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Plague Play

By
ERIN PROCTOR

Based on the book of Exodus, chapters 7-11

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ERIN PROCTOR

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Plague Play was premiered by LakehouseRanchDotPNG at Artistic Vibes (Miami) on Aug. 18, 2023.

CAST:

MIRIAM Ruki Etti
AARON Jedhi Weir
MOSES Kyran Wright
TZIPPORAH..... Lucy Marie Lopez

PRODUCTION:

Director Brandon Urrutia
Scenic design Indy Sulliero
Sound & Costume Design..... Maleeha Naseer
Lighting Design Leonardo Urbina
Stage Manager/Assistant Director Bianca Utset
Dramaturg Rosalind Elise Parenzan

The play received its New York premiere at IATI Theatre in association with LakehouseRanchDotPNG on April 25, 2024.

CAST:

MIRIAM Mia Soriano
AARON Mark Yowakim
MOSES Samekh Resh
TZIPPORAH..... Samantha Morato

PRODUCTION:

Director Brandon Urrutia
Scenic Designer Donnie Woodard
Sound Design Maleeha Naseer
Costume Design Sabrina Ehrnstein
Lighting Design Zac Zwart
Production Manager..... Adam Wassilchalk
Stage Manager Karlie Robinson
Dramaturg Danielle Breitstein
Producers..... Matthew B. Cullen, Angelica McEwan,
Daniel Wilde and Shania Benjamin

Plague Play

CHARACTERS

MOSES: A Hebrew-born, Egyptian-raised Midianite transplant. It's complicated. Granted with the ability to see what is to come. *The Simple Child*.

AARON: An enslaved Hebrew. Moses' older brother. His body is used as a vessel to bring forth the plagues. Always the pessimist. *The Wicked Child*.

MIRIAM: An enslaved Hebrew. Moses' older sister and Aaron's twin. Has an innate sense of hope. Always the optimist. *The Wise Child*.

TZIPPORAH: A Midianite. Moses' wife and sister-in-law to Aaron and Miriam. Kind of just along for the ride. *The Child Who Does Not Know How to Ask*.

SETTING: Goshen, a Hebrew village on the outskirts of Memphis in Ancient Egypt.

PACING NOTE: Each line is a new breath.

SCENES

1. *Dam* - Blood - מד
2. *Tzfardeya* - Frog - עדרפצ
3. *Kinim* - Lice - מיניכ
4. *Arov* - Wild Beasts - בורע
5. *Dever* - Pestilence - רבד
6. *Shechin* - Boils - ויחש
7. *Barad* - Hail - דרב
8. *Arbeh* - Locusts - הברא
9. *Choshech* - Darkness - וישוח
10. *Makkat Bechorot* - Death of the Firstborn - תורוכב תכמ
11. *Acharit Daver* - Epilogue - רבד תירחא

Plague Play

1. *Dam - Blood* - דם

(MIRIAM drinks from TZIPPORAH's canteen. They are sitting at the banks of the Nile. They are waiting.)

MIRIAM. It's strange to call the brown waters of Goshen cleaner than the blood-red waters of the River Nile.

TZIPPORAH. Do you think it's actually blood?

MIRIAM. It looks like blood.

It clots like blood.

The way it congeals on the banks of the river.

Look at this.

TZIPPORAH. Miriam, don't touch it!

MIRIAM. Look as how I dip my foot in,

The blood clears away,

Leaving a ring of clean water around my ankle.

TZIPPORAH. Holy shit.

MIRIAM. You try.

TZIPPORAH. I'm not touching that.

MIRIAM. Something is protecting us.

(MIRIAM grabs TZIPPORAH's wrist and shoves it in the water.

TZIPPORAH screams, but the blood of the river clears away for her too.)

TZIPPORAH. It must be why the waters of Goshen have been left untainted.

I wonder when they'll return.

MIRIAM. Moses and Aaron?

TZIPPORAH. I worry.

I fear the worst.

MIRIAM. You know they will return.

TZIPPORAH. Alive, yes.

But what if they're hurt?

What if they've gotten into some sort of altercation?

What if this is some sort of omen?

MIRIAM. They know what they're doing.

TZIPPORAH. Do they?

MIRIAM. Moses knows what he's doing?

TZIPPORAH. What if they've been jailed?!

MIRIAM. They're fine.

TZIPPORAH. I don't know what I believed when—

(AARON comes running in through the shallows.

The blood from the river does not touch him. He looks shook.)

AARON. Holy shit holy fuck holy shit holy FUCK!

Miriam!

(AARON hugs MIRIAM.)

MIRIAM. You're soaking wet!

AARON. There's no blood on me, right?!

MIRIAM. Just water. You're soaked to the skin, Aaron.

