



FROM THE TEMPESTUOUS  
PRECIPICE OF RICHARD III

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# FROM THE TEMPESTUOUS PRECIPICE OF RICHARD III

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Some sections of the dialogue appear in parentheses and indicate a slight change of perspective on the part of the speaker – a momentary change to a more introspective mood.

# FROM THE TEMPESTUOUS PRECIPICE OF RICHARD III

## ONE

*A room. A man in his fifties sits in a wheelchair. He is wearing a well-tailored suit. Part of a billiard cue acts as a splint for one of his legs. Behind him are an empty saline drip, a beautiful classical floor lamp and the box for the billiard cue. To one side, there is an armchair with a file containing medical notes. Darkness.*

who's there?

is anybody there?

*he switches on the lamp. Lights. Pause*

ah,

I knew it.

sometimes

a man has

a premonition.

a premonition that exists

even before we do.

before we become ourselves.

(we are the egg,

the feeling is the chicken.

or vice-versa.)

it's like a preconception:

which also comes before us.

it's there before

what we think

of someone else.

or ourselves,

I don't know.

It's like the pain in a foot

existed

before the foot.

or the pain remained,

even after the foot or the leg

were no longer there

not there any more.

they took it away from me,

the leg

not the pain.

gone.  
it went.  
they went.  
foot and leg.  
they took it off,  
took it away.  
never existed.  
in its place a piece  
of wood  
which feels pain.  
and before the pain  
a sort of itch.  
(decay before flesh?  
sawdust before wood?)  
it's strange  
my foot hurts more,  
my leg hurts more,  
depending on the weather.  
the more humid it is, the more it hurts.  
the more it hurts, the less I walk.  
the less I walk...  
and here I am.  
sitting here  
still, but still here.

*pause*

I'd like you to tell me about the weather.  
I'd like you to tell me  
exactly  
what the weather will be like today.  
and  
what day it is today.  
or yesterday.  
is it night?  
is it nighttime?  
what night is it?  
is it the night of yesterday,  
or the day before yesterday?

*pause*

is anybody there?

*long pause*

I'd like you to bring me  
a glass of whisky  
neat.

that would be ever so kind of you.

a good whisky

neat.

bring me whisky

neat

have one yourself.

I don't like drinking alone.

I'm here

sitting here

for ever.

*he hums to himself a while*

for ever

here

sitting here.

but still here.

*pause*

I carry the itch

and the pains with me.

always still here

sitting here.

*pause*

did you hear that?

someone's here.

what's it like outside?

it's raining.

raining a lot

or just a little?

the sky is clear.

(God has a housemaid,

sometimes she cleans the sky so well

that she removes the clouds.

leaving only a slight smell of bleach.)

*short pause*

is winter over?

has it gone?

has winter become

something else?

into the sun

or the discovered

moon?

spring

no clouds.

is there sunshine?

is it the sun  
that's out there?  
clear sky.  
has our discontent ended?  
the winter ended.  
no sign of the whisky...  
bring me a whisky  
and have one yourself.  
(I don't like drinking alone.)  
is anybody there?  
don't worry about premonitions.  
preconceptions.  
don't be scared:  
just because I wasn't shaped  
for amorous games  
or earrings  
pearls  
piercings  
or other cheap jewels  
that would never look good on me  
nature made me this way  
and what's done is done.  
(that's why I'm done for.)  
just because  
I have no gift for love  
conquest  
just because my charm  
does not exist  
nature gave me none  
didn't even look at me  
when it gave birth to me...  
    *interrupting himself. Pause*  
the dogs bark  
growl  
as I limp past.  
their teeth amuse themselves  
with my wooden stump.  
with my foot  
with my leg  
no longer there.  
    *angrily*  
but the pain is there  
the pain is here.

after the itch  
of preconception.  
it's an error  
the error  
not the pain  
the error of my formation  
or deformation as they call it,  
ugly raw mark  
wooden stump instead of a leg  
also raw  
also ugly.  
bitten.

*pause*

but is anybody there?

*silence*

can anybody bring me  
a whisky?  
anyone?

