Holofernes

A Lust Story

in the form of
Call and Response to
The Book of Judith

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CHARACTERS

HOLOFERNES, King of the Assyrians

JUDITH. Queen of the Israelites

PLACE
In the Middle of Things

TIME
In Medias Res

HOLOFERNES
See down through the ages, your artists and intellectuals
With whom do they couple, blondes from Minnesota, Australia
and Great Britain
Blondes name of Norma Jean manufactured by the Chosen People
of Sollywood
With names of Golden, Mayer, Zanuck and Zukor
Mankiewicz, Marx, Zlotoff and Cukor
Jew do not marry you, Jew

JUDITH
Jew - ess.
'S' for Siren, 'S' for seder,
'S' for Supreme and Ginsburg Ruth Bader
For you see, the majority opinion, the now settled law of the land,
grants a woman control over her photocopying reproduction

HOLOFERNES
If I lift the cover on my fotocopy machine and sit you bare-assed on the glass -

JUDITH
The paper will jam and you'll be wiping yourself as you watch my body parts disappear one by glorious one.

HOLOFERNES
So I can't convince you to betray your people despite their constant betrayal of you?

JUDITH
Expatiate.

HOLOFERNES
Its men and women talking at cross purposes.
You speak of body parts; I, betrayal.

JUDITH
Whoa -

HOLOFERNES
Is not me.

JUDITH
Slow down.

HOLOFERNES
Slowness is a concept for those with leisure.

JUDITH
I would have said you have nothing but.

HOLOFERNES
You would have said?

JUDITH
I will. It's why you oppress, to take the lesiure away from others and store it up for yourself.

HOLOFERNES
Like grain in our granaries being gobbled up by the rats around the edges.

JUDITH
The rats have already burrowed to the very center

HOLOFERNES
What did you say to the Yiddischka vermin before you traipsed here?

JUDITH
Traipsed?

HOLOFERNES
You don't object to 'vermin'?

JUDITH
I expect nothing nicer from you.

HOLOFERNES
You expect nothing nicer from this view? This view of the flatlands?

JUDITH
Because this stretch of land -

HOLOFERNES
- is one of the flattest on earth.

JUDITH
Allowing us to see very far in all directions, as far as the mountains.

HOLOFERNES
We're removing them from our field of vision for the sake of -

JUDITH
Vision

HOLOFERNES
Thank you. We can see beyond the time-space continuum to relate what we know of the story

JUDITH
I cut your head off.

HOLOFERNES
Yes, that's the body part we're hoping to duplicate.
Perhaps hope has already been accomplished.

JUDITH
What do you mean?

HOLFERNES
You'll see when I'm ready.

JUDITH
I told them I'd come here and lie -

HOLOFERNES
With me.

JUDITH
To you. I said I'd appeal to your vanity.

HOLOFERNES
Fat chance.

JUDITH
The fattest.

HOLOFERNES
When pressed for the most graphic details -

JUDITH
I supplied their demand.

HOLOFERNES
Really?

JUDITH
At my leisure.

HOLOFERNES
You do hate them, don't you?

JUDITH
If I do, it's about female mutilation.

HOLOFERNES
African, Indian, Egyptian clipperectomy, but Jewish? Don't you have your genders reversed?

JUDITH
They would cut my hair, make me wear a wig in various spots. In fact, above and below.

HOLOFERNES
Yes, but scalp I would gladly bare, even bearing the attendant merkin.

JUDITH
It's the mohel effect to which you object.

HOLOFERNES
You're a mohel of a goil.

JUDITH
You goy, me Jew - dith.

HOLOFERNES
Dith me, Juw - dee.

JUDITH
We do variation on Samson and Delilah.

HOLOFERNES
Whose strength is lost?

JUDITH
My strength is in the length -

HOLOFERNES
A thought I've had myself.

JUDITH
To which I will go. I've come to cut you off at your past.

