



HUNGER
BY
NICK GREEN

Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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'Hunger'

A one act stageplay by Nicholas Green

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The characters:

Amo - a revolutionary man

Amou - a revolutionary man

Amoux - a revolutionary man

The set presents a lounge in a palatial stately home in Bourges, France, 1798. There are portraits of nobles, fine chairs and sofas, and expensive ornaments. There is a large locked box on a side table. The box has a prancing unicorn inlaid in fine silver below the lock.

Enter a tall young man - AMO. His clothes are bloody and ragged - as if he has been fighting. He wears a sabre and a dagger on his belt, and carries a flintlock pistol. He has an old leather bag over his shoulder. He lights candles around the room with a flint and cloth lighter. Amo looks around. He likes what he sees. To be in here is a triumph for him. He moves around the room. He admires the pictures and lavish furniture etc.

Then he sees the locked box. He tries to open it; but he can't. He uses his dagger to break the lock apart. He can now open the box. He finds jewels and gems inside it. Excited, he grabs handfuls of jewels and stuffs them into his bag. Footsteps, off, make Amo stop what he's doing. The door opens. Amo quickly shuts the box lid and makes the lock look like it hasn't been broken. He steps away from the box just as a thin young man called AMOU enters. Amou is dressed similarly to Amo. He also carries a sabre, dagger and pistol – and a bag.

AMOU: Saints alive! Forget Versailles. This place is huge! Those bastards could have lived in a different room every day of the year!

AMO: Amou. What did you find?

Amou takes some old bread and meat out of his bag. He hands some to Amo. They choose chairs to sit on like faux aristocrats. They eat as if the bread and meat is a fine banquet.

AMO: Delicious. Thank you my brother.

AMOU: It's a few days old, but edible I think.

AMO: Revolutions are always hungry, no?!

AMOU: Don't talk with your mouth full, Amo. It's vulgar!

AMO: Well that's what we are. Vulgar! That's what this is all about: the rise of vulgarity!

AMOU: Why do you say that?

AMO: So I can talk with my mouth full!

AMOU: This isn't about the rise of vulgarity. It's about the death of privilege and you know it.

AMO: Do I?

AMOU: I thought you did. But 'revolutions are always hungry' ... ?

AMO: Like that idiot said – what is his name? He'll soon be in need of a new head anyway, then he won't need a name! Ah yes. Du Pan. Like toilet pan. Monsieur du Toilette Pan! After the guillotine, we can all use his neck as a toilet!

They laugh madly and eat like hungry dogs.

AMOU: I'll save up my pee!

AMO: Me too! Where's Amoux?

AMOU: I think he's checking out the dearly departed madame's closet, the pervert!

AMO: Well she has no need of it now!

AMOU: But you were saying?

AMO: I think the bread's mouldy.

AMOU: Well there's gratitude. Let us eat cake!

AMO: Now we've eaten the rich, you mean! This is for desert! Bad bread. Yum-yum!

AMOU: But Monsieur du Toilette Pan?

AMO: What about him? You couldn't find any wine?

AMOU: Wine is bourgeois, Amo.

AMO: Well we are in Bourges, my friend.

AMOU: And when in Bourges –

They laugh madly and eat like hungry wolves.

AMO: But delicious, brother.

AMOU: It is, old friend, (*re: the food they eat*) even though past its best –

AMO: A bit like me.

AMOU: Hardly, brother. But we must forget about delicious now, no? The new world order!

AMO: Such as it is ...

AMOU: Don't shock me, Amo. The new world order is here. It's now! It's this!

AMO: Yes. It's mouldy bread and bad meat.

AMOU: Now you really have shocked me. I thought –

AMO: I am. I'm hardcore –

AMOU: And I love you like a brother for it. As does Amoux –

AMO: Where the hell is he anyway?

AMOU: Sniffing death's knickers.

They laugh madly and eat like hungry lions.

AMO: You know I'm hardcore because to me, mouldy bread and dead meat are delicious.

AMOU: Amo. All meat is dead!

AMO: Are you making a philosophic point, brother?

AMOU: No! Merely a point about reality! About abattoirs.

AMO: Places where we turn miracles into meat!

AMOU: And then meat into shit! Yum-yum!

AMO: And what about 'reality'? Don't give me that!

AMOU: Well what else can I give you!? That's what this was all about – no?

AMO: You can give me mouldy bread!

AMOU: I'm trying not to be shocked. Amoux might be shocked, too.

AMO: We should leave some for him.

They set a little bread and meat aside on a table for someone else.

AMOU: Good thinking. Amoux is always hungry.

