

Bohemian Grove

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A short play

By Alex Coulombe

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Fancy party. Ordures and wine populate the stage. A classical guitarist and violinist perform.

Each character takes a step toward the audience to present their first line. The guests respond to each line with polite clapping.

MR. ELLINGTON

Anything is in reach if only you have the strength to have the arm long enough to reach it.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

Eating peanuts is like life. You love the taste-*or do you?* Especially the salty aftermath.

MR. CLAPDRAGON

If you have the beginning and the end, the middle is not necessary-

MRS. STEELBRIDGE

Unless you must teach.

MR. STEELBRIDGE

My wisdom is my food, and my is it nourishing.

RICKY

When the free are freed, when can I free with... we? Free with... Free... I'm tongue-tied.

Pause. Everyone stares. He looks  
to MRS. VON TRAVIER

Wait that's not it. When the free are freed, where's shall thee be? That's it, right? I know, I'm ruining the effect. You're doing those phrases translated from that cat with the EMP ratings, right? Yipper Timpkins? I hear about that. Where they assign random letters to its different brainwaves and the thoughts spell this stuff out, right?

MR. VON TRAVIER

Everything can be understood, if only... Ahem. If only... Dammit boy, you've ruined my statement. Hmph. Metaphors for all!

ALL

Metaphors for all!

RICKY

Sorry.

MR. CLAPDRAGON

How did you get here?

MR. STEELBRIDGE

Who invited you?

RICKY

I was sent by Mister... Fickle... bushton.

Everyone groans.

MRS. STEELBRIDGE

Ah, Mister Ficklebushton. He actually has a contribution tonight?

MRS. VON TRAVIER

At least he sent someone this time. I can't handle another dreadful holo-chat.

MR. VON TRAVIER

We can... trust you then?

RICKY

Oh yes. Mister Ficklebushton confided everything in me.

MR. ELLINGTON

Wonderful. Let's not break pace everyone, we're halfway there.

MR. CLAPDRAGON

When will dinner will be served? I'm tired of standing. You, servant boy. Prop me.

MR. CLAPDRAGON leans back as YING, the classical guitar player, rushes to catch him. He manages it in the nick of time.

MRS. STEELBRIDGE

This place gets less classy every year. Look at that disgusting mop the help left out. And when did the grove opt out of elephant paw plates? The tiger paws are so yestermeat.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

Have a dusseldumpling.

RICKY

What is it?

MR. VON TRAVIER

The gall bladder of a baby penguin stuffed with hummingbird hearts, of course. Didn't you take pan-germanic sciences at the academy?

MR. CLAPDRAGON

(to RICKY)

What did the market say to the broker as the chancellor walked down the alley?

Pause. Everyone stares at him.

RICKY

Careful... on the way in, I saw a dead prostitute.

Pause. Everyone bursts out laughing.

MR. ELLINGTON

Heh heh. You're all right, boy.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

He's very cute.

RICKY smiles at her.

MR. STEELBRIDGE

Moving on. Mister Clapdragon, cometh learning, steel needs to meet the bowls quickest.

MR. CLAPDRAGON

Quick as the ferret finds the flipper, sayeth ye cat friend.

MR. ELLINGTON

And once-after steel, remainder heats until understanding becomes knowing with three kilotons of platinum. Lest I be fisted. What say youeth, wee Ficklebushton?

RICKY

Oh. Well. What I always heardeth... is the best thing for bowls... is copper.

Pause. YANN stops playing violin.

MR. VON TRAVIER

One hundred percent copper?

RICKY

Right. Alloy bowls are crap.

MR. STEELBRIDGE

You are... certain of this?

RICKY

Yes. That's what mother said, at least-eth.

MR ELLINGTON

Mother?? Mother!

YANN empties a vial into a wine glass.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

That's the end.

RICKY

Am I missing something?

YING

(on his bluetooth)

The stocks are in free fall.

YING

It's a trap!

YANN

Don't drink that!

YANN drinks MR. ELLINGTON's wine and dies an agonizing death. Epic music. An all-out fight ensues, which RICKY does not participate in, but does all he can to avoid. MRS. VON TRAVIER spins her ordures plate at MR. STEELBRIDGE who dives into a corner.

At the same time, MR. ELLINGTON throws his dinner jacket, catching the plate in mid-air. MR. STEELBRIDGE pulls a leg out of one of the chairs and fires it as a tommy gun. MR. ELLINGTON and MRS. STEELBRIDGE are hit, but not mortally.

From cover, MRS. VON TRAVIER throws both of her high-heeled shoes at MR. STEELBRIDGE, shattering his shinbones. He continues to fire.

Meanwhile, MR. ELLINGTON has retrieved his dinner jacket and is having a cloak and dagger fight with YING. MR. and MRS. VON TRAVIER have been back to back, alternating kissing passionately and throwing food, plates, and wine at everyone else.

