

My Poor Will
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ACT I

Scene 1

The stage is lit only by a spotlight focussed on the face of Adam, sitting on a chair in the middle of the stage. He is wearing a white singlet and light blue jeans. Spectacles over his tired eyes. He has long messy hair, and thick facial stubble. The entire stage around him is in darkness. The sound of water boiling can be heard. The kettle begins to whistle, first softly then increasing in volume. The kettle's whistle becomes a loud screeching noise. Adam gets out of the chair and goes to turn it off.

MAN(OFFSTAGE)
Thats it?

Adam turns to face audience.

ADAM
Thats it? No...no... Hold on. I don't see anything in here.

Adam leaves stage to go turn lights on. Sound of footsteps walking swiftly. Lights are turned on, The room is dimly lit. A mixture of yellow and red lights spilling over each other. An old wooden chair in the middle of the stage, a cup right beside it. A faded green mattress at stage right, covered only partially with its white sheet. A Fridge on stage left and a small wooden table beside it, on which the kettle sits. A big mirror the length and height of the entire stage area stands behind everything, fitted as the backdrop for the stage. The man is sitting behind the chair in the middle of the stage. He is sitting on the ground, leaning against the back of the chair and face towards the mirror. His figure is cant be seen clearly but his presence is obvious. Adam returns, he walks straight to the cup beside the chair, picks it up and goes to sit at stage left across from his bed. He sits down facing the audience. And then while taking a sip he looks around the stage.

ADAM
Ah... thats better. (to the man behind the chair)
Coffee?

(CONTINUED)

The man ignores Adam. He gets up from behind the chair. His face and figure is seen just briefly as he walks from the chair towards the bed. His head is bald and face clean-shaven. He is wearing a white singlet and light blue boxers. He lies down on the bed.

ADAM

No? (takes another sip of the coffee) Ah... You don't drink cold coffee ha. Its good. You don't like coffee? You know, coffee don't keep me up, it dont make people less sleepy. It just keeps your brain running wild. Its like my body wants to sleep, but my brain doesnt. Ha! (takes a sip while slowly turning his head to look at the man) Well anyway, I guess I'll have to drink for the both of us. (takes a chug) Ah! Now where was I?

Adam gets up and turns to look at the mirror. He adjusts his hair and glasses. He picks up the cup and goes to the man still lying down on the bed. He squats down beside him

ADAM

Lets start again. Help me with my lines.

Adam stands up and goes to the center of the stage. He puts the pot of coffee down beside the chair, and stands on the chair.

ADAM

Now, a proper story, for you! For what would my story be without a spectator?!

Adam smiles, he takes a bow at his imaginary audience.

ADAM

Prompter!

MAN

(still lying down)
I have to get out of here.

ADAM

Prompter!

MAN

Give me the key.

ADAM

Prompter!

MAN

I need to get out of here, give me the key!

ADAM

(Louder)
Prompter!

MAN

You give me the key, you let me out, and I'll tell you your lines.

ADAM

Argh! (grips his head as if its about to explode)Ok ok!
No! YOU tell ME the lines and I'll tell you where the key is...

MAN

Don't use words you don't understand.

ADAM

Please?

Man looks away, Adam smiles and turns back to his 'audience' and straightens up to begin his performance.

MAN

(softly)
O how I have looked upon your face.

ADAM

O how I have looked upon your face!

MAN

(still softly)
Like a dancer in the dark yearning for your gaze.

ADAM

Like a dancer in the dark yearning for your gaze!

MAN

(still softly)
Of which I cannot have, on which...

ADAM

(interrupts)
Of which I cannot have, on which my desires rest!

MAN

(louder)
The whistle has blown, the ship has...

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

(overlapping)
The whistle has blown, the ship has sounded its horn.

MAN

But the sailors and its captain...

ADAM

(overlapping)
But the sailors and its captain they all have gone!

MAN

They've left the tears of heaven, and the hellish tides to flow.

ADAM

(almost in sync with the Man)
They've left the tears of heaven, and hellish tides to flow.

