

YVETTE AND THE WILD SHAME

Alexandra Aliko Bassett

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Yvette and the Wild Shame was first produced by Columbia University at The Pershing Square Signature Center in New York City on April 12, 2014. It was directed by Tasha Gordon-Solmon. The cast was as follows:

Matthew McDonald	Footman
Sean McIntyre	Maximus
Becca L. McLarty	Julie
Michael Micalizzi	Wilderness Boy (Lucas)
Adam Thomas Smith	Footman
Jen Taher	Cheryl
Lindsay Torrey	Yvette

The lighting design was by Carolyn Wong; the costume design was by Summer Lee Jack; the sound design was by Ien DeNio; the set and props design was by Aaron Ethan Green; the music was composed by the author; the production stage manager was Michael Tosto; the stage manager was Alexandra Hall, the director of production was Joe Novak.

Special Thanks

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To Patrick
To my parents Peter and Olga
To my brother Jonathan
To Yiayia and Papou

Thank you to my fellow playwrights, directors, actors, dramaturgs, stage managers and producers of the Columbia University Graduate Theater Arts class of 2014.

YVETTE

and the Wild Shame

BY
ALEXANDRA BASSETT

THE STORY OF YVETTE

(#) Lights up, empty stage. Perhaps a bare table and chair.

A woman (YVETTE) enters. She is disheveled, in rags.
FOOTMEN appear. A beat.

All at once, the footmen pounce upon her in a sophisticated and very organized frenzy: cleaning her/dressing her/making her up. This happens with a choreographic whipping staccato precision.
They seat her and disappear to the back and light cigarettes perhaps, now relatively pedestrian.

Yvette has a glow, a prowess. She drinks wine perhaps.
Meanwhile one footman in particular speaks to the audience:

FIRST FOOTMAN

The story of Yvette:

Long ago in many parts of France they made
Wine.
Of course.

Households produced the grapes
They picked the grapes
They stomped the grapes
“Pigeage
Pigeage à pied”
Pressing stomping stepping
“Pigeage à pied”

He and the other footmen have the audience repeat “pigeage à pied”

Women in white dresses with their petticoats
Pulled up and tied up in bundles over their knees
“Pigeage à pied”

He and the audience repeat: “Pigeage à pied”

Their dresses would grow pink and red and purple
Soaking in the skins and flesh

The beautiful blood of
Bunches upon bunches of grapes
Ah how a fine wine was made!

It takes nimble feet
Brawn in the thighs
This is why French fathers had French daughters
It was said:

The other footmen say the adage along with him:

“Beautiful daughter, beautiful wine.”

And of course these families bottled
And packaged their wines and sold them
All over the world
And they would tell you it is
Yes of course
Their business
But that it is very personal.
A family business
Is very personal
Always
No matter how large it may grow.

Beat.

So now to Yvette.

YVETTE continues drinking.

Yvette
She was the youngest in a
Long line of gifted winemakers
Of the Belle Beauvais region of France.

The family was very wealthy.
The most prolific respected winemakers in all of Europe for centuries
Until one day they stopped
Pff
Like that.
It was the Second World War
The vineyard was destroyed
It was a horrible fire

Finished.

And yet not at a loss.

It seemed in fact that the estate was even more wealthy
For each death in the family:
Yvette inheriting diamonds.

Broaches

Yvette tries one quiet, tender pigeage.

Necklaces

She does another with more confidence.

Rings

Pigeage a pied with growing gusto.

Wild draping things.

She finishes.

Her family dead
And she was adorned like an empress

Yvette could not produce wine anymore
Yvette did not need to produce wine anymore
Because
She discovered how to produce

Diamonds

From the ashes
Of her ancestors.

So skilled were the nimble feet and brawny thighs of this one Yvette
That she could compress the very ashes of her loved ones
With each of her tiny powerful toes

Fap fap fap: two earrings.

The family pet: fap fap fap: cufflinks.

Each stone, each diamond unique
It's shape, its hue from pink to blue
To onyx
Each with a glint in its eye
A remark
A sparkle
A memory.

It is a very sentimental thing
Forming precious stones from the parents of your parents

Yvette was very young
And the war was very sudden
And this was all she knew
All she knew how to do

So to escape the war
After all seemed lost
She covered herself head to toe in these jewels
Draped her young body in her ancestry
Put on a cloak of rags and snuck onto a ship
To America.

Or so it is said.

(#) All sing.

OOOOOOOH YVETTE!
A GROWING GIRL IN BELLE BEAUVAIS
UNTIL THE WAR GOT IN THE WAY
OH, YVETTE AA-AH
SHE TOOK A BOAT TO ELLIS ISLE
THEN TOOK A DRIVE 200 MILES
OH, TO MASSACHUSETTS!
OH, YVETTE!
AA-AH
AA-AH
AA-AH
AA-AAAAAH!
OH NOW SHE'S QUEEN OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD

AA-AH
AA-AH
AA-AH
AA-AAAAAH!
THE REIGNING QUEEN OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD!
OOO-OO-OO-OOO.

"THE ISLAND"
THEY CALL IT
AND THEY CALL YVETTE "MAMAN"
"DEAR JULIE"
HER DAUGHTER
SHE APPEARS A BIT WITHDRAWN
THE NEIGHBORS
ARE BOTHERED
BY THEIR DIAMOND-CLAD MYSTIQUE
"UNNERVING"
THEY WHISPER
And then they vanish.

BECAUSE YVETTE!
IS THE MOST ELEGAN-T
YVETTE
THE MOST LUXURIAN-T
YVETTE
OH, MAMAN YVETTE AA-AH
THE MOST OMNI-PRESEN-T
YVETTE
PERHAPS MALEVOLEN-T
YVETTE
OH MAMAN YVETTE!
AA-AH
AA-AH
AA-AH
AA-AAAAAH!
AH AAAAAH!
YVETTE!

(#) An instant time shift of many years.
YVETTE with her neighbor CHERYL and her husband MAXIMUS.
Mid-conversation laughter:

YVETTE, CHERYL, MAXIMUS
Ah-hahahahahahahahahaha!