MR. CLAPDRAGON wields his umbrella as a katana, and approaches MR. STEELBRIDGE while deflecting his bullets. He finally knocks the tommy gun out of his hand and stabs MR. STEELBRIDGE through the heart, killing him. MRS. STEELBRIDGE wields YANN's violin, and a tiger paw that was holding ordures. She throws the ordures into MR. VON TRAVIER's eyes, temporarily blinding him, as she charges MR. CLAPDRAGON. His back is turned to her, but as the violin comes down, he effortlessly blocks it with his umbrella katana. They battle. She alternates using both the violin and tiger paw as a weapon and as a shield.

MR. CLAPDRAGON

If you need to understand in order to enjoy, then understanding must always be part of your enjoyment.

MRS. STEELBRIDGE

If you wish to enjoy life.

MR. CLAPDRAGON &  
MRS. STEELBRIDGE

Which you do!

MR. CLAPDRAGON is taken aback by her skill, and trips over the chair leg tommy gun, kicking it to RICKY.

Shoot her!

MR. CLAPDRAGON

I can't do that!

RICKY

Shoot her now!

MR. CLAPDRAGON

Don't you dare, sugartop.

MRS. STEELBRIDGE

MRS. STEELBRIDGE laughs as she overtakes MR. CLAPDRAGON, eviscerating him with the tiger paw. He collapses on top RICKY.

MR. CLAPDRAGON

Listen... the faster you learn what you love, the quicker you can focus on what you need to know. Then you can spend your life understanding... and being cryptic... about it.

He dies. MR. VON TRAVIER dives for the chair leg tommy gun and tries to fire, only to find it is empty of bullets. YANN is next to him and suddenly wakes up, realizing there was nothing wrong with his drink. YANN snaps the neck of MR. VON TRAVIER and begins hand to hand combat with YING, eventually joined by their instruments as they procure them.

MRS. VON TRAVIER grabs a mop. MRS. STEELBRIDGE laughs, but MRS. VON TRAVIER twirls it with prodigious skill. MR. ELLINGTON and MRS. STEELBRIDGE begin to battle her simultaneously. MRS. VON TRAVIER knocks MRS. STEELBRIDGE's weapons away, and overtakes MR. ELLINGTON. She throws him to the ground and crushes his throat by stepping on the mop handle. Barely alive, he crawls to RICKY.

MR. ELLINGTON

Always in life, as if a misty cloud around you, what there is to learn must always be deciphered, as though... through... a messenger.

He dies. YANN and YING, after repeatedly knocking each other over with their instruments, have finally managed to snap each others' necks at the same time.

MRS. STEELBRIDGE and MRS. VON TRAVIER are now at opposite sides of the room and pause to stare each other down. Each intimidates the other, demonstrating their skill from afar. Finally, they charge. Just when they're about to collide, MRS. VON TRAVIER switches the direction of the mop and manages to plunge the dirty end into MRS. STEELBRIDGE's face, who screams in disgust. MRS. STEELBRIDGE involuntarily struggles to remove the tangly mess from her face. Taking one hand off the mop, MRS. VON TRAVIER snatches the tiger paw, and impales MRS. STEELBRIDGE through the throat, hidden by the mop. MRS. STEELBRIDGE collapses next to RICKY.

MRS. STEELBRIDGE

Everything can be understood if the messenger can be... eliminated.

She dies. MRS. VON TRAVIER looks at RICKY, who whimpers. She then collapses in exhaustion next to him.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

(patting RICKY on the leg)

You picked the right side.

RICKY

Thanks.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

We might have futures together.

Hooray...

RICKY

God, I need a drink.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

RICKY is in shock. She realizes he's not going to get her one, so she pulls herself to a nearby glass of wine; the one that YANN emptied his vial into.

Cheers, cutie.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

Wait, don't drink that!

RICKY

RICKY scrambles to stop her but she has already downed the whole glass.

Oh shit. Was that poisoned?

MRS. VON TRAVIER

I think so. Maybe not.

RICKY

Dammit. I can't stand the thought of being poisoned. Such a slow, painful, unsightly death. I'd rather go the way of my forefathers.

MRS. VON TRAVIER

She picks up the umbrella and prepares to stab herself through the stomach.

Wait!

RICKY

She does it. Her face contorts for as she pushes the umbrella further in.

My God. I don't know if that's the poison or the blade, but my stomach is in a terrible pain. Could you be a dear and just... open the umbrella?

MRS. VON TRAVIER

RICKY shakes his head as he holds back tears. She puts a hand on his, and he attempts to open the umbrella, but it just keeps opening by pushing itself out of her and opening in front. She tries to guide him, but is too weak.

Ow. Owie. Oh oh eyuuu... ugh... gaa. Grrggle.

She groans and contorts for some time before finally letting out a death rattle and collapsing. RICKY begins to cry, progressively more intensely, until--

MRS. VON TRAVIER

It burns!

And she dies. RICKY cries harder, then dives to the wine glass and slurps hard, trying to siphon any remaining drops from it.

RICKY

Me too, me too! Oh, if this too solid flesh could melt...

He swallows hard.

I think... I feel it... oh bear me away!

He burps. A pause, and he cries harder. A door breaks down and an IRISH COP enters. He surveys the scene.

IRISH COP

Jesus bloody Christ!

Pause.

RICKY

(through the tears)

I only wanted... a friend.

RICKY continues to weep as the lights fade.

BLACKOUT