

ct

On/From debris

de
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traducción de
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(fragmento en inglés)

Notes

The play is made up of tableaux: scenes of different places and times. The characters in one tableau may or may not be the same in other tableaux, even if they have the same name. Some of the characters are women of different ages, others have been defined as male. There are others such as Boss or Child who have no assigned gender role in the text and this will be as decided by those who stage it, with the differing implications of their choice. Some, like YOUNG PERSON 2 are deliberately ambiguous in gender terms as a definitive answer is not necessary for the established situation.

In certain tableaux there are no characters as such, but rather multiple voices.

Any of the characters may be performed by actors or actresses whatever their gender or age range.

Speeches ending in a dash (-) indicate an interruption by the following speaker.

Square brackets [] indicate asides: thoughts or feelings that are verbalised.

A slash / indicates the point at which the next speech needs to enter.

SCENE I. THE MILKMAID'S TALE 1. ALL LIFE IS A DREAM, AND DREAMS...

YOUNG NARRATOR

My grandmother used to tell me the story of the milkmaid before going to sleep. The one where a little girl had to carry a milk pail to market, or at least this was how my grandmother told it. She carried it on her head, like this. No, like this. As she walked, she would think about what she would do with the milk. The rich cream it would give that she could use to make a delicious butter that she could sell at the market and then use that money to buy chickens, pigs, start a farm, pay off her mortgage and then... I don't know, buy nice clothes by famous brands, travel to far-away countries like... like Iceland, buy a second home with huge bedrooms with views of the sea, have a lot of free time, maybe have children, employees, a good pension scheme... But the little girl, lost in thought sketching out her dreams in this conditional almost-perfect, lost her balance and she dropped the milk pail.

Three seconds. Her gaze takes in the remains of the pail, the milk...

"But my shoelaces were tied, but I come this way every single day and this never..."

SCENE II. INNOCENT COFFEE (WITH MILK AND SWEETENER)

YOUNG PERSON 1

What are you laughing at?

YOUNG PERSON 2

You.

YOUNG PERSON 1

Me?

YOUNG PERSON 2

Yes, you look so worried... you've got it all sorted.

YOUNG PERSON 1

Sorted? Are you kidding me? Can you pass me the sweetener?

YOUNG PERSON 2

What are you worried about? You have a roof over your head, food, warmth... Look at that queue. At 8 in the morning that soup kitchen is full of people, meanwhile you and I are having breakfast here in this hipster café in a bohemian hipster neighbourhood. You get up in the morning and think: "What shall I do today?"

YOUNG PERSON 1

That's because I don't have a job.

YOUNG PERSON 2

You don't have a job because you don't want one.

YOUNG PERSON 1

Because I don't want one...

YOUNG PERSON 2

You don't want to do a job you won't enjoy for rubbish money, correct?

YOUNG PERSON 1

No, I don't. Would you?

YOUNG PERSON 2

No, but the point is that no one does. Do you think we are going to change the world with our cheesecake and latte resistance?

YOUNG PERSON 1

We do what we can.

YOUNG PERSON 2

We do nothing.

YOUNG PERSON 1

No, excuse me, I am studying, I'm looking for work, I go to interviews, I network, I rewrite my CV, my website... every day I look at the job ads.

YOUNG PERSON 2

You look.

YOUNG PERSON 1

I look.

YOUNG PERSON 2

All you do is look. There is nothing to look for, it's simpler than all that. Life is all about oppositions: you work, you don't work; you have, you don't have; you eat, you don't eat, / you live, you die...

YOUNG PERSON 1

You talk a lot of bullshit.

YOUNG PERSON 2

I've decided to take action.

YOUNG PERSON 1

You're a real action hero.

YOUNG PERSON 2

I'm going to become a militant.

YOUNG PERSON 1

Militant, total action hero.

YOUNG PERSON 2

You mock me because you are a cynic.

YOUNG PERSON 1

I mock you because I don't even know what you're talking about anymore.

YOUNG PERSON 2

I'm saying that we have to do something.

YOUNG PERSON 1

Yes...

YOUNG PERSON 2

You can't spend your whole life thinking that everything is shit but not do anything about it.

YOUNG PERSON 1

And what exactly are you going to do?

