

The Blue Djinn

a play in one act
by Tom Rowan

[OPENING SCENE ONLY]

Draft 5: July, 2014

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THE BLUE DJINN was presented July 18-20, 2014, as part of the Fresh Fruit Festival at the Wild Project in New York City, with original music by Martin Hennessy. It was directed by Joshua Warr, with lighting design by Laura Steinroeder; the stage manager was Ashley Hanna, and the cast was as follows:

ALEX	Carrington Vilmont
BLUE	Sean Hankinson

In 2013, the play was seen, in a different production, as part of the Outworks Festival at Louisiana State University.

CHARACTERS:

ALEX: A musician. Early thirties. Tall but slightly built; nervous and sensitive. He's very smart but has a boyish eagerness and awkwardness. He wears eye glasses and a wool sweater over a white T-shirt and khakis.

BLUE: A dancer. Appears to be in his early twenties. Dark-haired and smooth-muscled. He wears a beat-up leather jacket over torn jeans and a tight tank top. He still has a little bit of glitter in his hair.

PLACE: Alex's apartment in Manhattan.

TIME: The present. 4:30 AM.

(A studio apartment in Manhattan. Sparsely furnished: a futon bed, a small couch, an old TV. A corner kitchen area with a small sink and a half-sized refrigerator. At one side there is an electric keyboard with a bench. Through the one window we can see that it's dark out. We hear a key in a lock, then the door opens and bright florescent light pours in from the stairwell. ALEX enters the room and turns on a funky lamp, followed by BLUE, who is limping slightly.)

ALEX

My humble abode. Sorry it's so... humble.

BLUE

I've seen worse. You're very neat. Tidy I mean.

ALEX

Gotta be when there's no space. *(Having closed the door, he eagerly pulls BLUE to him and kisses him on the mouth.)*

BLUE

Um, wow. *(He starts to try to undo ALEX's belt; ALEX pulls away slightly.)*

ALEX

Sorry; was that...?? It's been a long wait.

BLUE

Haven't hooked up in a while?

ALEX

No; I mean, well yeah, that too. But since you had to work till--

BLUE

I know, right? I was afraid you'd give up and go home. Or go find somebody else to--

ALEX

Not likely. You must be exhausted though. Sit down. Do you want something to drink or anything?

BLUE

Maybe just... do you have any orange juice? Does that sound dumb? I mean it's morning, right?

ALEX

Four-thirty almost. *(Getting a glass and pouring juice for BLUE)* I don't know how long it's been since I was at a club till closing time.

BLUE

Believe me it gets old. I'm glad you waited.

ALEX

Can I take your jacket?

BLUE

(Handing him his leather jacket) You may take whatever you want.

ALEX

Uh, okay... So! Are you *sure* you're not a...?

BLUE

A what?

ALEX

You know. This is awkward... I just want to make sure I'm not going to end up having to pay you.

BLUE

Alex, you asked me that already.

ALEX

I know but the... The music was loud. I'm still not sure I heard you correctly...

BLUE

"You could not believe your ears."

ALEX

Something like that, yeah.

BLUE

(Sprawling on the couch.) Not all go-go boys are hustlers, you know.

ALEX

Uh-huh?

BLUE

Some are. But a lot of us have other jobs, careers even. We dance for the extra cash. *(He puts his foot up.)*

ALEX

Are you okay?

BLUE

My ankle is killing me.

ALEX

What happened?

BLUE

Dancing on it for six hours?

ALEX

Sure; right. Do you need... do you want to ice it? Or soak it? I could get...

BLUE

Maybe in the morning. Come kiss me again.

(ALEX sits on the couch and kisses BLUE enthusiastically, if a bit awkwardly.)

BLUE

Are you nervous?

ALEX

However did you guess?

BLUE

How come, baby?

ALEX

I never thought I would be in this situation.

BLUE

You've never invited a guy home before?

ALEX

Not too often. And certainly never somebody like you.

BLUE

Like me?

ALEX

You know what I mean! Guys like me usually stare at guys like you from afar and maybe... stick a five dollar bill in your shorts--or those... harem pants or whatever it was you had on--for like... two seconds of fantasy or whatever. But you stared back!

BLUE

Indeed. I think it was 'cause of the cute way you were rubbing that bottle...

ALEX

I do that when I get nervous. Play with my beer bottle.

BLUE

Bud Light.

ALEX

(*He starts to light a couple of burned down candles in glass holders.*) And it was as if you suddenly appeared. I looked up and there you were and I was like, yeah, he's the one I like. 'Cause on a night when there's lots of dancers you have to decide who your favorite is, right? And you looked... you seemed kinda perfect. And your eyes were nice. Sometimes the eyes aren't nice even when the rest is perfect. And you made eye contact and wouldn't look away.

BLUE

You looked away.

ALEX

Of course I did, it was...! I looked away and then I looked back and you were *still* looking at me! From way up there on your... shelf or whatever. That narrow little platform thingy. Don't you get nervous dancing up there?