*pause*

don't be afraid.  
of me  
my deformity is all I have left  
to sing about.  
sing about my own deformity.  
mix the plots  
the conspiracies  
the accusations  
and the dreams  
with the deadly  
hatreds  
in the empty pleasures of these days.

*short pause*

anything to drink?  
anybody?  
a whisky  
and my thoughts  
dive deep down  
into my soul  
which is a wooden stump.  
another stump  
with dog teeth marks etched into it.

*he catches sight of a ghost. A nurse enters upstage with a bag of saline solution*

*in his hand. During the scene, he takes the man's pulse, makes notes in the file and inserts saline solution into one of his hands*

ah,  
finally, somebody.  
someone.  
a ghost in human form?  
a hu/man ghost  
and what do I see?  
empty-handed.  
not even a glass  
not even a bottle.  
nothing at all.  
nothing.  
nothing at all?  
nothing coming near.  
can you tell me  
give me the news  
what day is it today?

*silence. He confuses the nurse with his brother, the Duke of Clarence*

Clarence,  
dearest brother  
is that you?  
so young.  
are you  
alive?  
imprisoned?

*pause. Grabbing the nurse violently*

I brought on the anger of King Edward,  
our brother,  
against you,  
with saucy lies  
powerful arguments  
taking from you days of life  
and pleasure  
and reducing them to just one,  
one day  
imprisoned  
in a tower.  
and then one night.  
(your stay in prison did not last long.)

*letting go of the nurse. Pause*

but here you are young, alive  
and handsome too.

there was no error  
in my plan:  
I murdered you.  
what are you doing here  
in one piece?  
I dispatched your soul  
to Heaven.  
Clarence,  
you're still breathing  
but Edward is no longer King.  
how is that possible.  
(did I do something wrong?)  
tell me what day  
it is today.  
or what night this will be  
or was?  
ah,  
what's that,  
Clarence?

*short pause*

I don't think either of us  
are safe.  
we're both lost.  
at night I toss and turn,  
full of horrendous  
dreams,  
visions,  
wild animals.

*pause*

I dreamt you'd escaped from the tower.  
with me!  
and that we were on a boat  
bound for Bourgogne.  
both of us on deck.  
we looked back towards England  
remembered the hard times  
we'd had.

*short pause*

while we were walking up and down  
the slippery, treacherous floor  
of the deck,  
you tripped and as you fell  
you pushed me

(funnily enough, I reached out to save you  
even though I'd wanted and ordered  
your death)

as I was saying, you pushed me,  
into the depths of the ocean.

there

I felt the pain of drowning.

death raw

and transparent

in my eyes.

la morte per acqua

in tutte le notti tempestose.

I die and awake once more.

and now you're here,

I dreamt a thousand times

you murdered me a thousand times.

*pause*

forgive me,

dearest brother.

do you forgive me?

*silence*

do you have anything to drink?

a drink between two friends,

brothers lost

in the night.

a whisky

ah?

bring me whisky

and have one yourself.

no need to stand on ceremony,

you know I don't like drinking alone.

*an aria by a mezzo-soprano is heard playing softly*

here.

sitting here.

*the nurse exits*

Clarence?

*slightly louder*

Clarence.

*slow fade to black*

## TWO

*The aria continues. Lights. The man is sleeping in his wheelchair. In the armchair, the nurse is eating a Big Mac. His chips are covered in ketchup. Fade to black. Pause. Lights. The nurse is asleep in the armchair. In his lap and on the floor around him are the remains of the Big Mac. The man in the wheelchair awakes and holds the tip of the billiard cue in his hand. He holds it as if it were a baton and he were conducting the aria. Behind him, the box for the billiard cue is open and empty. Suddenly, the man begins arguing with the voice of the mezzo-soprano as if she were Anne's ghost.*

Anne,  
why do you spit in my face?  
when I'm sorry for the fall  
of your Lancaster.  
why do you accuse me of his death?

*pause*

I didn't murder your husband.  
but it's true  
he's no longer living.  
he's dead  
murdered at Edward's hands.  
look  
look at my hands  
they're clean.

