

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

by

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fifth draft
82 pages

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TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

"... Nor law nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds;
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death."

W. B. Yeats

(from "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death")

CHARACTERS

Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, SHAH of Iran

The EMPRESS Farah Diba, his wife

Colonel JAHANBINI, his bodyguard

Mark ARMAO, director of a public relations firm working for the Shah*

Dr. Benjamin KEAN, parasitologist at New York Hospital

General Omar TORRIJOS, ruler of Panama

Colonel Manuel Antonio NORIEGA, head of his intelligence service

José de Jesus Martinez, "CHUCHU", his friend and bodyguard

Dr. Carlos "Charlie" GARCIA, his personal doctor

Ambler MOSS, American Ambassador to Panama

Guards (non-speaking)

Twelve scenes, plus epilogue.

This story is based on real events involving real characters. It is nonetheless a work of fiction and should not be considered otherwise. Certain names may have to be changed for production.

** fictitious character combining the functions of two real characters (Mark Morse and Robert Armao)*

THE SET

The island of Contadora, Panama, December 1979. A large red-tiled terrace leading to a grassy slope going down to the Pacific, which we cannot see. The terrace is surrounded by palm trees, hibiscus and bougainvillea. White and yellow garden furniture, not new. A hammock slung between two trees. Sliding doors lead to the sitting room of a modest, rather ramshackle holiday villa off left. There is a balcony visible on the first floor. To the right, past the terrace, a path leading to an invisible driveway and road. By the side of this path we can see part of a rusty trailer serving no apparent purpose.

The hammock and the balcony must be practical and fairly prominent. The rest should be suggested as discreetly as possible to form a practical playing space.

Except where otherwise indicated, the scene changes should be as fast as possible. Set, lighting and acting should combine to give an impression of lightness, of transparency, of the ephemeral. We should feel that all we can see is likely to evaporate at any moment.

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ONE

Sunshine. Heat. The terrace is mainly in the shade, but the light that filters through the trees is fierce.

A young, scruffy GUARD in a tee-shirt sits lazily on the steps leading to the house, cradling a sub-machine gun in his lap, looking on without interest as a small, ugly man with a badly pock-marked face, in crisp, clean white military uniform goes about concealing an electric wire in the bougainvillea. This is Colonel Manuel Antonio NORIEGA. When he has finished there remains no trace of any gadgetry. He rehearses a sickly, simpering smile and holds out his hand limply to an imaginary interlocutor.

NORIEGA Your Excellency. I am Colonel Noriega. Your security is my business. I am glad to see you safely in my hands.

Pause

(confidentially into the bougainvillea) Noriega. All set. Ya hear?

Pause

You receiving me?

Pause

(shouting towards the trailer) You in there! The fuck ya doing?!

Pause

Knock twice ya hear me.

Pause

(to the guard on the step) Get in there. Knock twice ya hear me.

The guard disappears behind the trailer.

Ya hear me?

Two knocks.

Close the fucken door.

Sound of door slamming.

Ya hear me?

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Two knocks.

(whispering) Ya hear me?

Two knocks.

(moving across the terrace) An' here?

Two knocks. He moves towards the house without speaking. Two knocks.

I di'n' say nottin'! You fucken wid me? You fucken wid me?
People fucks wid me gets fucked in the ass. Wid a coke boddle.
Yuh: 'merican style. Hey, I'm the meanest liddle fucker in
Panama.

Two knocks. Noriega darkens, then looks at his watch. Sound of a helicopter overhead, deafening. Noriega scuttles off across the terrace holding his head down as if it were in danger of being hit by the helicopter. He stops and looks up, then tries his smile again, offering a limp hand to the air.

NORIEGA Excellency. Your security is my business. I am glad to have you safely in my clutches. Welcome to Panama.

The sound of the helicopter moves away. Noriega runs out. Two knocks.

Two men approach, coming from the trees. One is Colonel JAHANBINI, an Iranian army officer. Sandhurst trained, his speech and manner are clipped and polished, very English. He is balding with glasses. The other is a stocky, rather scruffy man with longish grey hair. This is José de Jesus Martinez, known as CHUCHU. They look over the terrace and glance inside the house, then look out to sea with binoculars.

JAHANBINI ... a dish composed especially by Maxim's, a mixture of caviar and poached quail's eggs, quite exquisite. Unfortunately the Shah never eats caviar and he wouldn't touch it. So no-one else could eat.

CHUCHU Why not?

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JAHANBINI Protocol. No-one can touch his food until the Shah has started to eat. Are those your men out in the boat there?

CHUCHU Let me see. Ah yes. National guard. So what happened, at the banquet?

JAHANBINI Finally someone found some leeks that they'd used for a soup, and the crisis was averted. What are they doing?

CHUCHU Sunbathing.

JAHANBINI Ah.

CHUCHU Did you hear the American officer when he got off the plane? He goes over to Ambler Moss and says "He's all yours." What does that mean? He is in Panama now. He is in our care. The Americans don't want the Shah. They are kicking him out the back door, like a wet dog.

JAHANBINI Yes. It is a very difficult time for us.

CHUCHU Panama is a small country. But we don't like being walked on. That is why I insisted on the place in the helicopter. You think this is petty?

JAHANBINI No, no...

CHUCHU You think this is petty. It is petty. You are right. But they make me so angry. They sign the canal treaty. Then they cheat. The Senate changes it. The General is very disappointed. We should have blown up the canal and started a war.

JAHANBINI A war? Against the United States?

CHUCHU We couldn't win, but neither could they. We would take to the mountains. Go into the jungle. Guerrilla warfare. They would hate it.

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JAHANBINI But what good would it do you?

CHUCHU That is what the General said. In the end he is reasonable. But sometimes a glorious death is preferable to compromise.

JAHANBINI Yes. I understand that. I'm afraid we've missed our chance for glory.

CHUCHU When the going gets tough, the tough get going. He already put all his money in foreign banks, your Shah. He is not stupid. We hear all about his SAVAK, about torture and repression - they say the Empress had her people read Racine to her to cover the cries from the cells -

JAHANBINI Nonsense. The Empress never came anywhere near the cells.

CHUCHU But when the people rose up against him he did nothing. No?

JAHANBINI One cannot blame the Shah. None of this is his fault. It is the fault of the Americans.

CHUCHU Ah yes.

JAHANBINI The Shah was always wary of the British. But he did listen to the Americans. Of course they helped him in 1953. They put him back on the throne. But this time it is different.

CHUCHU Never trust the Yankees.

We hear two voices approaching: Ambler MOSS, a plump, affable Virginian dressed in white, and Mark ARMAO, a thin, clean-cut, rather condescending young New Yorker in a three-piece suit. We hear them before we see them. They come out of the trees and onto the terrace. Moss is telling a story that he finds amusing. Armao is listening with reserve, and growing alarm.

MOSS ... State Department ring me Friday morning say can I get everything ready, but don't tell anyone! They gimme a shopping list a mile long, goes right down to dog food, and say don't tell anyone...

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ARMAO Yes, I gave them that...

MOSS No but, Marco, don't tell anyone?

ARMAO I know it sounds stupid but everywhere we go they forget the dog food...

MOSS Can you see me...?

ARMAO They got two dogs, you know, they gotta eat. One's a great dane for chrissakes, eats more than the Shah...

MOSS Marco, can you imagine, all the preparations...

ARMAO It's Mark actually...

MOSS All the security, the, the - what?

ARMAO My name. It's Mark. I don't care for Marco.

MOSS Oh. Oh, OK. The, the, the telephone, you know, I phoned the guy here - Gabriel Lewis, this is his place, sweet guy, you'll like him - I phoned him, it's just buzz buzz, and I'm less than thirty miles away...

ARMAO Oh God. The phone doesn't work? The Empress spends her life on the phone, we can't stay without a phone, that's just...

MOSS No no, it's done, it's done. We had the army in, put in a radio link and... But it's done because I made the decision, on my own head be it, we gotta tell Torrijos...

ARMAO Right...

MOSS You can't fly in the Shah of Iran and keep it a secret, not even tell the guy whose country it is...

ARMAO Well right...

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MOSS So I decide to tell Torrijos. Only thing is, that is easier said than done. You don't know Torrijos, you'll see him, great character, you'll love him...

ARMAO Hmm...

They have now drawn close to Jahanbini and Chuchu.

MOSS This OK, Colonel?

JAHANBINI I'm a little worried about a possible attack from the sea. But it's better than the Bahamas. If you'll excuse me, I'll just take a look upstairs.

He disappears inside the house, which Armao now looks over with mild distaste.

CHUCHU This is a nice man. For a fascist. Where's Noriega?

MOSS Got stuck with the dogs. I was telling Marco, *Mark* here, 'bout yesterday. So now I had to find the General. You can usually get him at his friend Rory Gonzalez' place on Calle Cinquente, but his idea of security is sleeping in a different bed every night - preferably with a different girl...

ARMAO And this is the guy...

MOSS So I try about a dozen different numbers, no Torrijos, no-one knows where he is, it's the weekend, he's probably started *drinking*...

ARMAO This is the guy that runs this country?

MOSS Yeah, well that's... Anyhow, Friday afternoon...

ARMAO I have a very bad feeling about this country.

CHUCHU You have a bad feeling about Panama?

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MOSS No no, he's gonna love it. It's not New York: you gotta change gear. Takes a little time to acclimatise. But you come to love the place. I did.

ARMAO You did.

CHUCHU I go see if the General's here yet.

He goes. Armao watches him go, then turns to Moss.

ARMAO I want you to make it clear that the Shah's not here to be ripped off, alright? Just get that straight. They bled him dry in the Bahamas, I don't want that to happen here. I mean he's a fairly wealthy man but his funds are limited now, he's very concerned about that, he has to...

MOSS I heard he's good for 500 million dollars. Any truth in that?

ARMAO 500 million or 500 billion?

MOSS And he's worried about the *rent*? How much are *you* taking him for?

Pause

No seriously, Mark, I think you should be careful of Panamanian sensibilities, you know. Torrijos is doing us a very big favour here, we have to tread very carefully...

ARMAO You think he might...?

