

# Out Of This World

By Rammel Chan

## CAST

**A** - male identifying, late 50s or early 60s. Working class, rough around the edges, unhinged from loneliness, pining for some semblance of joy he knew from before.

**B** - female identifying young woman. College-age person of color. She is related to A and suffers from a secret she must tell him.

**Charles** - male identifying, human-sized robot mouse. The last of his kind. A relic who longs for oblivion with an open heart. Eloquent and poetic. Ignored when he speaks until he is not.

*Lights up on A and B entering A's garage. There is clutter about and a blanket covers something at the center of the room. They are mid conversation.*

A

Where do you have to be?

B

I just had some stuff to do today.

A

You always have stuff to do lately! I got us something.

B

Ok.

A

What's up with you! I said! I got us something!

B

Ok cool. What is it?

*A pulls off a blanket to reveal the uncanny reclined corpse of a stiff human-sized animatronic mouse, Charles.*

B

Oh my god. Is that...?

A  
Charles Entertainment Cheese! The one and only.

B  
My god.

Charles  
W-what is this? Who are you? Why am I here?

A  
Isn't it amazing?!

B  
I don't know.  
Charles  
I should not be here. The others are gone. I am the last of my kind.

A  
This is our youth.

B  
Not my youth.

Charles  
I long for oblivion with an open heart.

A  
We did Chuck E. Cheese for every birthday. Remember? I took you to your first Chuck E. Cheese when you were four. Your mom was mad at me because I didn't tell her? Remember? You love this.

B  
I don't know, it's kinda weird.

A  
No. You did. People did! But now they're getting rid of it. Can you believe that? Those bastards. "Farewell, Munch's Make Believe Band. Adios! Thanks for nothing!" Ingrates. We're an entirely different country. Changed atom by atom.

Charles  
We are not meant for here. Or for now. Our time had come and gone and yet...

B

So Chuck E. Cheese is getting rid of the robot band.

A

No more band, no more tokens. All kids want now is screens and digital dance floors and and and PAW PATROL! Fifteen years ago, this was the height of entertainment. Friday Night? Go to Chuck E. Cheese. Your life couldn'ta been better. But I guess nobody likes this now. Why?!

B

Cause / it's weird.

Charles

I feel / weird

A

Cause it's not bringing in enough MONEEEEEYY. It's all about the money to these people. Well money's not everything. There's still Beauty in the World. Goodness. Innocence. Hope!

Charles

I feel thin. Stretched. Like butter that has been scraped over too much bread.

B

So, they let you take this?

A

They didn't let me! I saved him.

B

You stole this... from Chuck E. Cheese?!

A

YES.

Charles

/YES.

B

God.

A

Don't "God". Don't "God". You sound like your mother when you say...

B

Why were you even at a Chuck E. Cheese?

A

...

Joyce was throwing Martin a birthday party and I went.

B

Oh. She invited you?

A

No. I heard about it. On the Facebook. Grandma posted.

B

Did they say hi?

A

Kinda. Martin was happy to see me. But. His new dad was there. So.

I went looking for the bathroom, so I walk in the back and that's where I saw him, B. They had already dismantled Pasquelly and Mr. Munch. Jasper Jowls and Helen, oh Helen. Oh that beautiful chicken. I had to take him, B. I had to save him. They can't take this away from us too!

B

Ok.

A

Help me put him back together?

Charles

Please God, no.

B

I don't know. I've got some stuff to do today.

A

What do you have to do everyday? You haven't come by in weeks. What you have to do, you can't put together a stolen robot mouse with your Uncle?

B

... Fine.

*B begins to help A gather up what's left of Charles.  
After some time.*

A

How can they just abandon him like this? I grieve for this country.

B

Here we go.

A

Everything's disposable! Things we used to love. There's so much we're losing every day. I just found out! They canceled Firefly! Radioshack. Gone. And Red Lobster, that's going away. Because I guess people think shrimp is woke.

B

Uh...

A

And now this. Charles. Kicked to the curb.

Charles

Another victim of the unrelenting waves of time.

A

I remember the day I took you. Do you remember? Your mom was so mad. I got you up at 6am and we drove to Grand Rapids. You slept in the truck. No CAR SEAT. We got there and it was like a temple of joy. A lighthouse of fun. We played pinball and ate pizza. We had a whole cheese pizza together ourselves. It was 9am. Then the band started up. And you got scared. You jumped. Started crying. But then I knelt down next to you and you leapt into my arms and you hugged me. Remember? And you turned around in my lap and you pointed at them and I told you all their names and you smiled at them.

B (surprised)

I do remember that.

A

Now I guess it's just garbage. The good old days that's what they're taking. We lose bits of ourselves. Every day. Every day they chip away at us. Atom by atom. And we wake up, we brush it off, it doesn't hurt, no skin off our teeth, RIGHT? but then one day... boom. You're not even the same person anymore. I don't even recognize you.

