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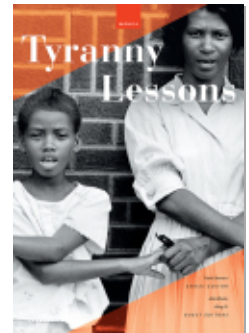
Three Short Plays

Asghar Wajahat, Alok Bhalla

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Three Short Plays

ARE YOU MY ENEMY?

1

"Are you my enemy?"
"No, not at all."
"No?"
"No!"
"Never were?"
"No!"
"Never will be?"
"Never will be."
"Will you swear?"
"Yes, I'll swear by anyone you like."
"Alright, are you one of us?"
"Yes, I am one of you."
"With your whole being?"
"Yes, with my whole being."
"Do you agree with what we say?"
"Yes, I agree with what you say."
"Do you agree with what we think?"
"Yes, I agree with what you think."
"Do you agree with what we do?"
"Yes, I agree with what you do,"
"Do you agree with what we have done?"
"Yes, I agree with what you have done."
"Will you accept what we may do?"
"Yes, I'll accept what you may do."
"Will you accept what we may not do?"
"Yes, I'll accept what you may not do."
"No, you do not agree with us."
"How can you say that?"
"We can say what we like . . . You do not agree with us!"
"No, no, how can you say that . . . I agree with you."

"So, you do not agree with us."
 "But . . ."
 "You oppose us."
 "But . . ."
 "You are our enemy."
 "But . . ."
 "You are our greatest enemy."
 "But . . ."
 "You are responsible for all the problems in the country."
 "But . . ."
 "If you do not exist all the problems would be solved."
 "But . . ."
 "But you must stay."
 "What do you mean . . . must stay?"
 "Yes, must stay."
 "I don't understand."
 "You must stay."
 "Alright . . . but I don't understand."
 "No, you don't understand . . . But, believe me, you are our enemy."
 "But . . ."
 "Our enemy from the beginning and forever."
 "But . . . why?"
 "If you're not our enemy, we'll cease to be."

2

"Listen."
 "Yes."
 "Continue to be our enemy."
 "Why not your friend?"
 "It's easier to be an enemy."
 "Why not a friend?"
 "Friendship is very difficult."
 "Why?"
 "It's easier to kill an enemy."
 "And a friend?"
 "Friendship is more complicated."

3

"Listen."

"Yes."

"Continue to be our enemy."

"Why?"

"So that we continue to be afraid."

"What are the advantages of fear?"

"Fear has many advantages."

"What advantages?"

"Shall I tell you the biggest advantage?"

"Yes, tell me."

"The biggest advantage is that as long as we are afraid, we'll not hold each other's hands."

4

"Listen."

"Yes."

"Continue to be our enemy."

"Why?"

"So that we can be angry."

"What's the use of being angry?"

"Anger has many advantages."

"What advantages?"

"It helps us move our hands and feet, digest our food, control our blood pressure, and forget everything else."

5

"Hey, enemy! Is what you think about yourself correct?"

"Yes, it is correct."

"Who told you that what you think about yourself is correct?"

"No one."

"Then it is wrong."

"Why?"

"Because what you think about yourself is wrong."

"Who knows what is correct?"

"I do . . . That's why what you know about yourself is wrong."

"Then how do I know what is correct?"

"What I tell you."

Cast of Characters

Narrator

Hindu Leader

Muslim Leader

Pundit

Mullah

Hooligans

Crowd: Hindus, Muslims, Individual Voices

Man

NARRATOR *[enters and begins to sing]*

Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Christian

Are not neighbors, are not kin.

When they get together, they fight,

Punch, kick, burn! What a show of might!

Here, there, everywhere the same sight,

They fight, every day they fight and fight.

[changes the tune]

In the name of religion, they tear children apart.

In the name of religion, they cut off women's breasts.

In the name of religion, they burn people alive.

In the name of religion, they manage a market of corpses.

Exits. Hindu Leader and Muslim Leader enter, holding hands.

HINDU AND MUSLIM LEADERS *[dancing and singing]*

We are the leaders of our community.

