

39 Hours

A One-Act Play by Tracy Coyle

Approximate running time: 35–40 minutes

Characters

THE MAN — newly arrived, luminous, disoriented

ASRITH — one who waits

WEIYOU — one who waits

RUNNER — one who clings to pain

VOICES — optional ensemble

Setting

A dark plain outside ordinary time. A faint glow rests permanently on the horizon. The ground has no clear substance. There are no stars, no moon, and no visible source of warmth.

Scene One — Evening

Darkness.

Long silence.

THE MAN lies center stage.

THE MAN

It is done.

He closes his eyes.

Silence.

Then he opens them.

[internal dialogue] The pain is gone.

He sits up slowly.

[internal dialogue] No fading. No gradual lessening. Just gone.

He stands.

A distant murmur of voices.

[internal dialogue] Voices... but where?

A faint rustling behind him.

A whisper at his ear.

ASRITH (unseen)

You glow.

THE MAN turns sharply and loses his footing but does not fall.

THE MAN

What others?

ASRITH (unseen)

The others that glow.

THE MAN

Why?

ASRITH (unseen)

Don't you know?

THE MAN looks at his hands and feet.

THE MAN

I have my Father with me.

ASRITH (unseen)

No, you are alone.

THE MAN

He is with me always.

ASRITH (unseen)

He is not, nor am I.

THE MAN collapses inward, clutching himself.

ASRITH (unseen)

If you continue you will join the others.

A scream erupts through the darkness.

RUNNER (offstage)

NO! NO! IT'S MINE! MINE!

A figure rushes across the stage.

RUNNER

MINE I tell you! MINE!

THE MAN steps toward him.

ASRITH (unseen)

No! Don't do that!

The RUNNER slams into THE MAN. Both fall.

RUNNER

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? TRYING TO TAKE IT AWAY? IT'S MINE! LEAVE ME ALONE!

The RUNNER tears free and runs into darkness.

RUNNER (fading)

FOREVER MINE!

Silence returns.

ASRITH (unseen)

What were you trying to do?

THE MAN

He was in pain.

ASRITH (unseen)

So were you.

ASRITH (unseen)

You're glowing again.

THE MAN

But he—

ASRITH (unseen)

He wanted his pain.

THE MAN

What is your name?

ASRITH (unseen)

Name?

THE MAN

Yes.

ASRITH (unseen)

I had a name...

THE MAN

Asrith.

ASRITH slowly becomes visible.

ASRITH

How do you know my name when I cannot remember it?

THE MAN

I am.

Scene Two — Morning

A faint gray light along the horizon.

WEIYOU (unseen)

Is he the one?

ASRITH

Maybe.

THE MAN

How long have you been here?

ASRITH

Time has no meaning here.

THE MAN

There is another beside you.

ASRITH

He does not remember his name.

THE MAN

I know him. He is Weiyou.

WEIYOU appears.

WEIYOU

It is him!

THE MAN

Who am I?

WEIYOU

You are the one who will end the night.

Scene Three — Afternoon

ASRITH

How?

THE MAN

Why would I end the night?

WEIYOU

So that we might wake up.

ASRITH

Except the runners.

WEIYOU

Runners. Always runners.

THE MAN

Do they always run away from the horizon?

WEIYOU

Yes.

ASRITH

Their pain becomes yours.

THE MAN

I called it sin.

ASRITH

Pain. Sin. The same.

THE MAN touches ASRITH.

WEIYOU

What have you done?

ASRITH begins to glow.

Scene Four — Evening

WEIYOU

My daughter. I see her in you.

WEIYOU

You are the one. You will end the night.

ASRITH

We can wait.

[internal dialogue] Judas.

ASRITH

You knew him.

THE MAN

I did.

ASRITH

His pain is his choice.

WEIYOU

Why did you not keep your pain?

THE MAN

Because it was PAIN!

WEIYOU

What are you waiting for?

Scene Five — Morning

The horizon begins to brighten.

THE MAN

You have been good friends.

WEIYOU

How much time have you spent with us so far?

THE MAN kneels toward the horizon.

THE MAN

My Father...

A voice answers.

VOICE

My Son...

Dawn breaks across the stage.

Blackout.

End of Play