*pause*

Anne, for the love of God  
don't take the name of the Lord in vain.  
It makes me tremble.  
makes me afraid.

*he looks at the sleeping nurse and sees in him the ghost of the body of King Henry. Using the ketchup from the Big Mac, he starts to anoint the face and shirt of the nurse to recreate the wounds of the dead King. Terrified*

(oh, the body of dead  
King Henry  
bleeds  
before me.  
I who made this happy land my hell.  
my winter.  
filled it with cries and curses  
holy furores.)  
look, look.  
the wounds of dead  
King Henry

opened and bled once more.  
it's my presence  
that makes them bleed  
blood from frozen, empty veins.  
what a flood there is.

*silence*

oh, Anne,  
I admit  
I was goaded on  
by my perverse spirit.  
I became a hedgehog.  
but you were the cause  
of that effect.  
it was your beauty  
that haunted me at night  
in dreams  
spurring me on  
to murder the entire world  
so we could spend  
just one hour,  
together  
alone.  
(don't curse me.)  
your eyes poisoned mine.  
If only they were  
basilisks  
then I might die  
this very instant.  
because they're killing me  
now  
I'm the living dead.  
your eyes  
drew from me tears.  
childish drops of water.  
my eyes were dry  
like a desert.

*pause*

I never begged  
from a friend,  
from an enemy,  
my tongue  
was never given to smooth talking.  
but you, Anne,

are the kingdom I desire.  
my heart  
and my tongue  
beg.  
(those lips of yours  
were made to kiss,  
not to spit.)  
but if you want revenge,  
if you cannot find it in your heart  
to forgive me  
Anne,  
use this blade  
and bury it  
in me  
in my chest.  
thrust it into my neck.  
thrust it deep  
into my soul  
or the wooden stump  
with teeth bite marks  
where my soul should be.

*silence*

kill me.

*pause. Aloud*

don't delay.  
because I killed the King.  
I killed your husband.  
but it was you  
your beauty  
your eyes  
that made me do it.

*even louder*

go on, kill me quickly.  
raise the blade  
or raise me up to you.

*pause. The aria ends. Silence*

Was ever woman in this humor wooed?  
Was ever woman in this humour won?  
I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.  
And will she yet debase her eyes on me  
That made her widow to a woeful bed;  
On me that halt, and am unshapen thus.

*slow fade to black*

### THREE

*The man is sitting in the wheelchair. The nurse stands to one side of him. In his hand the man holds a silver cup of water.*

what day is it today?

it's night.

night already?

*short pause. The nurse holds out his hand with some pills*

ah, the pills.

it's morning.

morning of what day?

of what night?

*silence. The man takes the pills, puts them in his mouth and swallows them with water*

my muscles

are twisted.

as if I'd been walking.

as if I'd been running.

a marathon.

a long marathon.

as if I'd spent hours

days

on my legs and feet.

even the leg that's not a leg

is playing up.

It hurts even more.

as if it were flesh

cartilage.

muscles

nerves.

but it's only a wooden stump.

(stolen cartilage.)

an out-of-practice,

wooden muscle.

with sensitive nerves.

how is that possible?

(sawdust?)

*short pause. The nurse holds out his hand with some pills. The man swallows them with water with some difficulty*

can you tell me what day it is today?

what morning this is?

*short pause*

ah,

the pain's still here  
and the foot  
and the leg  
are no longer there.  
damned piece of wood.

*short pause*

can you bring me a whisky?  
neat.  
with my breakfast.

*short pause. The nurse holds out his hand with some pills*

how many more?  
how many more pills do I need to take  
for breakfast?  
how many colours  
strange names  
how many pills?  
every morning  
a rainbow,  
without the light of the sun.  
a rainbow  
in the palm of my hand.  
a microcosmos.  
dark. dead.  
a black hole.

*the man swallows the pills with water and with even greater difficulty this  
time. The nurse removes the silver cup and exits*

why don't you open the doors?  
let a little light in  
on this cemetery  
early morning.  
damned day  
every day.

*short silence. Very loudly*

light!  
give me light!

*silence*

nobody  
everything empty  
like a never-ending cemetery.  
full of people.

