

BLOOD MOON

A Play in 3 Murders

Written by

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## CHARACTER LIST

DETECTIVE 1ST Class THELONIUS "T" PORTER: Male, Mid-30's, possesses the style of a typical Noir leading man. He sports an antiquated trench coat with matching fedora, he resembles a black and white photo in a technicolor world.

DETECTIVE 2ND CLASS ALICE MORGAN: Female, late 20's, hardened by years of working homicide in a male dominated police unit. Sharp, modern style of dress.

POLICE SERGEANT MARK KRAVITZ: Late 40's, stubborn, New York native.

CORONER COLE BALTO: Early 50's, a seasoned coroner and talented forensics expert.

JACK VANCE: Male, late 20's, slick Wall Street type.

DARK FIGURE: Cold-blooded, quick-tempered, killer.

## SETTING

Present day. The curtain opens to a dark alley. In the rear, there is a brick wall eclipsed by a New York skyline with a blood moon shimmering above. There is a metal sewer grate downstage right. The stage is lined with police tape and numerous yellow cards marking bloodstains. An industrial spotlight is centered upstage, casting a spotlight on a homicide victim.

SCENE 1

*As the curtain opens up, the audience is greeted with police lights and dissipating sirens. An exceptionally bright light bulb flashes the audience as MARK, the crime scene photographer, quickly snaps photos from various angles and awkward, uncomfortable positions. THELONIUS and ALICE enter stage right. ALICE continues to the body. THELONIUS stops and stares out into the audience. ALICE glances back; she's used to this behavior. As THELONIUS speaks, smooth noir jazz plays.*

THELONIUS

(Aside to the Audience) It wasn't your usual dead guy in a dark New York back alley on a dreary Saturday night. No, I could tell there was something different this time, there was something in the air that night. Something-(Sniffs) Something fishy...

(An INVESTIGATOR pulls a large rotten fish out of a garbage bag, he plugs his nose and drops it back in. The INVESTIGATOR wraps the bag and exits.)

Yes, I could tell this case wouldn't be the same. You could practically hear the tension in their voices that night.

(Jazz fades slightly)

MARK

What the fuck is he yammerin' to the friggin wall for?

ALICE

Um, It's... his process.

BALTO

Just let him do his thing, Kravitz. Detective Porter thinks he's in noir novel.

MARK

Newah'? What the fuck's a newah'?

(SMOOTH JAZZ picks up again.)

MARK (cont'd)

THELONIUS

(Aside) The moon cast a scarlet hue across the already blood-drenched alleyway and like art critics at a Pollack exhibit. We were sent to make sense of all the mess.

MARK

Hey, Big Bad Wolf! Why don't you quit trying to break the wall? It's made out frigging bricks for Christ's sake! (To ALICE) Who is this retard? Should he be allowed at a crime scene?

(THELONIUS ignores MARK, he dawns his latex gloves.)

ALICE

Look, he just has a sixth sense about this shit. T is a savant when it comes to solving murders. Let him do his thing.

(THELONIUS walks over to the victim.)

THELONIUS

Hey, Balto. What have we got here?

BALTO

Evening T, what can I say? Another late night, another poor kid.

MARK

Mugging gone wrong. No doubt about it.

THELONIUS

(Muttering) Possibly. (To BALTO) Who are you again?

MARK

Sergeant Mark Kravitz, forensic photographer.

THELONIUS

(Aside) I didn't like the look of him. Reminded me of one of those knuckleheads I used to walk a beat with back in my rookie days. He had a face like a week-old, vulture plucked, possum carcass.

(MORE)

THELONIUS (cont'd)  
 (MARK looks around him, baffled. *Is anyone else hearing this?* THELONIUS looks back to the body.)

MARK  
 Hey, asshole! I'm right friggin next to you! What's your deal? I swear. You must be some character straight out of the Maltese Fuckface.

(Jabbing BALTO with his elbo.)

Am I right?

(No one laughs. THELONIUS ignores MARK and kneels upstage from the body. MARK stares at him in astonishment.)

THELONIUS  
 Do we have an ID on the vic?

ALICE  
 Not yet, no wallet. We're still sweeping the surrounding area. They pulled his prints on the mobile. No word back yet.

THELONIUS  
 Copy, what's the cause of death?

MARK  
 What ya friggin' think Joe Friday? He got shot! Any rookie can see that.

(BALTO kneels and gestures to the victim's chest with his pen.)