YOUNG PERSON 2

Everything, we have to do everything. We have to bring everything down, inside and out. We have to scabble in the dirt and rummage in everyone's toys. We have to blow, spit, fuck God, the banks, the markets, our parents. We have to pick a target. Bomb it. I choose to kill the president with my bare hands. Strangle him. Wring his neck. We have to wring his neck. Implode. Tear down the ruins of the ruins. We have to fuck like mad, savagely. Bite. Come on, bite. Little girls like you don't bite. That's the problem. You have to learn. Learn to bite. To suck out the poison and spit it in the face of the future. Until you spit at the future, until you belch the remains of your past, until you realise that your present is dead, drowned in the milk they coddle you with all the time, you won't do anything. Vomit it. Vomit on us. Hurt someone. You should slit open the knots in your throat, in your chest, amongst their bodies. Get them out of yourself, out of me, out of them. Sink their economic index into their ribs. Lash out. Hurt yourself as you punch, if your knuckles don't bleed then it isn't a good punch. Tear the skin, gut your infancy a pinch at a time, the same for your adolescence, your promises to yourself, to other people, your degree, your MA... Tear out the blank sheets of your life. There isn't a single blank fucking sheet, they all have this fine print on them. Tear, tear out the parts of your mind that tell you tomorrow will be a better day, that all this has to change, that you're doing so well, that everything you've done is important. Don't cry, you have no right. Forget the term, rights. Repeat it to yourself over and over until you forget what it means. Repeat it, repeat it, screaming, howling, repeat it, "rights", "work", "outrage", "sad", "it couldn't happen", "bastards". Say it over and over, but now throw it up, throw it all up, it's just rot that is cooking in your guts. Dirty your mouth, your genitals with those words. Burn yourself alive and through the flames scream out the names of everyone that tricked you. Come on, drag them by their hair. Strip them publically, despise them. And then, extinction.

Silence.

YOUNG PERSON 1

I'm going to get the bill. What do we owe you?

(...)

SCENE IV. WHEN YOU TELL A TALE TALLY ALL THE TALES YOU TELL, TALLY ALL THE TALES YOU TELL WHEN YOU TELL A TALE

BOSS's office.

BOSS

I sometimes watch the children playing in the park... they have so much freedom, don't they? You remember when you used to go to the park and all you had to worry about was running, jumping, cutting into the queue for the slide...

JUANA

Yes.

BOSS

But... we have to adapt to the times we live in, we can't be children our whole lives. Can we?

JUANA

I guess not.

Silence.

BOSS

Why do you want to work with us, Juana?

JUANA

I think this project is very interesting. Everything I have read about your company... it has a real future. That's it, a future... Although I would like to know more about the conditions-

BOSS

We value sincerity, honesty in the workplace.

JUANA

Of course, I-

BOSS

Juana, Juana, let's pause for a moment, let's pretend for a moment that I'm not the one hiring you. Would you like something? A coffee?

JUANA

Yes, with milk, thank you.

BOSS

Why do you want to work with us, Juana?

JUANA

Like I said, I'm interested in the project, I see...

BOSS

A future.

JUANA

I can see the possibilities.

BOSS

I get it.

Brief pause.

JUANA

I am a very creative, proactive person, I learn quickly and I like working in a team, I think I would fit very well with what you are looking for...

BOSS

What are we looking for?

Pause.

JUANA

Someone who can turn your milk into something... interesting, into an advert that will have an impact, risky-

BOSS

It's easy to sell milk to someone who needs it...

JUANA

Yes.

BOSS

I mean... for someone who always buys milk at the supermarket... the difficulty is only in getting them to change brand, in convincing them to reach out to one shelf or another... to see our advert and think: "*The Milk Pail* is the best, cheapest brand-"

JUANA

Yes, yes, that's why I thought-

BOSS

But, what about someone who doesn't need milk, at all?

JUANA

We would have to tell them how healthy milk is, how tasty it can be, about the trace elements-

BOSS

Sure, but I mean someone who doesn't drink it and never will, for instance, someone who is lactose intolerant. What would you put on one of your adverts to get someone who is lactose intolerant to buy *The Milk Pail*?

Pause.

JUANA

I could advertise lactose-free milk?

BOSS

No, no, don't dodge the question... you have milk, plain milk, semi-skimmed let's say, and with your words, what you write, what you draw, you have to convince someone who is lactose intolerant to buy that carton of milk... what would you say? What image would you use?