MAN

To come down here and see a merry show!

ADAM

To come down here and see a merry show!

Adam opens out his arms and smiles to his imaginary audience.

ADAM

And then Will, he stands up on the chair facing the audience, his arms stretched out wide like a bird getting ready to fly. The music rings out around the theater.

Adam turns and smiles to the man. He gets down, picks up his cup of coffee and goes back to stage left, where he sits down on the ground.

ADAM

You know we still got it. The audience loves us, everytime! We can't quit now... (shouts) The world is our spectator! haha!

MAN

You're fooling yourself.

ADAM

You hear the cheers. Whats not to love. This Will character, he will become a legend. Anyway, I have a song for that final scene. (tries to hum the tune but cannot remember it). How did it go again?

The man refuses to answer.

ADAM

Well, you know... that one. You know it. Will is standing up facing the crowd, his hands outstretched like a bird, and then that song... It will be spectacular!

MAN

You have to let me out.

ADAM

Do you think it will be too lame? too tacky? cheesy? Cliche? It may be cliche... (sigh)

MAN

I need the key.

ADAM

Maybe we shouldnt add a song! You're right! You're always right! haha!

They sit quietly opposite each other but not looking at one another. Adam takes out a cigarette.

ADAM

I don't have the key.

MAN

What do you mean? How can you not have the key? Only you have the key!

Man sits up facing the audience then turns to look at Adam.

ADAM

You can't leave now. We can't. There's too much to do here, they're expecting us. Its our show.

MAN

We can. Give me the key.

ADAM

No! I threw it out! I... I left it, outside, out there! Its lost, gone. We cant get out. You should know that.

MAN

We have to find a way.

ADAM

And what about me? What will happen to me? I have to finish this, I have to give an end to Will.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

You can't. There is no way, there shouldn't be a way.
You know that just as much as I do.

They sit quietly. Adam puts out his cigarette.

MAN

You remember we saw that lady on the ship.

ADAM

No! No! We cannot give up now!

MAN

That crazy woman. She had a magazine in her hand which she kept rolling up into a scroll. She played with it over and over again, waved it around in the air, rolled it out and then rolled it up again, and again and again...

ADAM

But its not right!

MAN

And her eyes...

Man crawls towards Adam while continuing to speak about the lady.

MAN

You remember her eyes. There was a kind of madness in them. They danced and sang a tune we could not understand. You couldn't hear the song, I could not see the tune. We couldn't understand how they danced. We wondered what she saw in those little pieces of paper she kept playing with over and over again. You wondered what she saw, you wished you could see what she was seeing.

ADAM

(growing increasingly uncomfortable)

Stop it!

Adam gets up, picks up his cup of coffee and walks across to the bed. He sits on it and lights up another cigarette. Man turns to face audience.

MAN

And we came up with all these crazy ideas and thoughts that she might be having. Haha! crazy! But they were all just ours, not hers, they made no sense. You tried to see yourself in her, but she wasn't like you, she wasn't like us! She was free! haha! Free! And what did she do then?

(CONTINUED)

Adam is quiet, scared.

MAN

What did she do!?

ADAM

(softly)
She threw it.

MAN

Whats that?

ADAM

She threw it! goddammit she threw it!

Adam throws the cigarette down on the floor and steps on it. He grips his head and ruffles his hair in frustration.

MAN

She threw her fist in the air, she imagined herself throwing it... and like a bird, she imagined it fly away. But we could not see it.

ADAM

What is your point?

MAN

You know what my point is.

They stay quiet for a while. Man gets up and goes to the chair, he examines it.

MAN

Its strange... you can never see yourself except through a glass, and yet you try to see yourself in everyone else. It is just impossible to understand.

Man turns to face audience. Then walks towards Adam still lying on the bed. He squats down beside Adam.

MAN

You know its not fair that we're trapped in here.

ADAM

But thats no excuse.

MAN

Still

ADAM

Still we cant just forget about this show! Its our show, our stage... What would they think?

