

I

Claire Danes and Kevin Spacey stand at the edge of an overlook atop the Hoover Dam, staring out at the hemmed vastness of the structure itself and of Lake Mead beyond it. The sun beats down on them relentlessly. Both of their bodies gleam with a sensual amount of sweat.

“Isn’t it amazing?” Kevin asked.

“Yes... it’s so big,” Claire responded, drawing out the phrase pornographically.

“I mean... Just look at all that water, just waiting. Waiting to be *used*. And we control it all.” Kevin added, no less suggestive.

“What do you mean, ‘we’?”

Kevin smiled. “You know what I mean, baby. We’re in charge here. We can make anything happen... just by using our minds, by channeling

our human ambition. We control our own fate, just like this dam controls all of that water out there.”

He steps closer to her, grasping her waist.

“And think about all the power we have when we’re together...”

He kisses her neck and she responds eagerly, melting into him as their mouths meet in a passionate kiss. The moment lingers. She reaches for his shirttail, as though to remove it.

Kevin steps back from her abruptly. “What... what are we doing?”

Claire’s smile starts to crack. “What do you mean?”

“We can’t do this, Claire. We’re not supposed to be together.”

“Why not? You’re single, I’m single, we’re attracted to each other... what’s wrong? Two consenting adults, and all that?” She jokes, trying to restore the vanishing mood.

“It’s just not right. We’re from two different worlds now, Claire. Sand and water. You’re a wealthy socialite and I’m... I’m just a disgraced secret agent turned security guard, desperate for any chance to resume my aborted status.”

“So what? That doesn’t matter to me.”

“It should. If we’re together, even if they do bring me back to the Agency... it will just be because I’m *yours*, your little lapdog. We’ll both look pathetic. Our lives are too different. If you try to wet me, you’ll just evaporate away...” He stared off, away from her over the desert, as though longing for the sea.

“But I don’t understand. I thought you felt the same way about me that I feel about you.”

“Nothing is the same as anything else, Claire. It would be impossible for us to feel ‘the same.’”

“That’s bullshit,” she spat, tears coming to her eyes.

“Maybe,” he stepped close to her again, still not looking at her. “But there are things... things you don’t know about me.”

II

I grew up in an all-boys’ military academy. I was preparing to be an Agent from birth.

At the school, bullying was epidemic. Sleeping together, eating together, showering together...

there were just too many opportunities for the predators among us to take unseen advantage, some of it sexual, some of it simply cruel. It does a disservice to call it all “bullying”: some boys, those who seemed especially weak or vulnerable, especially odd or feminine... they unquestionably suffered lifelong emotional harm and some of them lasting physical injury.

I didn’t stand out. I never participated in these savageries, but I was never targeted, either. And I was confident in my path in life - I knew the school was the right place for me. I couldn’t wait to serve my country, become an Agent. Still, between the subject of our studies, the callous and impassive treatment of our professors, and the abuse of the other students... the atmosphere was oppressive.

Eventually, I found aspects that I could enjoy, too. In my later years, I became involved in the theater program, one of the few creative outlets available to us. While most students took electives like Battle Cartography or Uniform Design, electives that still dealt with the staggering Real, I was immersed in a world of artifice, conversing with skulls and tap-dancing to my heart’s content.

The teacher who directed the plays was extremely talented. His feel for the material and his command of the language, his ability to project his voice, make himself heard and understood... I'd never seen anything like it. I think it's safe to say... I fell in love with him.

III

Claire Danes is alone in bed. The room and the world outside her window are dark, but she's thinking of Kevin Spacey, his glabrous chest shining with sweat in the afternoon sun.

She fantasizes about making mad, passionate love to Kevin in every possible position and location. She can't get enough of him, and the fantasies become more intense and graphic.

The locations too begin to change rapidly: now an apartment balcony in Paris looking out at the Eiffel tower, now a secluded rainforest waterfall, now an infinity pool in the Hollywood Hills. Sometimes they are in public, and people are watching them, which intensifies the eroticism of

the fantasy, and sometimes the places are more private, offering a moment's affectionate reprieve.