MAXIMUS
To the Anniversary of the Revolution!

YVETTE
One hundred and fifty years!

YVETTE, CHERYL, MAXIMUS
The Anniversary of the Revolution!

They toast (hub bub).

CHERYL
And to the festivities tonight!
Ah haha!

They toast again.

What do you have in mind
For the anniversary
Maman Yvette?

YVETTE
I thought
What would be truly remarkable
At a time like this
With so much
 ("unrest/trials and tribulations" - Cheryl and Maxi don't know what she refers to)
I thought
Let's celebrate the revolution
With a barbeque.

CHERYL
Oh how fitting!
How fitting to celebrate a revolution with a barbeque
How fitting
That is!
Impressive.

MAXIMUS
Exquisite.

YVETTE

I thought wouldn't it be fun.

I thought

Fireworks of course, to represent...

MAXIMUS

(Represent...of course)

YVETTE

And then I thought

How about "hot dogs"

CHERYL

Oh!

MAXIMUS

Of course.

YVETTE

I thought

It would be very dignified.

Beat.

CHERYL

I'm really looking forward to it.

YVETTE

I hope so Cheryl.

I really think a barbeque

Will give us the opportunity to reminisce.

Beat.

CHERYL

Maman Yvette

A bit of business

YVETTE

Yes.

CHERYL

We were hoping we could increase production of our:

Cheryl gestures around her own face.

And that would depend on your:

Cheryl gestures to Yvette's feet

YVETTE

Oh?

CHERYL

Of which Maxi? The red?

He consults his notepad.

MAXIMUS

The blue!

CHERYL

The blue!

YVETTE

Ah the blue!

MAXIMUS

Yes blue diamond Maman.

YVETTE

Footman remind me tonight.

FOOTMAN

Yes Maman.

YVETTE

Anything else?

CHERYL & MAXIMUS

No

YVETTE

Well that was easy!

Meeting adjourned!

YVETTE, CHERYL, MAXIMUS

Ah-hahahahahahahhahahaha!

Beat.

CHERYL

Actually

I wanted to address.

I'm concerned about the children.

And that wilderness boy.

MAXIMUS

You bring up a serious point

Cheryl

A valid concern

(A valid concern.)

YVETTE

Is it serious?

Yvette signals for a footman to come to her.

CHERYL

I don't recognize him

He is perhaps not from the island

MAXIMUS

Ah.

CHERYL

The children are—

Meanwhile the FOOTMAN entered to YVETTE and is whispering in her ear while gesturing with his eyes.

MAXIMUS

I imagine it is good for all children to interact with others of the same age.

Good for their constitutions. Good for the health!

CHERYL chastises MAXIMUS with her eyes and a sound. THE FOOTMAN exits.

YVETTE

It seems Julie is fine

Nothing to be worried about.

CHERYL

But with so few families
That is
So few good families remaining
It is not inappropriate to be vigilant

MAXIMUS

(...very suitable...)

YVETTE

You anticipate this wilderness boy will enrapture my daughter and your son Benjamin will no longer be of interest to her?

CHERYL

I think very highly of your Julie and trust her estimations
Of course

MAXIMUS

(of course)

CHERYL cont.

She is also a young girl and—

YVETTE

We're all young girls, Cheryl, thanks to you two and your

Yvette gestures around her face.

Invention.

Don't we all find youth to be exhilarating
Really electric

MAXIMUS

(Zap zap)

YVETTE

Yes Maximus
Zap zap exactly

CHERYL

Yes, I just
Would like to
Draw attention
To ah, re-

Ah, real contractual betrothal between your dear Julie and our son Benjamin—

YVETTE

Do you doubt my word

Cheryl?

My

Good word?

CHERYL

(An obliged smile and a breath. “No.”)

YVETTE

Let them play.

What can happen.

There’s sand

Little rocks

We’ve got tall grass

The trees

Mud we can wash

Blood

We can wash

They are safe to explore here.

The Footmen

They keep watch

FOOTMAN

Always, Maman

YVETTE

They’re children

Children are fit to explore, no?

MAXIMUS

Of course

Of course

Children are miracles.

Little futures, every one.

And so on and so on

You see Cheryl

(Footman)

Nothing unmanageable after all.

CHERYL

After all

YVETTE
After all.

Beat.

CHERYL
Where will you be
That is
Haha—em
That is:
Where will you
Procure the hot dog
Meat?

YVETTE
The Footmen have made the “hot dogs” from poultry.

CHERYL
So
Exciting!
I bet they’ll be delicious.
A real luxury.

YVETTE
Yes.

MAXIMUS
(Luxury.)

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION

(#) The ceremony, that evening

Blasts!

YVETTE, CHERYL, MAXIMUS, THE FOOTMEN, JULIE looking splendid.
A humming of the “Aa-ah” part of the Yvette anthem and then:

Blasts! Colors in the sky.

Ooo, Ahh! Claps.

(The pomp and intricacy of a baroque monarchic teatime.
But it’s a BBQ.
People wearing sunglasses perhaps, holding sparklers.)

(#) Lucas runs through and intercepts Julie.
Lucas and Julie playing with rocks in the tall grass.
He takes a rock from her.

LUCAS
Can’t touch it.

Beat.

JULIE
Does my mother know you?

LUCAS
No.

JULIE
Who knows you?

LUCAS
You do.
Look purple!

JULIE

It's crystal!

LUCAS

I'm rich

JULIE

You're not rich I found it

LUCAS

They all look the same.

Anyone could have found it

But I cut it.

JULIE

Did you cut it with the stone?

LUCAS

I slid it up and down against this.

I rubbed it.

I made a tool out of this one.

It's got a prick on it.

JULIE

That'll cut.

LUCAS

Yeah

It's rough on the finger.

JULIE

Yeah

It's crumbling.

LUCAS

Yeah.

JULIE

We can't do this all day.

LUCAS

How would you know that?

Beat.