HOLOFERNES
As I see my way into your future.
Hello muddah, Inti - fadduh
Rabid right rips Rabin
Jew do not kill Jew - what a bloody unclean joke

JUDITH
Perish with Shimon
Rock with Barak

HOLOFERNES
Swing away, damsel
It's Damocles rapier hung by the thread of your sanitary sheathe
To be chomped out of you with my tight-clenched teeth
This Assyrian goes down like a wolf on your folds
Your co-hairs all gleaming my purple your gold

JUDITH
Remember how my father Abraham was tempted, and being proved by many tribulations, was made the friend of God. But they that did not receive the trials with the fear of the Lord, but uttered their impatience and the reproach of their murmuring against the Lord, were destroyed by the destroyer and perished by serpents.

HOLOFERNES
Serpentine, I'll dangle my circumprized schtick softly adoring each perfect pore Sway, sword, smack my cheeks
Turn the other buttock on the spit
Inherit the wind the earth for the sleek

JUDITH
O Lord God of my father Simeon, who gavest him a sword to execute vengeance against strangers, who had defiled by their uncleanness, and uncovered the virgin unto confusion -

HOLOFERNES
Uncovered the virgin unto confusion
Ooo, I like that a passle
Uncovered the virgin

JUDITH
And who gavest their wives to be made a prey, and their daughters into captivity: and all their spoils to be divided to thy servants, who were zealous with thy zeal: assist, I beseech thee, o Lord God, me a widow.

HOLOFERNES
Widow black spider widow's peak personal pique
Prick, my death, where is thy sting

JUDITH
That's my dead husband hanging on the wall --

HOLOFERNES
- looking as though he were alive.

JUDITH
My dead husband Manasses -

HOLOFERNES
Yo las' Molasses, long hanging-down sticky-bun balls, he who left you your present plantational fortune -

JUDITH
He dropped dead in the fields one sun-blasted day.

HOLOFERNES
After overseering heat, cracking the whip 'cross the backs of dose darkies, those Sephardic camel-mutha-two-humpers, all dose kikees huge owners of Afro-Amerikaners in the post-coited Auntie-and-Uncle-Tom-bellumed Alabubba.

JUDITH
It is ever so common knowledge that Israelites were the majority owners of Schwartzes from 1636 and the Reverend Jim Johnstein Guyana magic kool-aids missa and massa-cree right up until Shoiman's March up Leevi Strauss' Jeanshole.

HOLOFERNES
Hey, sissie, you exproperatin' my sly lingua. Give me my props, it's me carryin' the tunes and beltin' the singua.

JUDITH
This ownership, this is why to this day so many Nigras bear the name of their former masters. Shaneille Dondra Zukia Rosenbloom Shaquille Juwan Abdel-Rauf Finklestein Dante LL Kool J Tupac Doggdodog Shug Manny Saperstein

HOLOFERNES
All dem Jews sipping duh mint Jew Lips on duh pissed plantations -

JUDITH
When a too-lips too-lips press another too-lips too-lips -
Bring to pass, O Lord, that his pride may be cut off with his own sword

HOLOFERNES
Wielded not by me.

JUDITH
Let him be caught in the net of his own eyes in my regard; and do Thou strike him by the graces of the words of my lips.

HOLOFERNES
Whoa. I look right at your eyes and down.

JUDITH
Don't look at my lips - don't - don't - shit - he's got me - I'm through - back to my eyes - no lips

HOLOFERNES
Give her constancy in her mind, that she may despise me: and fortitude that she may overthrow me.

JUDITH
For this shall be a glorious monument for Thy name, when he shall fall by the hand of a woman.

HOLOFERNES
And she washed her body and anointed herself with the best ointment, and plaited the hair of her head -

JUDITH
And put a bonnet upon my head and clothed myself with the garments of my gladness.

HOLOFERNES
The garments of your gladness.

JUDITH
And put sandals on my feet and took my bracelets, and lilies and earlets and rings and adorned with all my ornaments.

HOLOFERNES
And the Lord also gave you more beauty.

JUDITH
Because all this dressing up did not proceed from sensuality.

HOLOFERNES
O no no no no

JUDITH
Not from sensuality

HOLOFERNES
Not a bit

JUDITH
Not a bit

HOLOFERNES
Not a bite

JUDITH
And the Lord increased my beauty so that I appeared to all men's eyes incomparably lovely.

HOLOFERNES
Do I let that pass? Yes.
And it came to pass, that when she came down the hill that the watchmen of the Assyrians met her, saying, "Whence comest thou or whither goest thou?"

