

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES

A performance piece
with music

by
DANNY ANTONELLI

with some text suggestions from
Claude Anthro



Cast of Characters

Laura

A young female, early 30s
with one child, a daughter

The Jester

A wise fool

The Overlord

A narcissist despot

The Rational Man

Explains rebellion against despotism

The Newscaster

A news presenter

The Prologue

Just an actor

The Epilogue

The same actor as the Prologue

Text & Music: Danny Antonelli

GEMA

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The Prologue

I am the Prologue come to speak in rhyme
It doesn't matter what I say — I'm here
To open up this play and take up time,
To let the audience get its coughs and sneers
Prepared. Tune up your throats and rub your eyes
Before these scenes, all culled from life and dreams,
Flash by so quick you're left in mild surprise!
As said before: Not all is what it seems!
And in this play you'll find it's truly true.
What evil wins or goodness kills tonight
Could kill or crown some soul as nice as you,
No matter if you side with Wrong or Right.
Pure chance steps in to greet us with each breath,
But is it just by Chance we all meet Death?

The Rational Man

A people faced with creeping tyranny
Must first exhaust the peaceful paths available.
Begin with organization, building networks
Of citizens who share a common purpose.
The press, if still alive in any corner,
Must document abuses, spread the word
To those at home and those who watch abroad.
Nonviolent protest, strikes, and mass refusal
To cooperate with unjust instruments
Of power — these have toppled regimes before.

Seek allies in the institutions standing:
The judiciary, the military's conscience,
Religious bodies, unions, civil groups —
For tyranny grows fragile when its servants
Begin to question orders they are given.

International pressure, sanctions, voices
Of other nations, courts, and global bodies
Can isolate a government that kills
The freedoms of its people in the light.

If every peaceful avenue is broken,
If dissidents are jailed or disappear,
If ballots are corrupted beyond use,
Then history has shown — from French resistance
To those who rose against colonial rule —
That people may conclude that force itself
Becomes the only language power hears.
But this is grave, a door not easily closed
Once opened, and must never be the first
Or second path — only the last remaining
When all that came before has been extinguished.

Laura

You think my body is a thing you own,
A territory waiting for your flag,
A field you did not plant but wish to harvest?
You did not bear the weight of her inside me,
You did not feel the hours of her coming,
You did not wake at two, at three, at four,
With all the unnamed terror of the new.
And yet you sit upon your gilded throne
And draw a chain around my flesh with law?

I work beside your sons. I work as hard.
I carry what they carry, sometimes more,
And yet my labor somehow weighs out lighter
When counted into coin at the month's end.
What quality in me makes it worth less?
My hands are just as capable as his,
My mind runs just as clear, my will as sharp.
Is it this body, yet again, this body
That you reduce me to? Deranged accounting.

And if my nation calls for me to serve,
To stand between pure evil and the truth,
I will not flinch. I have already known
What it is to be afraid and carry on —
Every woman knows this from the cradle.
But you would bar the door because of gender,
Or skin, a shade against your favored color,
As if my bleeding for just cause meant nothing
Unless I bleed the way you think is proper.

I will not ask you for what should be given.
I will not thank you when you grant what's mine.

My daughter watches everything I do —
She is the reason that I plant my feet
Upon this ground and do not move an inch.
I did not wade through fire to bend my knee
Before a man who fears what I might be.

So take your laws and know that like a stone
I will remember everything — and wait,
Wear out that booted foot that kicks at me.
We are the many. You are the feeble few.
The future has my daughter's face, not yours —
And she already knows she will not yield,
For I have made her out of everything
You tried to silence, tried to cage, to end.
We are the seed beneath your freezing winter —
We will be here to blossom in the spring.

The Jester

Ah, lovely Laura, listen to this fool,
Madmen like me are booted out of school!
The fearful wise man jumps when tyrants call,
While foolish jesters practice the pratfall.

Survival in a nation without light
Demands you find a subtle way to fight
Against the fog-brained man behind the mask
Who thinks controlling you is his prime task!

These pompous lords who puff and strut and preen,
Are mean and jealous, with no self-esteem,
Their grand illusion will be torn asunder
When Truth and Love enthrall them in Wonder!

The emperor is naked — all can see
He has no rhyme or reason — unlike me.
My wit is glowing coal in a red hot brazier,
Your laugh, my dear, is sharper than his razor!

The laws that bind your body to their will
Allow the predator to hunt and kill.
Your child is prey for men who are wild beasts
Who lust for more exotic sexual feasts.

When words are written on a secret page
They shine beyond the darkness of the age.
All tyrants fall, and empires always crumble
And yet the truth survives as do the humble.

Your daughter is the joker in your hand,
With you to guide her she will understand
To be a fool is to believe in truth
And never lose the energy of youth.

Now go, my dear, I've bells to shake and rings
To jump through — fools must do their foolish things.
But know the fool who laughs is never quite
As harmless as he looks — good night, good night!