JULIE
My mother wants me to be at the ceremony

LUCAS
This? Now?

JULIE
Yes.

LUCAS
Boring.
You'll need a bath first.
We'll go swimming!

JULIE
I don't walk there alone.
Undertow.

LUCAS
Rip tide.
When it's the moon its rip tide.

JULIE
Why do you think it's the moon?

LUCAS
Because it is the moon let's go.

JULIE
You're not wearing any shoes

LUCAS
I don't need shoes I have hard feet I have calluses.

JULIE
I stay here
We're going to have a barbeque.

LUCAS
Fine.
You're going to eat 2 hot dogs.

JULIE

Fine.
I'm cold.

LUCAS
You didn't dress right you didn't wear a sweater top I don't need a sweater top I'm hot
blooded.

JULIE
So am I

LUCAS
Here this is for you.

JULIE
What is it?

LUCAS
I made it out of dune grass
It's a bracelet.

JULIE
It's too big

LUCAS
It's a cuff one cuff

JULIE
It'll fall off of me.

LUCAS
Pull it up your arm tight.

She fixes things.

JULIE
I don't like it

LUCAS
Yes you do.

JULIE
I'm hungry

LUCAS

You didn't have a snack your lips are cold they're blue.
You're my puppy.
Come come.

He hugs her close to his side.

Blasts!

YVETTE, CHERYL, MAXIMUS, FOOTMEN ooh and ah.

LUCAS
Look at the blue.

Blasts!
YVETTE and CHERYL notice the closeness of Lucas and Julie.

JULIE
Who are you?

LUCAS
Look at the red.

(#) YVETTE gives a speech.

YVETTE
The footmen tell me I should give a speech
So I give a speech!
I'm not a barbarian.

Hi Cheryl.

It has been one hundred and fifty years
Since the Diamond Revolution
What a thing to have overcome
Together.

One hundred and fifty years
It's the lifetime of a high-reaching birch tree
An elm
An oak
Or a tortoise.

And because of our longstanding relationship
With Maximus and Cheryl's cosmetic company
And our patented Diamond Cream
We too will live past one hundred and fifty years.

Applause.

Thank you
Thank you very much

I look around and my, aren't we ravishing!
Diamond Cosmetics
Diamond Shipping
Diamond Contracting and Company

It seems while celebrating the anniversary
We're also throwing a bit of a business party!

Laughter

I am so proud to work with all of you
To be able to provide to you the fruits of my labor
So that we can create a better way of life
That we pass down and share with our children.

Aside.

Julie
My dear daughter

I see you have a new
Friend.

Different:

What's your name
Boy?

LUCAS
I don't know.

YVETTE
Where do you come from?

LUCAS
I don't know.

YVETTE
Well you seem
Very special.

LUCAS
I am.

Yvette is stirred by this.

YVETTE
Good.
I hope you all are enjoying the festivities
And soon the delicacies
Tonight.
(to Lucas:)
You must be hungry
You can eat at our table.

Applause.

And with that bon appétit!

Continued applause.

(Julie why don't you sit by me.)

At once the footmen serve a stunning hedonistic feast of Pigs-in-a-Blanket
There are oos and ahs.

MAXIMUS
What an extraordinary feast!

There is hubbub while they are served: thank yous and oh mys.
Everyone eating, indulging, with audible reaction.
The audience gets pigs-in-a-blankets too.

Apart:

LUCAS
Rooster.

JULIE
What?

Lucas does not eat it.

LUCAS
Thank you.

Gradually unnatural clouds come in

The hue on their faces and food turns their eating freakish, grotesque.

They look up to the clouds. The eating stops.

Lucas and Yvette lock eyes,

Blackout.

(#) Maximus, Cheryl, Footman

MAXIMUS

These clouds

Cheryl

They are very ominous

(Very ominous)

CHERYL

Yes Maxi

Frightful.

MAXIMUS

Yes.

But wouldn't you agree also

That they are very familiar

A familiar color

Yes?

(Unnatural)

CHERYL

No.

MAXIMUS

Oh?

(Very unnatural)

And the smell!

FOOTMAN

Sir?

MAXIMUS

You don't smell it?

The odor?

It's wafting in and out the windows!

CHERYL

Maxi

MAXIMUS

What we're what

We're not to mention it?

CHERYL

Maxi this is no time for scrutiny
I'm sure the clouds will be dealt with
Footman? Yes?

FOOTMAN

Yes ma'am.

CHERYL

See?

Dear perhaps you're cranky.
Do you want some toast, jam, milk, a boiled egg?
I'll go fetch it let me fetch it.

MAXIMUS

I love toast
Toast and jam
Yes
A man's breakfast.

CHERYL

Of course you do.
I'll just be down in that cellar fixing that up.
For you.

She exits.

Long beat.

MAXIMUS

NoNO I cannot shake it I cannot!
These clouds are consequential Footman!
Very (consequential)
I can't place it I can't place the memory
But they are undoubtedly—

It is said Footman
That the system—the olfactory system—is the
Memory factory
System.

Sniff.

Perhaps I can remember.

Sniff.

I am perhaps unlocking (unlocking)

Sniff.

A veiled recollection!

He sniffs his face through space.

FOOTMAN

Sir, but wouldn't that be outlandish.

MAXIMUS

Yes it would

It would be outlandish!

(Very outlandish)

Unless of course

I was systematically spot on

And I am systematically

On to something

He sniffs his face through space, he is onto something, until:

Oh my head

It aches.

FOOTMAN

May I offer sir an analgesic?

MAXIMUS

No, no the throb is within the cranium

Nothing can be done

(Nothing can be done)

I'm accustomed to it.

It seems whenever I consider anything of substance

My prehistoric mind gnaws at itself

Youthful exterior

Decay on the interior Footman

I am incapacitated!

I've deteriorated into a fumbling blotchy

FOOTMAN (overlapping)

Sir, you are not blotchy.

MAXIMUS (cont.)

