

Act One

Scene One

—**Blackout**...a lone Ranger and Tonto take their places around a campfire as the theme from the radio show, *The Lone Ranger* plays (version by the John Morgan Orquesta): start at 0:00, and at the 1:00 mark, fadeout -0:10, then begin slow fade-up of lights. the lighting is tight, around the campfire only. light falls unevenly however, creating shadows that draw the viewer, as they get caught up watching Ranger roll a cigarette. Tonto sits quietly. she too watches Ranger—

Ranger

“Came from the Sandstone Hills of Oklahoma for your information.”

Tonto

“I hadn’t asked.”

Ranger

“You were thinkin’ about it.”

Tonto

“Oh my, lookee there, you done rolled a perfect cigarette.”

Ranger

“Want one?”

Tonto

“Don’t mind if i do, if only to see if you can duplicate your feat.”

Ranger

“Don’t need no more, got two. one’s left, one’s right.”

Tonto

“If one’s left, you only got one, right? *double your pleasure, double your fun, with double mint double mint, double mint gum.*”

—The Ranger begins rolling another cigarette, taking his good ole time, attending closely to the process—

Ranger, looks up

“Ain’t heard that in a coon’s age.”

Tonto, shaking head

“Speaking of which...i remember you.”

Ranger

“Yeah...whatya mean by that?”

Tonto

“I mean, i remember you. i was young, a kid, hidin behind my mother’s backside, but i saw you, many times, and i heard you talkin.”

Ranger

“What was i saying?”

Tonto

“You were holdin court, as usual, tellin stories...i could never determine if you were bullshitting or reciting chapter and verse. figured it was a small dose of one and a whole lotta the other.”

Ranger

“I swear on a bible everything happened as stated...to the best of my (failing) memory.”

Tonto

“Half a what you were sayin’ made no sense. i had to ask my mother to explain. she set me down and translated to the best a her ability, everything you said, and then some. one story i’ve never forgot, nor will i, was the time you were tellin us about your life on the plantation where you were enslaved. i had no idea what a plantation, or a slave was. no words for such things in my language...yet i knew it wasn’t good.”

Ranger

“I knew that. it’s why i used the word, **X**. the way i was treated was not the way so called slaves had been treated by Native people, which is why there’s no word for such a thing in your language. Native people do not treat other people like animals.”

Tonto

“My mother explained.”

Ranger

“Did your mother tell you about the whippins?”

Tonto

(Head nodding affirmatively)

Ranger

“Then you know everything there is to know.”

—The Ranger hands Tonto the cigarette he’s rolled—

Tonto

“Thanks...how’d you become a ranger?”

—Momentary pause—

Ranger

“That, my dear, is a long and convoluted story...the short answer is, i was hired by the honorable Judge Isaac C Parker, he who was appointed by Ulysses S Grant, president of these united states. and he sent me to work as a deputy marshal in Indian Territory. things were bad and he knew that i knew the area, the topography, its people, plus i was fluent in the native languages.”

Tonto

“You’re a regular ole mythic figure, you know. you know that, don’t you? everyone knows about the lone Ranger. criminals steer clear, or like Belle Starr, turn themselves in to avoid pain a capture.”

Ranger

“Myths are stories, and there’s lots and lotsa stories about the lone Ranger. i don’t even know what’s real and what ain’t.”

Tonto

“A master of disguise, expert marksman, ya rode a white horse, on occasion had a Native American companion, and here you are, in the Great West roamin wide while huntin down outlaws and criminals of all shapes and sizes. bound to be a few good stories.”

Ranger

“What’s the meaning of all that?”

Tonto

“Depends on how you define myth, and how it fits into the overall picture of the culture.”

Ranger

“I am not the only ranger. there are rangers all over the southwest, from Califor-ni-a to East Texas, South Texas to Southern Colorado, and most of ‘em work by themselves. i’m just another in a long line of lone Rangers. i wasn’t the masked man i’ve been associated with. fact is, i never met a Ranger who wore a mask, tho i did meet some highly accomplished fellas, rangers awfully handy with a set a pistols. met this one dude who could shoot the pimple off a gnat’s ass at 50 yards and do it in rapid succession...”

Tonto

“There’s also the myth that’s nuthin more’n a tall tale.”

Ranger

“That would be mine...a tall tale.”

Tonto

“You’re making a comeback, Ranger, all six feet four inches of you. you been exhumed and resurrected.”

Ranger

“Ehhh, they’re spendin too much time with bullets flyin, chasin bad guys thru a cloud of dust, blah blah blah, little to no attention on the discussions the characters are having about living and dying, what we’re like, how we feel about things, and each other.”

Tonto

“This is America. fame accrues to those with a larger than life personality.”

Ranger

“More of my time is spent doin nuthin, sittin around a campfire starin at the flames, else jawbonin if’n there’s company, or ridin through a wasteland hours on end, my mind at work even if i can’t never remember a single thing.”

Tonto

“No matter, you’re still the one everyone keeps talkin about.”

Ranger

“Might have somethin to do with me bein stubborn, and stickin around a lot longer than most folks.”

Tonto

“Could be, but i think your victims might disagree. those who suffered your obdurate will probably say the man is as strong as a bull, can shoot straight and accurate and won’t take no for an answer.”

Ranger

“Now that’s true. i will not take no for answer...the more determined they get tryin to weasel their way outta a situation, the more resolute i become. like i said, i won’t hear no. call me nuthin’ but call me indefatigable. yeah, indefatigable. go ahead, call me indefatigable.”

Tonto

“Okay, alright, i hereby crown thee, Indefatigabilis.”

Ranger

“At your service...how’d you do that?”

Tonto

“What, the Latin? i went to school off the rez. learned Latin. from grade school through high school Latin conjugations were a part of my life. see, comes in handy.”

Ranger

“How’d you conjugate your way here is what i wanna know?”

Tonto

“Ahh...well...it was kinda roundabout, ya know, circular and serendipitous. kept passin myself along the way, but i finally arrived, and here i am.”

Ranger

“I see...i’ve had trips that went that way. seems my whole life has been spent goin around an around.”

Tonto

“Yeah...but the difference is, i was lookin for you.”

—Brief pause—

Ranger

“Whadya want with me?”

Tonto

“I wanna know who you are?”

Ranger, laughing

“Chile, *who am i*, is a non sequitur if i’ve ever heard one. the question’s based on the assumption i am a particular person, someone who can be defined in some logical fashion, perhaps not unlike this log i’m about to toss into the fire, a thing that can be touched, felt, examined and understood. we hold to this belief, who we think we are is somehow real. we’re treated by others, beginning with our parents and siblings, in ways that assume we’re

some one thing, a real person, but we ain't. we are no thing, no particular thing, and yet, we're many."

Tonto

"Sounds like the lyrics to a song."

Ranger

"They are—the song of my life."

Tonto

"Okay, but you seem...different is not the word...transcendent..."

Ranger

"I'm surprised by your question. i had this impression you were able to divine the future."

Tonto

"I have my limitations."

Ranger

"At least you understand your deficiencies."

Tonto

"I try and build on em, workin with them rather than allowing them to limit me."

—Brief pause during which Ranger pulls out a bottle and takes a long sip—