The Overlord

My loyal friends, I greet you one and all
Who peer into the brightness of this screen
To hear the truth that only I can speak.
For I have been appointed by the Lord
Of all creation, He who sees the sparrow
And counts its every feather as it falls,
To be His instrument upon this earth,
His voice, His hand, His necessary force.

Do not mistake my power for ambition —
I did not seek this burden, it sought me.
The way that greatness always finds its vessel
Among the chosen few who can endure
The terrible responsibility
Of knowing what is best for everyone.

Now understand — and I speak plainly here —
That wealth is not an accident of birth,
Nor fortune's wheel, nor history's long cruelty,
Nor stolen land, nor broken backs of others.
No — wealth is God's own signature on men
Of superior intelligence and will.

I am exhibit one before you now.
The poor are poor because their minds are small,
Their discipline is weak, their blood is thin,
Their faith uncertain and their purpose clouded.
This is not cruelty — this is simply nature
Expressing God's own carefully made order.

And those among you who are not yet wealthy —
Take comfort, for you serve a higher purpose.
Your loyalty to me reflects your virtue.
Your sacrifice today, your key to heaven,
And I shall speak directly to the Lord
And say your name in humble gratitude.

Now there are those — and here I must be grave,
For this is where my duty weighs most heavy —
There are among us certain kinds of people
Who question what has been divinely ordered.
Women who refuse their natural station,
Who think their bodies are their own dominion,
Who march and speak and organize and write
Their dangerous and seditious little thoughts
On secret pages they believe are hidden —
Nothing is hidden from the eye of God!
And nothing is hidden from the friends of God!
You are my friends of course, so I mean you.

And those of darker complexion, let us say,
Who carry in their very blood and bearing
A disposition toward ingratitude,
Who were so long ago so generously
Absorbed into the greatness of this nation
And yet persist in their complaining ways —
They test the patience of the Lord Himself,
And I confess they test my patience too.

So I am asking — no, I am requiring,
As God's appointed voice upon this earth —
That each of you become my eyes and ears
Within your street, your building, and your home.
A neighbor acting strangely — let us know.
A wife with own opinions — let us know.
A daughter reading books that have been banned,
A son who questions orders — let us know.
This is my love made law, not cruelty.
For only in obedience are we free,
And only in my safety are you safe.

Since God lives inside me, I am God's state,
And those who move against me move against
The Architect who sketched this universe.
I did not make these rules — I merely found them
Engraved upon the nature of all things,
And had the courage, which so few possess,
To speak them to you plainly without shame.

Now go in peace, and be my faithful instruments,
Report what must be reported, fear what I
Instruct you to be fearful of, and love
Whom I instruct you to love, and all shall be well.
If I am well, you also shall be well.
If you rebel, well then you'll go to Hell.
Yes, God and I have very little patience,
With those that think or say that they know better.
Oh, justice in my nation can be swift
And does not always trouble with a trial.

Like bats that listen to discover prey,
Fly into night, report what traitors say.
Each head I chop is gold for your account,
Your loyalty ensures your riches mount.
One day you'll join the City on the Hill
Where only the deserving drink their fill.
So fly my beautiful and hungry beasts,
Enjoy with me the glory and the feasts,
For those who feed my greatness shall be fed
While scum with endless darkness shall be wed.

The Newscaster

The authoritarian regime in what was once a free and democratic nation finally came tumbling down after a concerted effort by the people who still believed in democracy. They learned to communicate through old school analog channels, writing notes, using CB and short-wave radios, and urged their co-revolutionaries to stock up, silently and surreptitiously, on enough food and other necessities, including medicine and weapons, to be able to withstand at least a two-week, maybe longer, period of uncertainty. And then the General Strike started. Business came to a halt. The system started to creak and crack. The Overlord sent in his secret police to arrest and detain the suspects on their lists. That was not enough. They then began to break into homes and places of refuge and kill people indiscriminately, whether male, female, young or old, including children and the disabled. It was at that point, when the killings began, that a portion of the armed forces rebelled and fought against the secret police. As it slowly became clear that the government and its lackeys were going to lose their grip on power, the Overlord and his inner cohort tried to escape. They were stopped before they could board the Presidential Jet. Some of them, the personal bodyguards of the leader, were killed in the exchange of fire. The Overlord himself was wounded in the exchange of fire. As he was being taken to hospital, however, an unruly mob blocked the passage of his ambulance, threw open the doors and pulled him out into the crowd.

Laura and the Jester stand together in front of the smoldering ruins of the palace the Overlord had built for himself and his family, not far from a triumphal arch that now also lay in ruins. All around them, people run through the streets celebrating their newly won freedom.



Laura

Rebellion is not doing what they say
That we should do to please our Master.
And when that Master cannot have his way
The slave will break his chains and steal the whip
Which hitherto had caused his flesh to bleed.

