

# The Last Refuge

*A One-Act Drama  
by Robert Joseph Ahola*

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# The Last Refuge

## *Synopsis*

An aspiring actress is having a coffee date with a young man she met online. Unfortunately, as they were sharing insights and information online, he left out a few details from his profile: that he is a Marine, a veteran of the Iraqi War—an officer, a gentleman and a cripple. What's more, he stands for everything she is been brought up to hate.

*1 M/2F*

*Running Time: 30 minutes*

# The Last Refuge

## *Cast of Characters*

**Allison McGill:** An aspiring actress in her early 20s, she is very ambitious and apparently materialistic. She is intelligent, well informed, and politically savvy—or so she believes.

**Michael Revson:** A Marine Corps first lieutenant in uniform. He is in his late twenties, surprisingly articulate, and has a whole laundry list of secrets.

**Ellie:** An attractive waitress nearing thirty, she has basic “street sense” about life.

# The Last Refuge

## *Production Considerations*

The setting is a small sidewalk café and coffee bar. A minimum set is required. There is only one scene.

## *Props and Costume Plot*

**Props.** A table, three chairs, coffee cups, and plates.

**Costume Plot.** Modern fashions for the women. A Marine dress-green officer's uniform for the man.

# The Last Refuge

## Scene 1. A Small Sidewalk Café.

*It is clean but sparse. There is a round tea table with four chairs. A handsome young Marine lieutenant, Revson Thomas, in his late-twenties is waiting patiently, while a young waitress, Ellie, comes to take his order.*

**ELLIE**

Are you sure you don't want to order something. It's been a while.

**REVSON**

No, I'll wait.

**ELLIE**

Your date's running late, huh?

**REVSON**

A woman's prerogative I suppose.

**ELLIE**

Does she do this all the time?

**REVSON**

I don't know I'm meeting her for the first time.

**ELLIE**

Don't tell me...Online dating. Right?

**REVSON**

Something like that...

**ELLIE**

I tried that a couple of times. Total Disaster.

**REVSON**

As Balzac said: Like second marriages. A triumph of hope over experience.

**ELLIE**

Friend of yours?

**REVSON**

Balzac? After a fashion

**ELLIE**

The name sounds like a male medical condition. Or an STD.

**REVSON**

I think he probably had a few.

**ELLIE**

Not somebody I'd like to know.

**REVSON**

Probably not. He's a little old for you anyway.

*(thinks about it)*

You know, I think I will have that coffee. A cappuccino.

**ELLIE**

Weak or strong?

**REVSON**

Why be a wimp? Strong?

**ELLIE**

My kind of guy.

*(Starts to leave.)*

And I've got to say, I think men in uniform look very sexy.

**REVSON**

Thank you.

*Ellie exits stage right. As she does, an attractive twenty-something woman, Allison, enters. She is wearing a stylish fashion jeans, blouse and sweater.*

**ALLISON**

Revson?

*As she approaches the table, Revson rises [with some difficulty].*

Please don't get up.

**REVSON**

Already a done deal, Allison. My dear departed mother would come back to haunt me if I didn't.

**ALLISON**

Revson! Interesting name.

**REVSON**

My mother had a crush on the founder of Revlon, Charles Revson. I think she wanted to marry him and have him take care of her in the manner to which she was accustomed.

**ALLISON**

Well, I'm a bit too liberated for that. I didn't know you were in the...marines? Your profile said nothing about that. You weren't in that awful war in Iraq were you?

**REVSON**

I'm afraid so.

*He holds her chair as they sit.*

**ALLISON**

Well, that's ironic. I just came from an audition for a supporting role in a film called Inertia, about an Iraqi war veteran who turns to a life of crime.

**REVSON**

Not my intention, I assure you.

**ALLISON**

That New Italian director, Molinetti, is doing this. And it's being shot in New York in May. It's about this Marine officer who ends up running a crime syndicate using war veterans as hit men.

**REVSON**

*(thinks about it)*

Trained killers. Of course.

**ALLISON**

Well it's a crime that we're over there at all. I mean, my God! What we've done to the people in that country. We shouldn't even be there.

**REVSON**

Beg to differ.

**ALLISON**

I mean, my God! We invaded a sovereign nation! How many thousands of people have we killed? Thousands! Tens of thousands! And it was all about oil. You know it, and I know it!

**REVSON**

Beg to differ.