JUDITH
And I answered:
I am a daughter of the Hebrew

HOLOFERNES
Hebrw Shebrew all the way home
This little pig hair's pinned to my dome

JUDITH
I am fled from the pork eschewers
the hambone chewers
the spam can losers
the matzoh choosers

HOLOFERNES
Because you knew that the Israelites would become prey to me -

JUDITH
Because they despised you, and would not of their own accord yield themselves, that they might find mercy in your sight.

HOLOFERNES
For this reason, you thought with yourself, saying -

JUDITH
I will go to the presence of Holofernes -

HOLOFERNES
The camel jockey hook-nosed m'effer

JUDITH
That I may tell him the Jews' secrets, and show him by what way he may take them, without the loss of one man in his army.

HOLOFERNES
Betray them betray them
Make them relinquish the ball

JUDITH
I, Judith, see you, Holofernes, sitting under a canopy, woven of purple and gold.

HOLOFERNES
You look upon my face, bow down and prostrate yourself to the ground.
Rise up, O Judith, tell me for what cause hast thou left the mice.

JUDITH
Receive then words of thy handmaid and the Lord will do with thee a perfect thing.

HOLOFERNES
Ooo, I like that.

JUDITH
Because the children of Israel know they have offended their God, his dread is upon them.

HOLOFERNES
This perfect thing thing, I like that.

JUDITH
And God will tell me when He will repay them for their sins, and I will come and tell thee.

HOLOFERNES
Tell me.

JUDITH
And because God is angry with them, I am sent to tell these very things to thee.

HOLOFERNES
Tell me. And do me this perfect thing.

JUDITH
Drink more wine.

HOLOFERNES
I'm not drinking at all.

JUDITH
Start.

HOLOFERNES
Are you not due to go out into the night to pray?

JUDITH
Give me liberty to go out at night, and before day, to pray.

HOLOFERNES
Liberty? You have liberty, license, freedom. It's now night and before day. Go pray.

JUDITH
I cannot eat of these things which thou commandest to be given me, lest sin come upon me.

HOLOFERNES
I am sin.

JUDITH
But I will eat of the things which I have brought.

HOLOFERNES
Eat.

JUDITH
Drink.

HOLOFERNES
No.

JUDITH
And Holofernes was made merry on my occasion.

HOLOFERNES
Your occasion?

JUDITH
And drank exceedingly much wine.

HOLOFERNES
Really?

JUDITH
So much as he had never drunk in his life.

HOLOFERNES
But I'm in the program - five years to the night.

JUDITH
And when it was grown late, your servants made haste to their lodgings and your eunuch shut the chamber doors and went his way.

HOLOFERNES
And I did not lie on my bed, not fast asleep, not exceedingly drunk.

JUDITH
And I stood before the bed praying with tears:

HOLOFERNES
Jew not marry you

JUDITH
And the motion of my lips in silence -

HOLOFERNES
Don't see me look from your eyes to your lips
At your lips I shall have you
Strengthen you, O Lord God of Israel, that you may bring to pass that which you have purposed.

JUDITH
I went to the pillar that was at your bed's head.

HOLOFERNES
My bed's head

JUDITH
And loosed your sword that hung tied upon it

HOLOFERNES
And my long hanging down joculars swung low, sweet cherry Judy

JUDITH
And when I had pulled it out -

HOLOFERNES
When you had pulled it out -

JUDITH
I took you by the hair -

HOLOFERNES (singing)
Comin' for to carry me home

JUDITH
And said

HOLOFERNES
And said

JUDITH
Strengthen me, O Lord, at this hour

HOLOFERNES
And you struck twice upon my neck

JUDITH
And cut off your head

HOLOFERNES
And took off my canopy from the pillars

JUDITH
And rolled away your headless body

HOLOFERNES
Now what?

JUDITH
I went out and delivered your head to my maid.

HOLOFERNES
She liked it. She put my head on her head.

JUDITH
I bade her put it into her wallet.

HOLOFERNES
But she put it onto her head.
Then you two went out according to your custom of liberty, license and freedom - to prayer

JUDITH
And I from afar off cried to the watchmen upon the walls:
Open the gates!

HOLOFERNES
For, I've not opened mine, you say.

JUDITH
For God is with us, who hath shown his power in Israel

HOLOFERNES
And lighting up lights, they all gathered 'round about you.