Pause.

JUANA

For someone lactose intolerant?

BOSS

Yes, yes, lactose intolerant... Hypothetically... Put yourself in that position.

JUANA

I would draw happy people... like a family, or... maybe that person is lactose intolerant but they have to think about their children, for instance, or if they have any guests...

BOSS

Right. What if this person is a loner? What do you do to capture the attention of someone who is lactose intolerant and lives on their own?

Brief pause.

JUANA

Alone... completely alone?

BOSS

Completely alone.

Silence.

BOSS

Do you know how long *The Milk Pail* has been around?

JUANA

No.

BOSS

It's going to turn 150 years old. Although really that was only when the brand was launched, it actually started long before that. It was a local family run business...

JUANA

I think I know the place. It was a small shop on a corner. They would send my grandmother to fetch milk from there when she was a girl. Now it's a clothes shop, but you still use the lettering / it's the same on your packaging.

BOSS

Yes, that's the place. And look at us now. We are a family of over 300 employees. A family of families. It's like magic... to have managed to be the thing that feeds so many people. But it isn't. It's hard work, effort, being open minded and going further. Growing to satisfy everyone's needs. It's bigger than any of us, because it is all of us. *(Pause.)* We really liked what you said in your covering letter. About being positive in the face of obstacles, that "a problem is only a problem if you don't take advantage of the opportunity", or something like that, right?

JUANA

Yes.

BOSS

I could not agree with you more. *(Silence.)* Where do you see yourself in five years, Juana?

JUANA

I don't know... I would like, I would like to be working. *(Pause.)* Here.

BOSS

Here?

JUANA

Of course.

BOSS

In my office?

JUANA

I didn't mean-

BOSS

It makes sense to want to move up.

JUANA

No, I don't want-

BOSS

Really, don't worry, I completely I understand...

JUANA
I wasn't-

BOSS
Do you think you are going to get this job?

JUANA
The one you are interviewing me for, or...?

Silence.

BOSS
I'm going to open brackets here. This is in brackets. It will only last three minutes. I'll keep the time and you will be able to say what you really think about all of this. Anything. I won't make a note of anything, nothing will be written down. When you are done, I will pretend that this didn't happen. Honestly, do you think you are going to get my job?

Silence. They stare each other down.

JUANA
Yes.

Pause.

BOSS
(*Smiling*) Great, Juana, thanks for coming. We will let you know by next week.

JUANA is about to leave.

BOSS
Juana, one last thing: have you ever thought of having children?

(...)

SCENE VI. THE MILKMAID'S TALE 2. WHAT IF I DROP IT AGAIN?

YOUNG NARRATOR

She was unlucky. Unlucky... that it was one of those storybook milk pails, made of clay and without handles, not a nice sealed metal one, not easy to carry and no cart to transport it either... Or unlucky that she didn't have money for any of those things, just enough to carry a pretty unstable pail and no sign of being able to get hold of a better one. If she had taken out a loan... yes, a loan so she could have a proper pail, the sort of pail that would allow her to take on a project like this. A project with a viable business plan. Then it would be a completely different story. She could carry not one, but 300 pails. Of course, she'd have to pay off the interests for the loan for the pails... and that would suck away most if not all of what she earned for the cream. Maybe she could make some butter, but she probably wouldn't have enough for the pigs anymore... and that's not even considering the rental for the place where she would make the cream. She could ask for another loan to pay off the first one so she could at least buy the chickens. But, what would happen if the price of milk dropped, she practically had to give her cream away and the chickens didn't sell? Then they'd take her pails, the milk, the cream, her house and to top it all off she would owe them a fortune... and she would have to go back to carrying her milk in the original clay pail, stuck back together with superglue. On the way she would think that maybe, hopefully, next year she would be able to pay off that loan she took out and that if she doesn't then she'll get evicted and if she gets evicted she won't be able to live anywhere and so, where would she go? How would she pay off the instalments that she owes? The girl takes on another job in the afternoons or at nights. Completely unrelated to the farm she wants. She does whatever they're looking for, if she's lucky then it's fixing pails or getting people to invest their money in brass pails, or the bank's money at least. Jobs to help people forget about their loaned pails for a while, or to get them to spend the money they earn from their milk on anything. "But what if I drop it again...?"