

WORKING TITLE: "THE FLAT AND THE THEATRE"

Written by

Oscar Appleyard-Keeling

REV: 1.2

15.02.2024

EXT. SKY - DAY

A greyscale cloudy sky, in the distance a black dot slowly gets bigger and bigger. A sound of machines humming loudly is all that can be heard.

It becomes recognisable as the head of Oscar Wilde, his eyes are burnt through and on fire.

His head gets bigger until it overwhelms the screen and his burning eyes are all that can be seen.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER - UNKNOWN

The eyes of JAMES in the same position as Wilde's, holding for a few seconds. The sound of the room is all that can be heard, a slow low sound like a vinyl record on a turntable with the speakers unplugged.

JAMES sits wearing plain black clothes staring into the distance in a sea of red seats, alone. The room is silent.

After a few seconds the silence is broken by a crackle. JAMES' stare is broken, slowly looking to the left, then the right, then returning to looking forward.

JAMES has been looking down onto a empty stage, with red curtains at its back.

The stage remains empty until SEMA, a middle aged man wearing plain white clothes, pops into existence.

SEMA looks up to JAMES, JAMES returns the look.

SEMA walks to stage right, snaps his fingers, and music begins playing. He then points to the middle of the curtain beginning to ruffle with a cacophony of noise.

JODIE A young women in blue steps out. JODIE walks towards the centre of the stage and stands there for a moment looking into the nothing.

JAMES stares at her.

SEMA snaps his fingers. JODIE walks to stage right.

SEMA snaps his fingers again. Subtly different music begins playing. He points once again to the middle of the curtain beginning to ruffle with the same cacophony of noise.

PETER a young man in green steps out. PETER walks towards the centre of the stage and stands there for a moment looking into the nothing.

JAMES once again stares but at PETER this time.

SEMA snaps his fingers and then PETER walks to stage right.

SEMA snaps his fingers again and the music stops, returning to the sound of the room.

SEMA then walks to centre stage and looks up to JAMES, who returns the look. Still looking at JAMES, SEMA snaps his fingers. The theatre goes black.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

JAMES is sat at the end of the bed, looking down.

He looks up and talks to someone off screen.

JAMES  
I have no idea.

From the left of frame JODIE walks in and sits on the bed.

JODIE  
There's still time, you don't have to make a decision yet, we haven't even graduated.

JAMES  
The longer I leave deciding the more likely it is I will end stuck back with my parents till they die. Followed by a lonely, likely short, time stuck in their house till I die.

JODIE  
(Chuckling)  
At least it would get you on the property market.

JAMES  
Pretty much the only way with a soon to be Theatre degree.

JODIE  
Ah, at last you accept you will graduate, that's progress.

JODIE leans back looking up to the ceiling.

JAMES

I've lasted this long without  
breaking down, what's 2 more  
months.

JODIE stands up and walks over to pour herself and JAMES a  
drink.

JODIE

2 months of assessments and your  
final performance, still 50/50 odds  
I would say.

JAMES

You're meant to be the undying  
optimist who I come to rant to and  
the issues disappear, not taking  
bets on my breakdown.

JODIE

Sadly there is no money in being an  
optimist so betting on your  
breakdown is the only way I will  
enter the property market.

JAMES

I would pay you if the problems  
actually did disappear.

JODIE returns to sit on the end of the bed.

JODIE

In 2 months you will have made a  
decision, finished with a first and  
be preparing to move wherever you  
have decided, the problems will  
disappear.

JODIE hands JAMES a drink he holds it not thinking about ever  
drinking it.

JAMES

So your great advice to fix it all  
is that it will all be alright.

JODIE

Yep, you will either be living with  
me and Heidi in Edinburgh pursuing  
Avant Garde performance art, or  
surviving in London with Peter as  
you become a brilliant actor likely  
not getting the recognition you  
deserve but being highly regarded  
by critics.

JODIE downs her drink.

JAMES

Not considering the possibility I  
will strike out on my own and rise  
up the ranks through community  
theatre in Newcastle.

JODIE

Not a chance, you are a creature of  
companionship. You need one of us,  
and I already know which one you  
will choose.

JAMES

Do you now? Well then spill the  
beans on my innermost desire.

JODIE stands up to get herself another drink.

JODIE

That is for you to decide. Though I  
already know the decision, I can't  
steer you, you have to decide

JODIE (CONT'D)

(Looking up to the door)

Peter! At last you're home, do you  
know how long we've been waiting to  
drink because of you?

PETER stands in the door still wrapped up, looking worn out  
but happy to be back with his friends.

The gaze of JAMES lingers on him.

PETER

You've already started. Let me get  
dressed then the rest of us can  
start. Meet you both downstairs in  
5?

JAMES remains seated in the bed staring as PETER leaves,  
JODIE pours herself a drink the world begins to go dark.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THEATER. - UNKNOWN

Fading from black to reveal JAMES sitting in the theatre  
again with the sound of the room once again.

He stares down to the stage, which is empty, he then slowly looks left then right. He returns to look forward and after a moment looks up.

EXT. CLOUDY SKY. - DAY

The face of Oscar Wilde takes up the centre of the screen, his eyes burning. The sound of humming machines overtakes the sound of the theater.

INT. THEATER. - UNKNOWN

JAMES remains looking up for a few seconds, followed by him looking down to the stage.