MAN

Who cares what they think! (gesturing towards the audience) For once, why cant we let it be... unfinished? open ended? Or tacky? cheesy? Full of cliches!

ADAM

But thats not me! Thats not US!

MAN

And THAT is exactly what this is.

Man runs to the chair in the middle and jumps on it, facing the audience.

MAN

Broken mirrors and split personality! Unnecessary voice overs and scripted reality! The motivated resolution and self reflexivity! Spoon feeding the audience and narrating explicitly! What more do you want!? Tell me! Tell us!

Man gets off chair and sits down in front of it, still facing audience.

MAN

You saw what they did to poor old Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Will doesn't deserve to be trapped in your... in what they will make of him. Not on stage, not in here (points to his head)

Adam jumps on top of the bed, standing.

ADAM

But He stands facing the crowd with his hands outstretched, like a bird preparing itself to take off into the sunset... The music is turned on, the audience is waiting, expecting... and then what? And then what!?

He jumps off and walks across the room to the fridge, kicking away the chair as he passes it by. He takes out a pot of coffee from the fridge and is about to fill his cup with coffee, but decides not to. He closes the fridge, standing with his empty cup, looking at the chair lying on the floor. Man turns to him.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

Suicide. The script needs a cliché and be rid of a surprise element in the end. No 'WOW' factor! Will can simply commit suicide in the end. He needs just that one more cliché. Kill Will in the end and he will be free.

Man faces audience, and opens his hands out wide.

MAN

(shouts)

Suicide! He kills himself in the end!

Man turns back to Adam and smiles.

ADAM

You're right. (chuckles) hell of course you are. Its all the same. Everything... I keep trying to write an ending but I keep writing myself into it.

Adam walks towards the man and sits down beside him. They are now both in the middle of the stage.

ADAM

Nothing is new anymore, everything is the same, all fucking same... its all cold and stale. I feel dead.

MAN

I know. And i feel numb. (looking around the theater.)

ADAM

I know.

MAN

I have been trapped in here for too long. I have to leave. We have to.
If we leave now... we can let Will be himself, whoever he wants to be. We don't have to put him on a stage, he can be free.

ADAM

And what about me? I mean you...

MAN

WE... can do anything we want. Like Will.

ADAM

Like Will.

MAN

We'll fly... away from here. That's the dream isn't it?

They smile.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

I know the key now.

MAN

(smiles)

Then Will, you better go turn off the lights.

The two turn to face the mirror. Adam leaves. Sound of footsteps walking away swiftly. The man turns to the audience. He takes a bow. Then picks up the chair and turns back to face the mirror. He gets ready to throw it at the mirror. Just as he is about to let go of the chair, the lights go out. Sound of footsteps is heard again. Adam, playing the character Will, comes up on stage. A spotlight is turned on and focussed on the chair sitting in its place right in the middle of the stage. The empty cup right beside it. The sound of Adam/Will turning on the stove is heard. He walks to the chair and stands behind it facing the mirror. He ties up his hair and takes off his glasses and then his jeans. Like the man before, Adam/Will is wearing only a white singlet and blue boxers. He stands up on the chair facing the audience.

ADAM

O How I have looked upon your face.

Like a dancer in the light yearning for your gaze.

Of which I must not have, for your desires I have now put to rest.

O why should your eyes reflect my tormented soul?

Why should it be the looking glass in this darkened hole?

The whistle has blown, I have heard its sound.

The sails are now set, I, my captain, have now been found.

I shall leave for the tears of heavens and the hellish tides that flow.

For it is there that I shall fly, to my OWN merry show!

The sound of water boiling can be heard. The kettle begins to whistle. Adam/Will opens his arms wide as if a bird getting ready to fly.

(CONTINUED)

The kettle becomes louder and louder as he moves one hand to the back of his boxers and takes out a gun. He points a gun to the side of his head. Only the tip of the gun is clearly seen under the spotlight. The kettle's screeching noise become almost unbearably loud.

He pulls the trigger. Lights out as sound of loud shattering glass is heard.

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END.