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Annotated Script

FADE IN:

Stage and surrounding walls are entirely white. The minimalist design features only a white tiered podium center stage and four white chests upstage. RICHARD, naked and covered in powder, cowers on the podium in a fetal position. His face is obscured by his arms.

Use of body language- particularly fetal position, symbolizes birth. Manipulation of white stage symbolizes purity.

After a moment of stillness and silence, RICHARD crawls into a child's pose very sluggishly, as if it is a struggle to move. He slowly sits up and stares at his upturned, bare palms. He trembles.

Richard's vulnerability is represented from the beginning – nudity, trembling, weak body. Immediately contradicts the prior interpretations of Richard

A sound echoes across the stage; a single rapping of nails. RICHARD flinches

RICHARD (voice trembling, throat raw as if he has been screaming) Am I... deformed?

Richard's pre-recorded voice booms across the stage, harsh and sharp as if scolding himself.

Manipulation of soundscape – contributes to creation of postmodernist theatre and demonstrates key convention in achieving contemporary production

RICHARD flinches as the voice sounds.

VOICE Deformed! Unfinish'd! Ugly!

RICHARD Am I-

VOICE (interrupting again, louder) Frightful! Wild!

RICHARD flinches harder

Richard's flinching highlights his powerlessness. He did not choose this.

RICHARD (voice rising) Am I-

VOICE (louder again) Inhuman! Unnatural!

RICHARD jerks as if he has been hit and he fights to hold back a sob. He whispers incoherently to himself for a moment before shaking his head and calling out again, staring straight ahead as if searching for his voice in the distance.

He did not plan on becoming a monster.

RICHARD (yelling desperately) Am I-

VOICE Bloody! Sly!

RICHARD RICHARD sobs

	(whispers) No...	
VOICE	(slowly) The devil.	
	Silence.	
	RICHARD, tears streaming down his face, stares at his trembling palms.	
RICHARD	(whispering) The devil, the devil, the devil.	Echo – shows that he simply becomes what is being enforced upon him
	RICHARD repeats the words to himself over and over, staring at his palms in misery.	
	A rapping of nails echoes across the stage once. Around him, women in black bodysuits slowly crawl out from left and right wings. Their movements are irregular and animalistic, their right hands cradled to their chests. They only stare at RICHARD as they gradually crawl towards the podium. Squares of black paint cover the center of their faces: their eyes, noses, and mouths.	The rapping of nails is representative of the women and the influence of others. Strategic use of mystery sound alongside unrealistic movement creates tension.
	RICHARD does not notice them. He does not look up from his palms as he whispers to himself.	All distinguishable features of chorus are hidden- creates a void of darkness where identity is. Carefully removes their humanity- unusual design contributes to “oddness” of abstract concept.
	The women reach the podium and silently lay themselves across the stairs in varying positions: all uncomfortable and unnatural. Their right hands rest palm down on different levels of the podium. They continue to stare at RICHARD, but still he does not notice them. Slowly, the chorus’ left hands gravitate up, as if reaching for something above them. A cage of dark human hands surrounds RICHARD.	The chorus consists only of women- therefore their actions represent the impacts that the women in Richard’s life have had. Female chorus highlights the nurturing and loving roles that Richard was denied.
	A rapping of nails sounds twice, and the chorus twitch and jerk with the sound. RICHARD looks up in desperation and stares into the distance, palm up to shield against the lights.	He is trapped by them whether he knows it or not
	Beat.	Careful manipulation of movement so that Richard often shows / stares at his own hands. The stains, or lack of stains, on his palms represent his innocence. “Blood is on his hands”
RICHARD	(gulps and calls out in despair) AM I-	
	The chorus’ left hands suddenly reach for RICHARD, as if to grab or swipe at him. None reach him as they hiss in unison.	Unidentified features of chorus alongside unison represents it as a force and influence rather than specified characters
CHORUS	A villain!	
	The rapping of nails begins to boom over and over.	

Black balloons full of liquid are suddenly bowled from the wings by unseen hands. They are rolled out onto the stage over and over, until the white stage is speckled with black balls.

All members of the chorus leap away from the platform in various inhumane and unnatural movements, forming a loose semi-circle surrounding the podium.

Black handprints litter the edges of the podium in the places the chorus' right hands lay moments before.

The handprints are a symbol and physical expression of the hands that created Richard's villainous identity. Stained hands built this monster.