We are not Hindu, we are not Muslim.

We work hard to murder with impunity.

We are not Hindu, we are not Muslim.

HINDU LEADER Elections are upon us once again and we still have so much to do. Getting votes was expensive . . . In my electoral area, Hindus are in the majority . . . But they all hate me.

MUSLIM LEADER In my electoral area, Muslims are in the majority. But they hate the sight of my face.

HINDU AND MUSLIM LEADERS But we are their leaders . . . We can change hate into love . . . We shall tell them . . .

MUSLIM LEADER My Muslim brothers, the Hindus have ruined you . . . destroyed your homes . . . burnt you alive . . . But have no fear . . . I am with you . . .!

HINDU LEADER My brave sons of Aryavarta, these evil-minded Muslims have shattered the unity of India. They have no right to live here . . . These people raped

your women . . . cut the throats of your children. Come, let us march ahead together . . . I am with you, your faithful servant . . . *[folds his hands]*

MUSLIM LEADER I'll win the affection of my people when I help them get a curfew pass . . .

HINDU LEADER I'll get them the stuff they need to survive . . .

MUSLIM LEADER I'll arrange money for bail . . .

HINDU LEADER I'll collect donations to build a temple . . .

MUSLIM LEADER I'll collect donations to repair a mosque . . .

HINDU LEADER *Har-har Mahadev . . .*

MUSLIM LEADER *Allah-ho-Akbar . . .*

Hindu Pundit and Muslim Mullah come running onto the stage. The Pundit falls at the feet of the Hindu leader. The Mullah falls at the feet of the Muslim Leader.

MUSLIM LEADER *[to the Mullah]* Mullahji, why are you so sad?

MULLAH People no longer donate enough money to repair the mosque . . . My credibility is falling.

HINDU LEADER Punditji, what is the difficulty?

PUNDIT People no longer conduct ceremonies, offer money for rites and prayers, give donations. Faith is on the decline.

HINDU AND MUSLIM LEADERS *[singing]*

Stand up both of you.

Do what we tell you . . .

Your hands will always be in a pot of gold.

Your food will always be in abundance.

Your kitchen fires will always be lit . . .

Pundit and Mullah stand up, clap, and dance. Two Hooligans walk on stage and begin to laugh loudly.

HOOLIGAN Hey you, leaders, nothing will happen if you stand and chitter-chatter . . . You call yourselves the defenders of the nation . . . We are the ones who will burn the place down . . . fire bullets . . . cut the throats of children . . . rape women . . . cut off their breasts . . . sometimes in police uniforms, sometimes as ordinary citizens . . .

HINDU LEADER Welcome, welcome. You are brave . . . you are my right-hand men . . .

MUSLIM LEADER Welcome, welcome. You are my eyes.

Hindu and Muslim Leaders and Hooligans hold hands and form a circle.

ALL *[singing and dancing]*

To sing this is awkward.
We are really the most backward,
The most backward nation in the world!
We are its wolves; this is our lair!
This is our country; we really don't care!
Our religions and our fate
Teach us equality in hate!
This is our land; this is our desh!
This is our mask; this is our face!
To sing this is awkward.
We are really the most backward,
The most backward nation in the world!

Hooligans pick up two bundles lying on one side of the stage and give one each to Hindu and Muslim Leaders.

MUSLIM LEADER Mullahji, take this and throw it in the mosque.

MULLAH What's in it?

MUSLIM LEADER What do you think? Don't be childish. It has that which will get you donations and make us leaders.

MULLAH Then it is very useful. *[picks up the bundle]*

HINDU LEADER Punditji, take this bundle.

PUNDIT What's in it?

HINDU LEADER How does it matter? It won't destroy your religion. If anything, it will make it stronger.

PUNDIT What should I do with it?

HINDU LEADER At night, after everyone has left, walk quietly and throw it in the temple.

Pundit picks up the bundle.

HINDU AND MUSLIM LEADERS Pick up your bundles . . . act with courage . . . go, go, and do what you have been told.

All exit. Two bundles fall on the stage. Hindu Crowd enters from one side and Muslim Crowd from the other side.