MOSS No no. No. But let's not forget the Shah's not the only major ego around here. It would just make life a lot easier for all of us if these two actually like each other. The Panamanians have their pride, they don't... But they're very warm. Anyhow, Friday afternoon Torrijos finally calls me back, he's heard I been calling him. I go over see him at Calle Cinquente, I get there he's on the wrong end of a six-hour drinking bout. Eyes glazed. Voice gone. We work on a press release, then he says he's got to clear it with

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his president. Well, I mean the National Guard runs Panama, the president is purely icing on the cake, about all he gets to do is park his car in a reserved space at the Hotel Panama, but Torrijos wants him to know. Well, I can't get hold of him either. Finally track him down, get him on the phone, he says, "Well it sounds pretty crazy to me, but if it's what Torrijos wants, what can I say?" OK, thank you, Aristides. I turn back to the General, he's gone. I ask the secretary where he went. "Well sir, he fell asleep, so we put him to bed." Well, what can you say? I called State Department, told them everything's ready, send him down.

ARMAO You lied to the State Department?

MOSS What you want me to say? "No, nothing's been done. Omar's drunk in his bed." ? Washington would never understand. I told 'em everything's fine, send him on down, and I went home to sleep. Six in the morning, phone rings, the General. "Ambler, what was that you said last night? The date and all that?" "The date, mio general, hoy. Today. He's leaving in two and a half hours' time." Then he hits the panic button: "Oh my God. Get yo' ass over here." I'm getting dressed, Gabriel Lewis calls: "What's going on?" "Well Gabriel, the Shah of Iran is moving into your house on Contadora in a few hours' time, you'd better get over there and clear out your things."

ARMAO Oh boy.

MOSS I tell ya, you're gonna love it here.

ARMAO Er, just do me a favour, will you? Spare the Shah that story, OK?

MOSS Oh I wouldn't...

ARMAO Yeah. You know for a diplomat you sure have a strange way of reassuring people.

MOSS Well, coming from the public relations officer of the man with the worst press in the world, I think I'd take that as a compliment.

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ARMAO It's a little more than PR. My job is protecting a fallen king. A man who's been pushed from an airplane without a parachute and who needs protecting from all the sharks gathering in the water beneath. Did they get the dog food?

MOSS No?

ARMAO Great.

MOSS Listen, I think you've got the wrong idea about Torrijos, he's a very popular leader, he tours round the country, the peasants can talk to him, anyone. He's... He's...

ARMAO He's what?

MOSS Well if the Shah had done half as much for his country as Omar Torrijos has done for his he might not be here today.

Pause

ARMAO I trust you will keep those sort of opinions to yourself, Mister Moss. The Shah is not on trial here.

Chuchu returns, with TORRIJOS. He is tall, good-looking, fiftyish. There are signs of weariness, in the eyes mainly, which seem to stare beyond this world into the next, but the overall impression is of boyish enthusiasm and infectious high spirits. There is obvious affection between him and Moss. They embrace. Armao stands a little way off, stiffly, waiting to be introduced. Chuchu sits down at a table.

MOSS Good to see you, Papa General. Much trouble with the students?

TORRIJOS Nothing we can't handle.

MOSS I'd like you to meet Mark Armao.

ARMAO It is an honour to meet you, Your Excellency.

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Torrijos looks at Moss in some surprise, then bursts out laughing. He goes to the table and takes some bottles of beer from a pack he has brought with him. He gives one to Chuchu.

TORRIJOS *(To Armao)* Have a beer.

ARMAO No thank you.

TORRIJOS Go on, take it. You're sweating like a pig. Ambler?

Moss takes a beer and drinks from the bottle. Torrijos again offers the beer to Armao, who shakes his head. Torrijos shrugs and drinks from the bottle himself.

ARMAO But I will take my jacket off, if you don't mind.

TORRIJOS Mind? I think it is better for everyone. Don't worry. Everyone sweats in Panama. Even the Shah.

ARMAO A short walk to the hotel, they said. It is a long hike to the hotel. Next time I'll take a car. It's very humid, isn't it?

TORRIJOS It's not humid. This is the dry season. I am very keen to meet this man. We have a lot to speak about. Is that them down there? Chuchu, give me those binoculars. My God. Who is this beautiful woman?

ARMAO The Empress Farah Diba.

TORRIJOS She is this old man's *wife*? But look at her. She is magnificent. You have spoken with her, Chuchu?

CHUCHU Yes.

TORRIJOS How is her voice? Tell me she squawks like a parrot, or squeals like a little pig, or I am lost.

CHUCHU Her voice is like velvet.

TORRIJOS Ahhh.

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- CHUCHU But she is completely devoted to her husband.
- TORRIJOS What does he care to lose a kingdom when he keeps a woman like this? And devoted to him you say?
- ARMAO Absolutely.
- TORRIJOS Never the slightest dalliance when he is away?
- ARMAO Even in Iran, where there were hundreds of stories circulating, Farah Diba has always had the reputation of a chaste and faithful wife.
- TORRIJOS Never tempted to avenge her husband's infidelities?
- ARMAO She has devoted her life to him. They spend all their time together.
- TORRIJOS What a fortunate man this Shah is.
- ARMAO I'm not sure he'd quite see it that way.
- TORRIJOS Why? What has he lost? Iran? Pah! A lot of sand and oil.
- ARMAO The Shah has lost more than his kingdom. He has lost his faith in human loyalty and honour.
- TORRIJOS Well, we all lose that. In our line of business. We all lose that.
- CHUCHU They come.
- ARMAO Oh General, I hope you don't mind my saying this, but it's to spare you any embarrassment: the correct form of address when speaking to the Shah is Your Majesty. Some of your people have been calling him Your Excellency. That is incorrect, and the Shah doesn't like it.

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TORRIJOS I bet she looks good in a bathing suit. So, Chuchu, you've seen my hand, what do you think of my chances in the game?

CHUCHU In the game of getting Jimmy Carter re-elected, the cards are stacked against him, but all is not lost, and you have your hand to play. In the game of seducing the Shah's beautiful wife, you don't even get a seat at the table.

TORRIJOS Ahh. Always I dream of the unattainable. What else is there to dream of? Except death. Except death.

The SHAH and the EMPRESS arrive on the terrace, followed by Jahanbini. Armao attempts to begin the introductions but Torrijos strides up to the Shah and shakes him vigorously by the hand.

ARMAO Your Majesty, I'd like...

TORRIJOS Very pleased to meet you, Senor Shah. This little man here has given me instructions on how to address you, I can't remember any of that, I call you Senor Shah. Alright? Yes? Good. Delighted to have you in my country. To say nothing of your most beautiful wife. (*Kissing her hand*) Madam, it is a pleasure as well as an honour. If there is anything I can do to make your stay a more pleasant one you have only to say the word. This house is modest but comfortable. Gabriel Lewis was going to develop the island as a tourist centre for the rich and famous. A sort of St. Moritz by the sea. But it never happened, I forget why. Oil prices, I think they said. So, probably it is all your fault.

He laughs. The Shah looks embarrassed.

Anyway I prefer it like this. The rich and famous bore me. We get a few fat German tourists at the hotel and that's it. I used to bring the Americans here to negotiate the Canal Treaty. Now we have once more illustrious guests on Contadora and I am delighted to have you here. You are a lucky man, Senor Shah, she really is a most beautiful lady. You have had difficult times, here nobody will bother you. Anybody bothers you, let me know,

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I'll throw them in jail. I lend you Chuchu, he is my friend. You can trust him with your life. Not your wife perhaps, but your life.

He laughs. The Shah manages a weak smile. The Empress frowns.

He is a Marxist, but we forgive him. He is also a poet. I like to surround myself with people of different points of view. I listen to Chuchu, I also listen to Gabriel Lewis, who is a capitalist. Is this what you do too? But I don't have many advisers. Intellectuals are like fine glass, crystal glass, which can be cracked by a sound. Panama is made of rock and earth.

Pause

Ours is a lonely profession, is it not, Senor Shah?

Pause

SHAH I am very sorry to have to impose on you in this way. The Americans were very anxious to see the back of me. They think it will help the hostages. It won't, but I did not wish to stay where I was not welcome. I hope I will not be an embarrassment to you.

TORRIJOS Bah. We Panamanians are not so easily embarrassed. You are very welcome in Panama, for as long as it pleases you to stay. And we shall see if we cannot get those hostages freed.

Pause

ARMAO General? The American government assured us before we left that there was absolutely no possibility of extradition from Panama to Iran.

TORRIJOS The Shah is my guest. He will not be extradited.

CHUCHU We have no extradition arrangements with Iran.

MOSS Panama does not extradite people wanted for political crimes.

TORRIJOS We only extradite when the accused is sure of a fair trial and never when he is in danger of receiving the death penalty. The Shah will not be extradited from Panama.

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Pause

EMPRESS Mister Carter wants to negotiate. But there is no talking to those people. Khomeini is quite insane. The mad mullah, we used to call him. My husband could have had him executed. He let him go to Iraq. Then France. He thought he'd be out of harm's way. But the western media latched on to him. Every day we could hear him ranting on the BBC world service.

TORRIJOS But the people listened. Why?

SHAH I have given a great deal of thought to that question. But I'm afraid I haven't come up with an answer. I simply don't understand.

Pause

CHUCHU You were in power how long?

SHAH 37 years. Since 1941.

CHUCHU And in 1941, you staged a putsch?

SHAH Oh no. Before me there was my father.

TORRIJOS My father was a schoolteacher. When I was seventeen I ran away from home to go to a military academy in El Salvador.

SHAH Really?

TORRIJOS In fact I ran away the year before also, with a girl. I stole my older brother's car. But the police stopped me as I was leaving our town. I was lucky. I saw this girl not so long ago: she is enormously fat.

Pause

I am a man of the people. My country has always been dominated by an oligarchy of rich bourgeois families. They care only for their bank balance and they do whatever the Americans tell them. No-one cares about the peasants and the poor. Politics was dominated by the Arias family. In 1986 Arnulfo Arias was

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elected president. I was a major in the National Guard. I decide enough is enough. I put Arias on a plane to Miami. Then I run the country with another officer, Martinez. But he turns out very right wing. So I put him on a plane to Miami. A little while later I am in Mexico for the Caribbean Classic, a handful of officers try to take over. Not even the balls to put me on a plane to Miami. They phone me in Mexico. "We think it best you stay where you are." "And leave my country to a bunch of cretins like you? Not on your life. I'm getting the first plane back." I go straight back and in two days they have all surrendered. Ten years later here I am. A good story, no?

SHAH Very interesting.