**ALLISON**

Well, is this some kind of bait and switch? You're not at all who I thought you'd be. I mean, your profile on matchmaker.com was so cute and clever. And you didn't say anything about being in the military.

**REVSON**

I'm not...technically.

**ALLISON**

But you're wearing a uniform. You're a what?

**REVSON**

A First Lieutenant.

**ALLISON**

An officer and gentleman.

**REVSON**

Some would debate that.

**ALLISON**

You're not one of those career types.

**REVSON**

Not any more.

**ALLISON**

Then why the uniform? Don't tell me. It's the Oliver North thing. Isn't it?

**REVSON**

Oliver North?

**ALLISON**

When he got indicted for sabotage, cover-ups and destroying government documents, he was in deep shit. So he wore his major's uniform.

**REVSON**

*(corrects)*

Lieutenant Colonel's.

**ALLISON**

Sorry...Lieutenant Colonel's uniform to announce his patriotism and "duty" as a loyal soldier when he was nothing more than a thief and a lawbreaker. Underscoring Samuel Johnson's saying...

**REVSON**

*(ruminates)*

Samuel Johnson...

**ALLISON**

That, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel."

**REVSON**

I know the quote...Interesting coming from a fat old drunk with gout who never served any cause but single-handedly supporting the gin mills of London.



**ALLISON**

Meanwhile, he did manage to compile and assemble the first complete English Language Dictionary.

**REVSON**

Then he should have learned the meaning of the word, patriot.

**ALLISON**

Apparently, he did.

**REVSON**

“We see the world, not as it is, but as we are...”

**ALLISON**

Anais Nin!

**REVSON**

I think St. Peter said it first, in 1 Corinthians: “We see ourselves through a glass darkly...” Same sentiment. But then, all things are derivative.

**ALLISON**

Well, at least you’re not as sub-literate as most military men I’ve met.

**REVSON**

And you’re not as stupid as most liberals.

**ALLISON**

Well, thank you.

**REVSON**

Well, aren’t we a pair? Can’t you just feel the love filling up the room?

**ALLISON**

Fortunately, we’re outdoors.

*The Waitress brings the cappuccino, pausing as she does. Finally, she sets the coffee down.*

**ELLIE**

I hate to interrupt. You two seemed to be hitting it off so well.

*Finally, setting the coffee down, she turns to Allison.*

May I bring you something?

**ALLISON**(*deciding*)

You know, I don’t think so.

*(to Revson)*

I think we got started off on the wrong foot. And I’m sorry but I don’t see that there’s any place to go with this. You know I just came on this coffee date because my girlfriends thought it would be a good idea to meet new people.

Recent breakup?  
**REVSON**

Yeah.  
**ALLISON**

**REVSON**  
Me too. Want to commiserate over a coffee?

**ALLISON** *(to the Waitress)*  
Well, why not? Giant cappuccino. Leaded.

**REVSON**  
That's what I ordered. Here take mine.  
*He slides it across, turning to Ellie.*  
Bring me another, Ellie? Ellie, right?

**ELLIE**  
Yes, how did you know?

**REVSON**  
*(He points.)*  
That little thing called your nametag.

**ELLIE** *(looks down at it, blushing)*  
Oh, how embarrassing.

**REVSON**  
Don't be. I'd know you anywhere.  
*(Touched she steps away. Allison turns to Revson.)*

**ALLISON**  
Well, aren't you a glib little sucker?

**REVSON**  
To make someone feel better about themselves? Not much.

**ALLISON**  
Try it on me. It might even work.

**REVSON**  
Well, you're an actress. Fake it.

**ALLISON**  
What's my motivation?

**REVSON**  
Money! Fame. Anyway, I suppose I'm not what you were looking for.

**ALLISON**

Not exactly.

**REVSON**

Don't tell me, your ex boyfriend was a film producer.

**ALLISON**

Yep.

**REVSON**

Fairly well connected, no doubt.

**ALLISON**

Yes. Is it that obvious?

**REVSON**

Not a hard town to figure out, once you learn the rules.

**ALLISON**

And you know the rules for show business? At your tender age?

**REVSON**

If you're an actress the clock is ticking the minute you decide. You're too young for much of your career. Then suddenly you're too old. Most ambitious young actresses try to take a shortcut. They better-deal their way up the ladder until they meet a producer or director who better deals them with another actress or agent or publicist who's further up the food chain.