AMO: Nothing shocks Amoux.

AMOU: That's true.

Amou sees the box with the silver unicorn symbol on the table.

AMO: I meant - when I said, 'Revolutions are always hungry - '

Amo thus succeeds in distracting Amou from the box.

AMOU: What? When did you say that – yesterday?

AMO: Have you gone mad?

AMOU: I thought we all had.

AMO: Now I'm shocked. Me! You think the Revolution is a form of madness? Not some essential thing? The sanest of all things? The most sanitised? A thing that could not be done without? Something vital to the health of mother and father France itself? Do you not think the old order was diseased? My shock grows, Amou. You only said to me last week that you thought the Revolution was like crucial surgery. Pretend there is a sailor on a ship of the line. There has been an altercation with those vile British pigs. The pigs have shot through the hull of our beautiful boat. A dear friend of ours - let's pretend it is Amoux himself -

AMOU: The happy pervert -

AMO: The delirious Amoux! But let us pretend Amoux took shot to the leg from this vile fusillade. The wound this shot caused has now, a few day's clever sailing later and many nautical miles away from these same British pigs, gone septic. What should we do?

AMOU: Find more knickers to sniff!?

AMO: Amou I'm being serious.

AMOU: So am I!

AMO: We must consider whether to try to nurse the leg back to health with a poultice and a compress of sorts, with general ministrations, and the alchemy of medicine - we must decide whether to attempt to heal this gangrene, this rotting flesh, this dogmatic canker - though the stench of it threatens to make us vomit -

AMOU: Please, Amo! My appetite!

AMO: Yes - though the stench of the rot seems now to fill the whole world, indeed the vault of heaven itself seems sullied by it! Do I see angels gagging and running for it - their mouths covered against a rising gorge? I see them! Look, Amou! They are so very pretty!

AMOU: Amo, please! I eat!

AMO: Do we suffer this stench, or do we do what we know must be done?

AMOU: I don't know. If I had only found wine! Did those rich darlings really drink it all before they met Madame Guillotine? I wonder the stuff didn't spray from their suddenly headless throats all over the cheering crowds, and we all got drunk on death puke!

AMO: Amou, please! What do we do? I'll tell you what. We give the poor soul our strength - and yes we give him a swallow of something strong to help him bear it if we have it -

AMOU: If the Revolution hasn't already drunk it all!

AMO: And we hold him down if we must, to stop his thrashing. And then we do what?

AMOU: Oh! 'Revolutions are always ...' Monsieur du Toilette Pan, yes?! He said -

AMO: And then we perform the dreadful surgery. We hack off the putrid limb before the very choke of it poisons the world, the sky, and even up to heaven itself!

AMOU: You meant, when you said, 'Revolutions ...' -

AMO: There is pain, but we can't feel it. There is terror, but we don't know it. The three remaining limbs will mourn the loss of the fourth, surely -

AMOU: You meant what Monsieur du Toilette Pan said -

AMO: But in the end, when all the screaming and bleeding has finished, the body can be healthy again -

AMOU: Because of the Revolution. I see it now so clearly.

AMO: And that's why we have done what we have done, Amou. We have rid France of her rotten limb - in this case, I grant you, the limb was the head, oh yes!

AMOU: And if the head then surely France will now stumble!

AMO: Now I am shocked again, old friend! France shall not now stumble. It was only a metaphor! She shall dance free. She shall stride with purpose! Monsieur Bonaparte -

AMOU: But if she did! If she fumbled around for her head in the basket?

AMO: She shall not find it!

AMOU: And finding it, grasp the bloody apparition by the blood-soaked hair –

AMO: She has no need of it! It was a metaphor!

AMOU: And finding it, fumble the head back upon the shoulders –

AMO: Amou. Shut up!

AMOU: And somehow make it stick.

AMO: Nothing is that sticky! No kind of sap or confection, however sweet -

AMOU: But she might now see again!

AMO: Amou. This is most perilous of you! Do not make me wonder –

AMOU: Wonder if I, too, am hardcore? As hardcore as you, Amo?

AMO: I have faith in you, Amou. I believe –

AMOU: But you are not a child!

AMO: So you say only children

believe? AMOU: In essence, yes.

AMO: And how am I to report this conversation to others? To

Amoux? AMOU: As you will.

AMO: And if I will? What shall I say of brother Amou - that most hardcore of us all - he who swore allegiance to the sacred cause and led the day with revolutionary fire -

AMOU: As you will, Amo. I do not doubt

myself. AMO: Only fools lack doubt.

AMOU: So says the philosopher. The magnificent Amo.