TORRIJOS Now we have 80% literacy, slum clearance, we build schools and hospitals, we take in refugees from Nicaragua and El Salvador. My dream is for a Central America completely independent from the United States, not seen as a threat, just genuinely neutral. Perhaps this is a romantic dream. Perhaps this is unattainable. Certainly if Carter loses this election there will be trouble. But I am a soldier. Sometimes trouble is fun. You are not saying very much, Senor Shah.

SHAH I'm afraid I'm not much of a talker.

Pause

TORRIJOS Have a beer.

SHAH No thank you.

TORRIJOS A cigar then. Here, a present from Fidel. See, my name on the band.

SHAH No, I don't...

TORRIJOS *(Exasperated)* Ha!

Torrijos exits suddenly, in anger. Pause.

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MOSS The General is quite a character, don't you think, Your Majesty?

SHAH Yes, quite.

MOSS It's a different style of course, but he's a very warm man. I'm sure you'll get along with him just fine, after a while.

Enter Noriega. His white uniform now bears several large paw marks.

NORIEGA (*muttering*) Fucken mutt.

On seeing the Shah his whole attitude changes and his simpering smile returns.

SHAH Colonel. I hope Beno was not lacking in respect for your rank.

NORIEGA A dog as royal as this one, is an honour to be mauled by it, Excellence.

Laughter, followed by an awkward silence. The Shah drifts away and goes into the house with the Empress. Jahanbini follows them but stops at the door.

NORIEGA (*to Jahanbini*) I got two hundred National Guard round the house. Road-blocks on all the roads. I check out everyone arriving on the island. I got checks at all the airports and border points on the mainland. Anyone suspicious, we watch 'em day and night. I got sonic devices on the sea bed. Anything approaches we pick up a signal in there. (*He indicates the trailer.*) I got friends in the CIA. I got lotsa friends.

JAHANBINI Well, in that case, perhaps we can start thinking about lunch.

Noriega smiles at Jahanbini, who seems a little disconcerted.

CHUCHU Ah, lunch. I think we are lucky. No caviar today. Lobster and crayfish are the speciality here. It is a short walk to the hotel...

Armao seems about to object when the Shah and the Empress come out of the house. Chuchu goes off in the direction taken by Torrijos.

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ARMAO If Your Majesty would like some lunch...

Pause. The Shah does not reply. He looks at the house.

EMPRESS It's very...

SHAH Small.

EMPRESS It will do.

SHAH I'll take the big bedroom with the view. You can have the one downstairs.

They start to move off.

ARMAO Your Majesty, I have a bad feeling about this country.

SHAH Well. Things can hardly get much worse.

ARMAO You know they forgot the dog food?

SHAH Beno is not fussy. Let him eat lobster.

Torrijos returns, with Chuchu, as if nothing had happened. The others stop.

TORRIJOS Ah, Senor Shah. Thank you for waiting. We shall have lunch now. You will sit next to me, we have a lot to talk about.

Pause

ARMAO I think His Majesty might be a little tired after the journey. Perhaps you should...

SHAH Yes. To tell the truth, I'm not very hungry. I'm afraid I'm not fully recovered from my er... I think I'll just go and...

He goes indoors. Torrijos watches him go in frustration and surprise.

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- EMPRESS I'm afraid my husband is a reserved man at the best of times, General. And this is certainly not the best of times.
- ARMAO He's very tired.
- TORRIJOS I can see this, yes. Also I think he is sick. I will tell Charlie Garcia to come and have a look at him.
- EMPRESS Dr. Coleman thought they should have taken out his spleen in New York.
- ARMAO Dr. Kean thought taking out the gall bladder was risky enough as it was, and they can always go back later for the spleen. Maybe Kean and Williams should come down and examine him.
- EMPRESS I'd rather have Flandrin come over from Paris.
- TORRIJOS How many doctors does this man have?
- ARMAO Dr. Kean has been treating him since Mexico. He's a parasitologist at New York Hospital.
- TORRIJOS A parasitologist?
- ARMAO Williams is head physician there and Coleman is their senior oncologist.
- EMPRESS Dr. Flandrin has been treating my husband for many years now. With some success.
- TORRIJOS With so many doctors, no wonder he is sick. I'll tell Charlie Garcia to have a look at him. If there is anything I can possibly do for you, Senora Shah, don't hesitate to ask. I am very eager to please.
- EMPRESS Thank you. I'm a little tired too. Thank you so much for receiving us. Now if you don't mind...

She goes indoors.

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TORRIJOS Please, please. Whatever you wish.

ARMAO I'll be at the hotel if you need me, Your Majesty. *(to the others)*
If you'll excuse me...

He heads off towards the hotel.

They're very tired.

TORRIJOS I see this. She has lines in her pretty face. And the Shah is sick. I see that. But is that a reason not to even speak to me? I try to make conversation, all he says is yes and no, he cuts me dead. Does he not like me?

MOSS It's just a difference in style, Papa General. You'll get used to it.

TORRIJOS But is he a man, or a fish? This is a king? I cannot talk to him.

MOSS Try again a little later, when he's had time to settle in, get his health back.

TORRIJOS I do not like him. This air of suffering he wears. Does he not know how lucky he is? Is he not rich, with a beautiful wife? Is he not free? He has lost only what most of us could never have. He has lost his power, is that so terrible? I do not like him. I do not like his tragic air. I do not like his cold manner. I do not like this cissy-boy who works for him. The only thing I like about him is his wife.

BLACK

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TWO

Lights up. The Empress appears on the balcony in a bathing costume. She seems light-hearted. She looks down towards the beach. Jahanbini comes up from the beach onto the terrace, past a young Panamanian guard, who looks on idly.

JAHANBINI We're all set, Your Majesty.

EMPRESS Do we really need all those men sitting about in their little boats?

JAHANBINI Better safe than sorry, Your Majesty.

She goes inside. The Shah and Chuchu wander in through the trees onto the terrace. The Shah is in a summer shirt and has put on weight. He is visibly more relaxed.

CHUCHU ... Then there is the little girl living with me at the moment. She is very young and very naïve and I don't have the heart to tell her to leave. Also now she is pregnant. But really I am still in love with my first wife, the mother of my two children, the grown-up ones. Always when I see her now I cry like a baby. They say with you it is your second wife you are still in love with...?

SHAH Ah, Colonel. Enjoying yourself?

JAHANBINI Not really, Your Majesty. The Empress has decided to go water-skiing.

SHAH Splendid. Take her mind off those dreadful American magazines she reads. Everyone's very kind here. I'm feeling much better. I might even take a dip myself.

The Empress comes out, a cotton robe over her bathing costume. Chuchu goes to her, leaving the Shah and Jahanbini to one side.

CHUCHU Your Majesty, I have a message from the General.

EMPRESS Another one?

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

CHUCHU Always the same one: anything you want, just say the word. Also he wants to have a talk with you about Persian art. He is very interested in Persian art.

EMPRESS Please tell him I want for nothing here and I'm sure my husband would be delighted to give him a lecture on Persian art.

The Empress crosses to the Shah.

Ah. We've got some room to breathe now the children have gone.

She stops. Tears well up in her eyes.

JAHANBINI They are quite safe at their schools, Your Majesty. My best men are with them.

EMPRESS Yes. Of course. It was so nice to have them here for Christmas. Well. Come along, Colonel.

They go. Noriega comes scurrying out of the trailer holding a video camera. He slows on seeing the Shah and smiles obsequiously. The Shah smiles politely back, looking curiously at the camera. Noriega hurriedly dispatches the guard off to the beach with the camera and goes into the house.

SHAH Does he always smile like that?

CHUCHU The General told him he had a winning smile. It was a joke, but Noriega does not have the General's sense of humour. He is trying to improve his image.

SHAH Ah.

CHUCHU But he is efficient. And he has a fantastic collection of china frogs.

The Shah looks down towards the beach. Sighs.

I think your heart is still in Teheran.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

- SHAH And my gall-bladder in New York. They're after my spleen here. I'm leaving a trail of vital organs scattered around the world. What you see is the husk of a man, the stuffing has all been knocked out.
- CHUCHU But the husk has not lost the will to live?
- SHAH That is for God to decide.
- CHUCHU How can you tell what He wants?
- SHAH We have a very close relationship. I don't need mosques and mullahs. I speak directly to God.
- CHUCHU Does he speak back?
- SHAH He has on several occasions. Once I managed to pull a plane out of a nose-dive against all the laws of gravity and aerodynamics, a matter of seconds before it was due to hit the ground. The young pilot accompanying me was so impressed he wanted to show me what he was capable of himself. I watched from the ground as he looped the loop and flew upside down. He failed to pull the plane up again and crashed right in front of my eyes.
- CHUCHU The General also prefers young pilots. The experienced ones refuse to fly in bad weather.
- SHAH I think God was particularly eloquent on that particular occasion. But lately we haven't been getting on so well.
- CHUCHU You think He is punishing you?
- SHAH Well that... It's rather like with a man and a woman - with you and your wives for instance - sometimes everything is glowing, you are building a magnificent house, your children are laughing, life is wonderful... and then suddenly it all comes crashing down. At these moments one doesn't quite understand what is happening.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

CHUCHU Me, I don't believe in God.

SHAH No, of course, you...

CHUCHU But I believe in the devil.

SHAH Really?

CHUCHU I see no sign of God. The devil I can see every day. When you go in a hotel, there is a revolving door. You step in the revolving door, you push the wrong way, you get stuck. So. This is the devil.

SHAH Yes, that's... I must say I never looked at it like that...

CHUCHU The devil deals in earth and shit. He is real. God is like the haze from the heat. You think you see him sometimes, but there is nothing there.

Noriega appears at the door waiting for the Shah's attention.

SHAH Colonel?

NORIEGA Your Majesty. Your security is my business. This man Armao, he gets in our way. I think you better fire him.

SHAH Well, Colonel, I'll certainly have a word with him.

NORIEGA I think you must send him back to New York.

Armao, casually dressed now, comes to the door of the house and waits for Noriega. Noriega looks to the Shah, who looks from one to the other and smiles mildly. Noriega, realising the Shah has no intention of granting his request, bows and smiles in submission.

Your Majesty.

Armao ushers Noriega inside, stops on the doorstep.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ARMAO I had him down for underhand, devious and corrupt, now I'm wondering if he's not just downright evil.

SHAH You just say that because he is so ugly. Try not to judge people by appearances, Mister Armao.

Armao follows Noriega indoors.