**ALLISON**

Something like that.

**REVSON**

So, are you an actress?

*(He hooks his fingers in quotation)*

Or are you an "actress?"

**ALLISON**

You're hooking your fingers like you think I'm faking it. What the hell do you know about who I am?!

**REVSON**

I'm just asking.

**ALLISON**

Like an inquisition!

**REVSON**

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to sound accusatory.

**ALLISON**

But cynical...

**REVSON**

I guess I've gotten that way. Anyway, it's a tough career path you've chosen.

**ALLISON**

Anything is that's worthwhile...

**REVSON** (*trying to change the subject*)

It's just that I grew up in LA, and I've seen this all my life. Most people don't take their craft seriously. They play at being professionals but don't really commit to the professionalism.

**ALLISON**

And you're an expert?!

**REVSON**

I was a film major at UCLA before I got into this. Won a couple of festival awards.

*(Overhearing, the Waitress brings up the cappuccino and sets it down in front of Revson.)*

**ELLIE**

Are you two in film? You know I'm just doing this part time. I've got a headsheet and resume. I've actually done four features and some commercials. But you know, with the economy...

**ALLISON**

Believe me, I understand. Well, bring it by. I'd like to see it.

**ELLIE**

Great! Maybe we could exchange numbers. I'm looking for a new agent right now if you know one.

**ALLISON**

I might.

**ELLIE**

Great!

*Ellie departs. Revson and Allison look at one another and start to laugh.*

**ALLISON**

I see what you mean.

**REVSON**

Yeah, well... That was very kind of you.

**ALLISON**

We're all just one break away from the big time. Besides, she might be good. She might be very good.

**REVSON**

I try not to judge.

**ALLISON**

But you do.

**REVSON**

I just have my theories.

**ALLISON**

About actors in particular. And, by the way, I'm not an actress. I'm an actor. I thought we all got that gender crap out of the way decades ago.

**REVSON**

Americans are the only people in the world who consider the feminization of anything to be an evil. Are you ashamed of being a woman?

**ALLISON**

Certainly not.

**REVSON**

Then you shouldn't be ashamed of being an actress. Then again, most women who claim to be actresses aren't. Of course, I don't know who you are.

**ALLISON**

No you don't. It just so happens that I have an MFA in drama. I write and direct and have studied at Stella Adler and the Actor's Studio! So don't tell me I'm not a serious actor!

**REVSON**

Of course you are. And if I'd known you were an actress, I never would have come on this date.

**ALLISON**

And I never would have come if I'd known you were a trained killer! How does it feel to go into a profession where you murder innocent civilians?

**REVSON** (*grows reflective*)

It's not easy. There's never a simple answer.

**ALLISON** (*gaining momentum*)

How does it feel to be in a profession where you invade a sovereign nation under completely false pretexts, where you bomb its cities and blow up schools and hospitals and mosques in the process?

**REVSON**

Keep going, you're on a roll here.

**ALLISON**

And for what? To take over a country whose people don't even want you there? God! It's enough to make me ashamed of being an American.

**REVSON**

"And the idiots who, with loud enthusiastic tone,  
Praise all centuries but this, every nation but their own!"

**ALLISON**

Clever.

**REVSON**

Gilbert and Sullivan. From the Mikado. But it's true!

**ALLISON**

It's not true. You're just deluding yourself into thinking it's true. I had a great uncle who was a Navy pilot in World War II. He shot down what...22 Zeros? When someone asked him how it felt to be such a decorated hero, he refused to talk about it. I remember he said: "Killing anyone is the lowest form of human endeavor." And that was in World War II. "The last moral war."

**REVSON**

I agree with your uncle.

**ALLISON**

Don't get me wrong. I love my country.

**REVSON**

Glad to hear it.

**ALLISON**

I remember 9-11—that sad and terrible time. I was just in high school at the time, but I remember the strange flavor of love and fear all mixed together. We went to church [and we never went to church]! And we flew flags. And we never flew flags. It was all strange and beautiful, but sad. And yet we were all one family.

**REVSON**

We still are. It's just that some of us have forgotten. I remember all those little flags—the red, white and blue. They reminded me of tiny prayers, all sent up in some vain attempt to reclaim our innocence. Something I knew we'd never get back again. I remember thinking war was the worst thing I could imagine one human being doing to another.