The action of each chorus member is synchronized but the shapes they create with their bodies are not identical. They each adopt their own forms of grotesque. Each member of the chorus bends to reach for a ball, freezing for a moment of stillness as their hands wrap around one. The rapping of nails silences, and they each hold misshapen poses for one moment. Slowly, the chorus turn their heads to stare into the audience.

Building of tension

(physical theatre accentuated through use of levels)

CHORUS (slow unison) You wrong God.

In unison, the chorus suddenly spin and hurl their balls at the steps of the podium. RICHARD screams as the balls, full of black paint, explode across the whiteness. RICHARD shrinks into himself, wailing in fear.

As RICHARD screams, a soundscape begins. A cacophony of rapping nails, shattering glass, and sensual female laughter echo across the stage- a mosaic of sound. RICHARD flinches harder and harder each time he hears the rapping of nails.

Soundscape builds tension and represents the constant flow of voices + background noise that influenced RICHARD's life and identity. The white noise of degradation that has always been present in his life.

As the soundscape is implemented, the chorus circle RICHARD. They move in different ways: crawling, scampering, prowling. All movements are jaggedly grotesque and animalistic, as if they are circling prey. Each time the rapping nails sounds, the chorus jerk wildly in their formation. As they move, they swipe up the black balls from the ground. RICHARD's chest heaves as he stares wildly at the force of the circling chorus.

Animalistic movements strip away humanity of chorus. Depicts them as a dangerous force rather than potentially loving humans. Emphasizes that RICHARD was a victim to his own creation. He was powerless and he was prey.

CHORUS (one member) Weak-willed fool!

She hurls her black ball, and it explodes on the stage. RICHARD screams when it splashes onto him as if it burns and cradles his stained limbs.

(another member) Poisonous!

She hurls a ball. It explodes.

(another member laughs wickedly) Venomous!

She hurls a ball. It explodes.

(another member) Foul devil!

She hurls a ball. It explodes.

A canon of voices erupts as one by one, over, and over, the chorus scream at RICHARD and throw the balls. All movements are ritualistic, crooked, and jagged as they prowl around him. Eventually, the stage is a constant eruption of paint as RICHARD is splattered and covered in black. RICHARD cries out and begs as his white body is smothered in the darkness. He hides his arms to his chest. The sounds of glass, nails, and laughter begin to crescendo.

No contact is made between chorus and Richard – representative of disconnection between RICHARD and those that shaped him

The animalistic, unnatural movements of chorus symbolize the inhumane treatment and dark degradation RICHARD has been victim to

Each time a ball of paint splatters RICHARD, his entire body ricochets with the impact

CHORUS Hell's black intelligencer!
Bottled spider!
Harmful!
Kind in hatred!
Thou lump of foul deformity!
Frightful!
Wild!
Abortive, rooting hog!
Though unfit for any place but hell!

Significant fragmentation of text to highlight the treatment that RICHARD is victim to. Evident manipulation of text to help communicate didactic message.

RICHARD (wails) Why dost though spit at me?

He holds his white palms up, as if surrendering and begging for mercy

Despite the enforcement of this darkness, his palms are clean- symbolizing remnants of innocence. He may be smothered in darkness, but his humanity remains intact.

CHORUS Furious!
Sly!
The troubler of the poor world's peace!
'Desp'rate!
Unnatural!

Chorus canon, exaggerated ritualistic movement, and cacophony of the

RICHARD begins to echo the words back to the chorus, clawing at himself with painted black hands as he sobs each of their words. His repetition slowly crescendos.

soundscape significantly builds tension

CHORUS Harmful!
Fouler than heart can think thee!
Poisonous hunchbacked toad!
Kind in hatred!
Ugly!
Foul defaces of God's handiwork!
Bloody!
The devil!

Fragmentation of text

Each member of the chorus bends to reach for a ball, freezing for a moment as their hands wrap around one. The crescendo of sound silences, and they each hold misshapen poses for one moment. Slowly, the chorus turn their heads to stare into the audience.

RICHARD, skin completely black, panics as he desperately attempts to wipe some of the paint off his limbs. He scrubs himself, claws at his chest, and cries as he realizes he cannot rid himself of the stain. The chorus stay frozen in their grotesque poses. They do not look at him.

The people who stained him will not even acknowledge his pain

After a moment, RICHARD's hands drop to his sides in submission. He kneels on the podium, chest heaving, and stares at his palms. This time, they drip with darkness. He makes a broken noise in the back of his throat, like a wounded animal, and slowly looks up to the audience. His face, completely painted, is broken. He gulps.

