

"Blue Suede Shoes"

a film script for Tasmanian Gothic Script Challenge,
March 4-6, 2016.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

STORY BEGINS with black image, silence. After a few seconds an unseen PELTON "PELVIS" WESLEY, 30s, overweight, is WAKING from sleep. As he grunts and snuffles, his MOTHER, 60-ish, shouts from somewhere distant in the house.

MOTHER (O/S)
 (in distance, hard, rasping voice)
 Pelton! You still in bed, boy?
 Pelton! Time to move yourself!

Unseen, Pelvis grunts and groans a little louder.

PELVIS (V/O)
 (mumbling, groaning, sniffing)
 Ohhh! Errgh! Whazzat. Is the sun
 up already? Hell!

INT. PELVIS'S MAN CAVE - LATER, SAME MORNING

Semi-darkness. SOUND of a DOOR OPENING, and CLICK of a LIGHT SWITCH. Subdued light FLICKERS on. The room is an homage to Elvis Presley. Photos and posters of Elvis, artefacts, clothing and bric-a-brac are spread throughout - LP and 45rpm records, movie DVDs, cassettes, CDs, pop books, magazines, Elvis toys, dolls and games, and a photo propped up of Pelvis wearing 1970s Elvis garb outside Gracelands, bearing the inscription, "To Pelvis Wesley, with fond regards, Graceland Foundation".

One of the Elvis objects in the room is a small, white model coffin with a closed lid, with miniature golden grip bars. The coffin is raised on a little dais, and around it are blobs of plastic flowers. This all sits on a shelf display. Small LIGHT GLOBES point down towards the coffin. These lights are off.

As we move in for a closer view, Pelvis's hands reach towards the coffin - we can see the edges of sequined shirt sleeves at his wrists. The hands open a small box projecting from the edge of the dais behind the flowers, to insert power batteries. The hands disappear, there is another CLICK, and the two globes cast a red glow over the coffin.

PELVIS (O/S)
 (softly, impersonating Elvis's voice)
 Wake up, little man! It's a biiiig
 day for both of us.

There is a faint CRACKLY, HISSING noise of a cheap audio recording starting to play, then a TINNY rendering of ELVIS PRESLEY singing *LOVE ME TENDER*, emanating from the coffin.

Within a few seconds the coffin lid begins to slide open, REVEALING a small MODEL FIGURINE of Elvis when he was a young man, wearing a groovy black 1950s bomber jacket, lying prone, flat on his back in the coffin.

As the voice of Elvis sings, the figurine appears to wake up, and, slowly to sit up in the coffin, unwinding and spreading his arms out wide as though in full song, and opening and closing his mouth.

PELVIS (O/S)

(nearby, muttering in his own voice)
You'll never die, man. You are da king.

MOTHER (O/S)

(outside room, hard voice)
Pelton! Are you talking to that awful plastic coffin again? I can hear it.

Suddenly there is a GRINDING noise from the recording, and *Love Me Tender* is interrupted. Puff of smoke. The Elvis figurine seizes up, gaping mouth, arms akimbo, then collapses backwards into the coffin. The red globes go out. Pelvis's body looms into view, dressed in a flamboyant Elvis costume - he crouches over the display, silhouetted.

PELVIS

(shocked)
Oh, god! What happened? Elvis!
Damn, this thing cost three hundred dollars!

MOTHER (O/S)

(outside room, raised voice)
Pelton! What's wrong in there? Is something burning?

Pelvis standing with his back to us, head bowed over the figurine display.

MOTHER (O/S)

(outside room, raised voice)
Pelton?

Elvis slowly looks away, picks up a FLYER from a table, stares at it.

PELVIS
 (quietly to Mother outside room)
 Nothing, Ma. Junior just left the
 building, that's all. [SIGHS] And
 I gotta go -

Pelvis is looking at the flyer which announces "Elvis Impersonators Convention, 10 a.m., February 5-6, Hobart Hall".

PELVIS (CONT.)
 (speaking to himself)
 - to the wake.

EXT. HOBART HALL - LATER, SAME DAY

Outside the front entrance to an old, decrepit double-storey building with the name "Hobart Hall, 1881" engraved over the entrance doors. A display board nearby announces the Elvis Impersonators Annual Convention.

A collection of male and female Elvis impersonators, young and old, are standing around, walking in and out of the entrance. Two big American 1950s-model automobiles are parked to the side. From within the hall, in the distance, comes the echoing sound of an Elvis hit, *BURNING LOVE*.

As we move closer, two in the crowd start waving - HOUND DOG, a man in his 30s, and TEDDY, a woman, also 30s.

HOUND DOG
 (shouting, happy)
 It's The Pelvis! Hey, man, over
 here, Pelton!

TEDDY
 (Happy, using her Elvis voice)
 Whoo hoo! Here he is, my pudgy
 Pelly!

Pelvis walks towards them. In his 1970s costume he is looking less enthused than he should. They embrace.

Meanwhile in the near background an extremely OLD ELVIS impersonator on a walking stick is hobbling slowly past the three, wispy hair, gaunt face. He is dressed in the same style as Pelvis's coffin Elvis. He may be eavesdropping.

PELVIS

Hey, guys.

TEDDY

(Elvis voice)

Hey-yay - what's with the long
face, my little honey-child?

PELVIS

(downcast)

I prob'ly burnt Junior to death
this morning with a dud battery.