B

I'm... I'm still me.

*They tinker some more in silence.*

A  
Whatchu been up to?

B  
Just some stuff.

A  
Did you meet someone? A boy? A girl?

B  
I don't want to talk about that.

A  
You can tell me! I won't judge. I don't judge. I'm not a judger like some people.

...  
How's your mom?

B  
She's good.

A  
Did you tell her yet?

B  
Tell her what?

A  
The plan! About you coming to work at the shop? Before you go off to school.

B  
Oh. Um.

A  
Remember? The plan: you won't have to rush into any big decisions about college. I'll pay you. 5 dollars an hour. And we'd get to hang around all summer. We don't have any girls here. You'd be the first. Like Amelia Earhardt. It'd be a feminist thing!

B  
Yeah.

A  
It'd be fun. We'd have fun. You. Me. Charles.

B  
...Um...

A  
Let's plug him in! Try him out!

*They plug him in. Charles does a quick jolt and begins to sing "Out of this World", malfunctions and then writhes in painful finality. A goes to Charles to caress him like a man on a cross.*

A (simultaneous)  
COCKSUCKER!  
MOTHERFUCKER! Look at you, you poor bastard! They shred your soul too. They don't want you anymore! Because you don't fit into their perfect world. But I want you. I still want you goddammit!

A  
That's ...?

B  
In East Lansing.

A  
I know.

B  
Yeah.

A  
To do what exactly?

B

B  
I got into MSU.

A  
Huh?

B  
MSU.

Charles (simultaneous)

...  
/Why is living full of such

pain?

I beg you to give me to the emptiness! Let the vines grow within me and without! Let the water wash away what the world cannot cling to.

B (simultaneous)  
/...Uncle...

...Uncle, I have to tell you something.

...Uncle...!

Not sure yet. But I kinda figured I didn't want to stay in Empire anymore. I'm kinda excited to see what's down there for me.

A

Sure. Good. Good. Congratulations! Congrats! I guess you'll only be working here for a couple months then. Which is... fine.

B

Um. Well I actually was planning on just hanging out. And not really working this summer. All my friends... Casey's going to UCLA and Steph is moving to Richmond. It's our last summer. Together.

A

Cool. Cool. Coolcoolcoolcoolcool.

B

Uncle...

A



So this is goodbye?

...

When did you find out?

B

... A couple weeks. A month.

A (scoffs)

Kicked to the curb.

B

Come on.

A

Dismantled

In some back room.

B

This is exactly why I put off telling you.

A

Nice knowing you. Farewell, Munch's Make Believe Band.

B

I'm just going / to school!

A

Like sands through an hourglass. These are the days of our lives.

B

Seriously. Is this how you want to say goodbye?

A (to Charles)

She wants to know if this is how I want to say goodbye? What do you say to that, Charles?

What do you fucking say to that?

Charles

Say goodbye to the child.

B

You know... Mom told me I shouldn't even tell you. But I wanted to tell you. Because I want you to be proud of me. Because I love you.

A

/ Everything's disposable.

B

But you make it so fucking hard to do that! For everyone!

A

That's what they say?! It's hard to love me?

B

Who else can handle the ranting and raving?! On things that don't even track! I mean...*woke shrimp?!*

A

I saw it on a youtube!

B

I love you. I do. So, please don't make me feel bad for doing this. For wanting a life.

B & Charles

Just say goodbye.

A

I don't want to say goodbye! I don't understand why it is always goodbye! Everything has changed! Atom by atom. The country! The world! A billion little goodbyes until right is wrong and good is bad and fun things AREN'T ANYMORE. Everything changed! Wives leave husbands. Sisters leave brothers. The things we love last year thrown to the curb like so much garbage. And now you! Fine then! Here it is: Goodbye! Farewell! Adios! Just leave me here with Charles.

B

Uncle...

A

Just go! An annoying worthless little shadow following me around to car shows and garages and Chuck E. Cheese! Leave me alone, then! Give me my pizza and my video games and my animatronic band. I'll be fine! Goodbye. Best of luck. Toodle-loo!

B

...It wasn't the pizza or the games or even this thing. It was just the time hanging out. Goodbye.

*A trashes his room. He begins to punch Charles. At first vigorously and then weakly as he breaks down into tears. Charles embraces him.*

Charles  
I see you.

A  
I guess nothing can be loved forever.

Charles  
You are like me. They no longer need us. You are meant to be forgotten too.

A  
Can you... sing your song one last time?

*Charles nods. A plugs him in.*

*The lights dim, some party lights go up. "Out of This World" plays. The old robot dances his stiff animatronic dance alone. A crouches down watching.*

*Suddenly B rushes back in. She sees him. She lunges at him. Hugs him deeply. She kneels between his legs and then turns around. They both embrace this way and smile as Charles sings into blackness.*

**END OF PLAY**