

richard

By

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Based on William Shakespeare's Richard II

Screenplay - richard.

Music: Music for a funeral of Queen Mary (PURCELL).

CLOSE UP:FADE UP FROM DARK RED ON TITLE - 'RICHARD'

DISSOLVE TO:

Somewhere in England...

The sound of a medieval battle, galloping horses, the clashing of swords and shields and the screams of men fighting and dying.

The sound of a pencil being sharpened.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 1 EXT/NIGHT STAIRWELL OLD PORTSMOUTH

CLOSE UP:

A pencil being sharpened

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 2 INT/DAY-STONE STAIRWELL

CLOSE UP - PULLING OUT TO MEDIUM CLOSE UP.

RICHARD is slumped against a wall at at the top of a stairwell. There is a shaft of light coming through the window above his head suggesting the light of heaven which adds warmth to the interior. There is a small voice recording device on the floor beside him which he picks up and begins to talk in to.

RICHARD

I have been studying how I may

compare

This prison where I live unto the

world

And for because the world is

populous

And here is not a creature but

myself, I cannot do it.

(CONTINUED)

CALLUM, the ghost of RICHARD'S mind in the form of a small child, appears beside RICHARD but we only see his lower torso and legs.

CALLUM
Yet, you'll hammer it out.

RICHARD appears not to notice CALLUM who sits down beside him.

RICHARD
My brain I'll prove the female to
my soul,

CALLUM
My soul its father.

RICHARD
And these two beget,

CALLUM
A generation of still-breeding
thoughts.

RICHARD slowly turns his head to study CALLUM.

CLOSE UP-PROFILE OF RICHARD AND CALLUM

RICHARD
And these same thoughts?

CALLUM
People this little world.

RICHARD
In humours...like?

CALLUM
The people of this world.

PULL OUT FROM CLOSE UP TO MEDIUM WIDE

CALLUM moves towards the edge of the stone landing overlooking the stairwell and stares down. RICHARD watches him then follows the same action and peers down into the dark stairwell. RICHARD rises and begins to descend the staircase and CALLUM follows him.

The source of light coming from the window diminishes and the stairwell looks cold and grey.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 3 EXT/DAY- CASTLE

CLOSE UP:

Two large doors are pulled open and RICHARD peers out from between them and sees the muddy waters of an estuary before him. RICHARD steps outside and stands upon a surface of shingle and dried seaweed. He gazes out across the estuary and sees the silhouette of a large tower jutting out above a treeline. It is the castle keep of a medieval fortress. RICHARD bends down near the water's edge and pushes one of his hands through the surface of the muddy water allowing it flow against his skin. As he raises his hand and stares at the mixture of wet gravel and mud that he now clutches he looks down at the ripples on the water's surface which subside to reveal the image of a woman leaning over the parapet of a bridge. He raises his head to see a figure quickly disappear into a clump of trees nestled on the further side of the castle's moat which has now replaced the previous view of the estuary.

RICHARD traverses the bridge with CALLUM, who stops to gaze down at the dried mud where the water of the moat once flowed, and wanders along a path between trees and overgrown vegetation. He hears a soft voice singing a lullaby and peering from behind the flinty wall of a turret he sees a figure sat on some stone steps which lead to a wooden door, cradling a wrap of blankets

ISABELLA

For no thought is contented. The
better sort, as thoughts of things
divine, are intermix'd....

RICHARD moves from his place of concealment into open ground.

RICHARD

Ann?

The girl turns her attention back to the swathe of blankets that she cradles and shakes her head.

ISABELLA

With scruples and do set the word
itself against the word.

RICHARD

Isabella?

(CONTINUED)

ISABELLA

As thus!

RICHARD draws closer until he stood looking over her.
ISABELLA stops what she is doing and looks up at RICHARD.

CALLUM appears.

RICHARD leans further forward to look at the face of the babe that Isabella is cradling and sees his own image reflected from a mirror where the babe's head should be.

ISABELLA unravels the the blanket to reveal an empty space where the babe should be.

There is a loud rapping on the door behind Isabella followed by the sound of an older woman's voice.

VOICE OVER OF THE PRIESTESS

Come little ones! Come.

ISABELLA draws the swathe of blankets back to her bosom and continues to softly hum whilst gently rocking back and forth. CALLUM moves towards ISABELLA as RICHARD attempts to open the door behind ISABELLA

RICHARD

Who's there! Who?

RICHARD tries turning the large door knob and pounds at the door before resting his head against the door's surface. He shows visible signs of distress which boils over into anger.

RICHARD

Who are you!?