**ALLISON**

Yeah, but here you are. Not only a warrior but a Marine. A Marine officer—Gung Ho! What did you do?

**REVSON**

Forced reconnaissance. Re-con.

**ALLISON**

Oh my God! You were the killer elite! And fighting for what? For a President who lied, who betrayed everything 9-11 stood for—who fabricated information and duped congress into voting for a war that nobody else was for. He ought to be tried for treason.

**REVSON**

He made a mistake!

*(He thinks about it)*

Hell, he made a couple.

**ALLISON**

George W. Bush is a war criminal!

**REVSON**

He was my President.

**ALLISON**

Oh, God! You're one of those! I suppose you hate Obama!

**REVSON** *(grows calmer as she grow more intense)*

He's my President too. I'm not a President basher. I'm always amazed that 'We the People' vote a man into office to do the most difficult job in the world and then spend the next four to eight years pounding him with hate bombs. God, the psychic impact alone is enough to age a man.

**ALLISON** *(Reciting)*

"Theirs not to make reply.  
Theirs not to reason why.  
Theirs but to do and die!"

**REVSON**

Something like that...

**ALLISON**

The dutiful soldier...So, are you a man or a German Shepherd?! Or do they just sort of brainwash you? That's got to be hard for a woman to deal with. Is that why your girlfriend left you? She probably couldn't put up with the party line militaristic bullshit!

**REVSON**

That's not why...we split up.

**ALLISON**

Split up! Did you split up, or did she dump you?! I mean, it's okay! I just got dumped.

She cried.

**REVSON** (*remembering*)

I bet she did!

**ALLISON**

Shit, we both cried...

**REVSON**

**ALLISON**  
No doubt! What the hell were you thinking? Won't you men ever understand what you put your women through?!

**REVSON**  
Let's change the subject. Okay?

**ALLISON**  
Okay! I guess I can see why!

**REVSON**  
Let's talk about something else.

**ALLISON**  
Like what?! Maybe you need to look at this. Maybe you need to look what you've done with the choices in your life!

**REVSON** (*Grows reflective*)  
I have. Trust me, I have.

**ALLISON** (*relents a bit*)  
No doubt your heart was in the right place. But you ended up participating in war crimes! We've all seen the films—soldiers blowing up innocent civilians. Marines raping Iraqi women.

**REVSON**  
So rare! So out of the ordinary! Take a few isolated incidents and run and rerun them on YouTube. Then judge the whole campaign by the minuscule horror.

**ALLISON**  
A campaign built on lies! So, you were a patriotic fool.

**REVSON**  
And you are a "Useful Idiot."

**ALLISON**  
There's that word again; interesting turn of phrase.

**REVSON**  
Not mine. They come from a man named Nicolai Lenin.



**ALLISON**

Okay, Lenin! The father of the Communist Party. Here we go!

**REVSON**

Lenin once said: “Whenever we want to advance our cause, there will always be Useful Idiots in the West to help us.”

**ALLISON**

The only problem is that today we “Useful Idiots” have a tool called television, digital cameras, digi-phones, YouTube and a thousand other means of rooting out the truth—as it happens. So everything you do is on television. It’s called complete transparency.

**REVSON**

What you have is virtual truth! What you have is reporters for Reuters, AP and The Times and the Washington Post getting drunk in hotel bars in Baghdad and Beirut, texting some Iraqi field op when they need a juicy story three degrees of separation away from the actual event and then emailing into headquarters some made-up fairy tale as their version of the truth! It’s all a fiction!

**ALLISON**

Oh, bullshit!

**REVSON**

Useful Idiots! You think you know about life because you watch it on Television! I’ve been there. I’ve lived it!! I saw them doing just that.

**ALLISON**

Did you even see combat?

**REVSON**

*(remembering)*

Too much of it.

**ALLISON**

Did you kill anybody?! How many did you kill?!

**REVSON**

My share.

**ALLISON**

You’re so cavalier about it. My God, but you’re cold blooded!

**REVSON**

You get that way...when you see what I’ve seen.

**ALLISON**

And what did you see?! Where were you?

**REVSON**

Fallujah.

**ALLISON**

Fallujah! Oh, my God! That poor beautiful city that we pounded into rubble!  
Were you one of those who fired on that innocent crowd of protestors?