JUDITH
What do you mean, I say?

HOLOFERNES
"Don't touch me
Stay over there
Stop it"

JUDITH
What are you saying?

HOLOFERNES
"Notice that I'm not kissing you back
You're kissing me
I'm not kissing you"

JUDITH
Don't touch me
Stay over there
Stop it
You'd do this all night, wouldn't you?

HOLOFERNES
Yes.

JUDITH
Stop it

Go to sleep
Go over there

HOLOFERNES
If I go to sleep, you'll cut off my head.

JUDITH
Don't touch me

HOLOFERNES
I would touch you every second.

JUDITH
I have fallen knees.

HOLOFERNES
I would lift them with my kisses.

JUDITH
There is something wrong with you.

HOLOFERNES
What I cannot provide -

JUDITH
Is every ounce of energy.

HOLOFERNES
For the two of us. I can't do this alone. If you won't let me examine your every pore -

JUDITH
Porres - who - Porres

HOLOFERNES
Martin de Porres, first Catholic saint Afro ever, slept in the hold of a ship with AIDS sufferers examined their every porres.

JUDITH
I don't have your will -

HOLOFERNES
I can't provide you with the will when you won't -

JUDITH
I must have my life.

HOLOFERNES
You say you want everything for your tribe -

JUDITH
My tribe and tribulations.

HOLOFERNES
I've blown away women's love like dust.

JUDITH
You've left them in the dust and you won't do it again.

HOLOFERNES
I won't have the chance.

JUDITH
From dust thou art -

HOLOFERNES
And to dust blown away from women's love I shall not return.

JUDITH
Stop
Don't do that
Go away
I don't want you

HOLOFERNES
Don't want me. Let me.

JUDITH
I am not kissing you
You are kissing me.

HOLOFERNES
Nota bene
I note it well

JUDITH
There's a difference.

HOLOFERNES
Cut me dead.

JUDITH
I will hurt you

Make you jealous
Bury you in every possible way

HOLOFERNES
I hurt enough for both of us
You need not hurt at all

JUDITH
You - hurt Hah
And I went up to a higher place, and commanded silence to be made
And when all had held their peace -

HOLOFERNES
You brought forth the head of Holofernes from off the top of your maiden and all the rest of me twitching and sliding my sword plunged up to your hilt.

JUDITH
Excuse me?

HOLOFERNES
I wanted to sheathe myself in every pore of your fallen knees and concave convex chest which is it the one women don't want and inhale every mole for two hundred years and Time's winged chariot hurrying near had we but world enough and time these birthmarks, Judith, would be no crime.

JUDITH
You have lost, Holofernes.

HOLOFERNES
You have lost Holofernes.

JUDITH
Prepare to meet thy maker.

HOLOFERNES
Prepare to mate thy meeker and my head shall inherit the earth.

SHE slices off his head.

JUDITH
And I said to all the people: Hear me, my bros and sissies; hang ye up this head upon our walls.

HOLOFERNES
And when all his army heard that Holofernes was beheaded, courage and counsel fled from them.

JUDITH
And every country and every city sent their chosen young men armed after them.

HOLOFERNES
And when the high priest with all his ancients came to Judith, he said, thou hast done manfully, because thou hast loved chastity, and after thy husband Manasses -

JUDITH
That's my dead husband hanging on the wall looking as though he were alive.

HOLOFERNES
And after thy husband hast not known any other.

A cry of triumph from JUDITH.

HOLOFERNES
They all blest her, blast her with one voice -
Thou art the glory of Jerusalem
Thou art the joy of Israel
Thou art the honor of your people

JUDITH
And I want you
I want you
I want you

HOLOFERNES
And I am dead
And leisure is now mine

JUDITH
My sandals ravished your eyes
My beauty made your soul my captive
And with your sword I cut off your head

HOLOFERNES
Jew - ess
Jew - ess
Jew - dith
Dead to you

JUDITH
And she died and was buried with her husband in Bethulia

HOLOFERNES
And all the people mourned for seven days.

JUDITH
And all the time of her life there was none that troubled Israel.

HOLOFERNES
Nor many years after her death.

JUDITH
Don't touch me
Stay over there
Stop it

The End.