VOICE OVER OF THE PRIESTESS

Come. Come, little ones.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4 EXT/DAY - CASTLE MEADOW-ARCADIA

RICHARD turns his head towards the door's surface and sees that he is looking through the rusted iron bars of a Gothic arched window. On the other side is an older woman calmly knitting what appears to be a large net. RICHARD notices the difference between their two domains, the areas in which they are both positioned. RICHARD'S is dank, claustrophobic, full of broken masonry and walls with fissures leading to vaulted ceilings. By stark contrast, the area that the old woman occupies on the other side of the Gothic window is a green pasture full of wild flowers and sunlight.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

And then again, old woman?

The old woman continues with her work but replies to RICHARD'S request.

PRIESTESS

Full well you know, Richard. It is as hard to come as for a camel to thread the postern of a small needle's eye.

The PRIESTESS temporarily stops knitting.

PRIESTESS CONT'D

Beware, Richard. Life is there for the losing before thy crown is anointed by another hand. Some things you do not govern.

The PRIESTESS turns her attention back to knitting.

PRIESTESS CONT'D

Thoughts tending to ambition, ah, they do plot unlikely wonders.

RICHARD has been listening intently to the PRIESTESS but now sees CALLUM and ISABELLA walking towards the old woman. RICHARD reaches his hand through the grill of the stone window towards them.

PRIESTESS CONT'D

(Looks towards CALLUM)

By the prick of my thumb, something wicked this way comes.

ISABELLA moves past the old woman and heads towards RICHARD. She stands in front of him and reaches her hand through the bars to place it upon the long scar on RICHARD'S cheek.

ISABELLA

My love. No thought is ever contented.

ISABELLA begins humming to RICHARD whilst caressing his head through the window's iron bars. RICHARD stares at the milky softness of ISABELLA'S skin. ISABELLA pushes her other hand between the bars, turns it face up and offers it to RICHARD who takes it and buries his head into the pale skin of its palm. ISABELLA pulls RICHARD close against the bars. She begins to gently hum whilst weaving her hand through RICHARD'S hair.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD stares at the plain silver band around ISABELLA'S finger before reaching out and turning it with his fingers.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 5 EXT/EARLY AFTERNOON - AN AMUSEMENT PARK OVERLOOKING A LARGE OPEN PLANE COVERED IN MIST

P.O.V

The CONMAN is looking over his shoulder and halts at the entrance to an amusement park. He looks back towards the large grassy plane behind him and two figures in the distance walking towards him. Fearful of being confronted by the figures the CONMAN hurriedly moves inside the theme park to look for shelter.

P.O.V

RICHARD turns a silver ring on his finger. He spies a large circle of steel, a Ferris wheel, connecting the dark brooding sky to the landscape below. He and CALLUM walk towards it.

RICHARD

(To CALLUM)

Beware of butterflies that float
before your eyes. A thing so light
in it's appearance can make a sharp
mind idle.

When prophets pose as tricksters,
plying their trade to separate us
from our wealth. Our senses,
scattered like seeds blown in from
winter's hand. The palest of
blooms, flowering out of season.
and all the while, death waits in
line, patiently bidding his time.

RICHARD and CALLUM move through the mist.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6 EXT/EARLY AFTERNOON - AMUSEMENT PARK

The CONMAN moves hurriedly within the amusement park hoping to avoid the attention of the two strangers but quickly finds himself surrounded by fences in a corner of the amusement park overlooked by a giant Ferris wheel.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD and CALLUM enter the amusement park and move toward the CONMAN.

CONMAN pulls a handful of rusty nails from his jacket pocket and begins a well run routine of street theater.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP:

CONMAN
Nails, ladies and gentlemen, watch
the nails. Watch the vain
weak nails...

Watch how these vain weak nails may
tear a passage through the flinty
ribs of this hard world!
And for they cannot...

CALLUM
Die, (to RICHARD) in their own
pride.

CLOSE UP:

CONMAN throws the nails into the air, he looks up, but the nails do not reappear.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP:

RICHARD
(Gazing about the amusement park)
My ragged prison walls.

CLOSE UP:

CONMAN has been looking for the nails to fall but now looks towards RICHARD.

RICHARD looks at CALLUM and then CONMAN. CALLUM turns and walks away. after a short while RICHARD follows. As they leave the nails suddenly appear and rain down upon the CONMAN'S head who cowers before scurrying away.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7 EXT/LATE AFTERNOON - GARRISON CHURCH OLD PORTSMOUTH

WIDE:

RICHARD and CALLUM appear over the crest of a hill and begin to walk down some stone steps set into the hill. RICHARD hears someone shouting and stops to see where the noise is coming from. He and CALLUM move towards a man dressed in the guise of a preacher carrying a white cane and wearing dark glasses. He is practicing a sermon in front of an empty space. Beside him stands his assistant.

PREACHER'S ASSISTANT

Sshh...my love, there is someone coming.

The PREACHER temporarily stops his shouting, gathers himself before beginning his sermon.

PREACHER

Thoughts tending to content,
flatter themselves.