*(At this point, Revson seems to grow calmer as Allison becomes more impassioned with every statement she makes.)*

**REVSON**

The Jihadists were firing from the crowd. They were using them as a shield.

**ALLISON**

Oh, Christ! That's such a bullshit excuse.

**REVSON**

They were firing from the minarets in the mosque. They were using the mosque as a shield....

**ALLISON** *(disbelieving)*

Here we go...

**REVSON**

And schools as shields and hospitals as shields and women and children as shields.

**ALLISON**

Excuses! You killed innocent people!

**REVSON**

I don't know. I hope not.

**ALLISON**

But you probably did!

**REVSON**

I don't know. I ordered artillery strikes. I called in air strikes. War has a very broad blanket.

**ALLISON**

How can you live with yourself?!

**REVSON**

Because we did the right thing! Because I know we did the right thing!

**ALLISON**

How can you even sit there and say that?!

**REVSON** (*finally loses it and explodes*)

Oh, shut up! Just shut up and listen!! I understand that facts to a liberal are like Kryptonite to Superman, but try and listen anyway!

*Allison goes quiet, and Revson collects himself.*

I don't know whether Saddam Hussein had WMDs or not. But trust me, he was trying. Here was a man who gassed half of a million of his own people, who invaded another sovereign nation in 1991 and was crafting scores of chemical bombs. A man with a gangster regime that was conspiring with every known terrorist group in the world; a gangster who invaded other sovereign nations and would do so again, if given half the chance! Yes, we should never have disbanded the Iraqi military and sent them home. But we were led by buffoons like Donald Rumsfeld who was even hated by his own generals. And as Sun Tzu said, all battles are won or lost before they're ever fought.

*His candor surprises her to silence.*

I don't know how many mistakes were made. Probably thousands before I got there. All we could do was work with what we had. By then we'd lost Fallujah, and it had been taken over by radical Jihadists, Al Qaeda in particular.

**ALLISON**

But they weren't there to begin with!

**REVSON**

I wasn't there to assess cause. We had inherited effect. It was all I could do to understand it. I was a platoon commander with RCT-1.

**ALLISON**

RCT?

**REVSON**

Regimental Combat Team-One. All I can remember coming through on the first day was the bodies on the side of the road.

**ALLISON**

From combat. Jesus!

**REVSON** (*correcting*)

Executions mostly. Any man left in the city was dragooned into service by the insurgents. If they didn't go along or if they were deemed incompetent or thought to be spies, they just took them out to the edge of town and shot them in the back of the head. We tried to clear the bodies, but more often than not they were booby-trapped with I.E.D.s so they'd blow up whoever tried to move them.

**ALLISON**

I.E.D.s?

**REVSON**

Improvised explosive devices. Bombs made with everything from old car parts to used grenade fragments. We found them everywhere—cars, houses, corpses, women's vaginas, candy wrappers. Mostly they were lobbed into our compound at Camp Fallujah.

**ALLISON**

Fired into your compound...

**REVSON**

Sometimes as many as twenty or thirty a day launched from moving positions. Maybe only one in five would explode, but each one had to be defused. It was like carrying death around in your hip pocket every day. We were fixed targets—sitting ducks really.

*As he talks, she stirs and sips.*

I remember one night, a new squad of recruits came in and had to billet in a tent inside the quadrangle. They'd just unloaded their duffels and equipment when a round dropped in and blew the tent to bits.. They were just babies—barely twenty most of them. They never even got unpacked.

*He starts to break but looks away, then back to her.*

I ran up to help the medics and remember holding one kid together. But he'd been blown nearly in half. I swear I could see his soul leave his body. 26 grams! It's that look they give you right before you go. It's a kind of resignation—neither love nor hate nor fear nor hope—the soul just withdraws. It leaves a hollow place inside you.

**ALLISON***(shudders involuntarily)*

God! It sounds awful!

**REVSON**

You get used to it. And yet you never get used to it. Instead, something inside you dies.

**ALLISON**

How many men did you lose?

**REVSON** *(corrects)*

And women...I don't know exactly—dozens from my regiment, hundreds in Fallujah alone. Thousands in Iraq, wounded or K.I.A.

**ALLISON**

K.I.A.?

**REVSON**

Killed In Action.

**ALLISON**

And the innocent civilians killed in the cities? In Fallujah?! What about the women and children?