Untidiness of a being
A second-rate scientist
With a wife
A Cheryl
Steadfast
Whom I mortify
(Fetching toast and jam)
Forced to busy herself with
Wed-locks and tittle-tattle scandal

Tell me Footman
Who is this wilderness boy?

FOOTMAN

Sir.

MAXIMUS

You've seen him?
That whispering young man boy

FOOTMAN

He's spoken to you, sir?

MAXIMUS

No no, not to me.
But I heard their babbling
The children
He and young Julie
By the rocks
The rustling of children
The chirping.

From where did this boy materialize?
His parents are who?

FOOTMAN

I...?

MAXIMUS

Is he a magical creature?

FOOTMAN
Sir!

MAXIMUS
Footman!

Yes, of course.

We should be very
Attentive around him
(Very attentive)
Nonetheless.
That is all.

MAXIMUS locks eyes to ratify, then

I will sit quietly now and wait for my snack.

PORTRAIT OF WOMAN AND GIRL

(#) Yvette, Julie, Footman

YVETTE

Julie.

What did that boy speak of with you?

JULIE

He made me a cuff

Out of dune grass

For my wrist.

YVETTE

A cuff for your wrist?

JULIE

One cuff.

It is not good quality.

YVETTE

What a tribute.

Beat.

Julie

We don't know if you'll inherit the Beauvais family feet.

JULIE

I'm still growing

YVETTE

Yes of course yes

Beautiful daughter, beautiful future.

But it's important that you invest your attentions with the right kind of boy

A boy from our island.

The kind of boy that can keep you happy.

You remember Benjamin don't you?

Maximus and Cheryl's son?

JULIE
Yes Maman.

YVETTE
I'm sure he
Would give you a more
Sophisticated jewelry
If you encouraged him to

JULIE
I don't know how.

YVETTE
Oh it's easy Julie!
It's fun!

As a young woman
You are untouchable
Yet irresistible

You're pristine
But kind
But disinterested
But interest-ing!
You don't have to turn your head when someone calls your name
You should have confidence.

Only blink your eyes deliberately
And with duration and follow-through

Julie does

And when you stand
Be aware of your back
Of your caboose
This awareness is perceptible
And those in front of you will also contemplate your caboose
While you extend conversation

Do you understand?
Give it a go.

Julie does something just really something with her butt.

JULIE

Is this what you mean?

YVETTE

Well

Good.

Now onto discourse.

I do not avoid eye contact

I employ it

Don't demure your gaze

Always outward

Always toward the horizon

I only lock eyes with others

To

To ratify

If you waste your gazes on faces

Then real communication is left unpunctuated.

Footman am I right?

She turns her eyes to him quickly

FIRST FOOTMAN

Yes Maman!

YVETTE

Yes.

You should always be thinking two things simultaneously

This will make you mysterious and busy

And in conversation be sure to speak of the elements:

Water

Fire

The earth

The howl of the wind

It conjures the constitutions to feel the gushing and rushing of vitality in the veins

The mutable forces of desire

Let me hear you say it

Water

JULIE
Water

YVETTE
Fire

JULIE
Fire

YVETTE
The earth

JULIE
The earth

YVETTE
Wind

JULIE
Wind

YVETTE (overlapping)
Howling wind

JULIE (overlapping)
Howling

YVETTE (overlapping)
Yes gusting wind

JULIE (overlapping)
Gust
Wind gust

YVETTE (overlapping)
Whistling

JULIE (overlapping)
Whistle whistling

YVETTE
Ssshhh

JULIE
Tsh.

YVETTE
Yes.
And when you walk
Walk with conviction
And roundedness
All lines are curved lines
You know this
I've seen you gesture

And lastly always remember
Nipples are the simplest invitation
Like two sweet chicklettes peeping in the wind

And that's all!

JULIE
Thank you
Maman.

Julie goes to exit

YVETTE
Julie
I'm very proud of you.

Why don't you go and find Benjamin
And give it all a try

JULIE
Okay.

Julie goes to exit again

YVETTE
But natural Julie
Be natural

JULIE
Yes Maman!

Julie exits.

YVETTE

Footman

My bath.

FIRST FOOTMAN draws a bath.

Yvette shows signs of exhaustion.

FIRST FOOTMAN

Yes Maman.

YVETTE

I'll just

I must

My make-up

Will you wait? I'm weary.

I'm a little lethargic.

My feet.

FIRST FOOTMAN

I know.

He gets her mask ready...something shimmering, glittery sparkle.

YVETTE

The clouds have reached the island

FOOTMAN

We're addressing it

Maman

YVETTE

Oh good

That can't happen again.

I have too many perfumes!

How can I choose

I have too many perfumes to choose from

The vanity

Is overflowing

With perfume bottles

He adds the diamond powder to the bath.

Yes
A bath
It seems like the right thing to do.

FIRST FOOTMAN
Of course.

YVETTE
Thank you.

A secret:
They've stopped delivering food to the island
It's a coup.
No one knows
But I think they can tell
The cuisine is changing.

My thighs are tense
Now they're not
I just had to think about it

And that wilderness boy is
Around
He's only a child
But children are capable of anything.
Watch him.
Watch him with Julie.

FIRST FOOTMAN
You had a very trying day

YVETTE
Yes.
Yes I did.
Is the basin full?
The tub
I must take a tub
(She remembers the make-up)
Oh I've mixed up the order of things

FIRST FOOTMAN

Sh sh sh sh

YVETTE gets in

YVETTE

We can make shadow puppets
We can make shadow puppets on the tile
Look
A pear
A peeled September sugar pear
Remember?
Of course you can't remember
What a treat

Your turn

FIRST FOOTMAN

(Makes a cat)

YVETTE

How lovely
It's a kitty!
Or is it a bison?
That's much better than a pear

She prepares for her diamond mask.

Oh.

It is so tiring to mingle with Cheryl
She can be
So
"New money"
Do you know the term?

FIRST FOOTMAN

Mmm

He is applying the diamond cream to her face.

YVETTE

With her constant talking her
Concerns
I mean it's been centuries with this woman
Her questions

Her presence!
Ah!
She reminds me of the proverb:
“It is always the better of two options to say:
‘Where could she be?’
Than to say
‘Why here she is again.’”

