

The Books Left Behind in the Fire

By

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Characters:

Hooper - a professor

Fiona - a librarian

The scene is set in a major metropolis public library like the New York Public Library. However, it could potentially take place at any library.

It is the apocalypse. Snow piles up outside from months of nonstop blizzard. The world has come to a stand-still and the end of times seems to be upon us. There has been no communication with the outside world and the inhabitants of this library might be all that's left.

There are books scattered all over the room. Some are neatly stacked while others seem carelessly thrown aside. Books occupy shelves, chairs, tables, the floor... they are everywhere. It's an organized mess.

There is no electricity and no heat. It's cold. The stage is illuminated by candles and portable lamps.

Fiona calls from off stage...

FIONA

Professor?

She enters, bundled in a heavy coat, gloves, earmuffs.

FIONA

Professor, are you in here? Professor?

HOOPER

(off stage)

Who is it!?

FIONA

It's me.

She looks around the room, sees the books.

HOOPER

Who?

FIONA

Me!

(CONTINUED)

HOOPER

Who the hell is Me?

FIONA

You know God damn well who Me is.

*She begins searching through the books,
frustrated, she knocks over a pile.*

FIONA

I swear if you do not show your face this very second,
I will gut you like a pig.

*The Professor appears from another room also in a
heavy coat and gloves.*

HOOPER

Well well, if the prodigal librarian hasn't returned.

FIONA

What the hell have you been doing with my books?

HOOPER

I've come up with a new system for organizing.

She looks at the book in her hand.

FIONA

This book is three floors and sixty seven call numbers
away from it's rightful place.

HOOPER

How specific.

FIONA

Habit I suppose.

HOOPER

The new system separates books worth saving and books
that might be okay to burn.

FIONA

We decided there will be no burning of the books.

HOOPER

That was before-

FIONA

No book burning.

HOOPER

Winter is getting colder, we have already burned up
nearly all the furniture. Trees are nowhere to be

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOOPER (cont'd)
found. I'm not saying we start burning them now, but we should be prepared and separate romance novels from Shakespeare.

FIONA
No book burning!

HOOPER
Fine, we will swing round back to this subject when we are dying from hypothermia. Why are you here?

She holds out two frozen burritos.

FIONA
A peace offering.

HOOPER
I guess we should feel very lucky the staff lounge was stocked with frozen burritos.

FIONA
And this...

She pulls a bottle of vodka from her belt.

HOOPER
And the janitor's closet filled with Vodka.

FIONA
I miss you.

HOOPER
You do?

She nods. Pours two shots as they talk.

HOOPER
How many days has it been?

FIONA
Three.

HOOPER
Where have you been?

FIONA
Philosophy and Literature.

HOOPER
It's lonely down there.

She nods. Hands him a vodka.

FIONA
Cheers.

HOOPER
Cheers.

*They drink. She pours him another. He's suspicious
of her actions.*

FIONA
I need to apologize for the other day.

HOOPER
I think we both know that it's me who should apologize.

FIONA
Yes, that's true, but I said some things I regret. I
was angry. So I apologize.

HOOPER
Thank you.

They lift up their glasses 'clink' and drink.

*She waits for a moment. Maybe he will apologize
too? But he does not.*

FIONA
So... I've been reading a lot of books on feminism
lately and and I think it definitely contributed to the
misunderstanding that we had.

HOOPER
Oh sure, and it's been crowding your mind with ideas.

FIONA
Um.. No. I mean yes. If by 'ideas' you mean 'wisdom'
then yes, but when you say it like that is sounds
nefarious.

HOOPER
Well, I guess it depends on which books your reading
because a lot of feminists are man-haters. I mean, I
don't think they intend to be but I think it comes from
a misunderstanding of the definition of feminism.

FIONA
I don't think we should talk about this again.

HOOPER
That definition being, the advocacy of women's rights
on the bases of equality of the sexes. Professional,
educational and social equality.

FIONA

That is surprisingly accurate.

HOOPER

But a lot of people think it means that one gender should be held in power above another. And when strong angry female feminist start promoting that idea, it destroys everything the movement stands for.

FIONA

Okay fine but when you say things like 'man-hater' or 'angry female feminist' that's a triggering phrase and a careless assumption.

HOOPER

Is it? I didn't make them that way. It all started in the second wave of feminism which historically-

FIONA

Stop, I don't want to do this with you again! God just let me make my point please. I'm trying to apologize to you and all you want to do is lecture me. I'm not one of your students.