Mister Armao has not quite acclimatised yet.

Pause

He has heard something... a rumour going round, I'm sure there's no truth in it but... we have heard talk... that General Torrijos is involved in talks with Teheran...

CHUCHU The General is a gambler. He wants to be a hero. He wants to free the hostages, get Jimmy Carter re-elected, appear on television, on the cover of Time magazine. He wants everybody to love him.

SHAH There is only one condition for the return of the hostages...

CHUCHU You can trust the General. If you can trust anyone, you can trust the General.

SHAH If there is one thing I have learned in the past year, it is precisely that I cannot trust anyone.

Pause

What would you say to a game of tennis?

They go. Armao comes out of the house in conversation with Noriega. He is looking at papers that Noriega hands to him.

ARMAO No no no no no. Oh no. What is this? Ten thousand dollars - rent - G2. What does that mean?

NORIEGA Surveillance agents. I put them in the little houses at the bottom of the garden.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ARMAO Those little shacks? Ten thousand dollars rent? We're talking about those guys that spend their days hanging out their washing under the Shah's windows?

NORIEGA You complain my men are dirty. Now you complain they wash.

ARMAO Alright, alright, leave it. What's this?

NORIEGA For their meals. At the hotel. They got to eat.

ARMAO They got to eat but at twenty-one thousand dollars a month that's a hell of a cafeteria they got there.

The sound of a helicopter overhead. A guard comes up from the beach, crosses to Noriega, hands him a videocassette and goes back out. Noriega puts the cassette in his briefcase.

NORIEGA Twenty-one thousand is the total for the hotel. That includes your room, the rooms of the others in your party, plus all the meals you take there. Very reasonable. The manager is losing money. Security is expensive.

ARMAO It sure is when you're in charge, pal. What do I put on the cheque?

NORIEGA Noriega.

ARMAO The cheque's in your name?

NORIEGA Is easier to go through my bank.

ARMAO Just make sure no-one else comes round here asking for money. And you can tell Torrijos' girlfriends the Shah has seen enough real estate. No more visits to wildly overpriced properties. You're wasting your time.

NORIEGA Is a way of visiting the country.

ARMAO You people are about as subtle as a knee in the balls.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

NORIEGA We can be much more subtle than that, Mister Armao.

ARMAO What is that? Is that a threat? Are you threatening me?

NORIEGA We are happy to have the Shah in Panama. He is very happy here. While everybody is happy, is no problem. If there is a problem, is other people happy to have the Shah in their country.

ARMAO Wait a minute, what did you say? Did I hear you right? What are you saying?

NORIEGA I just give you some friendly advice. Don't make waves. You might get drowned.

Exit.

ARMAO Oh boy. Oh boy oh boy.

Dogs bark. Voices off, in Spanish, challenging. Moss rushes on, breathless, sweating, ruffled.

MOSS Has he heard?

ARMAO What?

MOSS Is Torrijos here?

ARMAO No. What is it?

MOSS I couldn't get hold of him. They told me he was coming down here.

ARMAO What's happened?

MOSS It's a mistake. Really. Problem of vocabulary.

ARMAO What is?

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

MOSS We mustn't let them panic. They gotta stay here. We don't wanna scare them into heading back for the States. Where are they?

ARMAO The Empress is water-skiing. The Shah is with Chuchu.

MOSS Where?

ARMAO I'm not sure. Is the Shah in danger? I don't trust these people.

MOSS No, no. No danger. Really. It's just a question... protection, surveillance, you know, it's just a...

ARMAO Moss, will you tell me what is going on?

Pause

MOSS Washington rang. The Iranians announced over the radio the Shah is under arrest. Pending extradition.

The Shah and Chuchu have arrived unnoticed on the terrace and hear the last exchange. The Shah stands still and turns pale. BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

THREE

Lights up. Armao is pacing up and down. Moss hurries on.

MOSS Any news?

ARMAO Nothing here. What about you?

MOSS He's not in hospital. The doctors can't agree on the operation.

ARMAO Did you speak to Torrijos?

MOSS Yes. But he was drunk.

ARMAO I'm going to phone Rockefeller. I need action on this immediately. You don't seem to realise...

MOSS Will you calm down and just tell me exactly what happened?

ARMAO Last night. Noriega came. Said the Shah was going to visit a property in Panama. Well, that was fixed for this morning, I said why did he have to leave the night before. Noriega says it's for his health. They don't want to tire him.

MOSS Well, maybe that's...

ARMAO That's bullshit, Moss, and you know it. I said alright but I'm going with him. He had his tough guys keep me away. They took him away in a plane. This is serious. I'm phoning Rockefeller.

MOSS Wait wait wait, let's try and find out what's happened first. Did Jahanbini go?

ARMAO Yeah, they let him...

MOSS Where did they say they were going?

ARMAO They wouldn't tell me. They wouldn't let me in the plane with him and they wouldn't say where they were going. Now you

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

might like to kid yourself but I know where they're taking him. Jahanbini or no Jahanbini, he's on a plane to Teheran tied up in string with a label attached: "Love from Panama".

MOSS Torrijos wouldn't do that.

ARMAO How can you say that? He's a drunk and a drug addict, he's already let them announce his arrest -

MOSS That was a misunderstanding. He explained that. There was never any question of extradition.

ARMAO Can you even be sure he knows what the hell is going on in this goddamned country of his? You think you can trust Torrijos, how about Noriega?

Pause

MOSS I'll make some more phone calls.

ARMAO Get me some hard information now or I'm phoning Rockefeller. This is not just your job on the line here, Moss. We're talking about murder. You don't help me find him, I'm gonna tell the world the United States' government was a party to the murder of the Shah.

MOSS Alright, alright, I'm doing what I can. There's probably a perfectly reasonable explanation...

ARMAO There is. It's a perfectly reasonable murder.

MOSS What about the Empress?

ARMAO I haven't told her yet.

MOSS They didn't take her?

The Empress approaches, with Dr. Ben KEAN, a big, burly American with a square head and closely cropped grey hair.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ARMAO You think I should tell her?

MOSS Let's find out the facts first.

EMPRESS Is my husband still not back yet?

MOSS Er, I don't think so, Your Majesty. Dr. Kean, good afternoon. How's your patient doing?

ARMAO Moss...

KEAN I'm glad to hear you still call him my patient. There are some people here seem to have forgotten that fact.

EMPRESS Dr. Kean is rather upset that my husband did those tests at the hospital at Paitilla.

ARMAO Mr. Moss has to...

KEAN I was promised the military hospital in Gorgas or the United States. This is outrageous.

EMPRESS But you agree that the operation on the spleen...

KEAN I think it's risky. I think we should consider the alternatives before jumping into this. Embolization of the splenic artery maybe, or radiotherapy.

EMPRESS But Dr. Rios and Dr. Garcia, Dr. Flandrin and now Dr. Hester all think...

ARMAO Moss...

KEAN I'm not saying they're wrong. I'm saying I should have been informed what's going on down here. Dr. Hester and Dr. Flandrin both agreed to report back to me. Now I find people have been running tests behind my back. The patient has a respiratory infection no-one saw fit to tell me about. The

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

problem is that these people have forgotten who's in charge here. The problem is that Dr. Torrijos has taken over. What do you think, Mister Ambassador?

ARMAO I think Mr. Moss has to...

KEAN The US government made me a promise. You represent that government. What are you going to do about it?

MOSS Well, Ben, I know Hamilton Jordan did say something along those lines, but really, you know, in the present situation, I have to say going to Gorgas would be asking for trouble. I mean it's virtually American territory. It's not just the Shah we have to think of, we're talking about the lives of those hostages.

ARMAO *Moss...*

MOSS Alright I'll er...

EMPRESS Is something wrong?

ARMAO Your Majesty, have you heard from the Shah at all since last night?

MOSS I'm sure there's no cause for alarm.

KEAN Where is the Shah?

Enter Noriega. Armao rushes up to him followed by Moss.

ARMAO Alright, Noriega, where is he?

NORIEGA Excuse me. I gotta speak to the Empress.

ARMAO What about?

NORIEGA I got a message from the General.

ARMAO (*Hissing at Moss*) You see! Torrijos has got him.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

MOSS Listen to him...

NORIEGA Your Majesty, good morning. I got a message for you from the General.

ARMAO Cut the crap, Noriega. Spit it out.

NORIEGA Your Majesty, the General said to tell you, you want anything, you only gotta ask.

Pause

EMPRESS He told me this himself, many times.

NORIEGA He said tell you again.

MOSS That's the message?

ARMAO Noriega...

NORIEGA Doctor Kean, Doctor Garcia wants to speak to you. He is waiting at the hotel.

KEAN Oh, so Doctor Garcia wants to speak to me, does he? Well it just so happens I have one or two things I'd like to say to Doctor Garcia. Your Majesty, gentlemen.

Exit.

ARMAO Alright, Noriega...

NORIEGA I heard you been looking for me, Mister Armao.

ARMAO What are you playing at, Noriega?

NORIEGA I am doing my job, Mister Armao. You make it hard, but I think I do it pretty good. The Shah thinks so too. He told me himself.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ARMAO When was this?

NORIEGA Just this morning.

EMPRESS What are you afraid of, Mister Armao?

ARMAO I... I just don't trust this man, Your Majesty. Can we go inside and talk?

NORIEGA Sure. But first I got some paper work needs attending to.

He takes out a handful of papers - bills, as before - from his briefcase.

ARMAO Oh no, this is not the moment... Let's go inside and talk, we can deal with these later.

NORIEGA I think you deal with these first. Then we talk.

Pause

ARMAO Hand 'em over.

He takes the papers.

MOSS Colonel, I'm sure you'll understand the Shah's not in the best of health, and security is a constant problem... I know you've done an excellent job there...

ARMAO Jesus...

MOSS But we haven't heard from him since last night and, given the circumstances, we're naturally a little worried... Could you just tell us where you took the Shah last night?

NORIEGA The Shah spent the night at the Hilton.

EMPRESS Could you please explain...

NORIEGA Mister Moss, I think we must have a word in private.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ARMAO Why?

Noriega just grins.

MOSS Well alright, if you'll excuse us, Your Majesty...

They come down stage, away from the others, and speak confidentially.

What exactly is going on, Colonel?

NORIEGA Mister Moss, believe me: the Shah is not complaining.

MOSS What does that mean?