BLUE

Why would I?

ALEX

It looks dangerous. I'd be afraid of falling.

BLUE

I always land on my feet. Like a cat.

ALEX

You are like a cat.

BLUE

Oh yeah? In what way?

ALEX

(*Hesitantly stroking BLUE's hair*) Sleek and graceful. And dark and kind of... quiet and mysterious. And beautiful in a sort of ancient way.

BLUE

"Ancient"?!

ALEX

Not ancient like old, ancient like a cat! Like you're descended from a long line of princes or noble deities.

BLUE

I sure like the way you talk.

ALEX

You still have some glitter in your hair.

BLUE

How 'bout we take a shower later and you can wash it out?

ALEX

(Almost laughs) Are you for real?

BLUE

Why wouldn't I be?

ALEX

It's just...! I'm too old for you for one thing. I'm like over thirty! *(BLUE gasps in mock horror.)* I know; people say I look young. Like I'm still in my "awkward years" or whatever. I have the downside of looking young without the good part! I'm all elbows and knees and sometimes even zits and I can't dance.

BLUE

I like the way you dance. And your elbows and knees are nice. There's nothing wrong with the long and lean look. Not everybody has to be muscle-bound.

ALEX

Yeah right. This is HK we're talking. I don't even have a tan, fake or otherwise. I'm all pasty like I spend my life in the library. Which I basically sort of do.

BLUE

So let's see.

ALEX

See what?

BLUE

The pasty white you. You got to stare at me in those skimpy "harem pants" all night and you never even took off your sweater. My turn!

ALEX

Oh jeez.

BLUE

(Tugging playfully at ALEX's sweater) Don't tell me you invited me home and you didn't even plan on taking anything off?

ALEX

You invited yourself, actually. You said, "Can we go to your place?"

BLUE

Right, and you said, "Sure--long pause--I guess." So here we are. I guess.

(ALEX slowly and a little reluctantly pulls his sweater over his head. He has a white T-shirt on underneath.)

BLUE

The T-shirt too. *(Beat)* Alex.

ALEX

Give me time; I do things in stages.

BLUE

Your shoulders are up around your ears. Sit here.

ALEX

What?

BLUE

I'm giving you a back rub. *(ALEX sits on the floor in front of the couch and BLUE starts to massage his back.)* Ease the tension out of those shoulders. Don't worry; I'm good at this. It's a skill I have.

ALEX

Yeah it is.

BLUE

Your shoulders are nice.

ALEX

Too scrawny.

BLUE

I like 'em.

ALEX

So what *do* you do?

BLUE

Your choice.

ALEX

No! *(Laughs uncomfortably)* I mean, what...? You said a lot of the guys who dance have other careers. What do you do during the day?

BLUE

Sleep.

ALEX

Oh no, don't tell me you're a vampire or something.

BLUE

You've been reading too much Anne Rice.

ALEX

Stephenie Meyer, actually. *(Beat)* A guilty pleasure.

BLUE

Don't worry; I'm not a vampire. *(Pause)*

ALEX

Okay, out with it then! What's your true vocation?

BLUE

I don't think you'd believe me.

ALEX

Try me. It couldn't be worse than mine. *(Beat; he gets an idea.)* Uh-oh.

BLUE

What?

ALEX

You do porn, right? I knew it.

BLUE

What? No!

ALEX

Oh please. You said your name was "Blue."

BLUE

It is.

ALEX

That's a porn name if I ever heard one!

BLUE

Nope. Never done a film.

ALEX

So that's just your go-go boy name then?

It's just my name. BLUE

"Blue"?. ALEX

Sure. BLUE

Okay, so what's your *last* name then? Sky? Denim? ALEX

"Blue Denim." I like that. BLUE

Seriously. ALEX

I just go by Blue. (*Smiles mysteriously*) I'm like Prince. Or Madonna. BLUE

Yeah right. Or Lady Gaga. ALEX

Lady Gaga's two names. BLUE

Yeah, but neither one is a last name! It's not like her first name's Lady and her last name's Gaga. ALEX

Point taken. BLUE

And her real name's Stefani Germanotta. ALEX

(*Mock surprise*) Really?? BLUE

So what's *your* real name? ALEX

Blue. (*Pause*) BLUE

ALEX

Well okay then.

BLUE

Is that not enough for you?

ALEX

Oh believe me, you're enough. You're beyond my wildest--

BLUE

And yet you don't trust me.

ALEX

How can you say that? I'm letting you manipulate my shoulders and my back in a way they have... seldom been manipulated. You could probably snap my spine in two like a wishbone if you were so inclined.

BLUE

(Kneading Alex's shoulders gently but firmly) I'm not so inclined.

ALEX

(With a little smile) That feels good.

BLUE

You know what would feel even better?

ALEX

I'm afraid to ask...