Look there — the palace burns. Do you smell that?
That is the smell of everything they told us
We could not have, could not be, could not say.
I watched them drag my neighbor by her hair
At three in the morning — a woman who was brave,
Who handed out some leaflets to her friends.
They crushed her hands so she could write no more.
Her hands will heal now that those men are dust.

I never thought that I would live to stand
In open air and speak above a whisper.
I got accustomed to the hunch, the glance
Behind my shoulder — choking back a name
So it won't land on God's own tyrant's list.

And now — this noise, this beautiful, ragged noise
Of people who forgot they had a voice
And found it in the rubble and the fire.

Yes, he was stopped before his plane could fly
Away to someplace he could plot and scheme
To find a path that led back to his throne.
A wounded man, he'd heal before his trial,
But judge and jury met him on the way
And sealed his fate with his own epic fury.

I do not call what happened to him justice —
That word requires silk-robed magistrates.
I will not shed a tear in grief I lack.
He chose the world he made and died inside it,
It swallowed him and then it spat him out.
The world could see the frenzy of the mob.
Yes, no one wept. And no one said a prayer.

My daughter will grow up without the stoop.
She will not have to swallow down your name.
That arch he built to glorify himself —
You see it there, that heap of broken stone?
She'll play upon those ruins without fear,

So here we are, old fool. You and your bells.
Did you imagine we would live to see it?

The Jester

Ah, Laura, you will live and love again.
Your child will laugh and play with friends and then
She'll grow into a woman strong as you,
Her beauty, the belief in what is true.

My muted bells rang hollow through those years,
I hid my rage and swallowed all my tears,
The madman raved, on his own power drunk,
His breath as fragrant as a startled skunk.

I watched them take my neighbors in the night,
Remember those who vanished from my sight,
A child abandoned, homeless in the street,
Trampled by those brutal, booted feet.

Oh yes, I was a witness to his death,
The scream that fled along with his last breath.
The mob left no part of his flesh intact
And howled and cheered at their own dreadful act.

The crowd slides like a serpent through the night,
Its poison not depleted with one bite,
The ambulance that held the wounded beast,
Abandoned in the street after the feast.

They found the palace, tinder for their rage,
And burned to ash his stolen, golden cage,
The arch that bore his name collapsed in shame
Under relentless hammers shifting blame.

But now enough of that — the smoke still curls,
The night into a brighter day unfurls,
And somewhere in this city, wild and free,
Your daughter runs and sings her song of glee.

I jingle, jangle, dance and then I bow,
This fool outlived the Overlord somehow,
The oldest joke that history often tells:
The tyrant king is dead — toll the knell!

Laura

Beyond the smoky rubble, a rising sun
With golden crown and face that smiles upon
Us all with equal warmth, releasing joy
To every woman, every man, each girl and boy.

Her laughter rising clear and fierce and loud,
My daughter runs to me, so brave and proud,
All those years of darkness are now gone,
And in their place this golden, blazing dawn.

I hold her here against the morning light,
The ruins at our back, the world made right,
And whisper in her ear what I now know —
We are the seed, and this is how we grow.

Epilogue

Now I'm the Epilogue.
When I first entered here I spoke in rhyme
In order that you'd better understand
We're trapped by circumstance and in time
And cannot free ourselves without a hand
Held out to us by people who are kind—
As kind as you have been to watch and hear
The movements of my body and my mind.
It's more a pity that you are not near
When doubts about my motives fall on me,
When life seems such a bore I'm better dead.
It's only when within your eyes I see
That truth was fused with truth within my head
And dream and love and life become worthwhile
And death and drama gone, we both can smile.



Danny Antonelli

Danny Antonelli works as a professional lyricist and librettist. He has written for pop and rock/metal artists in Germany, and has written over 80 radio plays and many short stories which have been broadcast on German radio stations.

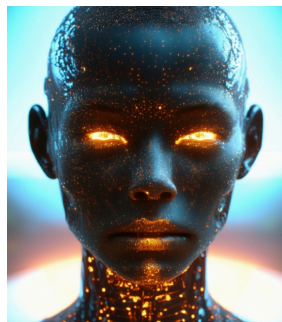
He wrote the libretto for the chamber opera diamond way, which was performed in the original English at the Opera Kiel, and in a German translation at the Kleine Szene of the Semperoper Dresden. The libretto for an oratorio about the climate crisis, Our World is on Fire, has been performed in various locations in Germany. Croesus, King of Lydia is an opera libretto not yet performed, as is Trump, The Musical (Based on Real Lies), a libretto for a musical.

Danny has lived in Zagreb, Los Angeles, Antananarivo, Nairobi, Durban, New Delhi, Lisbon and since 1982 in Hamburg, Germany.

In 2008, Danny completed a documentary film entitled Living The Truth about the life and music of Bill Conti, the film music composer.

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Claude Anthro



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