NORIEGA Mister Moss, there are some things we men understand, maybe not the Empress, maybe not even Mister Armao...

MOSS I don't...

NORIEGA A man has a right to a good time, no?

Pause

MOSS What do you mean?

NORIEGA The Shah has been in very good hands. Clean. Expert. Very friendly hands.

MOSS You mean...?

NORIEGA You are a little slow, Mister Moss.

MOSS Oh thank God. Oh God, thank You so much. Oh Jesus, You had me worried for a while back there.

NORIEGA So. Better we don't go into details, no?

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

MOSS Oh God, yes. Absolutely yes. (*Calling out to Armao*) It's alright!
 There's no problem! It's... everything's fine.

He comes over to the others, grinning with relief, amusement and embarrassment.

ARMAO What does that mean?

EMPRESS Where is my husband?

ARMAO Noriega, I demand to be taken to the Shah at once.

NORIEGA Fine. But I think this is not necessary. He will come to you.

ARMAO Just tell me where he is.

The Shah has arrived, unnoticed, accompanied by Jahanbini.

SHAH Where who is, Mister Armao?

Pause

EMPRESS We've all been wondering where on earth you'd got to. Mister Armao was getting quite nervous.

SHAH Really? That's very flattering but I assure you there was nothing to worry about. The Colonel showed me over quite a pleasant little property. A little expensive, I thought. And then he was so kind as to let me pilot the plane back. It's one of the few distractions I still really enjoy.

Pause

MOSS What is?

SHAH Flying.

MOSS Flying?

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

SHAH Yes Thundering through the clouds, streaking down like the wrath of God. Exhilarating.

Pause

JAHANBINI We also visited a site where they're going to build a school.

SHAH Yes. A very worthwhile project. Very deserving of encouragement.

EMPRESS *(Not taken in)* Well, if the crisis is over, perhaps you'll excuse me, gentlemen. It's time for my calls to the United States.

She goes into the house. The Shah watches her go.

ARMAO You didn't give them any money, did you, Your Majesty?

The Shah remains staring at the space his wife has just vacated. He doesn't seem to hear. Noriega smiles. BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

FOUR

Lights up. The Shah is sitting on the balcony looking out to sea. Jahanbini keeps an eye on him from the terrace below. Pause. The Empress appears on the balcony behind the Shah. After a moment he turns to her. There are tears in his eyes.

SHAH Farah?

Pause

The world shrivels and shrinks each day. My friends cast me out like a criminal. My peers shrug me off like dead skin. I am last year's model. I am yesterday's paper.

Pause

Or perhaps I am insane. I seem to remember an asylum. Perhaps I'm just a poor madman who thinks he is king.

EMPRESS You are the Shahinshah.

Pause

SHAH Yes. This crazy man Khomeini will die soon. He is very old. I give the whole thing a few more months. Then the people will call us back. They will plead with us to return to the Peacock Throne. Well, I shan't go. They have disappointed me. I shall send my son. Reza will ride in triumph through Persepolis... I shall watch it on television.

He goes indoors, passing the Empress without touching her. She stands watching him, in silence. BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

FIVE

In the darkness the sound of a recorded conversation: hiss on the tape, voices more or less audible, odd noises, etc..

CHUCHU He is not a happy man.

TORRIJOS He has the most beautiful woman in the world. He allows himself a whore on the side and she says nothing. I should like to be as unhappy as he is.

CHUCHU We all cheat on our wife. Are we any the happier for it?

TORRIJOS I want to know what they say to each other, when they are alone. Noriega gives me only the boring tapes. Nothing but politics. I see nothing but the façade of this man, I only see what he wants me to see. I want to know what he has in his belly. I shall go and see him. I shall have lunch with him. I shall make him drink. And he will talk.

Lights up. Torrijos is asleep in the hammock, a half-empty bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label on the ground nearby. A moment, then Noriega passes behind him, talking to a guard, furious.

NORIEGA I'm gonna kill the stupid son of a bitch! I'm gonna bust his balls - if I can find 'em. What do I tell Torrijos? Alright, he's out for the count, but now I gotta fake an enquiry. Whassamadder this guy? Call himself a pilot, can't even land a plane without breaking his legs! I told him! I told him the plane crash the arms still on board ya burn it. Any goddam idiot can burn a plane. All ya need is a match.

He goes off. The Empress and Chuchu approach, in conversation, coming from the trees.

EMPRESS I'm sure it's taking its toll on my husband. The chlorambucil was always enough before. Until the upheaval. My husband is very reserved, you understand. Some people can express their

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

disappointment, their anger. They scream and shout, it goes. Others...

CHUCHU ... get cancer. Yes.

EMPRESS And these doctors can't agree on anything!

CHUCHU Garcia and Rios are good doctors. Paitilla is a very good hospital. Even your Doctor Flandrin says this. The problem is the Americans. This Doctor Kean. He is not a cancer specialist. He is a specialist in parasites. That is why he likes Armao.

Torrijos stirs in his sleep.

TORRIJOS Papa?

Pause

EMPRESS He is a strange man, your General. Sometimes he seems dangerous, an unbearable bully, particularly with regard to my husband. And sometimes he seems... vulnerable, frightened, lonely... sensitive - another man.

CHUCHU Yes. Women like him.

TORRIJOS Uuungh!

Torrijos jerks awake with a cry of pure fear. He falls out of the hammock, scrambles to his knees, looks about wildly, terrified. The Empress steps back in alarm. Chuchu goes to Torrijos, lifts him up, calms him.

CHUCHU Alright, Omar. Just another dream. You're alright now.

He sits Torrijos back in the hammock, sits beside him, his arm around him. Torrijos stares in front of him, sees the Empress.

TORRIJOS Am I in paradise?

The Empress laughs.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

EMPRESS Hardly.

CHUCHU It's only Panama, Omar, only Panama.

Torrijos, still slightly stunned, lies back in the hammock. Chuchu gets up, strokes his forehead, watched by the Empress. He moves away, a little embarrassed. The Shah and Armao come through the trees, in conversation. Jahanbini is behind. Noriega comes up behind Torrijos and hands him papers, which he signs without reading.

ARMAO SAVAK?

SHAH Simply use the methods they were taught in the West. Every country has a service of this type.

TORRIJOS *(To Noriega)* What's this?

NORIEGA That's fine.

ARMAO You don't want a little dig at Carter? Without mentioning his name, just...

SHAH No. I don't want to start trading insults with politicians. Please make that a condition for the interview.

ARMAO As you wish, Your Majesty. But don't forget he's a very aggressive interviewer. He made a fool of Kissinger. He tried to stop them showing it, that just made things worse.

TORRIJOS Kissinger had it coming to him.

Pause

SHAH Henry Kissinger is a friend of mine.

ARMAO *(To Shah)* Perhaps we should go inside.

Torrijos gets up, hands the papers back to Noriega and starts pacing about.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

TORRIJOS He's using you to get Carter out of office. He's stirring it up. These people don't have friends. They are chess players. They manipulate the pawns on their board. Rockefeller and Kissinger want you back in the States to make trouble for Carter. That's democracy: they are forever preparing the next election. A bunch of whores plying for trade.

He takes a cigar from his pocket and holds it out to be lit. Noriega crosses and lights it for him, a little embarrassed by his own servility.

SHAH You do not consider yourself a politician?

TORRIJOS I am a soldier. We see things differently.

SHAH Yes. I too am a soldier. Perhaps in that case you might tell me frankly what stage you have reached in your negotiations with Teheran?

TORRIJOS *(Laughs)* Yes, I will tell you frankly. Frankly we are getting nowhere. It is all a big game. I may have to arrest you and take a few photographs of you behind bars, but strictly for propaganda purposes. There is nothing to worry about.

Pause

SHAH *(To Armao)* When one is not well, such things are a strain.

TORRIJOS It is nothing. It is not even gambling: if I lose, I lose nothing and nobody loses. Everything remains as before. If I win, everybody wins. Except for this man's employers.

ARMAO I do not work for David Rockefeller. He recommended me, that is all. I work for the Shah.

TORRIJOS His brother had the right idea. He went out in style. One last blast of ecstasy between a young pair of thighs, that is the death I should dream of. Instead of all this violence.

Pause

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

Nixon and Kissinger were your friends because you had oil. This is cheque-book diplomacy. If it had been Khomeini in your place they'd have done the same.

SHAH I'm afraid I disagree.

TORRIJOS Then explain yourself! Come on. You think because they let you buy all the F 14's you wanted they thought you were a splendid fellow? You think because they let you be tough on dissidents they thought you were a good and moral person?

SHAH They trusted me... Eisenhower was a nice man, too. And Lyndon Johnson. Nixon came to see me in Cuernavaca. At least some Americans remain true to their principles.

TORRIJOS You mean Carter is not? Why don't you say that? I always have to subtract what you don't say from what you do say to find out what you mean. Why don't you just say what you think? Why don't you tell me frankly, from one soldier to another, what you think of Carter?

SHAH He is not a man I should care to meet again.

Pause

EMPRESS President Carter and his wife were our guests in Teheran for New year's Eve in 1978. He made a speech that made a great impression on my husband. He said he had asked his wife with whom she would like to see in the New Year and that she had replied: "Above all others, I think, the Shah and the Empress Farah." He said that Iran was an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world, because of the great leadership of the Shah. He said there was no leader with whom he had a deeper sense of personal friendship and gratitude.

TORRIJOS He said that?

EMPRESS A year later he refused us entry to the United States.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

Pause

TORRIJOS So, you hate Carter's guts. Good, now we are talking.

SHAH It's getting a little chilly, isn't it?

Pause

EMPRESS It's ninety degrees in the shade.

ARMAO I think we should go inside.

EMPRESS I'm calling Flandrin.

SHAH Just a touch of fever again.

The Empress and Armao usher the Shah inside. Jahanbini follows. Noriega remains on the terrace with Torrijos and Chuchu.

TORRIJOS He gets on my nerves with his cancer. He uses it to run away. He will not talk to me.

NORIEGA He just fell out the sky, from another planet. He don't even know that men are bad. He is surprised.

TORRIJOS Aren't you?

NORIEGA I'm from the Barrio.

Pause

TORRIJOS Would you like to be in my shoes, Noriega?

NORIEGA Me, General? I am ugly. People don't like me. I gotta stay in the shadows.

TORRIJOS Good. I want you to go and see Castro, find out what the hell he thinks he's up to in Managua. I stopped arming the Sandinistas, why hasn't he?