Regardless, with each new location, Kevin's face clicks step by step from a look of pleasure into a rictus of extreme pain.

Finally, she reaches a dingy room with bare walls. Here, she realizes Kevin is trapped in a kennel, separated from her by a thin fence of chicken wire. This time, she is not alone. There are many more women with her, all naked, all clawing at the cage that holds Kevin, which will not hold for long.

She tries to fight through them in vain. She can only watch as they breach the wire, streaming through it. They force her to watch them have sex with Kevin, and indistinctly torture him in a multitude of other ways. Just when she thinks it can get no worse, hatches open behind her and an army of younger, more virile, anonymous men enter and surround her. Their smell is intoxicating.

The dream becomes more and more vague, but both her suffering and her lust are crystalline. She wakes up in a sweat, panting and angry.

IV

Of course, the atmosphere of the school did not permit an “out” homosexuality. But, like in certain southern communities, certain students were tacitly understood to be gay. Our adoration of the director placed me and one other student solidly into this category. Our other relationships atrophied as our social prestige fell even further, and of course in that void, we became even closer to the director. He became like an older brother to the two of us.

The director spoke to us like adults, so we felt like adults for the first time. Elevated like this, at least in our own minds, the other student and I became closer, as well. And of course at the beginning, it was all rosy - the director spent plenty of time with all three of us together, and his love seemed plentiful enough that we both got more personal time with him as well. He gave us the impression he was romantically involved with various women outside of his life at school. This impressed and, honestly, aroused us a little bit to think about.

I wished, desperately, to confess to him. To touch him, to be desired by him in turn. One day, while rehearsing a particularly steamy scene in our Caligula play, we were both waiting in the wings for our entrance. I whispered to my friend and rival that I desperately wanted to kiss the director.

He smiled, but it seemed fake. "Get in line," he tried to joke. From that point on, it was a cold war. We vied ever more viciously for alone time with the director and our own friendship vanished.

In the second semester of my senior year, staying after class to work with the director and a younger student, it happened. It was late, and as the director coached us, I played my confident Horatio, slowly leading the younger student through his less-so Hamlet. At last, satisfied, the director dismissed the younger student, asking him to click off the house lights as he left. I stayed behind to return the scripts to a locker. As the lights of the theater clicked off, I turned - to find myself in the arms of the director.

We kissed, and touched, and rubbed - and I lost my virginity among the sandbags piled on stage

left. It hurt, he'd only used spit to lubricate himself, but the sting was the sting of victory.

Or so I thought.

A week or so later - a week I spent on cloud nine, deflowered and floating above my fellow students - I found some pretense or other and made my way to the director's office. I let myself in - a fatal mistake - and found the director and my "friend". My rival was dressed in the costume I'd hoped to wear to play Ibsen's *Master Builder*. All of it, at least, except for the pants.

V

Ving Rhames grabs Forrest Whittaker by the collar of his labcoat and pulls the smaller, but still defiant, man close to his face.

"I want the launch codes, *now*."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Forrest seems earnestly confused.

Ving pushes him away. "I mean.. I want the *breach* codes, or something like that. I want to let the water through. Don't play games with me. I know you have the codes."

“Even if I did, I wouldn’t give them to you.”

“Oh, I think you will,” Ving retorts. Then he grabs the scientist again, putting a handgun to his temple. “Now. The launch codes.”

Forrest almost smirks. “I don’t know where the *breach* codes are.”

“Wrong answer.” Ving cocks the gun.

“Wait. Okay. I’ll tell you. They’re in the computer.” He sits down and logs into the workstation, clicking a few times after. “The codes are...”

As Whittaker starts to recite them, Ving Rhames keys them into the oversized keypad at the control room desk. Each press rings out with a different pleasant tone tuned to a semblance of Beethoven’s ninth, punctuated at the end by the blaring of a klaxon alarm and the “whoosh” of a huge, rushing movement of water.