The loss of his humanity and innocent identity

RICHARD (softly, voice raw and tired) And therefore-
(his voice cracks) since I cannot prove a lover...

Each member of the chorus, staring out at the audience, smiles slowly. The white of their teeth are uncanny against the dark squares hiding their faces.

In unison, they hurl their bodies towards RICHARD and bombard him with their thrown balls of paint as they scream.

CHORUS (unison) A VILLAIN!

The balls hit RICHARD all at once, and the podium explodes in a burst of splattering black paint. The sound of shattering glass echoes across the stage the

moment the paint bursts onto the podium. For a moment, all that is seen is the explosion of paint and people

RICHARD is left kneeling in a pool of wet paint, completely unresponsive. The chorus lay scattered around the podium.

Long silence.

A rapping of nails sounds. The chorus members jerk in their positions and sit up. The sound of nails raps again. Chorus exit.

Clear connection between symbolic sound and chorus

Four women in the chorus stay on stage, and instead of exiting left and right, slowly make their way to the four chests upstage

Silence.

The four women slowly kneel in front of each chest and open their lids. As the lids open, female laughter sounds. RICHARD flinches.

The rapping of nails continues again; slow and repetitive as the women assemble.

The women move in total synchrony as they slowly undress with their backs to the audience. Their movements are gentle and fluid now, almost sensual as they carefully peel off their black bodysuits to reveal white lace undergarments. From each of their chests they pull a white cotton cloth. They calmly and methodically wipe the paint from their faces. Once bare faced, they reach into the chests and pull out dazzling white ballroom gowns. Very slowly and carefully, they don the lace gowns.

Contrast is heavily manipulated to represent the creation of their identities. They strip themselves of darkness – something RICHARD cannot do- and don their innocence. White lace undergarments and gowns highlight the cleanliness and purity that these women have the privilege of showing despite their previous darkness.

As they zip up their gowns, they turn to face the audience. They are clean, white, and pure. Pre-recorded whispers flutter across the stage as if in a passing wind; remnants and echoes of the previously screamed insults. In unison, the women walk downstage, their movements elegant and smooth. They carefully lift the hems of their white dresses and delicately assemble themselves across the stairs of the podium. Each woman sits poised despite the surrounding paint staining their gowns. Slowly, they raise their hands to reach for the sky. Their arms, white and paint-less, shine against the darkness of the podium. Slowly, they turn their

These women, now pure, are caught in RICHARD's mess. By slowly walking and placing themselves in it, it shows that they are "victims" to their own mess.

palms to face the audience. Their palms are stained black.

Stained hands built this monster.

RICHARD suddenly wakes with a heaving gasp, and the women clench their fists and hide their right hands behind their backs. They do not look at RICHARD as he looks around in confusion, and instead glance away in different directions. They do not react as RICHARD stares at his body in devastation and runs his hands along the paint that smothers him.

They will not acknowledge that monster that they created.

RICHARD (softly, as if grieving himself) Look what is done cannot now be amended

CHORUS (dismissive unison) Harp not on that string; that is the past

RICHARD (sobs softly, hand on his chest) Cannot a plain man live and think no harm?

CHORUS (shrug carelessly, uninterested) Tis' more than you deserve.

RICHARD (broken laugh) Though cam'st to make the earth my hell-

CHORUS (sharply interrupting) Thou *unfit* for any place but hell, devil

RICHARD (desperate) I can make amends

CHORUS (disgusted) You wrong God

RICHARD (exasperated) Now, by the world-

CHORUS (interrupting) You wrong God.

RICHARD (shocked) Be not so curst

CHORUS (shaking head in dismissive disgust) You wrong God.

RICHARD (hurt and flustered) Bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

CHORUS (ignoring him) You wrong God.

RICHARD (begging) Speak it!

CHORUS (blank) You wrong God.

RICHARD (confused, desperate, loud) Are- are you all afraid?!

CHORUS (distantly) You. Wrong. God.

RICHARD (shakes head frantically as he claws at the paint on his chest) I blame you. I blame you all!

Blackout. Silence.

RICHARD (low, angry, threatening)
I am YOUR beast.

End scene.

Script adapted from William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (original text)

References:

Spark Publishing, 2004. "No Fear Shakespeare: Richard III." SparkNotes LLC

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