*silence. The nurse returns with breakfast on a silver plate. He gives it to the man  
what about the whisky?*

*silence. The man takes the silver plate and starts eating. The nurse exits.*

*Silence. Very loudly*  
whisky!  
*silence. He waits for the nurse to bring the whisky for a few seconds*  
(nothing.)  
*pause. He resumes eating. Silence. Calling to the nurse*  
Buckingham!  
*pause*  
Buck  
ing  
ham...  
*pause.*  
so what do they say  
the citizens?  
are they all mum?  
*pause*  
they don't say a word.  
I'll only allow them to let me speak  
after they have insisted  
and insisted.  
and a prayer book...  
*louder*  
I need a prayer book.  
*very short pause*  
and a whisky.  
neat.  
*pause*  
Buckingham!  
*long pause*  
when they begin to intercede  
I'll use all my energy  
to say no,  
to begin with.  
then depending on how hard they insist  
I'll accept the crown.  
*he laughs*  
because it would be a big mistake  
to refuse the highest position in the land  
the majestic throne  
the sceptre of office,  
fortune  
and not reign on this ungoverned isle.  
*pause. Calling the nurse*  
Buckingham!

*the nurse returns with a book in his hand, a best-seller of the kind sold at airports*  
come in.

*he hands the book to the man and exits taking with him the remains of the break-  
fast on the silver plate. Loudly*

come

in

all of you.

*pause*

welcome.

*silence. The man prepares his pose. He speaks humbly from the wheelchair*  
dear citizens,

I see that you want to impose  
the golden yoke of sovereignty  
on this renowned Plantagenet.

here I give you

now

my final answer:

all your love

deserves my gratitude,

but my unworthiness

commands me to refuse,

such is the poverty of my spirit.

but, God be praised,

I shall give you all my assistance

should you need it.

adieu!

*he hides behind the book as if he were reading. Silence. He peers over the book.*

*Acting as if the citizens are insisting*

ahh

no no no no no no no.

why do you insist

in placing on me

this great burden?

why are you doing this to me?

look closely at me.

I was not made for the throne.

no

I cannot accept.

*pause. More insistence from the citizens*

do you want to force me into a world of cares?

I am not made of stone.

*silence. The man reflects a little. In a more solemn tone*  
cousin Buckingham and citizens

do you want to place this heavy burden on my back  
whether I can bear it or not.  
I see that I must be patient  
and bear the load.

*pause*

but  
if by chance  
by any chance  
any chance whatsoever  
any dark scandal  
or reproach  
attaches itself to my acts  
as  
King  
or should a black, impure  
stain  
reveal itself within me  
this coercion of yours  
will acquit me.

*pause*

well,  
I accept the throne  
and  
the burden.

*pause. The man realizes that the book that he holds in his hand is not a  
prayer book. Softly*

what is this?

*short pause*

today  
is the day  
of my coronation.

*short pause. Coronation music is heard becoming louder and louder. The man  
grabs hold of the lamp behind him and pulls it so that the source of light is imme-  
diately behind his head like a halo. He waves several times. The music ends. Fade  
to black*

## FOUR

*The same room, totally disorganized. Darkness.*

who's there?

Is anybody there?

*in the darkness a loud crash is heard. Crying in pain*

ahhh... fuck!

*pause. Loudly, calling the nurse*

Buckingham!

*short silence*

damned traitor.

he ran away

put himself at a distance

by escaping to Wales.

*pause. We hear some interjections and the sound of a body dragging itself along with difficulty breathing*

it's the dead of night

dark.

(fuck, I even saw stars.)

*he switches on the lamp. Lights. The man is lying on the ground. The wheelchair is overturned. Pause. Loudly, calling the nurse*

Buckingham!

*pause. With great difficulty, he manages to get up. Pause. He looks around*

is anybody there?

*pause*

I would like

someone to bring me a glass of whisky

neat.

that would be ever so nice of you.

a good whisky

neat.

bring me whisky

neat

and have one yourself.

I don't like drinking alone.

*pause*

can you hear me?

is anybody there?