RICHARD

That they are not the first of
fortune's slaves.

PREACHER

(To Richard) Nor shall not be the
last, my friend.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP:

PRIEST

Just like beggars, brothers and
sisters. Fools sat in the stocks,
the last refuge of shame! (Looks up
and begins to pray) Hear me Lord,
that these are of the many...

A chorus of imaginary voices cry hallelujah, yeah!...

PRIEST(CONT'D)

Yea! And though there are others
touched by the shadow that moves

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST(CONT'D) (cont'd)
towards the valley of the meek!

PREACHER'S ASSISTANT
Hallelujah!

PRIEST(CONT'D)
And in their weakest hour so must
they sit there, awaiting judgment!

The PRIEST holds open his arms to the sky.

CAMERA PUSHES UP TO THE SKY

SCENE 8 EXT/EARLY EVENING - REAR OF PORTSMOUTH CENTRAL
LIBRARY

CAMERA PULLS DOWN FROM THE SKY

CANTERED ANGLE, LOOKING UP, MEDIUM CLOSE UP:

THE DEVIL is leaning against the railings reading a tabloid newspaper. He is well-dressed and carries an air of arrogance about him. He talks in a nonchalant manner whilst continuing to browse his newspaper.

THE DEVIL
And in this thought, brethren, in
this very thought...they find a
kind of ease...with me.

He pushes the newspaper down and looks directly into the lens of the camera.

THE DEVIL (CONT'D)
Bearing their own misfortunes on
the back of such as have (yawns)
before endured the like.

The DEVIL continues to stare for a short while before slowly raising his newspaper.

ZOOM IN:

(CONTINUED)

To a photograph on the front of the newspaper. It is the opening frame from the next scene.

CUT TO

SCENE 9 EXT/STAIRWELL OLD PORTSMOUTH - NIGHT

MEDIUM WIDE:

There is a MONSTER , sat near the top of the stone stairwell,talking to himself. RICHARD and CALLUM stand near the bottom of the stone stairs. The darkness is broken by neon blue street lamps.

MONSTER
Sometimes am I king.

He slowly rises to his feet.

RICHARD
Then treasons make him wish
himself beggar.

CLOSE UP:

MONSTER looks at RICHARD and CALLUM before sitting back down.

MONSTER
And so I am.

CLOSE UP:

RICHARD
Then crushing penury persuades him
he was better as a king.

CALLUM
(To RICHARD) Then he is king'd
again?

WIDE:

MONSTER rises back to his feet and raises his unopened umbrella aloft. Three dark shadowy characters begin to draw near to the MONSTER, armed with nails, knitting needles and sharpened pencils.

CLOSE UP:

(CONTINUED)

A pencil being sharpened, its point tested and blown at. (Refer to opening of scene 1)

CLOSE UP PULLING OUT TO WIDE.

MONSTER (CONT'D)

And by and by think that I am
unking'd by such ill luck
And straight, am nothing.

The shadowy figures move in on top of MONSTER and begin to destroy him.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP:

RICHARD kneels before CALLUM and speaks.

CAMERA SHOT FROM THE SIDE LOOKING THROUGH RICHARD AND CALLUM TO THE MONSTER BEING DESTROYED.

RICHARD

RICHARD (Pointing to the MONSTER) to CALLUM.
Thus play I one person in many
people and none contented (pause).

CLOSE UP - LOOKING UP INTO CALLUM'S FACE.

RICHARD grips CALLUM'S arms.
But whate'er he be. Nor I nor any
man that but man is, with nothing
shall be pleased...

CLOSE UP LOOKING DOWN.

CALLUM

...till he be eased with being
nothing, Father?

CLOSE UP:P.O.V. RICHARD

Looking up and then down. Camera pulls out to medium close up of CALLUM'S hand clutching a pencil which is the same one from the close up shot of a pencil being sharpened from SCENE 1

CALLUM and RICHARD both look down to see that CALLUM has pushed the pencil into the side of RICHARD whose vest now has a large ink stain spreading outwards. CALLUM calmly closes RICHARD'S eyes before cradling him in his arms. He is joined by two of the assassins to form a tableau 'PIETA' by Michelangelo. CALLUM takes the voice recorder from RICHARD'S pocket, switches it on and stares directly into the camera.

SLOWLY ZOOMING IN TO CLOSE UP:

CALLUM

I have been studying, how I may
compare this prison that my father
built for himself unto his world.
And now that world is less populous
by one, I think, I have it figured
out.

Music: Recondita Armonia from Tosca by Puccini.

CALLUM continues to stares into the camera.

CALLUM clicks the recorder off.

CUT TO:

SCENE 10 INT/STAIRWELL NIGHT

We see RICHARD with his eyes wide open with terror. He takes a last intake of breath before slumping to one side and dying.

BLACK OUT.