BALTO  
 Won't know for sure until I get him back to the lab. But, based on the amount of blood he coughed up, it would appear that a round to the chest caused his lungs to fill with blood. Most likely, he died of asphyxiation.

MARK  
 Goddamn!

BALTO  
 It wasn't quick, I can tell you that much. Look at how much blood is smeared around him. Must have been a slow death.

THELONIUS  
 (Aside) A weird spot to make blood angels.

MARK

Wait, what?

ALICE

Have we found any brass yet?

BALTO

Not yet, killer might have picked it up. Just judging from the size of the entry wound and no clear exit wound, I'd say it was a single shot from a small-caliber pistol or possibly a snub-nosed revolver.

ALICE

A revolver would explain the lack of expended shells... Mob hit?

BALTO

That could be plausible. Those mob types love their revolvers.

MARK

Well, like I said already. He was shot to death. But it wasn't a mob hit. I mean, look at this Ivy League yuppie. It was a mugging! No doubt in my mind. Probably some friggin tourist, poor schmuck took a wrong turn.

THELONIUS

Car-fax, was it? Why don't you go and get us some coffee?

(ALICE receives a phone call and steps aside.)

MARK

(Stammering) What... The fuck... Wait one fucking sec- No- I'm not- No way-

THELONIUS

(Continuous) Decaf, Two sugars, a splash of creme. You know what? Let's throw an everything bagel with lox. Got all that?

ALICE

(Interrupting) Just got the results back on the fingerprints. (Reading from the phone) Our John Doe comes back to a Jack Vance, 36 years old New York resident, he keeps an apartment in Battery Park City. The magistrate is cooking up a warrant right now.

THELONIUS

(Aside) It didn't add up. What the hell was he doing on the wrong side of town in a grimy dark alleyway, on a cold February night like this? This case was like a dirty glass filled to the brim with a murky Irish Stout and I needed to get to the bottom of it.

MARK

Are you serious with this guy? Am I in a dream? Tell me this is a dream. Did I fall asleep watching Dragnet?

BALTO

Shut it, Kravitz, before I call your supervisor.

(THELONIUS kneels upstage from JACK. He closes his eyes for a moment. The stage dims and a spotlight hits JACK. The other investigators remain still in the darkness. JACK stands up, terrified. He raises his hands. Only THELONIUS can see this, he stands and witnesses the murder unfold like a vision.)

JACK

Who are you?

(The DARK FIGURE enters from stage left, he is masked and partly shrouded in darkness, he raises a snub-nosed revolver to JACK'S chest.)

Wait, I got money! You don't have to do this. Please, I'm begging you.

(JACK, shaking violently, takes out his wallet. He keeps his hand up defensively as if to block the rounds from the revolver.)

Look, here's my wallet.

(JACK tosses the wallet at the DARK FIGURE'S feet. The DARK FIGURE bends to pick up the wallet with one hand, keeping his eyes and his revolver steady on JACK. He tucks it into an interior coat pocket.)

See, and- and there's more, just let me get to an ATM. I can pay you back somehow! It was just a simple fuck up!

(JACK takes out his phone and keys, tossing them at the DARK FIGURE.)

(MORE)

JACK (cont'd)

Here! My keys and- and- you can have my phone. It's the new iPhone X! The password is 6969!

(The DARK FIGURE stomps on the phone and kicks it downstage, it slides over the edge and clatters below the stage. He picks up the keys and puts them in a pocket.)

DARK FIGURE

(Enraged) It doesn't make any difference, Jack! This isn't about money. You fucked up and we don't give second chances!

JACK

Oh, God. Tell them- Tell them I can fix this. Please, I got a wife. I- I've got kids!

(The DARK FIGURE lowers his weapon and laughs, he gestures with the pistol.)

DARK FIGURE

Don't lie to me Jack. You think we don't know everything about you? Your nice penthouse downtown, your cute little girlfriend? Your subscription to Cosmo Magazine?

JACK

That's Rexanne's, not mine!

(The DARK FIGURE quits lulling his weapon about and takes aim at JACK again.)

DARK FIGURE

Lying to me again, Jack? Not a good idea. Not good at all...

(JACK drops to his knees. He starts pleading and groveling.)

JACK

Please, it's mine. I love Cosmopolitan, I take all the quizzes! I'm sorry I lied. You gotta believe me!

DARK FIGURE

Oh, I believe it. Stand up.

(JACK hesitates.)

(Furious) I said STAND UP!

(MORE)



DARK FIGURE (cont'd)  
(JACK stands, his hands held up in  
defense.)

Lower your hands.

(JACK hesitates.)

