone to be there every day. And you just aren't.

BENNETT

I'm there. I'm here. Jar. We're gonna fight. It's going to happen. The fact that we reconcile isn't a bad thing. That means we work. You're all I think about.

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"Camptown Races" rings out from Bennett's pocket. He pulls out the phone, looks at the caller ID]

BENNETT

You're all I think about.
(He answers the call.)
Godfrey.
Yeah- we left early.

Bennett looks at Jarvis.

Are you ready to go right now? Yeah. Thanks.

Bennett hangs up the phone. The giant screen behind Jarvis goes black for a moment, then is filled with a photograph of the two of them, smiling.

JARVIS

What?

BENNETT

Turn around. Rotate. Swivel. One-eighty.

Jarvis does. He sees the screen. More photos of the couple scroll by. He watches them. Bennett watches him. Photos scroll. Under them appears the text: "Jarvis- Will you marry me?" After a moment, Jarvis turns to Bennett.

BENNETT

Will you?

Jarvis is silent.

BENNETT

You're all I think about. You're all I've got. I'm willing to do anything to make this work.

JARVIS

And I'm just supposed to melt.

BENNETT

You're supposed to say yes.

Beat.

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BENNETT

You saved me, Jar.

JARVIS

You saved me, too.

BENNETT

We need each other.

JARVIS

We needed each other.

Jarvis leaves the Atrium, leaving Bennett with the giant screen, as the photos scroll by. He doesn't look back. The last slide comes up, a photo of the two men in front of Alice Tully Hall earlier that evening. A caption pops up, reading "He said yes!" Bennett looks at it. Lights fade out.

END OF PLAY

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