**REVSON**

Most of the women and children were evacuated long before that. Those that remained were usually killed—by the Jihadists...along with the homeless and those too poor to leave.

**ALLISON**

And none by you?

**REVSON**

You speak with emotion, but not one fact. Let me tell you what really happened.

**ALLISON**

I know what happened!

**REVSON**

No you don't know you don't! You see some manufactured newsclip on MSNB or CNN and are naïve enough to think they got it right. They didn't. They weren't even there. They were on some street twenty miles from any event with a made-up script that has no basis in truth. So listen!

*(His passion startles her. She visibly rocks back.)*

**ALLISON**

Okay! Okay! You're dedicated. I get it!

**REVSON** *(collects himself)*

When I first got to Fallujah, I was amazed at the number of dead bodies left on the side of the road as we drove out. I only found out later they were executions. Some of them were women who couldn't get out in time—what the Jihadists called 'honor killings' because the women who no longer had men or families were believed to be unclean—prostitutes, lower than filth. So they raped them and killed them, or just took them to the side of the road and shot them in the back of the head. I saw women and children with arms missing or hands or fingers missing on their hands and found out later that this was the way Al Qaeda treated women and children who were "disobedient" or who they felt needed discipline. Remember, a woman in Sharia Law is considered one fourth of a man, and therefore has no social value and no worth other than their utility for food, bearing children and sex. And God help the children—particularly the female children. They're less than human.

**ALLISON**

That can't be true. That is too horrible to be true.

**REVSON**

When we launched Operation Phantom Fury in the winter of 2004 to take back Fallujah City, we fought the insurgents from house to house. The firefights were intense. It went on for days.

**REVSON** *(Continuing/Haunted.)*

Some of the houses we took over had chains on the walls in the bedrooms. When I asked one of the local militia what they were, he explained that that's what some of the fundamentalists did to discipline the women and children. They would chain them to the walls and starve them, beat them, maim them or worse.

**ALLISON** *(horrified)*

You can't tell me that's what they did!

**REVSON**

You're expecting sanity from the world outside. You have no idea. Let me tell you, something! When you shoot your way into a house in Fallujah and you see that the men you just killed or driven off had been playing cards on the body of a dead naked woman, you change forever. It kills every last vestige of innocence inside you! They had been using her as a card table!

**ALLISON**

And what did you do?

**REVSON**

From that point on I felt like I was fumigating for cockroaches. I was in the extermination business. These people weren't human! They were insects.

**ALLISON** (*visibly balks, assessing him*)

...You know...I don't believe you. I've known you for fifteen minutes, and I don't think you're like that. I don't believe you were ever like that. You may not be my kind of guy, Revson, but you're not an animal.

**REVSON**

Nice of you to notice...

**ALLISON**

I know human nature. You're not a mean person. But there is a note of deep sadness around you. It's like a shroud. I can't see it, but I can feel it.

**REVSON**

It's funny. You called me a German shepherd earlier. Some people who get into this are. The rest of us are idealists—even romantics. We've been imbued with the notion that democracy is the desired nature of man. You don't always come out feeling that way. It's a pretty primitive ugly place out there.

**ALLISON**

And yet you did it anyway. You can't force feed a culture, Revson. None of us can.

**REVSON**

People don't realize anything about what we did in Iraq. Or what we went through. They're just too far removed from it to understand.

**REVSON**(*Continuing*)

Did you know that, when we shot and wounded a captured Al Qaeda combatant, we had to make sure that their wounds were tended before we took care of our own? Those were standing orders. Those were the dictates of combat. Even though more than half the Jihadists were dropped in from Jordan or Yemen or Syria or Iran, they had priority over our own people.

**ALLISON**

No, I didn't know.

**REVSON**

I remember after a firefight I had to call in a MEDIVAC for one of our own and two of theirs. And I personally tried to treat one of the insurgents. [And I was certain it was my round that had caught him.] He was gushing blood from his chest, so I tore open his top and put a compress on until the corpsman could come. And he just lay there looking up at me. No hate, no fear, just confusion—I think he was confused at the show of humanity. And I looked down at that young face; couldn't have been more than 17 or 18. He could have been my kid brother...hell he was my brother. We're all brothers, you know...

*He breaks and starts to weep.*

And all I could think of was that here was a kid who never had an education, who grew up being pumped full of some ridiculous brutal mythology that convinced him he could die a glorious death by blowing up the infidel!