HINDU CROWD *Har-har Mahadev.*

MUSLIM CROWD *Allah-ho-Akbar.*

HINDU CROWD We shall drink your blood.

MUSLIM CROWD We shall send you to hell.

Both groups close in upon each other, shouting slogans and brandishing weapons. They become louder. Suddenly Man enters and stands between them.

MAN [*screaming*] Stop, wait, listen! I know you are not Hindus or Muslims . . . You had already decided to fight when you left your homes . . . But tell me, what is the issue?

HINDU CROWD The Muslims threw beef into the temple. See, here it is.

MUSLIM CROWD The Hindus threw pork into the mosque. See, here it is.

MAN [*bends forward to look into both bundles, then straightens up*] Brothers, this is neither pork nor beef.

HINDU AND MUSLIM CROWDS What . . . it is not . . . ?

MAN No, no, my friends, I have travelled across the world. Do you think I can't differentiate between pork and beef? See, if this was pork, it would have layers of fat . . . and this has none . . . And if this was beef, it would be red . . . have fibers . . . Do you see any? This cannot be pork . . . and this cannot be beef . . . You have been fooled.

HINDU AND MUSLIM CROWDS Then what kind of meat is it?

MAN You people tell me. There are Hindus and Muslims here. Tell me, what meat is it?

HINDU AND MUSLIM CROWDS We don't know what kind of meat it is.

MAN Yes, that's right. You don't recognize it because you have never seen this meat before.

HINDU VOICE Whose meat is it . . .

MAN Listen . . . This is human meat.

HINDU AND MUSLIM CROWDS Human meat?

MAN [*confidently*] Yes, human meat . . . this color . . . these fibers . . . My brothers, this is human meat . . . It cannot be anything other than human meat.

HINDU AND MUSLIM LEADERS No, no . . . You are lying.

MAN Look at the color . . . its fibers . . . It is human meat.

HINDU VOICE True . . .

MUSLIM VOICE He's telling the truth . . .

MAN Yes, yes, I am telling the truth . . .

VOICES FROM THE CROWD Is it really human meat?!

FIRST VOICE Then it doesn't matter.

HINDU VOICE Punditji, human meat doesn't pollute the temple, does it?

PUNDIT No, human meat doesn't pollute the temple.

MUSLIM VOICE Mullahji, human meat doesn't pollute a mosque, does it?

MULLAH No, certainly not . . . had it been pork, the mosque would have been polluted!

PUNDIT Had it been beef, the temple would have been polluted!

FIRST VOICE Isn't it lucky it turned out to be human meat!

SECOND VOICE The temple wasn't polluted.

THIRD VOICE The mosque wasn't polluted.

FOURTH VOICE That is really lucky.

FIFTH VOICE Dharma is saved.

HINDU LEADER Let's go and save Hindutva. This is not beef, it's only human meat.

MUSLIM LEADER Come, soldiers of Islam, let's go. This is not pork, it's only human meat.

MAN The cheapest meat . . . is human meat!

All exit.

GURU TO STUDENT: A CONVERSATION

1

STUDENT Guruji, are the Muslims of India outsiders?

GURU Yes, they are outsiders.

STUDENT Where did they come from?

GURU They came from Iran, Turkey, and Arabia.

STUDENT But they are citizens of which country now?

GURU India.

STUDENT What languages do they speak?

GURU They speak the languages of India.

STUDENT Do their culture, ways of living, and thinking resemble that of other people?

GURU No, culturally they are Indian.

STUDENT How can you then call them outsiders?

GURU Because their religion is not Indian.

STUDENT Is Buddhism Indian, Guruji?

GURU Yes, of course it is Indian.

STUDENT Should all the Chinese, Japanese, and Thai Buddhists migrate to India?

GURU No, no, of course not!

STUDENT Then why should Indian Muslims migrate to Iran, Turkey, or Arabia?

2

GURU Listen, Hindus and Muslims cannot live together.

STUDENT Why, Guruji?

GURU They are radically different from each other.

STUDENT How?

GURU They speak a different language . . . we speak a different language.