You know?

FIRST FOOTMAN
Yes Maman

YVETTE
But her Benjamin
Perhaps it would be wise to move forward with the betrothal after all
Keep distractions out of mind.

Be sure to massage the arches
Yes?

FIRST FOOTMAN
Of course.

YVETTE
My footman.
My favorite footman

He begins to massage her feet.
Are they black? Are they blood red? Are they pristine?

Mmm
A lullaby perhaps.

There is a whispering a growling a rustling in the distance until...

THE WILD SHAME

- (#) A beast with seven heads (or rather seven people in a very tight mob) appears and tiptoes through the space. Prancing, shocking, tightening, it is a shifting frenetic. This is its anthem, alternating voices and unison, punctuating throughout with grunts, animal sounds, and howls:

I
AM
THE WILD—SSH!
I AM THE WILD
BARK BARK CAW CAW BANG BANG SNIP SNAP
SSH!
I
AM
THE WILD—SSH!
I AM THE WILD SHAAAAAME
SHAME SHAME SHAME!
NO I
HOWWWWL
I AM THE WILD GROWWWL
GROWL GNAW GNAW
GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING
GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING SHA—

- (#) Maximus and Cheryl.

MAXIMUS
Ah!
I dreamt Cheryl
I dreamt!

CHERYL
Oh a dream!

MAXIMUS
It was an army
An aerial unit
Helicopters and aeroplanes

CHERYL
No

MAXIMUS

The sky was
Full indigo
And full of these hovering
Helicopters
The blades thrumming and thrumming
It was this low beat
This deep
Woo woo woo Cheryl
And I was flying
Up with them
And we all had these
Long snake hoses

These tubes

And I didn't know

Whether they would spurt fire

Or drop
Bodies.

Oh
Cheryl

CHERYL
I'm here.

MAXIMUS
In my ear
I can still hear it
Woo woo woo

Is it true?

(#) Morning. CHERYL, JULIE with wedding magazines. MAXIMUS with his notepad.

JULIE
It feels silly to start planning a wedding
So close after the Anniversary of the Revolution

CHERYL

The what?

Oh the barbeque.

(Realizes:)

Oh! Yes.

You're so sensitive dear Julie

It troubles you to think about that war?

JULIE

I just imagine it.

Constant clanging and clashing...

CHERYL

Why no! Think on flowers

The bouquet!

The fondant on the cake!

JULIE

These cakes?

They all look like fancy furniture

Like layered satin ottomans

I don't want to eat furniture.

And to think of flowers

What if the

What if the clouds...

CHERYL

These clouds will pass Julie

They're "weather"

Weather.

Flowers always bloom in the summer here.

Oh think of the bouquet!

The Anniversary of the Revolution was a celebration

Don't bourdon yourself imagining the past.

JULIE

I suppose you're right

It could dampen the spirits

Thinking of a war

Its savagery

With bombs going off and off and off

And off and off

And the fire at night
And the rumbling
And tussling
Getting deep in the sand
And thirsty
So thirsty
Crawling against the rocks and the earth

Well it must have been so long ago now

MAXIMUS
Imagine if a war were still going on
Unnerving

JULIE
That there could be people fighting right now
Just beyond the island
And we'd have no idea.

MAXIMUS
(...we'd have no idea...)

JULIE
My gosh these cakes they look like pedestals
Like tiny nightstands for pretty princesses

CHERYL
You are a princess
You're mother's the queen

MAXIMUS
(...Her mother's the queen...)

JULIE
Well then give me cake to eat
Not a nightstand
All the more reason.

I'm not a princess.
I'm a daughter.

CHERYL
You are Yvette's daughter.
Oh we're so pleased you'll marry our Benjamin.

And to think with your diamonds and our face cream and this merger
You two may be together for another one hundred and fifty years!

(#) Lucas Julie Footmen

FOOTMAN

The boy.

He says:

LUCAS

Take your shoes off.

FOOTMAN

She says:

FOOTMAN AND JULIE

Why. No.

FOOTMAN

She does.

FOOTMAN

She walks across the prickling rocks and he watches to see when she winces.

LUCAS

8 times.

FOOTMAN AND JULIE

Why what are you counting?

LUCAS

You don't have calluses. You might have the Beauvais feet.

A time shift

Lucas and Julie circle each other:

FOOTMAN

She wears sandals.

She wears espadrilles.

She wears heels.

She wears stiletto heels.

And he wears his grandfather's briefcase. She says:

JULIE AND FOOTMAN

What a tribute.

FOOTMAN

But the look of it: the molding leather, the creases; the quality, it is not good quality – it's a joke, it's a laugh. /He has nothing to his name but calluses.

JULIE (simultaneous)

/You have nothing to your name but calluses.

What's it like to know your grandfather?

Beat.

LUCAS

It's like knowing how you're made

LUCAS AND FOOTMAN

The potential you have within

LUCAS AND FOOTMAN

What you're up against

LUCAS

You are his future

And he is also your future.

There's wisdom and wiggly parts.

JULIE

(doesn't get the joke)

I've never known my ancestors

LUCAS

That's not entirely true.

JULIE

Well, I've never met an elderly person

I've worn

Heirlooms.

She refers to her diamonds

FOOTMAN AND LUCAS

What a tribute.

LUCAS

Who's that?

JULIE

My great uncle

I don't think I remember his name.

LUCAS

He's quite blue

JULIE

It's from the element boron

It means he was very salty in life

And maybe a little blue in life too

She refers to another diamond

This is my mother's mother

She's more yellow

Which means she probably died young

Younger people have more nitrogen

More protein

They are always growing

Either that

Or she had very very very long hair.

Or she died and

Burned with a full breath of air in her lungs.

Beat.

LUCAS

What's it like

To wear your grandmother?

JULIE

When I was little

It was a comfort.

I would imagine them
Dancing
Dancing.