VI

Kevin Spacey is driving his 2014 Hyundai Elantra, deep in thought. Despite himself, he’s barely paying attention to the road, his vision

clouded with imaginary, semitransparent skeins - first a montage of images of the nubile bodies of men and women far younger than Claire Danes; next a scene of him getting his gun and his badge back and sitting down at his own desk at the Agency; then a panoply of even more young bodies.

He loves Claire, he knows. But his desires are becoming more and more difficult to control.

Kevin's reverie is disrupted by his phone ringing. He presses a button on the dashboard of the economy car to answer it.

"Hello?"

Claire answered, in a distressed voice. "Kevin, it's me."

"Claire - what's wrong?"

"I just had the most awful dream. You were in danger - and I couldn't help you."

"It was just a dream, Claire. I'm fine."

"I know, but it felt so real..."

Kevin's tone grew impatient, dismissive.

"Listen, I'm on my way to work right now. I'll call you later, okay?"

"Okay."

"I love you."

“I love you too.”

He hangs up the phone and continues driving. It rings again and he slams the answer button angrily.

“Claire, I really can’t talk -”

His superior’s voice. “Spacey, where are you? We’ve got... a situation.”

VII

LOS ANGELES - Ving Rhames, world-renowned actor, has taken on a new role: fearsome leader of the Moisture Seekers, a so-called “libidinal ecoterrorism ring.” The Moisture Seekers’ mission is to spread their message of environmental awareness and climate control via any means necessary, even if it means getting a little bit naughty.

Rhames and his band of Merry Men (and women) have been responsible for a string of high-profile sex scandals, each more sordid than the last. They’ve targeted wealthy businessmen, politicians on both sides of the aisle, and even a few of Rhames’ fellow celebrities in Hollywood.

No one is safe from the Moisture Seekers' brand of justice. If you're not careful, you might just find yourself on the receiving end of their unique brand of punishment.

VIII

The room is decorated in shades of black, white, and gray. There are expensively-framed posters of current and historical Hollywood stars, along with photos of Kevin Spacey himself. The furniture is all plush and comfortable looking, with a large bed in the center of the room. A bar area is set up near one corner, and in another corner there is a small stage, currently empty, where a jazz trio occasionally plays.

Dim lighting completes an atmosphere of cozy relaxation, easy enjoyment. A handful of attractive men laugh and joke around, drinks in hand. Music plays softly in the background. The debauchery lurks, just under the surface.

Not long after, all of the men are engaged in various forms of sexual activity, with Kevin Spacey as the center of attention. He seems to be enjoying

himself immensely, but he's distracted when a small, harmless looking bird, brightly colored in contrast with the dark and muted colors of the room, flits near him and then to the floorboards beneath the men's feet.

The bird pecks and pecks, the repetitive sound disrupting Kevin's concentration. Finally it pecks through, and into the room below, before flying off in terror towards an antenna placed on the outside wall of the building. Here, there are more birds who look just like it, except, every colorful hungry-eyed bird on the outside bears a full set of lupine teeth.

IX

Ving Rhames, movie star, terrorist, and master builder has completed entering the breach codes. The hatches of the dam are opening, and the water is beginning to spill through.

“Let's see what kind of destruction we can cause. And after it's done, we'll reroute this energy somewhere *useful*.”

Just then, the door of the control room bursts open and Kevin Spacey comes in, gun drawn.

“Freeze!” Kevin starts to yell.

When the two of them see each other, there is a brief moment of recognition. Both stammer, confused.

“You!” They haven’t seen each other since their days at the Academy.

“I don’t *think* so,” Ving says, not really responding to Kevin. He fires, but Kevin ducks and the bullet misses. The terrorist runs for cover, dragging Forrest Whittaker in front of him. Kevin follows, firing at him, putting one in his shoulder before Ving makes it to a door and slams it shut behind him.