SEMA is standing centre stage. He clicks his fingers and JODIE appears on stage right, and PETER appears on stage left.

He clicks his fingers again and music begins. He points to JAMES who stares back and looks towards JODIE.

A click can be heard. JAMES disappears leaving the seats empty. He appears on the stage with JODIE across from him and SEMA in deep stage right.

JODIE walks towards JAMES. They come together in the middle of the stage and begin dancing.

They fumble but continue on. JODIE is leading, not faltering, but JAMES is following and out of time, trying to find the rhythm but failing. They attempt to continue on, but SEMA clicks his fingers and the music stops. JAMES is returned to his seat in the audience. He looks down onto a now empty stage.

JAMES continues to look down at the stage but his face/body flickers between himself and SEMA's. For a second JAMES is fully replaced by SEMA before returning to JAMES the sound of crackling throughout.

Looking down SEMA appears centre stage, he snaps his fingers. The theatre goes black.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

In a dimly light room with alcohol bottles on a coffee table 4 people sit around chatting. PETER and JAMES are sat next to each other. JODIE and HEIDI are sat together on a different sofa.

JAMES stares into the distance, not paying attention to the chatter going on around him which is muffled and inaudible.

PETER

James

Breaks through grounding him to reality.

JAMES

Hmm?

PETER

Lost as always. I wanted to know how you have been. I've been working so much I haven't properly talked to you in like a week.

HEIDI

I can tell you, the exact same as last week.

JODIE

As his psychologist that's not fully true.

HEIDI

So you are fully committed to being his psychologist as well as mine, and I thought we had something special.

HEIDI throws her head back pretending to be faint.

JODIE

Oh we do, you will always be my favourite patient, I live for the minimum of an hour each day I spend unpicking your fucked up brain.

PETER

Do you two want a room? If you keep this up you will definitely be breaking the no sex in communal spaces rule.

HEIDI

You're no fun. What else are we getting drunk for?

PETER

To enjoy our limited time together?

JODIE downs her drink.

JODIE

Well I can only enjoy time with you  
when drinking so that works.

PETER sighs turns to look at JAMES.

PETER

If those two would just flirt  
privately I would have gotten an  
answer.

HEIDI

Fine we will, I wanted a smoke  
anyway.

HEIDI stands putting a hand out to the JODIE to stand up.

JODIE

Mon amour, you treat me so  
fabulously.

They leave together hand in hand.

PETER looks to JAMES.

JAMES

I have been fine.

PETER

Still not decided where you are  
going yet.

JAMES leans back.

JAMES

No, I just wish we could all stay  
together. Choosing between a career  
while living with you and no career  
while staying with my best friend  
is not easy.

PETER

So the only reason you are even  
considering moving to London with  
me is for your career. Wow.

PETER now slumps back.

JAMES

(A look of annoyance)

You know what I mean. I have known  
her since I can remember, I don't  
know what a life without her is  
like.



PETER

I know. But you can't remain that child forever, you both have to take that step into your own worlds.

JAMES

Any chance she will do a panic Masters in London?

PETER leans forward to grab his drink.

PETER

Not in a million, she already has a apprentice role lined up, and her parents have found her that flat for her and Heidi.

JAMES

So you have already decided I won't be going with them?

PETER

Pretty much yeah. If you were going with her you would have decided by now. You need to find the excuse not to before you fully decide but that's all you have left.

JAMES

Are you my new psychologist?

PETER

I can be.

JAMES pauses for a second, processing the response as PETER takes a sip of his drink.

PETER (CONT'D)

But it will be different. I won't do it for free.

JAMES leans forward to be level with PETER.

JAMES

Well then you won't be, you know how little I have here never mind in London.

PETER

You can pay me in other ways.

For the second time JAMES pauses staring at PETER.

PETER (CONT'D)  
You can be my flat maid, clean up,  
do my laundry, pick up groceries,  
you know in-between auditions and  
jobs.

JAMES  
So you would be wearing the pants?

PETER  
We both know that.

JAMES continues to stare at PETER, looking into every detail  
of his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THEATER. - UNKNOWN

Fading from black to reveal JAMES sat in the theatre. To his  
right sits SEMA. They both are looking down to the empty  
stage. SEMA clicks his fingers and JODIE and PETER appear on  
the stage.

SEMA looks to JAMES, he returns the look, then JAMES looks  
down at the stage. He looks between JODIE and PETER.  
Lingering on JODIE for a second before turning to look at  
PETER.

SEMA clicks his fingers, JAMES disappears from the seats and  
appears in centre stage across from PETER. JODIE is nowhere  
to be seen.

JAMES looks up to SEMA now sat in the seat he previously sat,  
he clicks his fingers again and music begins to play.

PETER steps towards JAMES and they begin to dance, PETER  
leads, this time JAMES follow to perfection as they dance in  
rhythm.

SEMA smiles while looking down. He begins to flicker, being  
replaced by JAMES for a second before returning to SEMA with  
a sound of crackling.

Looking down on the two men dancing, the light slowly goes  
down as they continue to dance to the music until the screen  
is black, the music still playing.

FADE TO:

EXT. CLOUDY SKY. - DAY

The face of Oscar Wilde is holding still, eyes burning, the flames begin to flicker and are extinguished. His head begins to reverse back into the clouds. The credits begin to roll with the music from the theater still playing.

**THE END.**