Don't (Beat) Make me repeat myself.

(JACK slowly lowers his hands to his  
side.)

JACK  
Please. You gotta believe me, it wasn't my fault!

DARK FIGURE  
That's the last lie you're gonna tell tonight.

(The DARK FIGURE steps closer and cocks  
the hammer on the weapon.)

Wait-

JACK

(The DARK FIGURE pulls the trigger. *BANG!*  
JACK falls back to his original  
position. THELONIUS remains centered  
between them, observing silently. The  
DARK FIGURE steps closer to the  
spotlight and crouches a few feet away  
from JACK. The DARK FIGURE is still  
mostly shrouded in darkness. He gestures  
with the revolver. JACK is fighting for  
breath, he clutches his chest.)

DARK FIGURE  
I'm sorry it had to be this way. It was a bad bit of  
business for both parties involved, Jack.

(Beat)

You know what?

(JACK begins to cough.)

I might just have to check in on that pretty girl of yours.  
Maybe she can truthfully answer a few questions for us.

(MORE)

DARK FIGURE (cont'd)  
 (The DARK FIGURE stands and holsters his  
 pistol under his arm.)

Yeah. That sounds like fun. Don't worry. I'll make sure  
 she's taken care of.

(The DARK FIGURE exits. THELONIUS returns  
 to the upstage side of JACK. JACK looks  
 up at him and reaches out with one hand.  
 THELONIUS takes his hand and looks into  
 his eyes.)

JACK  
 (Coughing) Are you? An angel-

(The spotlight slowly dims as the stage  
 lights return to normal. THELONIUS  
 slowly eases him back and carefully  
 rests his hand back to his side. LIGHTS  
 UP.)

MARK  
 Hellloooo? I'm talking to you! Listen hear dickwag, if you  
 think you're gonna boss me around- (Laughing) then you got  
 some balls!

(MARK steps closer to THELONIUS.  
 THELONIUS stands up solemnly.)

THELONIUS  
 (To Alice) Detective Morgan, did you get the address for the  
 victim yet?

ALICE  
 Yes, the desk just sent me the info. We should have our  
 warrant by the time we get there.

THELONIUS  
 Let's get moving.

(THELONIUS walks past KRAVITZ, he starts  
 walking stage right and stops. ALICE  
 continues off stage right.)

(To KRAVITZ) Sergeant Cat-Fish, I'm handing the scene off to  
 you. I need you to clear the scene. Bag and tag all the  
 evidence. Get some people down in that drain. You should  
 find a shattered iPhone. I need you to take it to I.T. and  
 have them download the data. The password is 6969.

BALTO

Nice.

THELONIUS

Balto, as soon as you've conducted the autopsy, get back to me with your findings.

BALTO

Sure thing, T.

(MARK is once again in shock, he looks back and forth, completely dumbfounded. Noire jazz begins to swell.)

(To KRAVITZ) You'd better write that down, Kravitz.

THELONIUS

(Aside) This case had just gotten a whole lot more complicated. We had no time to waste. A woman's life was in danger and only we could put a stop to it. No telling if the killer was there right now! I knew there wasn't a second to lose. Her life was dangling like a pair of dusty Reebok runners from a telephone wire.

(ALICE enters again.)

ALICE

T! Are you coming?

THELONIUS

Right.

(ALICE and THELONIUS exit.)

MARK

Wait... What the fuck just happened? Somebody *please* tell me what in the FUCK just happened! I'm a crime scene photographer. I take pictures. I don't do this cleanup shit.

BALTO

Would you rather be chasing down a cold blooded killer?

MARK

No.

BALTO

Then shuttup and do as you're told.

(The following action should be choreographed: A squad of NYPD in white cleaning suits enter with mops and buckets in hand, they quickly begin scrubbing the blood and picking up evidence markers. BALTO points to JACK as two members of the crew bring a litter and lay it downstage from him. Satisfied, BALTO exits stage right. The pair crouches on either end, each grabbing a few limbs, they count to three and lift the body onto the litter. They then grab the handles of the litter and count to three again and the bottom end drops. They look around to see if anyone witnessed this and shrug. They carry the body off stage right.)

Simultaneously, MARK waves a few more clean suits onstage and gestures to a metal grate on the edge of the stage. One of them lifts it and the other hops down, moments later, an iPhone is raised up to MARK. Astounded, MARK places the iPhone in a clear evidence bag. The member climbs back onto the stage and the grate is carried away. The stage is bare. As the curtain closes the Noir music gets louder.)

END SCENE