AARON. I didn't know I could do this.

TZIPPORAH. Wait

You did this?

AARON. I touched the river and next thing you know

BOOM! BLOOD!

EVERYTHING IS BLOOD!

Except for when I ...

(AARON puts his hand in the water.)

AARON *(cont'd)*. No blood?!

TZIPPORAH. Where is my husband?!

AARON. Shit.

Moses?!

MOSES *(offstage)*. MAYBE IF YOU WOULD FUCKING SLOW DOWN!

AARON. He's coming, he's coming.

(AARON stares at his hands.)

AARON *(cont'd)*. Oh my fucking God ...

(MOSES enters, also soaking wet. TZIPPORAH runs to him and embraces him.)

MOSES. Tzipporah!

TZIPPORAH. They didn't hurt you, did they?

MOSES. They didn't have the chance to.

AARON. Because we jumped ship and swam back here.

And they were too terrified to even set foot in this ...

Water?

Blood water? Blood?

It's definitely blood.

MIRIAM. You jumped ship?!

MOSES. And it didn't get on us at all!

AARON. No.

MOSES *(picks up AARON and spins him around)*. You genius.
You bloody fucking genius!

AARON. Please put me down.

MOSES. Oh my God, you should've seen him!

He was like— (*Waves his hand over the water.*)

Boom!

Blood!

AARON. Yeah it was more or less like that ...

MOSES. And everyone freaked the FUCK OUT!

And then we were handcuffed.

But the cuffs were no match for our tiny little Levite wrists!

(MOSES waits for AARON to give him a high-five, but AARON is disassociating.)

MOSES (*cont'd*). Broski?

AARON. I did that.

(AARON sits on the banks of the river. He watches as the clear water washes against him in gentle waves.)

AARON (*cont'd*). How far has the blood traveled?

Has it reached Goshen?

MIRIAM. Goshen seems to be the only place not affected.

Thank, God.

AARON. Like not at all?

TZIPPORAH. We have the only clean water this side of the Nile.

And I wouldn't even call it clean.

But I would call it cleaner than whatever this is.

AARON. Oh wow.

TZIPPORAH. How did you do it?

AARON. I'm not sure

I kind of blacked out.

MOSES. It was like—

A powerful possession.

It was like—

I looked into Aaron's eyes and no one was home.

MIRIAM. Do you think?

MOSES. I've no other explanation.

Let's go PROPHET!

(MOSES holds out his hand for AARON to high-five.)

MOSES (*cont'd*). Come on bro, don't leave me hanging.

(AARON gives MOSES a very sad high-five.)

AARON. But you foresaw nine more disasters.

MOSES. Yes?

AARON. They're going to come from my hands?

MOSES. Well not technically—

But also—

Yeah, technically?

AARON. Moses, I don't like this.

MIRIAM. Nine more disasters?

MOSES. I dreamed of plagues.

Ten distinct plagues.

This is the first.

They're supposed to make the Pharaoh relent and give in to our requests.

Hopefully, we'll only have to use this one!

AARON. I don't want to make any more.

MIRIAM. Well, the Pharaoh will soon realize that there is no clean drinking water for his entire kingdom and relent.

Right?

AARON. Don't look at me!

Moses is the one with the whole future-vision shit.

MOSES. I mean it's the most logical outcome.

A good king like Rameses isn't going to starve out his population.

AARON. Good king?

MOSES. He's a good king. A good man. I know him to be.

AARON. I feel like if he listened to our requests the first time then we wouldn't have had to go all supernatural on his ass?

MOSES. His heart's been hardened.

But he can change his mind.

I'm sure this will change his mind.

AARON. Good king? I feel sick.

This is the man who chained us to the side of his ship.

Called us filthy Hebrew swine!

MOSES. It's just banter.

AARON. I don't understand how you're so unaffected by this.

MOSES. Everything is going according to plan!

MIRIAM. You look like you need rest, Aaron.

AARON. I need to sleep for ten years.

MOSES. We'll need to be well-rested for when we confront the Pharaoh again tomorrow.

AARON. You think he's gonna change his mind tomorrow?!

MOSES. OK, we'll give him a week.

I bet he'll come crawling to us. Begging.

"Oh please, turn the blood machine off."

AARON. Blood machine?

MOSES. My brother: the blood machine!

TZIPPORAH. Let's wash you with the fresher waters in Goshen.

(MOSES kisses TZIPPORAH and exits.

AARON waits until they are completely out of sight.

He turns to MIRIAM and screams.)

AARON. AHHHHHHHHH!

MIRIAM. AHHHHHHHHH??

(AARON jumps up and down in the water.

He is watching the blood disappear as the water splashes against him.)

AARON. AHHHHHHHH!!

MIRIAM. WHY ARE YOU SCREAMING?!