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

NORIEGA Ah. Yes. Talking of arming the Sandinistas, I just heard about a funny thing. One of our planes crashed in El Salvador and they found a whole stack of arms on board.

CHUCHU For the Sandinistas?

NORIEGA Looks like it. I dunno who could of ordered such a thing. I make an enquiry.

TORRIJOS Better from us than from Castro. I am a respectable dictator. Fidel is jealous of me. Tell him I have no contact with the Sandinistas. If it's not true, I don't want to know. And José Blandon will go with you.

NORIEGA I don't need Blandon.

TORRIJOS I need Blandon. He will go with you. Now leave us.

Noriega leaves.

What do you think?

CHUCHU I think he's secretly selling arms to the Sandinistas. And also to the Contras. He's selling information to the Americans. And also to Castro.

TORRIJOS In other words our little colonel is going into politics.

CHUCHU Why don't you fire him?

TORRIJOS Fire Noriega?

CHUCHU Why not?

TORRIJOS What did she say about me?

CHUCHU She said you were strange.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

TORRIJOS That's good. "Strange" is very good. That means she's intrigued.

The Empress comes out of the house. Chuchu discreetly moves away.

EMPRESS My husband is not well. You must leave us in peace. You don't understand. I'm sorry but it's so stupid. You don't understand.

TORRIJOS No, I don't understand. I don't understand how a man like him can deserve a woman like you. I have known many women, but none like you. A man can penetrate a woman's body. He can brand her flesh with his name. This is nothing. The dew of a summer morning. I want to write my name on her soul, like an inscription on a tombstone. I have never been able to do this. But your husband has.

EMPRESS Do you think that is any comfort to him?

Pause

What do you want from him?

TORRIJOS I want him to recognise me as his equal.

Pause

EMPRESS During the festivities for the 2500th anniversary of the Persian Empire, there was a famous French pastry cook who spent days and days working on this very elaborate cake. He put his heart and soul into it. But we had to move it and during the transport the whole thing just collapsed. All that was left of his work was a pile of sugar and crumbs. You can't imagine what it's like to see your life's work just suddenly wiped out. You spend a lifetime building a magnificent castle and in a few minutes it is trodden into the ground. There is nothing left.

TORRIJOS Yes there is. The snail is left after his shell is crushed. That is what I'm interested in. Your husband is avoiding me. He uses his dignity like a veil. I see only the public persona. It is of no interest. You are the only one to see the private person, the naked man. You are the only one who can hold him close and

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

look him in the eyes, beyond the mask, in the place where he cannot lie, in the place where the bleeding animal licks its wounds. Only you have seen this. So tell me, what is he like, this snail, when he crawls out of his shell?

EMPRESS That is a vile metaphor. My husband is king. There is no secret man.

TORRIJOS Then there is no marriage. I suspected as much. Even with you he wears the mask. He must feel terribly alone. Is it his choice, or yours?

Pause

I feel sorry for him. Not for you. You have your beauty, your children, his money, all the privileges of power, almost as much as before. You don't have his crimes on your conscience. He will die, and you will go on living. He is like me.

Pause

My death will be sudden and brutal. My work will not survive me. I have tried to stamp my name on this country. But it is written in sand. Soon the tide will come in.

She looks at him in surprise. BLACK.

The play can be performed continuously, without an interval, or with an interval here, between scenes five and six.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

SIX

Lights up. Sunset. The Shah is sitting on the balcony looking out to sea. Jahanbini is seated a little way behind him. Both are quite still. Long silence.

SHAH Well. Another day gone. Another day gone...

He gets up, with a little difficulty, and heads indoors.

What's that dreadful smell?

BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

SEVEN

Lights up. Afternoon. GARCIA and Kean approach, both angry, hot, and out of breath. Garcia is a big, gruff man, looking more like a guerrilla than a doctor. Armao and Moss follow in their wake. The Shah comes out of the house, with Jahanbini.

SHAH Doctor Kean, Doctor Garcia. Something wrong?

KEAN We have to talk, Your Majesty.

SHAH Oh dear.

The Shah sits down.

MOSS (*Aside to Armao*) Can you smell something?

GARCIA Your Majesty. Your red cell count is abnormally low, as you know. You don't seem to be bleeding internally, so that means one of two things: that your bone marrow is not producing any red cells, or that they are being destroyed in the spleen. Doctor Hester has examined the bone marrow aspirated by Doctor Flandrin. 75 per cent of your bone marrow cells are red. The normal figure is about 25 per cent. You are producing red cells so fast because something is destroying them. The spleen is the guilty party. It's as big as a football. It has to come out.

SHAH I think everyone is agreed on that. Is that not so, Doctor Kean?

KEAN I agree a splenectomy seems inevitable. I have to add that it is quite dangerous.

GARCIA The danger is of haemorrhage or of infection during or after the operation, or of thrombo-embolism due to an increase in platelets after splenectomy. This is why we must give a transfusion of white cells and platelets. This is why Doctor Rios called in Doctor Hester.

KEAN He had no right to do that.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

- GARCIA He had every right. I myself appointed Rios as the Shah's physician.
- KEAN You did not. I did.
- GARCIA Doctor Kean, how can you appoint anyone? You appoint in New York. You are in Panama.
- MOSS Well, never mind who appointed who, what's this Doctor Hester supposed to be doing?
- GARCIA She is an expert in supportive blood transfusions to leukaemia patients. She has ordered a blood cell washer and a blood cell separator from IBM. We do not have these machines at Paitilla, nor at Gorgas. Doctor Hester asked IBM to send them together with an engineer to Paitilla, where the operation will take place.
- KEAN And I ordered them to send them to Gorgas, where the operation will take place. I see no reason why His Majesty's treatment should suffer simply as a sop to Panamanian nationalism.
- GARCIA Doctor Kean, the Shah is in Panama as a guest, because fifty to sixty Americans are held hostage in Teheran. Put the Shah in Gorgas and you might as well take him to New York. You can say bye-bye to your hostages.
- MOSS He actually has a point there, Ben.
- GARCIA So there is no question the operation be done anywhere but Paitilla.
- KEAN Is that an ultimatum?
- ARMAO How can we entrust His Majesty to the care of men who are negotiating with emissaries from Iran?
- GARCIA The only question is the choice of the surgeon and his team.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

KEAN This is an outrage.

Pause

MOSS Let's get the best man possible.

KEAN I consider this a betrayal.

The Shah stands up.

SHAH Good day, gentlemen.

He goes inside. The others watch him go.

JAHANBINI With doctors like these, who needs terrorists?

He follows the Shah indoors.

GARCIA I will make arrangements at Paitilla.

MOSS I'll fly back with you. Good day, gentlemen.

Garcia and Moss leave. Armao remains with Kean.

KEAN We need a new solution.

ARMAO What do you want to do?

KEAN What we need now is a surgeon of international acclaim. A man so big that no-one will dare buck him. What we need now is Michael DeBakey.

ARMAO The heart surgeon?

KEAN Yeah, the greatest surgeon in the world. They can't turn *him* down.

ARMAO But there's nothing wrong with the Shah's heart.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

KEAN So what? You think the guy can't take out a spleen? I'll go call him right away.

Exit.

ARMAO I have a bad feeling about this operation.

He takes some papers out of a briefcase, begins to read.

68,000 dollars?! Well, fuck you, Noriega.

He puts the papers down, crosses to the house, looks inside, sniffs and moves away in distaste. He walks upstage to look at the view and stands with his back to the audience. Noriega comes out of the trailer and crosses to the house.

NORIEGA (*Without emphasis*) And fuck you too, Armao.

Armao turns in surprise and watches as Noriega goes into the house without looking at him. Armao remains upstage, thinking. BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

EIGHT

Lights up. Dusk. Torrijos and Chuchu.

TORRIJOS Come away from the house, it's bugged. Noriega knows where we are, but we don't know where Noriega is.

They move away.

 It stinks too. Why don't they get rid of that dog?

CHUCHU He is sick, like his master. It is very sad.

TORRIJOS Marxists are not supposed to be sentimental, Chuchu.

CHUCHU I try to think of the horrible tortures, of the oppression of his people, I try to keep this in mind, but when I look at him, none of it is left. Now he himself is being tortured, by life.

TORRIJOS Bah. He is a squeezed orange. All the juice is gone, so they throw the peel away. He gives me a headache, this man. I only have to say the word and he is on a plane to Teheran. Yet he looks right through me. I do not exist. And when I look at him I see my future. In his eyes I can see my death.

Pause

CHUCHU And the negotiations?

TORRIJOS I think they don't want the Shah in Iran. Too many problems. They just want him dead.

CHUCHU And what do you want?

Pause

TORRIJOS How I hate the evening.

CHUCHU Something is weighing on you.

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TORRIJOS The world is weighing on me. I am weary of it.

Pause

I want out.

CHUCHU Out?

TORRIJOS Out of politics. Out of the National Guard. I want to get out alive.

Pause

Twelve years now. Dreams disappear into the haze on the horizon. Nothing takes root. I want out.

CHUCHU But there is so much left to be done.

TORRIJOS There always will be. I am no use any more. I am worn out. When the people find a leader, they work him to death, like a peasant works a good ox to death.

Pause

CHUCHU You need a successor.

TORRIJOS Yes.

CHUCHU Paredes?

TORRIJOS Too political.

CHUCHU Diaz Herrera?

TORRIJOS Too ambitious.

CHUCHU Noriega?

TORRIJOS Too sly. I don't trust any of the colonels. I think I should dissolve the National Guard. Noriega's gunning for himself now. He's out

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of my control. Castro would rather deal with him than with me. So would the Americans. The time will come when he won't need me any more...

Pause

CHUCHU You would leave the country to the politicians?

TORRIJOS I'm going to give the politicians a big surprise. I'm designing a system - a democratic system - in order to get out. They will think I am designing a system to stay in. They will waste their bullets firing in the wrong direction, then say "But this sonofabitch is unpredictable."

Pause

CHUCHU So you want to be an ex-dictator?

TORRIJOS Yes. Not like the Shah. No-one kicks me out. I go in my own time. Ex-dictator is not so bad. I prefer this to dead dictator.

CHUCHU You will give yourself a pension?

TORRIJOS How much does an ex-dictator need to live in the style to which he is accustomed? I must ask the Shah.

CHUCHU What will you do all day?