Hound Dog and Teddy look askance at Pelvis, lost for words. Old Elvis has hobbled closer, with a GRIM EXPRESSION, staring hard at Pelvis. The three notice his proximity, and silently stare at him for a moment. Old Elvis turns his back on them and fades from view.

HOUND DOG

(low Elvis voice)

Whoo! What was that! That's the
oldest Elvis I ever seen. Maybe
even older than Elvis - hisself!

TEDDY

(Elvis voice)

Hush now, Hound Dog, they say he
turns up at all the conventions.

HOUND DOG

Who says? I never heard that.

TEDDY

No one knows who he is.

Pelvis is distracted, staring off in the direction of Old Elvis.

Hound Dog takes Teddy's arm in a proprietary way, and steps towards the hall entrance.

HOUND DOG

Teddy Bear, let's go. [SINGS]
"Hunk a hunk a burning lurve." [TO
PELVIS] Comin', Pel? Stop
obsessin'. That old fart is a
joke. Should'a been put down in
his coffin decades ago. Let's have
some fun, man. I wanna see that
wax Elvis dummy they got inside.

They all turn and begin walking to the entrance.

PELVIS
(concerned, intrigued)
What dummy, man?

TEDDY
You won't see it until later this
afternoon - it's still locked up.

They disappear up the steps and through the doorway. From somewhere within in the distance we hear the echoing tones of *Burning Love* fading away to silence.

INT. CONVENTION ROOM IN HOBART HALL - LATER, SAME DAY

Large crowd. On stage there's a Q&A in progress, indistinguishable talking and laughing. Pelvis, Hound Dog and Teddy are standing together, looking at wall photos of Elvis at various stages of life and career, exhibits of clothing, clips of movies running on screens.

A MASTER OF CEREMONIES comes on stage.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
(Into microphone, Elvis impersonation)
Hope y'll havin' a good time,
folks - hey, this aint no
heartbreak hotel, eh? [SHOUTS FROM
CROWD] Yeah, that's right, you
scrungy third-rate impersonators.
Hey, don' go away - we got some
real special guests lined up...

While he is prattling on we are SLOWLY MOVING IN on Pelvis, and the MCs commentary is SLOWLY FADING DOWN. Pelvis is beginning to look uneasy, glancing up, away, around, while beside him Hound Dog and Teddy are engrossed, not taking any notice of him.

A QUIET VOICE intrudes, an OLD MAN, calling to Pelvis.

OLD MAN (O/S)
(Quietly, Elvis voice, old)
Pelton... Pelton. Pelton Wesley..
Listen to me, stand up and follow
my voice. Follow...

Distracted, as though entranced, Pelvis arises. Surprised, Hound Dog and Teddy look at him.

HOUND DOG

Hey! Where you goin' man? You just got here.

TEDDY

Pel? Pel! What the hell?

PELVIS

(vague, distracted)

Ah - sorry, guys - I have to - ah - meet someone. Over there. I'll, I'll check you later.

Pelvis moves towards a door marked "EXIT", nudging people along the way, annoying them. He pushes his way through the door, which swings shut.

INT. SIDE PASSAGE IN HOBART HALL (CONT.)

It is darkened and gloomy in the passage. There are doorways leading off to rooms unknown. Pelvis stands, uncertain of where to go.

OLD MAN (O/S)

(Quietly, Elvis voice)

Where are you Pelton Wesley? Come, follow, follow me...

Pelvis follows the voice along the passage, until he comes to a closed door...

OLD MAN (O/S)

(Quietly, Elvis voice)

Stop, Pelton. Open the door. Come inside.

Pelvis slowly turns the door knob, opens the door, enters the room. Door closes behind him.

INT. A BACK ROOM IN HOBART HALL (CONT.)

Darkened, bare, but for a full-sized WHITE COFFIN. Pelvis stands inside the doorway, staring at it. He is calm, self-possessed. He approaches the coffin, stands over it.

PELVIS

(Quietly, Elvis impersonation voice)

Elvis, I am here.

Pelvis kneels at the coffin. Suddenly the coffin lid slides partly opens. Inside is a cadaverous waxen image of Elvis Presley. It is garbed in identical fashion to Pelvis's broken figurine, and Old Elvis. The waxen body abruptly sits up, its head leering at Pelvis, mouth agape. Two bony arms grab Pelvis around the shoulders and neck, and haul his balk into the coffin. Pelvis screams as he disappears. The coffin slams shut. Total silence for some seconds.

OLD MAN (O/S)
(Muffled, quiet, Elvis voice)
You killed me, Pelton.

PELVIS (O/S)
(Muffled, quiet)
Yes. I'm sorry, Elvis. The batteries were faulty.

As they talk, we slowly retreat from the coffin. Very quietly *Love Me Tender*, by Elvis Presley, begins to play.

OLD MAN (O/S)
(Muffled, quiet, Elvis voice)
You should have used those batteries first on the Everly Brothers doll your mother gave you for Christmas.

PELVIS (O/S)
(Muffled, quiet)
I don't like that doll, Elvis.

OLD MAN (O/S)
(Muffled, quiet, Elvis voice)
Man, that's what I'm saying!
And, please, don't crumple my blue suede shoes.

PELVIS (O/S)
(Muffled, quiet)
Oops, sorry, Elvis.

EXT. HOBART HALL - LATER, DAY

Love Me Tender rises in volume. Outside the main entrance one of the big 1950s American cars pulls away towards the foreground. As it slides slowly past, we see Old Elvis at the driver's seat, smiling benignly to himself.

THE END