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**Waiting For The Cut**

**By Robert Levin**

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After "Waiting For Godot."

Two men, STEVE and HAROLD, both in their early twenties, and with long hair styles, are standing outside a small hair cutting salon on a sweltering August afternoon. The salon is closed. STEVE, after offering a cigarette to HAROLD—who waves it off—lights one himself and begins to pace.

STEVE: [Checking his watch.] I hate fucking Brooklyn.

HAROLD: [Wipes his face with a balled-up handkerchief.] Brooklyn? I don't know about Brooklyn. Brooklyn may not be as terrible as I thought it was. It's hard to form an opinion when you're rapidly losing consciousness. Jesus, it's like we're standing on the sun here.

STEVE: [Looking away.] Brooklyn's where you have to wait for this jerkoff.

HAROLD: [Rolls his neck.] This isn't what you meant when you said he always keeps you waiting, is it? He doesn't pull this every time you come here? [Feels his wrist.] Dude, my pulse is gone! [Holds his head with both hands.] And my memory—it's gone too!

STEVE: All of it?

HAROLD: No. I think just the last year.

STEVE: If it's just the last year then you can still remember the last time you got laid. [Peers down the block.] He's never been this late before. He's gotten much better at it. Shit, he ought to think about turning pro. [Looks at his watch again.] God, my WATCH is sweating.

HAROLD: [Calmed down. Wipes his face again.] I think they said last night that, factoring in the wind-chill index with the temperature-humidity thing, today would be the hottest day in the history of the world.

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STEVE: [Distracted.] If they did they got it right. [Looks up and down the block.] It's a goddamn hour. Where is this asshole?

HAROLD: Don't quote me on that. Okay? I could be way off.

STEVE: [Shaking his head.] I wonder sometimes why I come here. I mean I probably should have mentioned something else:

HAROLD: What?

STEVE: He can also fuckup. In fact, he can also fuckup in a major way. There was one fuckup that was actually beyond major, really spectacular—worthy of its own wing in the Hall of Fuckups.

HAROLD: Yeah?

STEVE: HE loved what he did. He was proud of himself. He even took a Polaroid.

HAROLD: Yeah? I don't remember...

STEVE: You don't remember because you didn't see me for a month. I cancelled all my public appearances.

HAROLD: Wait. That was...? It was that bad?

STEVE: Put it this way: I would definitely have gotten mucho action—if it'd been 1964 and I had a cockney accent.

HAROLD: You looked like a Beatle?

STEVE: Early Ringo Starr.

HAROLD: Okay. I've got a statement and then a question. The statement is: Yeah, when you were bugging me to give him a shot and finally getting me to make this trip—which I never wanted to do because nothing I've seen of his work for you has blown my skirts up past my ankles—YOU FUCKING PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED THAT! The question is—and I'm anxious to have your wisdom on this before it's too late, while your brain scans are still registering occasional blips. Do you figure I can find my way back to Manhattan by myself? The "3" train, right? What is it—four blocks this way, then hang a left?

STEVE: Let's give him a little while longer.

HAROLD: Why? Damn. I was expecting an acceptable level of mediocrity. I thought the worst thing I had to worry about was getting wasted in a crossfire.

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STEVE: Because speaking of "getting it right..."

HAROLD: You know the barbershop in the 86th Street subway station? It's beginning to loom as a viable option.

STEVE: We'll give him another fifteen minutes. Okay? [Looks at his watch.] Fifteen minutes. Exactly fifteen minutes. You can handle fifteen minutes, can't you?

HAROLD: [Hugs himself and pretends to shiver.] My sweat just turned very cold. You ever hear of someone freezing to death in his own sweat?

STEVE: Listen to me. Let me tell you this. The first haircut he gave me—when I was working the lights for a music thing in the little park around the corner and needed a quick trim. It was strange because I asked him for just a simple trim and at first that's all that I thought I got, you know? There was nothing noticeably out of the ordinary. If anything, it seemed a little on the flat side.

HAROLD: Right. But after you washed it—and probably factoring in certain favorable atmospheric conditions...