**ALLISON**

So what happened?

**REVSON**

I tried to save him, but he died before the MEDIVAC team arrived. And all he could do was look up at me like some lost dog, spitting up blood and crying out Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar! "My God is Greatest!"

**ALLISON**

He died fighting for his country.

**REVSON**

Actually, it wasn't. He was Yemeni. I could tell by the red keffiyeh he was wearing. Jesus! He was just a baby! But then ignorance knows no generation...

**ALLISON**

I'm sorry. I know you feel deeply about this. But I'll just never understand. Even if everything you did was right, the minute we leave there Iraq will go back to the primitive, radical fundamentalist culture it was, and worse. Women will still have no rights. Democracy will have no chance. And tens of thousands of people will have lost their lives. And nothing will change. Nation building for what?! For the crazies of the world?! It ain't gonna happen! It's pearls before swine!

**REVSON**

God, I hope you're wrong. No. I know you're wrong! We may not have gone in for the right reasons, but we stayed for the right reasons. Let me tell you, when I went to muster out, the day I was leaving one of the local Iraqi officials came up to me with tears in his eyes and said, "Thank you for giving us back our country. Thank you!" When my regiment was leaving Fallujah, after retaking the city, some women came rushing up to us grabbing onto our legs, begging us not to leave, begging us not to let things go back to the way they were.

**ALLISON**

And yet you know they will. What are the odds...really? Come on. I mean, it's okay for you. You leave a hero. A career ahead of you, a chest full of fruit salad—I mean, look at those medals! What are they?

**REVSON**

Campaign ribbons. A Bronze Star with Clusters. Silver Star...

**ALLISON**

A War hero! See! Although I have to admit, I've never understood medals really. You get awards for killing people.

**REVSON**

Not all. Some for saving people. Some for being wounded in combat. I have a Purple Heart too.

**ALLISON**

So you were wounded.

**REVSON**

Yes, I was.

**ALLISON**

But you're okay now.

**REVSON**

*(takes a deep breath)*

I'm alive.

**ALLISON**

Alive and well. Apparently...

**REVSON**

Appearances can be deceiving. You acted surprised that I met you in my uniform. You want to know the reason? It was my last day as a Marine. I was mustering out of the Corps. Discharged for medical reasons, and I just wanted to wear it one last time.

**ALLISON**

How does it feel?

**REVSON** *(Smiles thoughtfully)*

Practical. I also wore my uniform because it's one of the few things I can wear in this weather where the scars don't show.

**ALLISON**

I didn't know.

**REVSON**



You see, lady, I got my ass shot off—literally. Oh, they grafted skin from the back of my legs to make repairs, but in the process I had to get reconstructive surgery on the entire back half of my body. And the reason I broke up with my girlfriend? One of the little perks from all this was a total loss of reproductive sperm. Meanwhile, they tell me I'm a PTSD—"Post Traumatic Stress Disorder." But they stop counseling after five sessions.

**ALLISON**

I'm so sorry.

**REVSON**

Oh, I'm still sexual, as it were. But I'm sterile. I'll never be able to provide my seed to a woman. I'll never have sons. And she wanted children.

**ALLISON**

Thank God you've gotten good care. At least you have that.

**REVSON**

Not really. The Veterans Administration is virtually bankrupt. V.A. hospitals do what they can. Government cutbacks have pretty well taken away most of the things they can offer to us. Enlisted men really get a short shrift. And the Military pensions to the families of the K.I.A. are a joke.

**ALLISON**

But you're an officer.

**REVSON**

It doesn't matter. Eventually, we all end up in the same place. They pump us full of psychotropic drugs and kick us to the curb. Funny isn't it? We can send billions in relief to New Orleans or Bangladesh or Haiti. But we can't scrounge up enough money to give our wounded vets decent medical treatment. It sucks! The whole thing sucks!

**ALLISON**

And here you are! A faithful son of America to the last. You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din! Jesus! How do you do it?!

**REVSON**

I don't know. I remember what my parish priest once told me. "Revvie, my lad," he told me in that Irish brogue of his. "Remember! 90% of the world is stark raving mad, and the rest is teetering on the brink."

**ALLISON**

I think he's right.