Now that I know you
And you've told me about your family

Its
Unnerving

I can't take them off
My fingers grew around them.
I've been trying to take them off.
I was thinking I wanted to meet your family
Your grandparents
I wanted to meet a grandparent
And I thought it would be
In bad taste
To wear
Them

Why do you spend time with me?

LUCAS
Because I'm good for you

JULIE
I haven't decided if you're good for me

LUCAS
You don't have to decide
Deciding has nothing to do with it
I am
Just good for you.

JULIE
Good

LUCAS
Good.

Beat cute.

JULIE
What's bad for me?

LUCAS
Benjamin.

This island is bad for you.

JULIE
This is my home.

LUCAS
It isn't a home Julie
It's a theme park to live like this.
Right now it seems like we're surrounded by nature
And all this is very natural
But this isn't
Natural
People like me
We hauled the sand out from the Pacific Ocean bed to restore your beach
The first time
And then the second time
We ground down old windows, brick and cement.
And dyed it.
And the third time
Your mother had us grind down the diamonds.

(An echo, different)

FOOTMAN
Look purple.

FOOTMAN
It's crystal.

FOOTMAN
I'm rich.

FOOTMAN
I found it.

FOOTMAN
They all look the same anyone could have found it.

But who cut it.

Beat.

LUCAS

It takes a whole life to make a diamond.
But a life isn't worth as much as it used to be.
But you knew that already didn't you.

He lets some sand fall from his hand.
It looks like the bath powder.

JULIE

She doesn't go around killing people.

LUCAS

Lucky there's a war going on
And on
And on
And on...

(#) Yvette and Julie

JULIE

Is it true?

YVETTE

No
No
No

This boy
He may call it a war
Because he may have different values
He grew up differently
And I feel for him
I can relate
There are difficult parts of the world
Where people are born with many needs unmet
And they need to make certain sacrifices
To survive.

But I believe

And your Aunt Cheryl and your Uncle Maximus

JULIE

They're not really my aunt and uncle.

YVETTE

No they're not

Because a real war

Took your aunt and uncles!

My Julie

Wars and death tear families apart

But our business

Keeps us together

You see?

We ended war with our Diamond Revolution.

This is a business

This is your family

And this is all yours

It is our business together

We want it to last forever don't we?

We want to be together don't we?

Julie does not answer.

It took me so long to be sure the world would be safe for you

For me to have a girl

To have a baby in this world

It took me

So many years

To know I could provide for you

And keep you safe

And surrounded by beautiful things

Where you could be free to explore and play and

I don't know what children do!

I didn't

Have childhood.

You should never have to see

The things I had to see

When I was your age.

JULIE
I'm sorry Maman
I'm so sorry.

Julie reaches to her.
Yvette takes her hand.

YVETTE
I do all of this for you Julie

(#) Maximus and Cheryl. Maximus connects to war. In front of footman? Do they

MAXIMUS
But who is this Yvette?
She is here one day
She was not here the day before.
She is the queen.
But I do not remember the day before Yvette.
Do you remember the day before Yvette?
No.
Me neither.
This is very disconcerting (very disconcerting).

Somehow she is like an untouchable force
A glowing—
I feel I am a moth
And I travel to her
And she is like
The moon
And I am like a moth.
And we are all moths (we are all moths)
I DON'T WANT TO BE AN INSECT
I WANT TO BE AN ANIMAL!
But I behave:
"Flutter flatter don't disturb her
Don't agitate don't agitate
Don't breathe too loudly
Laughing laughing"
It's dehumanizing.

And I do not remember before!
I cannot remember how it was before!

Do you?

CHERYL

Why would I want to think on the past?
Since Yvette's arrival and now with our future merger
All I know is happiness.

MAXIMUS

How was I?
I must have been--?
I am not a moth!

FOOTMAN (simultaneous)

No, sir, you are not a moth.

CHERYL (simultaneous)

Of course you are not a moth, Maxi.

MAXIMUS

(I am not a moth.)

CHERYL

No.

MAXIMUS

No.

No.

Perhaps I was a pilot.

CHERYL

Maxi.

MAXIMUS

It's all coming together:
The anniversary of the revolution, and the clouds coming in, they are familiar, unnatural
Why would they arrive that day?
Looming, musking
Like that wilderness boy
He is a beguiling thing!
He comes along with the wind approaching
That ungodly sky

I think perhaps I was a pilot in the war.

CHERYL (overlapping)
Maxi where is this coming from?

MAXIMUS (cont.)
I think perhaps I was a pilot in the war
And I think something more
Unnerving
That perhaps the war is still a war Cheryl
And this hue on the horizon
This thick mist
Is the evidence.
Evidence enough!

CHERYL
SSh!
SSH!
Footman will you excuse us a moment
My husband is suffering from one of his headaches.
Sometimes the pain incites delusions
He must rest and remember himself.

Footman Exits

Maxi.
You will not ruin this for us.
You will not intervene.
Our son is about to receive
Everything.

Sh.

(#) Wild shame. Rustling whispering and howls and growling build into:

SH!
I
AM
THE WILD SHAME!
I AM THE WILD
WRACKING GRIPPING GODLY GRUNTING
HAUNTING HAUNTING HAUNTING HAUNTING
WRECKING CLUTCHING CLENCHING NAGGING
GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING

GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING/BARK BARK CAW CAW BANG
BANG SNIP SNAP
ROARING ROARING ROARING ROARING/ BARK BARK CAW CAW BANG
BANG SNIP SNAP
SHAME!
SHAME SHAME SHAME!
SHAME!
SHAME!
SHAME!
SHHHHHHHhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

The Wild Shame continues its hush: a low rustling and whispering wind below the following:

(#) Yvette's dream
Lucas is peeling a September sugar pear.

This takes a long time:

LUCAS
Can't touch it.

YVETTE
I'm hungry

LUCAS
It's mine
I picked it

We can't do this much longer

Muffled blasts, in the distance.

Their eyes meet.

YVETTE AND LUCAS
Your lips are cold

LUCAS
They're blue.
And red
And purple
And yellow

And pink...

