

The BOSTON STRONGARM

A Comic Book Written for the Stage

MATTI PAASIO



MERC A DIEU

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For the Boston Five

While the *adat* and the collective wisdom of the elders are important, though, these are forever in tension with an egalitarian, competitive and aggressive spirit of adventure and independence.

MARK GALEOTTI,
Russia's Wars in Chechnya 1994 – 2009

Wherein, as in a mirror, may be seen
His honour, that consists in shedding blood
When men presume to manage arms with him.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE,
Tamburlaine the Great I

CHARACTERS

- D. "DEE" MURRAY A man in his late forties.
- CASTING DIRECTOR (CD) "EDDIE" A woman in her early thirties.
- RAMZAN "RAM DASS" KADYROV A son in his mid-forties.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The action takes place in a looking-glass world. Reader's right is "left" in the text, and vice versa. But "upstage" is in its proper place—away from the audience—and "downstage," in your face.

The author claims no responsibility for the confusion. As Samo says, it's the same old story since the world began. Convention is the culprit.

We can blame Beckett, so I suggest that we do. The Beckett Estate, they know not what they are doing. Like Lynyrd Skynyrd, but way worse—the Estate's ban on improvisation destroys the life's work of somebody else.

Then again, maybe that's what Samuel wanted, stirring still. So screw him. Study the lives of King A instead. Read Rimbaud the White Moor, and learn.

Yes, the note: I haven't forgotten and am getting there

An exclamation point at the end of a sentence indicates emphasis. It doesn't mean that the person delivering the line has to shout. Not every time, anyway. Let the music roar.

ONE

CD is standing in the middle of a desert with a whip in her hand. MURRAY is running around her counterclockwise. CD is addressing the AUDIENCE.

CD

Ladies, and all. For those about to clock—we salute you.

(MURRAY stops and makes a quick Nazi salute in the general direction of the AUDIENCE. He hurries off.)

He's kidding, of course. He's no Nazi. I mean, as Gaia is my witness. One word: Antifa. He's testing you. Seeing how woke you are.

MURRAY

And you fail miserably.

CD

O significant other! Yeah, I'm talking to you. The downtrodden, you!

(Singing)

Hey, you've got to put your phone away.

(Alarmed, MURRAY stops running.)

Don't be afraid! You're not missing anything. It's happening right here, right now! Soon, anyway. We have an important announcement to make.

MURRAY

We do.

CD

We bring breaking news for ya. A story straight from the IRA—

MURRAY

And we know what you're thinking.

CD

You're thinking *Hunger*.

MURRAY

You're thinking the film.

CD

The Steve McQueen "masterpiece."

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Not that, though. Steve McQueen the actor, no. What you should be thinking is the Artist, the Director—

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Black Jesus. And you'd be wrong.

MURRAY

Not him. Not them.

CD

Terrorists, no.

MURRAY

The Irish. No dogs. No—

CD

A bad bunch. So wrong.

MURRAY

The dustbin of history, where they belong.

CD

Russians we're talking about. Ta-da! There it is: the Russian IRA.

MURRAY

Seems they got one, too.

CD

Called the Internet Research Agency.

MURRAY

Or whatever. Fake news—

CD

Also known as the Troll Factory.

MURRAY

Sounds like fake news to me.

CD

To you—Dog the Corrupt? What a fucking surprise.

MURRAY

It is possible. It is! What if—

CD

You lush!

MURRAY

It's not them, it's us?

CD

Oh, absolutely. Let's take a long, hard look at ourselves, shall we?
The Deep State deep fake, whatever you say. Now they say, down
at the Troll Factory, they say the FSB—feel me?

MURRAY

Their intelligence agency.

CD

FSB? The successor to the KGB—

MURRAY

That carried the torch of the NKVD. Stalin's secret police, you
know. Lenin's too, initially—and brutal too, not just secret. Of
course it'd be brutal, what with that bubbly psychopath Beria at
the helm—

CD

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MP