

ZORBA THE FREAK

"PILOT"

Written by

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Inspired by "Zorba the Greek" by Nikos Kazantzakis

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INT. AMSTERDAM CAFÉ - DAY

Raindrops knock on the café window as if they were desperately trying to get in. The windows are fogged up with the breath of its guests.

AMADEUS (*late 20's, thick blonde hair resembling the mane of a lion*) stares out of the window as he sips on his coffee.

TWO MEN and TWO WOMEN enter the café in heavy raincoats.

Amadeus follows them with his gaze until they sit down. His eyes return to the Amstel river dancing wildly behind the fogged up window.

A glass shatters. YOUNG BARISTA (*20's*) starts cleaning up the glass shards.

*** All dialogue in *italics* is in Dutch.

WAITER

What is it with you today?

YOUNG BARISTA

What is it with me? I wake up, go to the café, I go back to sleep and then I come back to the café. That is all. That's my life. It's a fucking drudgery.

Silence, THE GUESTS look at the Young Barista for a while and then they all simultaneously turn to look back out of the window.

A GUEST sitting next to Amadeus scoffs.

CAFÉ GUEST

God have mercy on us.

THE WAITER picks up Amadeus's empty cup.

AMADEUS

I'll have one more, please.

The Waiter nods and trots away.

Amadeus yawns and focuses his gaze back on the world behind the window.

He looks at the people running in the rain with their umbrellas, holding on to them for dear life, trying not to fly away.

As he fixes his eyes on the little boats jumping up and down on the river, his grief takes shape and his memories begin to take material form.

EXT. AMSTERDAM RIVER STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

It is a rainy and cold morning, a different day in the past.

Clean shaven Amadeus with shorter hair stares, motionless, at the back of A MAN IN AN ARMY UNIFORM throwing a couple of bags out of a houseboat onto the street.

The man, WOUTER (*mid-20's, green eyes and a lovely smile*), walks towards Amadeus and stops in front of him. They look deeply into each others eyes.

Wouter softly places his palm onto Amadeus's cheek, he smiles and Amadeus closes his eyes.

WOUTER

If you want to save yourself, try
to save others. Right? That's what
you told me.

Amadeus opens his eyes and looks at Wouter, gazing over every little wrinkle on his face.

AMADEUS

Goodbye.

They embrace each other in a heartfelt hug. Amadeus laughs unsteadily to hide his sadness.

WOUTER

Are you sad?

AMADEUS

(*quietly, softly*)
Yes.

WOUTER

Why? We knew this would happen. We
knew years ago. Put on your mask -
calm, unwavering, smiling.

Amadeus forces a smile and suddenly the sound of thunder rings out in the damp air. His face turns worrisome.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

Do you have one of your bad
premonitions?

AMADEUS

I do.

Wouter takes Amadeus's hands into his palms, his eyes twinkle.

WOUTER

If I am in mortal danger, I will think of you with such an effort that you will know about it. Deal?

AMADEUS

Deal.

WOUTER

I don't believe in telepathy though.

AMADEUS

That's ok.

They silently clasp hands, their fingers briskly press together and then they abruptly pull away.

PRE-LAP: the sound of a heavy fist knocking on a window.

INT. AMSTERDAM CAFÉ - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Amadeus raises his head and sees THE FACE OF A HUGE MIDDLE-AGED MAN IN A BLACK LATEX SUIT (ZORBA) squished on the other side of the window waving at him. Amadeus studies his restless penetrating eyes. The man winks at him and walks towards the café entrance.

The glass door of the café opens. The stocky man enters with a light step. Water drips from him as he makes his way through the café towards Amadeus. The latex suit squeaks with every step he takes.

Suddenly he is standing in front of Amadeus, their eyes meet again.

ZORBA

Are you traveling?

Amadeus just stares at him, perplexed. Zorba points to the big duffle bag and a suitcase underneath his table.

ZORBA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

AMADEUS

Prague. Why do you want to know?

ZORBA

Would you like a traveling partner?
You look like you need help.

Amadeus looks at Zorba's face, the face of a man that has lived life to its fullest. His salt and pepper hair, his sparkly eyes.

AMADEUS

Why would I need a traveling partner?

ZORBA

Why? Why? What's with all these why's? Can't we just do something without asking "why"? Just for the pleasure of doing something exciting?

Amadeus chuckles and has another long look at Zorba.

ZORBA (CONT'D)

What are you thinking?

Amadeus pulls out a chair next to him. Zorba smiles with a big grin and takes a seat.

ZORBA (CONT'D)

I'm Zorba.

AMADEUS

Is that Greek?

ZORBA

It stands for nonferrous scrap metal in English, but yes, my father was from Crete.

AMADEUS

Amadeus.

They shake hands firmly.

AMADEUS (CONT'D)

Do you want some coffee?

Zorba turns around, orders a cup of tea with rum and turns back to Amadeus.

ZORBA

It's cold out.

Amadeus looks at Zorba, sitting there like he just came from a BDSM shower party. He smiles and nods silently.

AMADEUS

I'm not going for a fun little trip. I'm moving to Prague to start a business.

ZORBA

Even better!

AMADEUS

What kind of work can you do?

ZORBA

Any work. With my hands, with my feet, my head... I can do anything.

Amadeus smiles.

AMADEUS

Good.

The waiter brings a cup of tea with a shot of rum sitting next to it on a tiny plate, he places it on the table in front of Zorba. Zorba downs the shot, disregarding the tea.

