

Leap of Faith

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MUSIC CAN BE HEARD IN THE DARKNESS. SLOW, EERIE CHANTING IN ASIAN VOICES.

LIGHTS UP.

Kneeling stage center are MONK 1 and MONK 2. They are dressed in elaborate robes and head pieces made up of of beads, feathers and brightly colored fabric. Obviously the more outrageous the better, just make sure they don't go too over the top and that they both resemble each other to show some visual consistency.

They each hold wands decorated with feathers.

For at the least the first three minutes of the opening (longer at your discretion) they go through a slow and deliberate ritual; bowing, waving, swaying, getting up and dancing, all with a serene and reverent pace. Each matching the others moves perfectly. Nothing too wild, quick or outlandish. It should look like a very old ritual. Their faces should be calm and concentrated. The chanting music plays throughout.

As the music fades they end up kneeling, looking out at the audience, their palms raised. There is a long pause. Then...

MONK 1
(turning to Monk 2.)
You ever get the feeling this might
all be bullshit?

Monk 2 slowly turns to Monk 1, taken aback.

MONK 2
(confused.)
What?

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP.

Entering on stage are the DIVINE MOTHER and PATRICE. The Divine Mother wears a version of the robes and head piece, but larger and more elaborate, to show her higher status. Patrice wears jeans, a sweatshirt, Birkenstocks and totes a backpack. She looks like a globe trekking traveler.

DIVINE MOTHER
And this is the Great Hall of
Meditation. It has provided comfort
(MORE)

DIVINE MOTHER
and solace to members of the Bai
Naa Brotherhood for over ten
centuries.

PATRICE
(impressed.)
Nice...

DIVINE MOTHER
It is, of course, open to you while
you stay here, as well as the
gardens and the upper walkways.

PATRICE
Sweet...

DIVINE MOTHER
At the temple of Bai Naa, we are
committed to the serenity and
comfort of those in need. It has
been our way for hundreds of years.
You may stay with us as long as you
please.

She claps her hands twice. Monk 1 and Monk 2 enter. Monk 1
carries a broom and begins sweeping around Patrice's feet.
Monk 2 takes a simple robe and puts it on her.

PATRICE
Excellent...But could you show me
where the little monk's room is?
I've been on the trail for two days
and I really gotta pinch one.

DIVINE MOTHER
Certainly. And afterward I will
show you our recreation and dining
area.

The Divine Mother leads Patrice off stage. The Divine Mother
turns back to Monk 1 and Monk 2 and whispers at them,
harshly.

DIVINE MOTHER
Get this messed cleaned up and
finish those dishes in the kitchen!

MONK 1 AND MONK 2
Yes, Divine Mother.

DIVINE MOTHER
 (to Monk 2.)
 And did you shovel the driveway?

MONK 2
 (confused.)
 Uhh, no--I thought Larry was
 supposed to--

DIVINE MOTHER
 Larry can suck shit! I told you to
 do it! Now get your ass out there
 before I chew it off and hand it to
 you on a plate!

MONK 1 AND MONK 2
 Yes, Divine Mother.

She exits. They breath a sigh of relief. Monk 1 keeps
 sweeping.

MONK 2
 I can't believe it.

MONK 1
 What?

MONK 2
 I can't believe you're having
 second thoughts.

MONK 1
 Well, it's perfectly natural in any
 belief system to--

MONK 2
 --Fuck you!

Monk 2 begins pacing, agitated.

MONK 2
 Eight years...eight years ago you
 decide it would be cool to go on
 some dumb-ass eastern pilgrimage.
 "Let's hike through the Himalayas"
 you said. "Let's go to the
 spiritual center of the planet and
 look for the truth."

MONK 1
 (nostalgically.)
 Yeah...the truth.

MONK 2

And like some naive asshole, I agree to go with you!

MONK 1

I thought we really needed to find ourselves.

MONK 2

I was happy! I had a good job, mail room, but lots of opportunity for advancement--

MONK 1

--No, dead end--

MONK 2

--A girlfriend who was really into me--

MONK 1

--She wasn't your type--

MONK 2

--we were even talking about moving in together.

MONK 1

Bad idea.

MONK 2

Even the band was starting to play out in clubs--

MONK 1

--You guys were good.

MONK 2

I was all set. But no, you get a bug up your ass to do a pilgrimage. And I think, "Well, he's my best bud, I can't let him go alone."

MONK 1

(touched.)

Aww...

MONK 2

And after three months of hiking those frigid fucking mountains we wander into this place. And I think..."Maybe he's right. Maybe this is it. Maybe we finally found

(MORE)

MONK 2
 real truth." And I commit myself,
 totally. Turn my back on my job,
 the band, my girlfriend, my life. I
 dedicate myself to the Brotherhood
 of the Bai Naa and all it stands
 for. For eight years. Eight years
 of praying and chanting and silence
 and drudgery...And now you tell me
 you think it might be bullshit?!

MONK 1
 I'm pretty sure it is.

MONK 2
 I'm going out into the freezing
 snow, in my robes, and shovel three
 hundred yards of driveway. And
 while I'm doing it I'm going to be
 thinking of reasons why I shouldn't
 slice you open and dance on your
 entrails.

Monk 2 exits.