STEVE: No. Yeah—maybe something like that. I don't know what it was, what he did, and whenever I bring it up he says he doesn't know what I'm talking about.

HAROLD: When was this exactly?

STEVE: 2000.

HAROLD: 2000? That's four years back in the dank and murky past—that's back when you were with Beth, the lost love of your wretched, woebegone life.

STEVE: Actually it was the day before I met Beth.

HAROLD: [Startled.] He gave you a haircut the day before you met Beth?

STEVE: [Looks at HAROLD squarely. Nods.]

HAROLD: [Stares back at STEVE. Then abruptly turns away from him; walks a few steps off; stops; comes back.] Let me have one of those.

[STEVE gives HAROLD a cigarette, takes another one himself; lights them both.]

HAROLD: If he's not here yet he's not coming—we know that, don't we?

STEVE: Yeah...I guess.

HAROLD: [Turns away again. Turns back.] Actually...

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STEVE: What?

HAROLD: I was thinking that he could be coming. I mean there's a chance that he stumbled into a serious crisis situation on his way here, you know? It's possible that he was called upon to administer multiple emergency mullets and buzz cuts and shit, and he could have every intention of showing up when he's done.

STEVE: This is weird. I was just thinking the very same thing.

HAROLD: [Motions toward STEVE's watch.] How much time did you...?

STEVE: [Looks at his watch.] Twelve minutes now.

HAROLD: Considering that the disaster he may be dealing with could have a heart-breaking size and scale, he'll likely need more than just another twelve minutes.

STEVE: A disaster of the magnitude we're talking about...Yeah, I'd say he...

HAROLD: What I think is that, under the conceivable circumstances, we should go another round—give him another full hour.

STEVE: [Taken aback. Emits a quick laugh.]

HAROLD: Hey, another hour's not unreasonable, man—not under the conceivable circumstances.

STEVE: [Holds up his hand.] No. You're right. Absolutely. Another hour's more than reasonable. [Looks at Harold with a suddenly pensive expression. Says softly...] You're on my page now.

HAROLD: And, if you think about it, man, under the conceivable circumstances we owe him that much, don't we? Under the conceivable circumstances it BEHOOVES us to give him another hour.

STEVE: [Looks at HAROLD with mock admiration.] That's very good. Shit, I could learn a lot about living from you.

HAROLD: It's not like we even have any respectable options here.

STEVE: I can't think of any.

HAROLD: Then we're doing it—we're doing another hour?

STEVE: I don't think we could live with ourselves if we didn't. [Looks at his watch.] Make that sixty minutes. [Squints down the block. Looks at this watch again. Purses his lips. Grimaces.] Exactly sixty minutes.

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HAROLD: [Sits on his haunches. Wipes his face with his handkerchief. Thinks aloud.] Yeah, another hour. Who knows? That might do it. That might be just what the prick needs us to give him.

BLACK

Former contributor to The Village Voice and Rolling Stone. Coauthor and coeditor, respectively, of two collections of essays about jazz and rock in the '60s: "Music & Politics" and "Giants of Black Music."

### **WAITING ON THE LORD**

**By Irvin L. Rozier**

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Waiting On The Lord

Psalm 105.19 "Until the time that his word came, the word of the LORD tried him."

Waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. Waiting during trials, testings and tribulations. Waiting when all hope seemed gone. Waiting when family and friends misunderstood. Waiting while wrongly accused. By faith, waiting for God's purpose to be done.

Adam waited for Eve. Noah waited for the waters to recede. Abraham waited for Isaac. Joseph waited for promotion as ruler in Egypt. Moses waited for his leadership position. Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego waited in the fiery furnace. Daniel waited in the lion's den. Job waited during his afflictions. John the Baptist waited in the desert. Paul waited in jail. Throughout the Bible, men and women have waited for God to do as He has said.

The trying of faith works patience. The LORD still has His people who are waiting for Him to fulfill His promises. Hold on until your time comes. God is never late; He is always on time.

Psalm 27.14 "Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the LORD."

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