AARON. I'm scared, Mir.

I'm scared fucking SHITLESS!

I did this.

All of the water in Egypt,

Save for Goshen,

Is BLOOD!

It's motherfucking blood!

Look at it!

MIRIAM. I see.

AARON. I did this! I created this!

MIRIAM. God did.

AARON. THROUGH ME!

LIKE A PUPPET!

MIRIAM. Moses said things will turn out—

AARON. MOSES DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE FUCK
HE'S TALKING ABOUT!

MIRIAM. Things will work out in the End.

AARON. Ah yes. In the END. Emphasis on END!

But what about in the here and now?!

In the here and now, I am a harbinger of disaster, Miriam!

MIRIAM. Miracles.

AARON. I'm not classifying this as a miracle.

2. *Tzfardeya* - Frog - עדרפצ

(MOSES admires a frog.)

MOSES. Hey there, little fella.

I wonder where you manifested from.

Aaron's right hand?

Or his left?

Maybe his foot?

Or his ear?

You're cute.

A cute little guy.

I don't know if Aaron fucked up

But I don't think I could classify this as a plague.

You're just a cute little frog guy.

A little ribbit ribbit boy.

Just vibing on your little lily pad.

Not bothering no one.

(TZIPPORAH is heard screaming offstage.)

MOSES *(cont'd)*. TZIPPY?!!

(TZIPPORAH enters.)

TZIPPORAH. FROGS IN MY HAIR!

FROGS IN MY HAIR!

(TZIPPORAH sits down next to MOSES.)

TZIPPORAH *(cont'd)*. CHECK MY HAIR FOR FROGS!

MOSES. There are no frogs in your hair, love.

TZIPPORAH. I saw an Egyptian woman covered head to toe in frogs!

MOSES. If this is anything like the last plague, then we should remain unaffected and unharmed.

TZIPPORAH. WHY FROGS?!

MOSES. Can't answer that one.

TZIPPORAH. Every time I hear a ribbit I have a little heart attack.

MOSES. Are you scared of frogs?

TZIPPORAH. No!

But I don't particularly like them!

MOSES. I used to always want a pet frog as a kid.

My mom would never let me.

Thought it wasn't appropriate for a prince to keep such a disgusting creature.

But they're not disgusting.

Look at this guy's little frog face!

TZIPPORAH. Well, now your mom's chamber is probably filled to the brim with frogs.

MOSES. I wonder how she is.

Rameses refuses to let me see her.

Told me that she was no longer my mother.

TZIPPORAH. He doesn't have the power to un-mother your mother.

MOSES. Said I should find solace with my Hebrew mother.

Just like I've found solace with my Hebrew brother and no longer need him.

But joke's on him! She's been dead!

So now he must take my adopted one from me too, I guess.

TZIPPORAH. Oh, Moses.

MOSES. I wonder if she even knows I'm alive.

I wonder if she knows that I'm the one who has brought these strange blights to our—

I mean her nation.

I wonder what propaganda has been spread about me?

If I'm just another rowdy Hebrew to them?

Causing up a major fuss.

For all I know,

Rameses could've told her that I died out in the desert.

That I didn't last a week into my banishment.

That for these past ten years instead of building a life for myself, I've been dead in the ground.

You know he was happy to see me at first.

He was.

TZIPPORAH. You told me.

MOSES. He offered me back my title.

My rank.

A place in his court.

But then took that all away when I told him why I was really here.

TZIPPORAH. If it's any solace

You have three people who love you here in Goshen.

And a whole village of people who love you back in Midian.

You're very well loved, Moses.

MOSES. My own people here in Goshen don't really give much of a shit about me.

All of their questions and qualms seem to always go straight to Aaron.

TZIPPORAH. That's because they know him.

They haven't gotten the chance to know you yet.

But when they do,

You will be adored.

MOSES. I don't even want to be adored.

I just want to be given the time of day is all.

(MIRIAM enters with a pot full of frogs. She empties it into the river.)

MIRIAM. WHY FROGS?!

MOSES. Oh Mir,

Don't tell me you hate frogs!

MIRIAM. I don't like them when they're all in my everywhere!

(AARON enters with a broom, sweeping frogs across the stage.)

AARON. They've got dart frogs closer to the palace.

MOSES. Our little guys are cute and harmless.

MIRIAM. They're a nuisance!

This is just a big nuisance!

AARON. Listen,

I did not expect frogs to spontaneously shoot out of my hands yesterday, OK?

MOSES. I thought it was pretty cool.

AARON. Water is drinkable again

But not so drinkable when there are frogs consistently crawling out of your cup.

MOSES. I think this is the one that's gonna break him.

He's gonna choke on a frog and be like—

OK FINE!