ZORBA

Ready to go?

Amadeus picks up the raincoat from his own chair and hands it to Zorba.

AMADEUS

Take this.

EXT. AMSTERDAM STREETS - DAY

The rain is not as strong anymore, Amadeus and Zorba walk next to each other through the streets of Amsterdam. Amadeus holds an umbrella with one hand while pulling a suitcase behind him with the other. Zorba, wearing Amadeus's raincoat over his latex outfit, is carrying the big duffel bag Amadeus had underneath his table.

AMADEUS

What do you have in the fanny pack there? A flapjack or perhaps some underwear?

Zorba laughs.

ZORBA

None of that. My wallet and a mouth organ, a harmonica.

AMADEUS

A harmonica? You play the harmonica?

ZORBA

Every now and then I go to coffee houses, sit in the corner and play on the harmonica. Tourists that are either high or drunk give me money, sometimes.

AMADEUS

I see.

ZORBA

They don't call me Toots for nothing. Although they do also call me Golem ... or Calamity, because where I come I bring destruction. Sometimes.

AMADEUS

Sometimes.

ZORBA

Sometimes. Mostly they just call me Zorba the Freak.

Amadeus chuckles.

AMADEUS

Zorba the Freak, I like that. When did you learn to play the harmonica?

ZORBA

When I was in my late teens. I've heard this mystical old loner play it under a tree during sunset and then I couldn't eat or sleep for three days. Afterwards I went to the old man and begged him to teach me how to play the harmonica. For some time I went to him and studied. He was an excellent person. Ever since I play the harmonica I have become a different person myself. Whenever I feel the weight of the world crashing down on me I play the harmonica and immediately start feeling better. When I play the harmonica and people talk to me - I do not hear them.

AMADEUS

How so?

ZORBA

Eh, it's called passion.

Amadeus looks at Zorba's hairy hands, veiny and full of scars, he notices a ring on the fourth finger of his left hand.

AMADEUS

Are you married?

ZORBA

Am I not human?! I got married. I became a father of a family, can you imagine? House full of worries. What will we eat? What will we wear? My own little personal hell. A harmonica needs mental well-being.

Zorba looks at Amadeus and sees him thinking about what he just said.

ZORBA (CONT'D)

The kids are alright. They're all grown up now.

AMADEUS

Oh. Ok. Good.

The two appear in front of a street elevator entrance going into an underground garage. Amadeus pushes a button and the elevator doors open, the unnatural bright light shines on Amadeus and Zorba as they enter - it makes them look as if they were being sucked in by an alien vessel.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Zorba carefully opens his fanny pack, as if he was undressing a lover. He delicately takes out a shiny copper harmonica with a red velvet top. His rough hand strokes the instrument, slowly and affectionately.

ZORBA

Man is an animal. The devil stands over him with a sword, but he, the fool, does not understand. The harmonica, on the other hand, is a completely different animal. It loves freedom. You must never make me play it, understand?

Amadeus nods understandingly.

ZORBA (CONT'D)

If I'm in the mood, I'll play, I'll sing. I will also dance.

Amadeus grabs Zorba by the shoulder.

AMADEUS

Zorba, do you want to know why we're going to Prague?

Zorba shrugs his shoulders "I don't care".

AMADEUS (CONT'D)

I've bought an old soap factory there and we are going to turn it into the hottest gay club in town.

Zorba's cheeky grin grows absurdly wide, revealing literally all of his teeth. The elevator reaches its floor and dings, the door opens.

AMADEUS (CONT'D)

Let's go. May God be with us.

They look at each other and laugh.

ZORBA

And The Devil.

Zorba leaves the elevator first, followed by Amadeus.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Autumn beauty, light-filled road along the forest. The sun shines its rays on an old JEEP CHEROKEE that drives along the asphalt at a graceful pace. Far away on the horizon landscapes merge with the sky.

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE - ROAD - DAY

Amadeus sits behind the steering wheel with Zorba next to him. They stare into the distance, a bit dreamy, listening to classical music on the radio.

At this moment there is an unspoken compassion between them, compassion not only for each other, but for nature, for the whole world. This is reflected by all the incredible shadows and lights bouncing off the Jeep and swirling dust.

The song on the radio stops and a FEMALE VOICE of a RADIO ANCHOR starts to echo through the car.

RADIO ANCHOR

The amount of hate speech against the LGBT community in Central Europe is increasing. And it's not just statements that are made in public space, but also on social networks. These comments are sometimes posted by real people, sometimes by paid trolls. We recently managed to uncover such a troll, who posted homophobic comments of the same wording under different profiles.

Zorba turns off the radio and rolls down his window. Amadeus turns to him, Zorba's face looking waxy in the sunlight. He spits out of the window and rolls it back up.

ZORBA

They have no shame.

Zorba's face lights up as he raises his hand and points to two large deer bouncing across the plain.

Amadeus notices that half the index finger on Zorba's left hand has been cut off.

AMADEUS

What happened to your finger?

ZORBA

(annoyed)

Nothing. Don't you like deer?

AMADEUS

Was it some kind of a heavy machinery accident?

ZORBA

Why the hell are you talking about machines? I cut it off myself.

AMADEUS

Yourself? Why?

ZORBA

You wouldn't understand.

AMADEUS

Try me.

Thank you for reading the preview of my screenplay.

If you're interested in reading more or discussing potential collaboration, please feel free to reach out to me.

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