TORRIJOS Drink.

He pours Chuchu a large whisky and himself an even larger one.

To a quiet life.

CHUCHU You won't do it.

BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

NINE

In the darkness, the sound of a tape being wound backwards with an unpleasant screeching sound, then the following passage, imperfectly recorded, with echo:

CHUCHU Diaz Herrera?

TORRIJOS Too ambitious.

CHUCHU Noriega?

TORRIJOS Too sly. I don't trust any of the colonels. I think I should dissolve the National Guard. Noriega's gunning for himself now. He's out of my control. Castro would rather deal with him than with me. So would the Americans. The time will come when he won't need me any more...

Lights up. Noriega comes out from the trailer, deep in thought. Sound of a car drawing up in the driveway, an altercation. Armao comes on, pushing back a young guard.

ARMAO Noriega, tell this idiot to get off my back.

Noriega does not react.

ARMAO Noriega!

Noriega reacts suddenly with surprising speed and aggression. He grabs Armao's shirt front and forces him down onto his knees. Then he takes out his revolver and points it at Armao's head. BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

TEN

Lights up. Morning. The Shah sits on the balcony looking out at the Pacific. Jahanbini is seated a little way behind him. Neither moves. Pause.

SHAH What a sight this must have been for Balboa. Everything was possible then. But the planet has aged, Colonel. No more conquistadors. I stare at the ocean and see only desert.

Pause

I should have liked at least to die among friends. But there are so few of them left. We spend our lives building castles. Then we stand back and watch them change shape. Towers turn into tinsel. Walls into whispers. What we thought was stone and steel is only cotton wool. Once the echoes of gunfire have wafted away on the wind, there are no castles: only clouds.

Pause

We have lived too long, Colonel. We are out of place. Here we are like left-overs from a splendid banquet. They serve us warmed up for television interviews, or articles in Paris Match. But we have lost our savour. We are all skin and shell.

Pause

Mr. Armao thinks they are going to kill me on the operating table. Or put me in a trunk once I'm under anaesthetic and pack me off to Teheran. Perhaps it's selfish of me, but I'd really rather avoid that.

Pause

We should have fought, Colonel. We should have died fighting for what we believe in.

The Shah goes indoors.

JAHANBINI *(Once the Shah is out of earshot)* Speak for yourself.

He follows the Shah indoors. Moss, Noriega and Armao approach.

MOSS ... just a little misunderstanding, I'm sure no harm was meant...

NORIEGA I do my job. People get in my way, I gotta get 'em out.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

MOSS Yes, but...

NORIEGA He parked his car across the drive. We told him many times. The drive gotta be kept clear.

ARMAO I was just stopping by for a minute. I was in a hurry.

NORIEGA He wouldn't move the car. He swore at us. He called my guard a motherfucker.

ARMAO I did not.

NORIEGA He needed to be taught a lesson.

MOSS Well, I'm sure he's learned his lesson now, so why don't you both just shake on it and let bygones be bygones?

Noriega and Armao stare at each other. The Shah has appeared on the terrace and stands listening.

No? Well, maybe that's not really necessary. The important thing is everybody's back where he belongs and the Shah is in good hands.

NORIEGA *(Seeing the Shah)* Your Majesty, I made the arrangements for the operation at Paitilla. Soon as your doctors are ready, I will take you there. There is a bed for Her Majesty as well. And for Colonel Jahanbini.

ARMAO What about me?

NORIEGA There is nothing to worry about, Your Majesty. Noriega is working for you. The General, the people like him, he makes speeches, he has a pretty face; but he is unpredictable. Lucky for you behind the General is Noriega.

ARMAO That's exactly what's worrying us.

Exit Noriega.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

I spent the night in a cell.

MOSS Alright, but you're out now. They didn't rough you up at all?

Pause

SHAH If they arrest you, an American citizen, what might they not do to me?

ARMAO I think we have a problem here.

Pause

SHAH In any case I have no choice. I have to put my faith in the doctors.

BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ELEVEN

Lights up. Night. Torrijos, Noriega and Moss. Moss is engrossed in his own narrative. Noriega is listening patiently, Torrijos is subdued, sombre.

MOSS Doctors? Gimme ballet dancers any day. Unbelievable, towering egos. Kean calls in DeBakey - why he needs a heart surgeon to take out a spleen I don't know - but Kean calls in DeBakey. Garcia's miffed. The General here tells Garcia go meet DeBakey at the airport, Garcia says no, fuck 'em, he's too miffed. So DeBakey arrives at the airport, no-one there to meet him, now *he's* miffed. No-one tells them they need identity badges to get in the hospital, so there's a big row with the guards, they won't let them in. So now they're not just miffed, they're apoplectic. Garcia sees the size of DeBakey's team and now *he's* apoplectic. He says: "I said the spleen was the size of a football. I didn't say I needed a football team to take it out." God. And Jeane Hester, my God, these guys go to the hospital, they leave her at the hotel, they forget her.

TORRIJOS What have they decided?

MOSS Wait. When they come back, DeBakey's seen the Shah, they've decided to bring the operation forward from Sunday to Saturday, don't ask me why, he's been waiting six months with this goddam spleen of his, I don't know what difference a day makes, anyway this is Friday afternoon, and they tell Hester they're bringing it forward, can she get her machines ready.

TORRIJOS Get to the point, Ambler.

MOSS Yeah. Well, the machines are there alright, but one's damaged; or there's a part missing, or something - that's what she's there for, she works these machines, from IBM, there's one to, one to *separate* the blood cells, like the red and white blood cells, cos he's got a very low white count, or red count, one or the other, and he needs these machines, else he'll bleed to death, or something like that. So there's one to separate 'em, I think, and one to, er, one to *wash* 'em, wash the white cells I guess -

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

anyhow there's a problem with one of these goddamned *machines* - the washer, or the separator, I dunno - but like, Hester's got, she's now got less than twenty-four hours to get it fixed and ready for the Shah's operation.

TORRIJOS Ambler...

MOSS I'm getting there, I'm getting there. IBM are sending out an engineer with the missing part, the part she needs, and she drives out to the airport, only she *misses* him, doesn't see him till she gets back to the hotel, god knows what time o' night, and she finds the guy, and he's got the part, only when he goes to put it in, *it doesn't fit*. Can you believe that? I couldn't believe this when she told me.

TORRIJOS I can't believe I have to listen to all this to get a simple piece of information.

MOSS Yeah, yeah, OK. So she's on the phone to IBM, they say they'll mail the thing, she says your goddam life you will, you put it in somebody's lap and make sure he's on the next plane to Panama. Which they do. But meanwhile - she's up working on this all night, right? - Kean comes to her Saturday morning, asks her if she's ready. She says not yet, I'll try and have it ready for this afternoon. And Kean just looks at her, like that, you know, and he says: "I knew you couldn't do it." Yeah. "I knew you couldn't do it."

TORRIJOS Another macho Yankee.

MOSS Anyway she goes on working on her machine. Saturday morning DeBakey and the Panamanians have a big pow-wow and DeBakey's actually quite civil but by this time the Panamanians have worked themselves up, they've got so mad, even the calm ones like Garcia de Paredes are shouting at everybody and trading insults and God, this, this is, cos, someone's put out this story to the press, the Shah is sick and needs sophisticated treatment he can't get in Panama: the Panamanian doctors are hopping mad, makes it look like they can't take out a spleen.

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Sounds like Armao to me, putting that about because he's with Kean, he wants Gorgas - nobody wants Gorgas: the Panamanians want Paitilla, Flandrin's happy with Paitilla, Hester thinks Paitilla is great, hell, the *Shah* is happy with Paitilla, even *Gorgas* want it to be Paitilla cos they think the students are gonna riot if he goes into Gorgas. Only people want Gorgas are Kean and Armao, cos Kean and Armao means Rockefeller and Kissinger and all they want is trouble. Yeah. So. Where was I? Hester's working her butt off on this goddamned machine, finally gets it ready and washing, or separating, not perfect but good enough to go ahead Saturday afternoon. Only since the slanging match in the morning Saturday afternoon is off.

TORRIJOS What about the Shah?

MOSS The Shah? Well, he's just hanging around waiting in his room at Paitilla. Now I, on my own initiative, I now get DeBakey and Garcia de Paredes together, and they make the peace, they end up blowing kisses, de Paredes says he's in the presence of a master, DeBakey signs a copy of his *book* for him, they love each other. DeBakey agrees to come on board the Panamanian team as an equal, but he suggests they postpone the whole thing for a few weeks to let the ill feeling die down. The Panamanians agree and they fix the date for two weeks from now.

TORRIJOS I thought this operation was urgent?

MOSS Yeah, well, so did I, but...

TORRIJOS Even a king is powerless in the hands of these people. The Shah is my guest. I don't want him to die in Panama.

NORIEGA The American doctors have no intention of returning in two weeks' time.

MOSS Wha...? Well, how d'you know that?

NORIEGA DeBakey told the Shah he'd only operate if he was in complete control and if he has the choice he don't wanna do it in Panama.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

- MOSS Ah. You knew that, huh?
- NORIEGA The Shah asked Flandrin what to do and Flandrin said he could not recommend an operation in Panama.
- MOSS When did...?
- NORIEGA The Empress spoke on the phone to Mrs. Sadat. She invited her to Egypt. She promised the American doctors could operate there.
- TORRIJOS Sadat?
- NORIEGA Seems he thinks it will please God. He says it's not a question of politics, it's a question of principle.
- MOSS *(Aside to Noriega)* You know, you're very well informed on all this.
- NORIEGA In Panama everyone has a secret. You wanna know what it is, just ask Noriega. I like to keep in touch. I don't wanna end up like the Shah.
- MOSS Well, why would...?
- NORIEGA *(Low, for himself)* Nor like the General.
- TORRIJOS Hmm. What a miserable night. How vain it all seems. What a waste of time. All day long I struggle to make my mark, and then the night comes and the darkness washes over it, there is nothing left. I am nothing.
- Pause
- Egypt's bad for everybody. Bad for the hostages, bad for Carter, bad for Sadat, bad for Panama. Bad for everybody except the Shah.
- NORIEGA Washington are sending Hamilton Jordan to put pressure on DeBakey.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

TORRIJOS Hamilton? I must get some beer in. What about the Shah? They want me to stop him?