MONK 1
 (calling after him.)
 Have a good time!

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP.

The Divine Mother and Patrice enter.

DIVINE MOTHER
 And here are the sleeping quarters.
 There are no private rooms. We
 believe it is an unnecessary
 indulgence. The Brotherhood is open
 to all.

PATRICE
 No problem. I had to share a
 bedroom with my cousin growing up.
 And she stank.

The Divine Mother claps. Monk 1 enters.

DIVINE MOTHER

Our brother will help you settle in and answer any questions you might have about the Bai Naa. Please, make yourself at home.

PATRICE

I definitely intend to.

The Divine Mother exits.

PATRICE

Man, she's sweet. Reminds me of my Grammy Looper.

She holds out her hand to Monk 1.

PATRICE

Hey, I'm Patrice.

He shakes her hand and bows.

PATRICE

And you are?

MONK 1

We do not have names within the brotherhood. Our identity is singular, and given up to the greater good of all.

PATRICE

Crazy...Yikes, I gotta sit. My corns are screaming.

She sits and rubs her feet. He takes off one of her shoes and massages her foot.

PATRICE

Wow...nice. Therapudic and slightly erotic.

MONK 1

Did you travel far?

PATRICE

I left Boise two months ago. I canned my old man, sold the Camero and headed out the door "I know not where." I just knew I had to find what I was looking for.

MONK 1

Which is?

PATRICE

I don't know. Something gnawing at me deep inside. Like a burning. But I have to say, since I got here and saw all the beauty, the mountains, the gardens, the temple...that burning has gone away. I think I might belong here.

MONK 1

Really?

PATRICE

It feels like home. I think I might want to stay here...for a very long time.

MONK 1

No!

PATRICE

(confused.)

No? But I thought--

He grabs her by the shoulders.

MONK 1

You listen to me. You gather your things, head out the door and never come back. This is not a home for anyone, believe me!

PATRICE

But I thought--

MONK 1

There are secrets here. Dark secrets, things that you shouldn't know.

PATRICE

What secrets? Tell me, please.

MONK 1

He turns away.

I can't!

Monk 2 enters.

MONK 2

I can.

MONK 1

(fearful.)

No...

MONK 2

(to Patrice)

The Brotherhood of the Bai Naa was formed centuries ago with the goal of finding complete truth and utter peace. In doing so we leave behind all of our worldly possessions, our past lives, even our identities. We go through a trial period, years of study, meditation and hard work. Humbling ourselves before the truth of the universe.

PATRICE

Sounds beautiful.

MONK 2

And only when we feel we have accomplished complete separation from our wants and desires can we move on.

PATRICE

Move on?

MONK 1

The Ban Chee Ha.

MONK 2

The Holy Tea Ceremony. It is the last step in our path to truth and full consciousness. The tea is composed of special herbs and a secret ingredient that allows us to travel through time, through space, through the fabric of other dimensions. The curtain is pulled away and we see the utter truth.

PATRICE

My mind is officially blown.

MONK 2

And as I toiled out there shoveling the endless piles of snow I realized something. I realized that

(MORE)

MONK 2

I'm ready now, to give it all up.
I'm ready to drink the tea of the
Ban Chee Ha.

MONK 1

No! You can't! That's why I said
this was bullshit! I worked in the
kitchens. I saw them brew the
ceremonial tea. I saw the secret
ingredient...It's poison. That's
all. The only thing waiting for you
at the end of the ceremony is
death.

Monk 2 walks slowly over to Monk 1 and looks into his eyes.

MONK 2

And maybe death is the last truth
we will ever know.

There is a pause. Monk 1 turns away from Monk 2.

PATRICE

Whoa, that is so heavy.

MONK 2

We've come this far together,
brother. It's just one more step.
Will you take it with me?

He holds out his hand. Monk 1 turns. He takes Monk 2's hand.
He smiles.

MONK 1

I will.

PATRICE

Oh, I'm gonna cry.

LIGHTS OUT. MUSIC IN DARKNESS.

LIGHTS UP.

Monk 1 and Monk 2 are kneeling on stage. There is a tea pot
and two ceramic cups in front of them on the floor.

The Divine Mother and Patrice stand near the rear of the
stage, watching.

As the music plays, the two monks go through an elaborate tea ceremony. They hold the cups over their heads, hand them back and forth to one another, then they are still.

The Divine Mother picks up the tea pot and fills the cups in their hands. There is silence. The two monks look at one another peacefully. They bow their heads, bring the cups to their mouths and tilt back their heads, drinking deeply.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP.

The cast stands casually on stage, smiling at the audience. The Divine Mother speaks to the audience.

DIVINE MOTHER

Well, that's our show for this evening, kids. It's a cautionary tale to remind you not to get caught up in any of these wild, offbeat, crazy religions that seem to be everywhere these days.

MONK 1

Use your head and stick to the tried and true, traditional American religions that have stood the test of time and brought real peace and truth to their believers.

MONK 2

Like Mormonism. A traditional church that believes in good, wholesome values like Multiple Heavens and Worlds, black people becoming white and that Jesus actually visited America.

PATRICE

And don't forget the magic underwear.

DIVINE MOTHER

Drive safely and God bless!

BLACKOUT