HOOPER

Fine, what's your point?

FIONA

My point is that I've come to the conclusion that you are not a chauvinist or a misogynist or racist, sexist, insensitive self serving single minded prick. You're just an asshole.

She doesn't wait to 'clink' and just downs her drink. Pours herself another one and drinks, ignoring him.

HOOPER

Cheers.

FIONA

God you make this so difficult.

HOOPER

I know. I do. I really do.

FIONA

I have a favor to ask.

HOOPER

You? Have a favor?

(CONTINUED)

FIONA

Did I stutter?

HOOPER

No I just never thought I'd see the day. I'm all ears.
What is it?

FIONA

I want us to make a baby.

Beat. Long Pause. He turns away, says nothing.

FIONA

Hello? I want you to help me make a baby.

HOOPER

No.

FIONA

No?

HOOPER

Did I stutter?

FIONA

But I thought? Three days ago you made a big speech
about how we need to repopulate. "It's up to us" and
"We could be human-kind's last hope"

HOOPER

I was just trying to get in your pants.

FIONA

Well that's stupid. You've been in my pants. Many
times. You're always in my pants.

HOOPER

But we got in a fight. And you took your little
princess away from me. I got lonely and I was trying to
get her back.

FIONA

So all that talk about being part of a greater
universal plan, "a new Eden, we might be the only ones
left on the planet and if we don't do something, human
existence might be forever forgotten."

HOOPER

A horny man's desperate attempts to get you to spread
your legs.

(CONTINUED)

FIONA

I don't believe you.

HOOPER

It's true.

FIONA

You said we were Adam and Eve in the garden all over again.

HOOPER

I really said that?

FIONA

You did.

HOOPER

I was drunk. You were drunk.

FIONA

It was a magnificent speech.

HOOPER

Yes, I don't have any reservations about that. I've always given a good lecture. However, I feel that you had several very good counter arguments.

FIONA

I was just being practical.

HOOPER

But you're right. We live in a post apocalyptic library. We don't have a proper place to deliver a child. We're running out of food. If this is the plan of a higher power, I don't think God would leave us so unprepared.

FIONA

I don't believe in God.

HOOPER

Neither do I. You want to raise a child in a Godless home?

FIONA

What if that's the point? Maybe the world fucked it up last time with religion and now we have a chance to do it all over again without God in the picture.

HOOPER

I'm just not entirely certain it's our responsibility. Maybe there are other couples in other libraries in other cities around the world. There is no way in hell it could just be up to us.

(CONTINUED)

FIONA

Did you call us a couple?

HOOPER

Did I?

FIONA

You did.

HOOPER

I didn't mean it like that. I meant two people. Like a pairing. Not a pair but a match. Not a match but a team. Of two. A couple of random people thrown together accidentally to see if they could survive on nothing by burritos, books and booze... what are you doing?

She approaches him, seductively.

FIONA

What are you afraid of?

HOOPER

I'm not afraid of anything. I would attach a tiger right now if it walked in this room.

She drapes herself over a chair, slips down into the seat and spreads her legs.

FIONA

You don't want this?

HOOPER

Stop it. Did you hear me? A tiger! I'm fearless.

FIONA

Come on daddy.

HOOPER

Oh, when you say it like that... gross.

She picks up a burrito and takes a bit, sensually.

FIONA

Daddy... make me a mommy.

HOOPER

Christ, all you ever want to do is fuck and eat burritos.

FIONA

But this time I want you to finish by making me a baby.

(CONTINUED)

HOOPER

Listen, don't take this the wrong way but you and I are the last people on the planet who should be reproducing.

FIONA

But what if we are the last people on the planet?

HOPPER

We don't know that.

FIONA

We haven't seen anybody in over eight months. Please?

HOOPER

I don't think we should.

She grabs him by the shirt, spins him round, sets him in the chair, sits on his lap, face to face.

FIONA

Pretty please?

A moment passes. He changes his tone and shows real concern.

HOOPER

What if something goes wrong? You know, in the pregnancy. What if something terrible happens. I could lose you. I don't think I could live if I lose you.

She kisses him.

FIONA

You wont lose me.

HOOPER

But what if I do.

She cups her hand over his mouth.

FIONA

You wont. I promise. Now lets try and make a baby.

Beat. He subsides and nods his head.

She removes her hand and they kiss again.

Lights Out.