

# and here be dragons

Feature length drama script

Writer: John Hillis

*A road trip in search of death, where life gets in the way.*

## Synopsis

Set during a modern dust-bowl summer *and here be dragons* follows JACOBSON, an ancient and forgotten Chinese god in search of his own death, as he travels the sprawling sun baked Canadian prairie with the mischievous Native deity TRICKSTER. Encountering INEZ, a terminally ill single mother desperately seeking the migrant father of her eight year old son CALEB, the four enter into an emotional journey of discovery and loss.

## Outline

With immortality thrust upon him, Jacobson, an ancient but minor Chinese music god, tries to escape his endless existence through futile attempts at suicide. After a pointless confrontation with a freight train he comes face to face with the terminally ill Inez and her desperate quest to find her son's father and her own peace of mind. By losing a mundane bet with his friend, the Native troublemaker Trickster, Jacobson becomes obligated to assist mother and son on their quest for safety and hope. Joined by Trickster's companion, a wild COYOTE, this group travel a desolate sun baked prairie landscape in Jacobson's weathered pick-up truck searching for the elusive migrant Mexican farm labourer father, encountering forgotten gods and dissolute farmers in equal measure.

While traveling through a world where powerful deities of a bygone era work gas pumps and country fairs, and farmers are both tied to the land and fleeing from it, Jacobson and Inez struggle to deal with their own destinies of eternal life and imminent death. In the midst of this journey, Caleb develops a gentle bond with Trickster as the god mentors the young boy in the humour and beauty of daily existence.

In a small town Chinese restaurant, Jacobson comes face to face with the ancestor of the railway labourer who brought him to Canada two hundred years ago. The magnitude of his own isolation mounts as Jacobson confronts the realities of immortality while Inez begins to succumb to the cancer that is ravaging her body.

As Trickster nudges, prods and guides the voyage along its trajectory, the futile search for Caleb's father, Inez's imminent death, and Jacobson's fixation with ending his life all create a mounting tension culminating in a shooting that wounds a local farmer and is fatal to Coyote.

Engulfed by Trickster's literal storm of grief, the three remaining travelers scramble for shelter in a disused rural radio station where, with Inez's dying efforts, Jacobson confronts his fears and embraces a new role in life and Caleb's future.

## Background

What happens to Old World gods a few centuries after being transplanted to a New World by an ever-increasing transient population? Now forgotten and left to navigate unfamiliar landscapes these deities struggle to find new meaning for their endless lives. This script is a journey through that world. The title is taken from the regions of early maps where cartographers would inscribe unknown territories with the phrase 'and here be dragons'.