

# The War That Could Almost Drink

by

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## Characters

George – An arms dealer/lobbyist. Middle-aged. Depressed. Male.

Karl – A political consultant. Middle-aged. Hopeful. Male.

**Scene** – A bar with a television playing the news in a corner.

**At Rise:** George sits at the bar slumped over, looking disheveled. Next to him is Karl. More put together, but nonetheless somber. On a television a politician speaks from a podium. The Breaking News headline says: President Announces Decision to End Longest War.

GEORGE                    I mean, why would he do that?

KARL                        Well, it had to end eventually.

GEORGE                    It's not right. It's not fucking right.

KARL                        I was a great run. Come on. We did good work.

GEORGE                    I was just getting into my stride.

KARL                        That stalemate was rather inspired from you.

GEORGE                    I mean, have they considered the ramifications?

KARL                        There'll be other wars.

GEORGE                    Not like this one. No. Not at all like this one.

KARL                        Look...

GEORGE                    What's happened to us, huh? It used to be—that we could get into wars for centuries. Our tribal impulses would dictate that we continue until the enemy was eradicated.

KARL                        They don't make them like the Hatfields and McCoys anymore.

GEORGE                    You're right there. They just don't make 'em like they used to.

KARL                        We've mellowed out.

GEORGE                    It's a disgrace. It's a fucking disgrace. They used to be called the Hundred Years War, and—and like, the...

KARL                        The Reconquista?

GEORGE Yes! Now *there* was a war! Almost 800 years! Generations. Nearly a millennium of violence. God, what I would give for the halcyon days of making war because some Italian guy wanted us to kill brown people.

KARL I mean that's almost like what we did.

GEORGE It's not the same and you know it.

KARL You gotta try to look at the bright side.

GEORGE What's the bright side, huh? Huh??

KARL Well...it's a time to maybe pivot. Reinvent ourselves, ya know?

**Silence. George quivers. He tries to stifle a sob.**

KARL George. George...hey...hey, champ. No, no, no. Don't—don't cry.

GEORGE I'm sorry...I'm just...

KARL I know. I know. It's scary.

GEORGE I mean...it's...

KARL What's going on? Like really. What's happening?

GEORGE It's stupid...

KARL No it's not. You listen to me now. Your feelings are valid. You understand? Unless you talk about what's bothering you, you can't get past it.

GEORGE I...I don't know if I got it in me to do it all over again...

KARL ...what?

GEORGE I...what if I've lost my mojo?

KARL That doesn't make any sense. Come on.

GEORGE No, Karl, it's true. I'm not as young as I was. What if the spark's not there anymore?

KARL Nonsense, that's nonsense.

GEORGE But—

KARL No. I won't even entertain it. Who was the one that supplied the weapons to the rebels in the first place and called them freedom fighters until we had to fight them?

GEORGE Me...

KARL And who got so much funneled into the war that we literally could not sell anymore products to the government and they had to waste it on nothing?

GEORGE Me...

KARL That caused a political firestorm!

GEORGE It did...

KARL And who orchestrated the creation of a massive private army to keep death toll counts artificially low so we could keep the war going?

GEORGE Me.

KARL And who just put us through the longest war in this country's history, costing this country trillions of dollars and enriching us beyond measure?

GEORGE Me! I did! I fucking did that!

KARL And you're trying to tell me that you might've lost that magic? C'mon. Really? You're just getting started, my man.

GEORGE You're right!

KARL You're damn right I am, George. The end of the war should be a celebration. Mission accomplished. We set records on this one. This war's the benchmark. We just blew the Vietnam War outta the water.

GEORGE We did, didn't we?

KARL Hell yeah.

GEORGE                    You know what? Thanks, Karl. Man, you always know what to say to lift my spirits.

KARL                      That's what friends are for, George.

GEORGE                   But damn, it's still sad.

KARL                      I know. It's a bittersweet ending to a beautiful thing.

GEORGE                   Not even that. Just...

KARL                      What?

GEORGE                   If we had just waited one more year the war would've been old enough to drink.

KARL                      Ah damn...

GEORGE                   The jokes that could've been made.

KARL                      The road not taken.

GEORGE                   The war that could almost drink.

KARL                      It's a shame.

GEORGE                   The lost possibilities.

KARL                      Next war we do, we'll get it to the legal drinking age.

GEORGE                   Yeah? You got some leads?

KARL                      Well...actually...did you hear they deployed like 25,000 troops to the Capitol?

GEORGE                   No. That many?

KARL                      We only had like...

GEORGE                   Twenty-five hundred troops over in Afghanistan at the end of it.

KARL                      Exactly. So, I'm thinking. This whole political divide. Might be really good for some business.

GEORGE            You're not suggesting...?

KARL                I am.

GEORGE            Oh my God...

KARL                I mean, the pieces are all there.

GEORGE            This is how we reinvent ourselves.

KARL                But to do it right, I need my old partner.

**Beat. George is touched.**

GEORGE            You mean it, Karl?

KARL                George, I can't think of anyone I'd rather have by my side as we bring down a superpower.

GEORGE            I love you, man.

KARL                I love you, too.

GEORGE            Let's destroy this country.

KARL                Together.

GEORGE            Always.

**They stand up. George a little unsteadily, but Karl, ever the supportive best friend, catches George and steadies him. Their eyes meet. They smile and exit. On the television images of rioters at the Capitol then soldiers stationed about, protests all over the country, and political pundits delivering talking points rapidly play.**

*End of Play*