The Wild Shame exhales and Yvette is alone, shaken.

(#) Yvette in the bath, the Footmen tending to her.

YVETTE
I hear you there.
Cheryl.

CHERYL
Yes it's me!
I'm sorry
I'm lurking!
I am embarrassed.

YVETTE
I assure you Cheryl
I am the most
Naked between the two of us.
Come.

CHERYL
Oh the water is ice cold!
Ah!
I'm frostbitten!
You must be freezing!

YVETTE
No.
I find it soothing
My tender feet

CHERYL
Unnatural

YVETTE
Is it?

What brings you to my bathroom?

CHERYL
I'm

Oh
I was hoping
I was just checking

Yvette and the footmen are sensuous here.

It's nothing
I shouldn't have bothered you in the bath.

Cheryl goes to exit.

YVETTE
Cheryl
How's Maximus

CHERYL
He had a headache!!
And now it's much better!!

YVETTE
Oh I'm glad to hear we're back on our feet.
I was afraid his mind would get away from him.

CHERYL
No Maman Yvette
A full recovery.

YVETTE
I hope so
This betrothal
I am going to put it on hold for a while Cheryl
Until the clouds have passed
And certain
Difficulties are sorted out.
Your son Benjamin
Has agreed to work for me
In the meantime.

CHERYL
He's just a boy!

YVETTE
We need more Footmen Cheryl

She gets out of the bath

Your son is very loyal.
He learned that from you.

She is now covered.

It seems Julie has made a more advantageous connection
And I will pursue it for the good of the island.

CHERYL
What could be more advantageous than our merger
Than the potential to live forever!

YVETTE
Food.

CHERYL
Food is everywhere!
There's always food to eat!
What I offer you is unique
You don't know their values
They'd do anything for your diamonds

YVETTE
No no
Anything they do they do to survive
And so do I
And so do you.

(#) Cheryl, perhaps putting on face cream.

CHERYL
They're her sexual golf course
Those footmen
She slathers all over them at night
They're her man-harem
Sick
Fuck fuck
Woman
She surrounds herself
With men

And they gobble all over her
Gobble gobble gobble
Sucking it up
It's it's it's it's
TOO MANY JUICES!
How.

And everything she wears is translucent!
That curve of her butt is always perceptible through the silks
Through the sheers that she wears
She shows herself
She shows herself
To those footmen
They live in the nook of her ass!
Their faces are committed to her ass!
They kill to be in her ass—ASSASSINS!
Disgusting.
It's unsavory
It's not friendly.
It's not friendly
To dress that way.
In front of your business associate's son!
Oh my Benjamin
She'll turn him into a bath toy
Into foot furniture

I worked very hard
To make this lifestyle possible
We get to be here because of the sacrifices we made.
And she turns my son into
A service animal!
To entertain her libido
And watch over
That
Business.

But she never gave birth to a boy.
She can send my son to her war because she never gave birth to a boy.
A civilized
Beautiful
Young
Cherished
Heart
Beating

Good.
She turns them
She molds them into
Footmen.

It's not fair to be a mother of a son
In this world.

(#) MAXIMUS, FOOTMAN

MAXIMUS
Footman

FOOTMAN
Yes Sir

MAXIMUS
Footman.

FOOTMAN
Yes Sir.

MAXIMUS
At the Anniversary of the Revolution
Maman Yvette served us rooster.
She said it was "poultry"
(Poultry)
But I could tell
Rooster!

Why the male bird.
The patriarch
Why the flutist of the flock?

I am mustering the thought.

Perhaps there are no more chickens alive
Footman
There is only rooster
(Only rooster)

And everything

Well everything feels a little off when rooster is a meal

“Hot Dogs” Rooster

Rooster in Red Sauce

(Blood)

Not wine

Not tomato

It all seems rather systematic

The low hanging hue

My unresolved feeling that

Yes indeed I flew

I aviated and this was my aviary

And we eat the rooster.

Something’s amiss

Here

On this

Island

This

Rooster

It’s all too much!

I look around

The few families left

The few good families

And I suspect they suspect my suspicions

But why only then would the wind come in?

And why only then with this rooster and this revolution?

Headache.

Something is

Consuming me

Eating away at my thoughts!

My mind

Where is my mind?

I am like the rooster running with its head cut off!

We are one and the same this bird

This is not unreasonable.

This is not unreasonable Footman.

The only thing left to try then is of course
Is a highly sophisticated experiment
Highly controlled
Highly scientific
With no opportunity for uncertainty or inessential variables

So we must begin with a hypothesis
Footman naturally
And the hypothesis follows
Naturally:

If I am indeed a rooster
Then my
Reflection
Should be that of a rooster
Thus the experiment reveals itself to be

That I must now look into a mirror

Footman, place the hand mirror into my hand Footman

And at the count of
Three
We shall assess through the looking at my reflection
Whether or not I am indeed a rooster: One

Two

No NO!
Wait.
Now I am having a thought!
We've reached of course an unanticipated snag
It has to be said
That it has been said
That the mind can see things that are not there

FOOTMAN
Yes the mind plays horrible tricks.

MAXIMUS
Yes
And therefore
My mind could reveal to me the reflection of a man
And one would think then

“Ah yes, I am therefore a man”
But in fact I am a rooster
Who desires to be a man so ardently
So very ardently
That I would see a man’s face
And mistake it to be my own
When I am of course a rooster
With a rooster face
And all the fitting features of a rooster.

Naturally the experiment must be voided
And deemed inconclusive without trials
Footman, take the hand mirror from my hand Footman.

FOOTMAN
Yes Sir.

MAXIMUS
That was an ineffective use of time.
We are no closer to clarity.

FOOTMAN
No no certainly not.
No rooster clarity.

MAXIMUS
None you’re right Footman.

An idea:

Perhaps
Perhaps you see
You see my walk
My gait
Here
See as I walk
My posture
The protruding
This
This
Here this jabbing
Jabbing into space
This jabbing
Jabbing

Footman are you noting this?