Kevin tries to open it, but it’s locked. He screams - partially from frustration, partially from the emergence of something hidden and buried within his psyche. His whole body tenses, and he knocks the door off the hinges with a single well-placed kick.

The room is empty. He runs to the window that opens onto the spillway and looks out. All he can focus on is the body splayed far below. Tires

screech somewhere unseen, and Kevin watches as a white 2004 Cadillac Escalade peels off into the distance, a car he notes with some derision does not even get particularly good gas mileage.

X

Forrest Whittaker isn't a good man, but he's not a bad man, either. At least, that's what he thinks about as he dies alone on the spillway of the Hoover Dam.

After a few moments, Kevin Spacey makes it to the ground floor, dashing to Forrest's side. He kneels down and takes Forrest's hand.

"Spacey..."

"Forrest... don't talk. Help is on the way."

"Spacey... I'm going to die. There's... things you should know..."

"No, Forrest. *Dad*. No."

"Kevin... your mother and I loved each other very much. Even though we aren't blood related, you are my son, and I love you. Promise me... promise me you won't give up on yourself, no

matter how hard things get. No matter how much the world seems to hate you.”

“Dad! Save your strength!”

“Promise me!”

“I promise, Dad.” Kevin breaks into a slow sob.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you, Kevin. But I’ve always loved you, even though I know what you are. And I’ve... I’ve always been proud of you.”

Forrest’s eyes widen in his final moment.

Kevin bends down, kissing him lightly on the cheek, feeling the last warmth of his body. Kevin closes both of Forrest’s eyes reverently, then stands, newly determined, and dashes for his gray Elantra.

XI

The cars weave in and out, narrowly avoiding accidents on the hairpin turns up the narrow roads of the desert valley. Ving Rhames’ Escalade always narrowly outpaces the economy car Kevin Spacey drives, though they jockey for position, trying to knock each other off of the road.

Suddenly, even though there is no residential area for miles around, there are two women on the

road in close-fitting jogging clothes, one blonde and one brunette. Both have gigantic, heaving breasts, which move provocatively as the women jog. Ving narrowly misses the blonde, but slams into the brunette, sending her flying through the air and slowing him slightly. Kevin manages to take position and forces Ving into the dusty shoulder of the access road, slowing him further.

Suddenly, there are two men in the road, one black and one white. They both have huge cocks sticking out of the flies of their pants. They are walking together, talking animatedly and laughing about something neither Kevin nor Ving can hear. Kevin slides between them, hitting the black man and sending him flying through the air. The white man is unscathed.

Distracted, the terrorist accidentally navigates his Escalade into a gulch and hits a wall. The car bursts into flames instantly with Ving still inside.

Kevin screeches to a stop fifty yards beyond the crash and gets out of his Hyundai, slowly plodding towards the inferno. He drags the body, which seems too small and too female to be Ving Rhames', free of the flaming car. Regardless, the

person is dead, and burned beyond specific recognition.

XII

Purgatory has a population of three million people, ruled over by a single central government. People tend to spend about one hundred and fifty “years” here before moving on.

The food in Purgatory is said to be bland and unappetizing, as it is meant to discourage gluttony. It is grown in fields that are surrounded by high walls.

This society doesn’t believe in gender or sexuality; everyone who lives here considers themselves *human* first and foremost, even though they no longer are. Marriage does not exist, and families are not recognized.

Children are raised communally by the entire community. Education is compulsory for all citizens from birth until death, although work hours are flexible depending on what each person feels like doing that day. There is no central currency, instead, everyone sort of issues their own, or keeps

a running mental tab of favors people owe them, or just trusts in the fundamental goodness of the society.

Art, music, dance, literature, etc. are illegal and not practiced. The people do not remember the exact reason for the prohibition, but it may be because they are seen as unnecessary distractions from the task of repentance. As for design, for whatever reason, the predominant color of clothing seems to be the blue of the Nevada sky.