STUDENT Do the Muslims only speak Urdu? . . . Do they not speak Hindi, Kashmiri, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, etc.?

GURU Well . . . actually . . . That's not what I meant. Their religion is different.

STUDENT You mean people with different religions cannot live in the same country?

GURU Yes . . . India is for Hindus.

STUDENT Then Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Persis, Jews should be thrown out of India.

GURU Yes, they should be thrown out of India.

STUDENT Then who will be left in India?

GURU Only the Hindus . . . and they will live in peace and harmony.

STUDENT Like the Muslims in Pakistan live in peace and harmony.

3

GURU Listen, you should hate the Muslims.

STUDENT Why, Gurudev?

GURU Because they are dirty, illiterate, and criminal.

STUDENT I understand, Gurudev. You mean that we should hate people who are dirty, illiterate, and criminal.

GURU No . . . no. You should hate the Muslims because they are religious fundamentalists.

STUDENT I hate religious fundamentalists, Gurudev.

GURU No . . . no. You don't understand. You should hate the Muslims because they had once ruled over us.

STUDENT Oh, then we should also hate the Christians.

GURU No . . . no. Listen, the real reason for hating the Muslims is that they were responsible for the partition of India.

STUDENT So, I should hate people who were responsible for the partition of India.

GURU Yes . . . Absolutely. You should hate those who were responsible for the partition of India.

STUDENT How should we treat those who divide the people of India?

4

STUDENT Guruji, who are the people killed in communal riots?

GURU Important pundits, maulvis, businessmen, administrators, and politicians are killed in communal riots.

STUDENT And who are the ones who are never killed?

GURU Ordinary people . . . artisans, craftsmen, rickshaw pullers, street vendors, workers, etc. are never killed in communal riots.

STUDENT Then why does no one stop these communal riots?

GURU That's obvious, isn't it? ... Ordinary people have absolutely no interest in stopping communal riots.

STUDENT And what about the important people?

GURU Important people do try to stop communal riots ... Pundits and maulvis invoke religious principles ... leaders of different political parties work hard to end these riots ... rich businessmen give donations to stop them ... government servants and police officers do what they can to prevent these conflicts.

STUDENT Why do these communal riots continue despite their efforts?

GURU That is the real mystery, my son ... If you solve it ... you'll be killed in one of the riots.

5

STUDENT Guruj, why doesn't the law punish the killers in communal riots?

GURU That's the greatness of our legal system!

STUDENT How?

GURU Our courts understand the feelings, the sentiments of those who kill in the riots.

STUDENT Understand what?

GURU Listen, those who die during communal riots go straight to heaven, don't they?

STUDENT Yes, they do?

GURU So, who does them the favor of sending them to heaven?

STUDENT The murderers.

GURU Absolutely correct! Our law isn't so shameless as to send such kind people to the gallows.

6

STUDENT Guruji, how can the riots be prevented?

GURU No one in the country has an answer to that question ... Neither the president nor the prime minister ... neither any cabinet minister nor any intellectual ...

STUDENT Guruji ... Human beings have reached the moon ... have controlled nature ... the impossible has become possible ... Why not give the responsibility of finding an answer to the question to the scientists?

GURU Oh, the scientists were asked to work on the problem ... they said it was a religious issue.

STUDENT Then why not ask the priests for an answer?

GURU The priests were also asked to find an answer . . . they said it was social problem.

STUDENT What about the sociologists?

GURU They said it was a political issue.

STUDENT What about the political scientists?

GURU They said there was no problem at all.

7

STUDENT Guruji, is the prime minister responsible for communal riots?

GURU No.

STUDENT Is the chief minister?

GURU No.

STUDENT The home minister?

GURU No.

STUDENT The parliament or an elected member of the parliament?

GURU No.

STUDENT A local administrative officer or a police officer?

GURU No.

STUDENT Then who is responsible for the communal riots?

GURU The people.

STUDENT Meaning . . . ?

GURU Meaning, we are responsible.

STUDENT Meaning . . . ?

GURU Meaning . . . No one is responsible.

Translations from Hindi by Alok Bhalla