**REVSON**

Maybe...it's my obligation to that noble 10%. You know, you said something earlier—that patriotism is "the last refuge of the scoundrel..." I think of it as something else. Maybe it's the last refuge of the civilized man... Maybe I choose to believe that by trying to bring sanity to the rest of the world, we can turn that

light on somewhere...somehow! If we don't do it, who? If we didn't do it before, there would still be a Berlin Wall. The Soviet Union would still hold the Ukraine and Georgia and Hungary and Bulgaria and Romania and Poland under its iron fist. South Korea would now be a satellite of North Korea. And Kuwait would have been annexed by Iraq. The world stood by while China devoured Tibet, while the USSR brutalized Afghanistan, while the military junta overthrew the legitimate regime of Burma and created the terror state of Myanmar. The Muslim warlords in Sudan rape and butcher entire villages in Darfur, and all we give is aid and sympathy. And yet everyone came down on NATO and the U.S. for not going into Kosovo soon enough and letting hundreds of thousands of Muslims be slaughtered in ethnic cleansings. So it all depends upon what's popular in the court of world opinion, and what is not. Meanwhile, centrifuges in North Korea and Iran are multiplying like gerbils. The world is being taken over by madmen. And the clock is ticking. Winston Churchill was right: "Tyranny is hungry dog that is always on the prowl..." Let the word go out to the halls of men that the bitch who bore him is in heat again!"

*Allison's cell phone rings, and she jumps on it. She holds up a finger, checking.*

**ALLISON**

Sorry...

*She answers.*

Yes Jake! No love, I was just finishing up. Callbacks tomorrow 8:30 a.m. So-o-o looking forward to it! I have a whole new perspective on this, I can tell you. Ohh, I'm so-o-o-o excited!  
Mwaah!! Bye love!

*She air kisses the telephone.*

*She clicks off and turns back to Revson*

That was my agent. I have a call back tomorrow!! So I've got to prep...

**REVSON**

Congratulations...

*She gets up to leave. He slowly rises to join her.*

**ALLISON**

Listen, I'm sorry. This was...certainly different. And you're a good person, Revson. I believe that. But I think you're still a little caught up in this Iraqi war thing. And frankly, I don't think you're ready to start dating yet, you know? I think you might even need some counseling. This is a tough thing you just got through. And I appreciate what you've...tried to...do. I do. But take it easy for a while. I mean, why are you trying to do this now?

**REVSON**

I don't know. Maybe it's so I can still see if I'm attractive to a woman. Maybe it's to feel somehow that I'm still valuable as a human being.

**ALLISON**

You are. Of course you are. Let's have coffee again sometime. And catch up.

*Patronizing she gives him a hug and a pat on the back.*

I've got to run now.

*She pauses to regard him.*

Good luck, Revson. And I mean it.

*Allison exits stage left. Revson stays standing, reaches in his pocket and puts his money down. Ellie, the waitress, comes up.*

**ELLIE**

Well, that was intense. Are you okay? I couldn't help but overhear... part of it anyway.

**REVSON**

I'm fine, Ellie. Thank you.

*He reaches over for a cane on the other chair.*

**ELLIE**

You need some help getting that?

**REVSON**

No. I'm okay. I won't need this much longer. I've got a job interview in a couple of weeks. And I'm going to make sure I won't need it when I do.

**ELLIE**

Really? So what are you going to do?

**REVSON** *(Thinks about it.)*

A mentor of mine once said that there are two deaths. The second, when you actually die is the easiest. The first comes when a man finds out that he is no longer relevant. So...

*(He smiles to himself.)*

I'm going to go out and prove that I'm still relevant.

**ELLIE**

Well maybe you'll get back into film. I mean you won some awards, right? Make a movie about your war experiences. Wow! What a story that would be! Just have a good woman's role in it—maybe one of the wives.

**REVSON** *(ponders the irony)*

Yeah...maybe so. Maybe you're right.

*He gives Ellie a kiss on the cheek and starts to leave. She hands him her card.*

**ELLIE**

That's my number. Whenever things clear up for you.

**REVSON**

Thank you.

*Revson, using his cane, exits stage left. Ellie goes to clean up when her cell phone rings. She pulls it out.*

**ELLIE**

Talk to me...Weird! Yeah, I know. It's been the weirdest day! Must be something in the air. Mercury in retrograde. Yes a movie. Yea!!! Something fun. No not that. That's that war movie! Too depressing. Yes, milk duds and mindless diversion. That's the ticket... Twilight!

*Curtain*