BLUE

Lift up your arms. *(He pulls ALEX's T-shirt over his head with a surprise swipe, and continues to massage his bare shoulders.)*

ALEX

Okay, that is better.

BLUE

I wish I knew why you're so tense. You've got knots in your back a boy scout couldn't untie.

ALEX

Were you a boy scout?

BLUE

(Shakes his head) They don't take people like us.

ALEX

Except nobody knows when you're ten years old.

BLUE

I did. *(Still massaging)* Just breathe. Relax. Let yourself flow with the moment.

ALEX

Oh please.

BLUE

You almost said No when I asked if we could come here.

ALEX

I hesitated for all of four seconds.

BLUE

How come?

ALEX

'Cause I don't know.... your last name, for starters. *(Beat)* I don't know! Usually if I've just met someone and he's all "let's go to *your* place," my first thought is to question whether he really wants me.

BLUE

As opposed to...?

ALEX

Wanting a new computer or a new TV! Okay?

BLUE

You call that TV new?

ALEX

(Laughs) Touché.

(BLUE pulls out his wallet and hands ALEX a bill.)

ALEX

What's this?

BLUE

Your five dollars back. Now do you trust me?

ALEX

(Sheepish) I didn't say I didn't trust you.

BLUE

Yeah you did. I'm not a hustler. And I'm not a burglar.

ALEX

I believe you. Really.

BLUE

Though the electric piano is tempting.

ALEX

Shut up. It's ten years old.

BLUE

I *knew* you were a musician. Anybody who knows Lady Gaga's real name...

ALEX

Shut up.

BLUE

Do you write, or just play?

ALEX

I work in a book store; I told you. A little one, downtown.

BLUE

And?

ALEX

And what?

BLUE

(*Kissing ALEX's neck*) What are your dreams?

ALEX

I'm too old to have dreams. I'm working on giving them up.

BLUE

Come on; you said you were thirty!

ALEX

I said *over* thirty.

BLUE

Yeah yeah. Tell me your dreams.

ALEX

(Pause) Okay; I do write music, sometimes. Not nearly as much as I used to.

BLUE

Cool. You got a band?

ALEX

No.

BLUE

Sooo... singer/songwriter?

ALEX

No. More serious stuff.

BLUE

Serious? You mean classical? Like symphonies and piano concertos?

ALEX

Operas, actually.

BLUE

(Amazed) Fuck me!

ALEX

Maybe later.

BLUE

Now you're starting to relax!

ALEX

No, I'm serious. I studied music up in Boston.

BLUE

Have any of your operas been performed?

ALEX

No. I mean, well, little ones have. Like scenes, and a short one-act one I wrote in school. But not the big ones.

BLUE

How many "big ones" have you written?

ALEX

Two. *(Beat)* And a half.

BLUE

Wow.

ALEX

But it's silly to... Can we talk about something else? I don't expect you to be interested in--

BLUE

Why not? Because I dance in a g-string to Kelly Clarkson remixes?

ALEX

No. I just meant most people aren't interested in the kind of stuff I write. It's very... esoteric, I guess.

BLUE

Try me. Sing some of it for me.

ALEX

I can't really sing. I mean, it's written for opera singers with like, huge ranges and stuff.

BLUE

Play some of it on the keyboard then. (*Little boy*) Please.

ALEX

Look, it's too late. I'd wake up the neighbors. This is an old building and the walls aren't... Sometimes I get complaints even when I'm working at five in the afternoon!

BLUE

Okay, okay. Another time, then.

ALEX

What happened to your eye?

BLUE

Still with the personal questions.

ALEX

I mean your cheekbone. There's a bruise. I didn't notice it before.

BLUE

I cover it with makeup when I'm working. Tends to wear off by the end of the night.

ALEX

(*Touching the bruise very carefully with one finger*) Does it hurt?

BLUE

Not when you touch it.

(Brief pause)

ALEX

You don't have to tell me if you don't want to.

BLUE

(Shrugs) The guy I was staying with beat me up. Believe me, it wasn't interesting.

ALEX

(Concerned) Ohmygod.

BLUE

It was getting to be a problem. So I moved out yesterday.

ALEX

Wow. So where are you "staying" now?

BLUE

(Shrugs again) Like I said, I tend to land on my feet.

(ALEX takes BLUE's empty glass and puts it in the sink, then turns back to him.)

ALEX

So... you still haven't answered my question.

BLUE

Which was?

ALEX

What do *you* really do? When you're not dancing?

BLUE

Oh yeah.

ALEX

(Beat) Well?

BLUE

Okay, you asked for it. *(Beat)* I'm a djinn.

ALEX

A what?

BLUE

A djinn.

ALEX

“A gin?” You mean like with tonic?

BLUE

No. (*Spells it out*) D-J-I-N-N. It’s kind of like a genie.

(*Pause*)

ALEX

I don’t get it.

END OF EXCERPT