*silence*

can anybody bring me

a whisky?

someone?

something to drink?

a whisky.

*silence*

good,

I'll get it myself.

*he walks a few paces and decides to remove the billiard cue that has been acting as a splint for his leg. He throws it on the floor and exits. Silence. Offstage, he shouts loudly for Buckingham. Silence. A few moments later he returns, holding in one hand a beautiful crystal bowl full of strawberries and in the other a telephone whose cord stretches offstage. No whisky arrives*

(Buckingham!)

*pause*

fucking traitor.

deserter.

*he sits with difficulty in the armchair. He places the bowl of strawberries and the telephone in his lap. While he tastes one or two strawberries, he dials a number on the telephone. Long pause. Irritated, he hangs up*

(damned machines...)

*calmly, emphasizing each word*

son of a bitch.

*he tastes some strawberries. A few seconds later, he dials a number on the telephone. Pause. To the telephone*

is that you, Elizabeth?

no, no, don't put down the phone.

don't abandon me.

I have something to say to you.

don't go away.

don't be afraid.

*pause*

you have

a daughter

who is virtuous

fair

and gracious.

her name is

Elizabeth

don't be concerned

I don't want to taint

her birth.

she is a royal princess.

her life is secured

by her birth

the same security

that leads to insecurity

that killed her brothers.  
their condemnation by destiny was inevitable  
but they lived a just life.

*pause*

I promise you now  
a greater good  
than the harm you have suffered at my hands.  
everything I own,  
yes,  
including myself  
and everything  
everything  
I want to give to your daughter  
who I love from the bottom of my soul.  
don't get me wrong.  
I want to make her Queen of England.

*silence*

everything I have done  
that I have committed  
was for love of her.

*pause*

what is done, is done.  
it cannot be undone.  
if I took the kingdom from your sons  
I will give it to your daughter.  
if I murdered the fruit  
of your womb  
in your sons  
I will plant the seed  
of my fruit  
with your blood  
in the womb of your daughter.  
your sons  
brought unhappiness to your youth.  
but mine will be a comfort to you  
in your old age.  
your loss  
was only a son who should have been King  
and for this loss  
your daughter will be Queen.  
that is the recompense  
I can give you.  
and all the ruins

of those distressing times  
will be repaired with double the riches of contentment.

*short pause*

what!  
there are still many good days to come.

*pause*

inform  
the princess  
your daughter  
of my intentions.  
prepare her ears  
for my propositions  
of love.  
light in her breast  
a golden  
sovereign  
flame.

*pause*

and if one day  
by any chance  
any chance whatsoever  
any  
chance  
at all  
I stop loving your royal daughter  
I will myself destroy  
myself  
may Heaven and Fortune  
deny me happy hours.  
may the day deny me light  
and the night deny me rest.  
may the planets of good luck  
oppose me.  
may death,  
desolation,  
ruin and deca...

*he interrupts himself. The receiver at the other end has been put down. Long silence. He puts down the receiver. Silence, during which he tastes one or two strawberries. He looks around. With the bowl of strawberries in his hand, he gets up and takes a few paces around the room, observing it. Very long silence*

I will lie here  
tonight.  
but where will I lie,

tomorrow?  
well, it makes no difference.

*silence*

I have a conscience  
that speaks a thousand languages  
all different.  
and in each language  
there is a tale.  
and in each tale  
a condemnation  
of this villain that I am.  
perjury,  
perjury  
and more perjury.  
of the highest degree.  
murder,  
murder,  
of the direst kind.  
I shall despair.  
the souls of those I murdered and that came to me here  
are the same ones that will make  
vengeance fall  
on the head of Richard:  
on my head.

*long pause*

how many traitors are there?  
six, seven thousand?  
my men are three times that number.  
and whatsmore,  
my name is a fortress.  
I will study  
the battlefield  
and its advantages,  
call on men of great experience.  
let there be rigour  
and no delay.  
The day will be full of labour.

*looking at the bowl of strawberries*

I will eat nothing tonight.  
all I want is  
a whisky.  
bring me whisky  
and this time,

just this once,  
leave me alone.  
I want to drink it alone.  
I prefer to drink it alone.