FOOTMAN

Yes Sir

MAXIMUS

And that my hind legs

Well potentially my only legs

Well they bend

See

I'm bending

Tell me how the knees bend

FOOTMAN

Oh they are bending

Bending rigorously

MAXIMUS

Which way do the knees bend?

Fore

Or Aft?

FOOTMAN

I cannot—

MAXIMUS

Port

Or Starboard

FOOTMAN

Sir!

MAXIMUS

Yes Footman! Why would a rooster be talking ship talk?

No of course a rooster would not know ship talk.

That's not the proper argot for a bird

Unless it were a sea bird

My my

My rooster whiles

Very cunning very cunning rooster

But I am onto me!

I am following my every move!

Yes.

We shall wait until daybreak
When the moon has set
The crack of dawn
And you shall see if I crow toward the horizon Footman
If I am indeed a rooster I would not shirk my duty
My nature

To cawk!

FOOTMAN
Splendid Sir.

MAXIMUS
Yes!
I am so tired.

FOOTMAN
Shall I fetch your wife sir?

MAXIMUS
Yes
Bed time
Yes yes
Go on.

I'll be here.
On the look out.

(#) YVETTE, CHERYL, AND MAXI

CHERYL
What did you do to him
You used your feet on his head.

YVETTE
Cheryl you said he was suffering from headaches
Your face creams can only do so much...
His mind has aged to capacity
This seems to be the logical conclusion.
It would be quite unnatural to stomp on your husband's head.
With my bare feet
On your husband's head.

CHERYL

We would have never betrayed you.
You're taking everything from me.

YVETTE

Cheryl
I am trying to keep our lives how we like.
I'm trying to keep you alive.

CHERYL

That boy
He'll change your daughter's name to
Smith
Weaver
Baker
Butcherblock
He'll cut you two apart.
Did you consider that
That he would want to take her away from you
That he might not want to stay here?
And you arranged it all.

YVETTE

Cheryl

You're flushed
Your cheeks
They're so pink

Wouldn't you make a beautiful diamond

Absolutely transparent
With that pink in it

I could wear you in my hair
On a barrette

It would be another way to spend time together.

A quiet way.

CHERYL

I will be quiet.

YVETTE
Good.

THE WEDDING

(#) Cheryl and Maximus
There is a dash of rooster to Maximus' garb.

MAXIMUS
How do you write a wedding card?
What do you say for a wedding?

CHERYL
It helps me to imagine that a couple is dying
Or that they're dead
And then somehow I can think up all the ways they encouraged me in life
All the ways that I have been grateful for them
And proud of them

If conjuring an image of their deaths doesn't stir up the words
You probably should say
"Congratulations, Sincerely Maximus."

Beat.

MAXIMUS
My dear Cheryl
Do you think about death
For every occasion that may warrant a greeting card?

CHERYL
Yes I do.
I find
A certain comfort
Contemplating death.
It gives one the opportunity to summarize.

MAXIMUS
What other deaths do you contemplate?

CHERYL
I've thought a lot about your death

That's how I remind myself how much I love you.

And I think of my own death.

And what would be said about me if I were to die.

That I was hardworking
Giving
That I lived and died with dignity
That I helped others

That I was kind
Patient
That I was a good cook
That I made a special mark on the world.

I wonder who would say it.

MAXIMUS
So strange to celebrate a wedding
It's something I knew would happen of course
I thought it would be Benjamin's...
But to attend the first wedding in over a century
Remarkable isn't it.

CHERYL
Remarkable.

(#) Lucas and Julie pre-wedding

LUCAS
Your dress is like a parachute.

Lucas and Julie circle each other.

JULIE
We'll stay here.

LUCAS
"We'll stay here."

Let me show you outside.

JULIE
We are outside.

LUCAS
Julie

JULIE
It will disappoint me.

LUCAS
How would you know that?

JULIE
I will
Disappoint you

Someday I'll die.

LUCAS
Of course you'll die
And so will I

They kiss
They hold hands
Or another simple act that bonds them.

(#) THE WEDDING.

Everyone enters with a low hum
Julie sings above it (Lucas sings the "I do" lines with her):

LOOK HOW THE MOON GLOWS RIGHT UP ABOVE US
ON A NIGHT SO NEW
I GIVE MY LIFE TO YOU
I DO

AND WHEN THE CLOUDS COME IN
AND ALL THE WORLD IS COVERED IN SNOW
IF WE'RE APART
I'LL KNOW
I GAVE MY LIFE TO YOU
I DO
ALL OF MY LIFE FOR YOU
I DO

Then everyone else hums a verse together
Julie removes her diamond rings
She gives the diamond rings to Yvette

She sings the song again, but this time Yvette sings the last section with her.

LOOK HOW THE MOON GLOWS RIGHT UP ABOVE US
ON A NIGHT SO NEW
I GIVE MY LIFE TO YOU
I DO

AND WHEN THE CLOUDS COME IN
AND ALL THE WORLD IS COVERED IN SNOW
WHEN WE'RE APART
I'LL KNOW
I GAVE MY LIFE FOR YOU
I DO
ALL OF MY LIFE FOR YOU
I DO

Julie and Lucas aim for the exit and begin to walk

(#) Yvette and Julie

YVETTE
Julie

Yvette reaches to her.

I'm very proud of you.

JULIE
Thank you maman.

Yvette hugs Julie.

YVETTE
Beautiful daughter, beautiful future.

The hug turns violent.
Yvette is killing her.

From offstage we hear a whispering a rustling a growing unnerving.

The Footmen take Julie's limp body away.

(#) Yvette alone.
Putting on a new ring.

The Wild Shame whispers offstage

BARK BARK CAW CAW BANG BANG SNIP SNAP
HAUNTING HAUNTING HAUNTING HAUNTING
WRECKING CLUTCHING CLENCHING NAGGIN
GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING
GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING GNAWING
ROARING ROARING ROARING ROARING

And Yvette stops it all with a

SHH!

She holds the ring to her heart.

Blackout.

End of play.