*loudly*

a whisky.  
can someone bring me a whisky?  
and give me another horse.

*silence. Calmly, he takes some strawberries and squashes them on his  
face. Silence. A little disorientated, he sees the overturned wheelchair.*

*Throwing the bowl of strawberries on the ground*

dress my wound.  
my wounds...

*somewhat tormented*

but what day is it today?  
what night is this?  
shrouded in gloom  
and ghosts...

is it All Saint's Day?  
Is it already All Saint's Day?

*silence*

so then it is All Saint's Day.

*short silence*

the final hour  
for the punishment of my sins.  
the lights burn blue,  
it's the midnight of the dead.  
I feel cold drops of dread  
in my body  
in my wooden stump.

*pause*

this night of shadows  
has brought terror to my soul.  
and I see no daylight.  
It's far away.  
has anyone seen the sun today?  
bastard. traitor. deserter.  
(seems it doesn't want to shine.)  
this is a day of darkness.  
but we will advance  
prepare another horse for me.  
call together my army.

*short pause*

I've prepared a few words for them.

*skilfully, he looks at the two halves of the billiard cue and screws them together.*

*Using the billiard cue as a lance*

remember who your enemies are:

a horde of vagabonds, peasants and runaways,  
lackeys

and, I dare say, some fucking bastards

these are the ones who are bringing unrest

to those of us blessed

with intelligence.

who sleep safe in their beds at night.

and who leads them?

Richmond,

A man who has never felt the cold snow

enter his shoes

a man with two legs.

we'll send these stragglers running

over the sea

repel these animals from here,

poor rats.

they want to take our lands,

sleep with our wives

and ravish our daughters.

*a choir of male voices is heard singing softly. Loudly*

can you hear the drums?

fight on, fight on.

archers,

draw your arrows up as high as your heads

startle the heavens with your broken lances

attack!

*long silence. The choir of male voices stops singing. Silence. Calmly*

in just one night

as King

I perform more miracles than any other man

confront all kinds of dangers.

and now my horse is dead,

and I fight on foot

I'm looking for Richmond in the jaws of death.

*silence*

anyone?...

can anyone bring me

a whisky?

*pause*

a whisky.

my kingdom for a whisky.

*silence*

(with my incantation at an end

I'm left with nothing but what I am

which in truth

is rather precarious.

I'm a victim of the black arts

that emerges with the spirits

at night or during the day

and paying a high price for them.)

*silence*

a dark fear is all that remains.

*long silence*

now,

your will can leave me here

in no man's land

on this sterile isle

or send me to that other place...

*fade to black*

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Play. Frédéric D. Oberland. On The Edge Of The Great Precipice (feat. Gaspar Claus). 6 years ago6 years ago.Â FILM TRAILER: vimeo.com/14898901. /// "An arresting film narrative and a provocative stand-alone soundtrack. Moments of beauty are many." Textura. "Delicate and very effecting. A comparison would be the spoken elements of Swans and lyrically it shares much with the film noir cool of Enablers." Nine Hertz. "Shot in stark black and white and imbued with a mesmerising dreamlike fragility, the film's look brings to mind some of the great Expressionist movies of 1930s Germany as well as Tarkovsky's Stalker and the work of modern masters such as Béla Tarr". Decoder Magazine. "Elegant, harr The Precipice (Russian: Ð±Ñ·Ð²², romanized: Obryv) is the third novel by Ivan Goncharov, first published in January–May 1869 issues of Vestnik Evropy magazine. The novel, conceived in 1849, took twenty years to be completed and has been preceded by the publication of the three extracts: "Sophja Nikolayevna Belovodova" (Sovremennik, No.2, 1860), "Grandmother" and "Portrait" (Otechestvennye Zapiski, Nos.1-2, 1861). The author considered it to be his most definitive work, in which he fully realized his NavegaÃ§Ã£o de artigos. â† Do PrecipÃcio Tempestuoso de Ricardo III. Dos Mundos Interiores â†'. Contacto. luismestre@mail.com. Teatro Nova Europa. teatronovaeuropa.wordpress.com. Pesquisar por