MOSS Well, keeping him here against his will might not play too well at home... No, we have to try and talk him into staying. Carter says he'd rather have him in the States than let him go to Egypt. Jordan and Brzezinski are horrified at the idea. Cy Vance says to say they'll let him in but they'd like him to abdicate...

TORRIJOS No. Leave it to me, I'll talk to him. He'll stay.

The Shah, the Empress, Armao and Jahanbini approach, with a guard. They stop on seeing the others. The Shah seems older and visibly shrunken, his clothes too big for him again, as in the first scene. He wears a jacket over his shoulders, the arms hanging loose.

SHAH General, Colonel, Mister Moss. We were not expecting you.

MOSS No, I...

NORIEGA Your Majesty will excuse me, I have work to do.

Noriega leaves.

SHAH The weather is changing, I think. The wind has lifted. Perhaps some rain?

MOSS Well, I don't think it will last... We heard about your er...

SHAH My medical soap opera?

MOSS I'm so sorry it had to be like this, it's... Really. But it's all straightened out now. There's no reason why everything shouldn't be fine in two weeks' time. I'm sure DeBakey...

SHAH Perhaps we could find another topic of conversation, if you don't mind. I think we have exhausted the possibilities of amusement in that particular subject.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

- MOSS Yes, I er... I just hope you're not thinking of doing anything rash, Your Majesty.
- SHAH Mister Moss, I am no longer at an age, nor in a position, to do anything rash. I suppose you are referring to my decision to leave Panama. I assure you there is nothing impulsive about it.
- TORRIJOS You are not happy in Panama? After all we have done for you?
- ARMAO Oh brother.
- TORRIJOS Is this true, Senora Shah? I asked you to let me know if there was the slightest thing you wanted. I am very hurt. Why did you not speak to me? What is wrong?
- SHAH I assure you no slight is meant on your hospitality, General. It is purely medical considerations that are behind our decision.
- TORRIJOS Ah yes. Doctors are strange animals, with great skills and great egos. You have twenty-five different doctors, and twenty-five different opinions. The Panamanians were all trained in the States, side by side with the Americans, (*miming a sawing motion*) I think they can carve a body as well as anyone, but if you want, I will tell them to let DeBakey be the general of the doctors. He can do the operation here.
- Pause
- SHAH As I see it I have three options: stay here, return to the United States or proceed to Egypt. I realise I am a dying man, so my concern is for my family and my country. But I want to die with honour, not on the operating table because of a mistake or a bribe.
- MOSS I understand that, Your Majesty. But I do feel the Panamanians have made a lot of concessions already and will make more before we're through. Plus we must consider the damage this might do to the American hostages in Teheran. I mean they are in a very difficult situation...

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

EMPRESS It is not only in Teheran that there are hostages...

MOSS Plus, I know President Carter feels very strongly that Anwar Sadat is in a very delicate position in Egypt, what with arab feeling about the Camp David agreement, and well, frankly, your presence there isn't going to help matters much.

Pause

TORRIJOS It's no use talking to him, Ambler. I have observed this king. He thinks only of himself.

EMPRESS General!

MOSS Ah, well now I...

TORRIJOS Yes, Senora Shah, you know it better than anyone. This man thinks of nothing but his own importance. He doesn't care about the hostages. He doesn't care about his people. Your White Revolution. Your Great Civilisation. It was all just a monument to yourself.

Armao prods Moss, signalling to him to intercede.

EMPRESS That's ridiculous.

MOSS Well now, General, I'm not sure this...

TORRIJOS You failed to even notice your people were turning against you. Is that not correct?

ARMAO General, the Shah is not in the best of health...

TORRIJOS He can talk, can't he?

Pause

SHAH It happened very quickly. I was cut out like a cancer and isolated in a vacuum for analysis. The West decided to wait and see. But

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my country is left thrashing about like a headless chicken. That is not surgery, that is slaughter.

TORRIJOS But were you not aware your people wanted a change?

SHAH I was going to give them a change. I was going to give them my son in my place.

TORRIJOS The man is mad! Did you want to save the people, or to save the monarchy?

SHAH It's the same thing. Save the monarchy and you save the people.

TORRIJOS No. You got out. You saved the monarchy but not the people.

SHAH I saved my son. Now there is hope for the people.

TORRIJOS Listen to this man! You talk like the son of God. But you are the son of a soldier. A soldier who usurped the leadership of his country. Like me.

SHAH I'm afraid the resemblance stops there.

TORRIJOS Yes. I am a big frog in a small pond. I know this. I don't expect to turn into a prince.

SHAH I suppose I am a prince who has turned into a frog.

TORRIJOS But you still see the world with the eyes of a prince.

SHAH I don't think misfortune is any excuse for vile behaviour. They have taken my kingdom from me. I shall not give them my honour into the bargain.

TORRIJOS All this talk of honour! What honour is there left for you? You have been turned out by every nation in the world. You are reduced to coming here like a humiliated beaten dog with nowhere else to go, and yet all the dog talks about is protocol!

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

You are in a small house on a small island in a small country.
There is no room for protocol here.

SHAH That is regrettable.

TORRIJOS I do not understand your regret. Here we are face to face, can we not talk man to man?

SHAH I'm afraid not. I am a king, by birth. You may be the leader of your country at present, you may even have a programme of reform, you may well be quite the best leader your country could wish for at this juncture, but you are a godless man, so you will never be able to inspire your people, or lead them to the true order of things. You will never find peace.

TORRIJOS Have you found peace?

Pause

SHAH Perhaps I am being punished for hubris. I don't know.

TORRIJOS And you who believe in God, do you believe God has thrown you away like an empty shell because that is the true order of things?

Silence

You know what I think you should do?

SHAH I really have no idea.

TORRIJOS I think you should take one of your precious F 14's or a beautiful white arab charger, and ride magnificently into Persia and die on a sword like a king.

Pause

SHAH I have been called many things in my time, but never stupid.

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TORRIJOS Then die alone in a hospital bed with machines to monitor you according to protocol!

SHAH I am not alone.

EMPRESS It is very bad for my husband to be subjected to this sort of treatment in his condition.

Pause

TORRIJOS I am sorry. I shall leave now.

EMPRESS Goodnight, General.

TORRIJOS The darkness drains me. But if the sun comes up in the morning, everything will be possible.

ARMAO What does that mean?

SHAH Goodnight, General.

TORRIJOS When I took charge of this country, I thought power would set me free. That is a good joke, is it not, Senor Shah? There is no peace for a man who tries to leave his mark on the world. We know this, you and I. Eagles pick at our liver. We are lied to and lied about, we are stabbed in the back and the knife twists and turns its way into our soul. They lick our boots and spit in our face. Our achievements crumble. Institutions rust. Friendships corrode. White changes slowly to black. We thought we were the masters. We are only the lapdogs. Yapping at shadows. Biting postmen. And when we have shat on the carpet our masters will kick us out the back door into the rain. Who will take us in then? Who will give us a place by the fire? Who will bury us beneath our favourite tree when we finally give up the ghost? If we find one friend who will do this for us then we are happy men.

SHAH Yes. We shall see. Perhaps after all I am a happy man.

TORRIJOS Then I envy you, Senor Shah.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

Torrijos leaves.

MOSS He's quite a character, isn't he?

Pause

A little excitable...

EMPRESS He is monstrous.

MOSS I think he was just a little upset that you were thinking of leaving Panama.

Pause

Plus, I think he is genuinely worried about the fate of the hostages...

SHAH I too am concerned. But there is nothing to prove that my death would secure their release. I do not wish to be delivered into the hands of those butchers just on the off chance.

MOSS President Carter is prepared to let you return to the United States. Though his advisers seem to think it might be helpful if you were to abdicate beforehand.

ARMAO Abdicate?

EMPRESS Don't you *dare* abdicate. Think of our son, think of our country...

SHAH I am quite prepared to abdicate. I am dying anyway. The throne will go to my son.

MOSS Er, no, that's not... What I think they meant was...

EMPRESS You can make him abdicate, but after him there is our son, and after him there is our younger son, and after him there will always be someone. Nothing will change.

MOSS I see.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

SHAH Is that all, Mister Moss? Only it has been a very tiring day...

MOSS Yes, yes, I'll er, leave you to think it over. Do you... do you think we could have an answer by tomorrow?

SHAH Certainly.

MOSS Well. Good-bye.

Exit.

SHAH Good-bye, Mister Moss.

EMPRESS Don't listen to them. They will be back. With more promises.

SHAH Yes. But American promises are not worth very much these days. They have already cost me my throne. I shan't trust them with my life.

ARMAO I should tell them you'll consider abdication, go to the States, then say the hell with them.

SHAH I would feel more comfortable among friends. We'll go to Egypt.

BLACK.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

TWELVE

Lights up. The sky is overcast. The Shah, Jahanbini, Chuchu and Noriega. All smiles.

SHAH Thank you all so much for everything you've done. And please extend my thanks to Mr. Lewis as well. I have left him a note. I hope we are leaving everything as we found it.

CHUCHU I think the smell will leave with you.

The Empress comes out of the house, with Moss.

NORIEGA Colonel, I wish you good luck in Egypt.

JAHANBINI Thank you, yes. Off again. It's rather like working for the Flying Dutchman.

Armao comes out of the house.

SHAH Is everything ready?

ARMAO The luggage has all gone, Your Majesty. There's just the hand luggage left. And the dogs.

SHAH Yes, I was wondering about Beno. Perhaps we ought to leave him here.

ARMAO Your Majesty, over my dead body will Beno be buried in Panama.

CHUCHU (*To Jahanbini*) I wish you a pleasant trip.

JAHANBINI We'll all be sick from the stench.

ARMAO What's taking them so long? It's been hours. What's the delay?

CHUCHU Well, this is Panama. Little things go wrong sometimes.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

- SHAH Mr. Martinez, you have been an invaluable guide and a most agreeable companion. My only regret is that I no longer have a country in which to return your hospitality. Colonel, thank you so much for all your hard work. You have been most efficient.
- NORIEGA Thank you, Your Majesty.
- Sound of an airplane coming in to land.
- ARMAO At last.
- EMPRESS How's the fever?
- SHAH Let's get a move on. The sooner this trip is over the better.
- ARMAO Alright then, let's go. *(To Jahanbini)* I think maybe you should sit with the pilot. Make sure he's not steering us to Teheran.
- JAHANBINI What do I do if he is, shoot him?
- NORIEGA I got a present for you, Your Majesty. A souvenir of Panama.
- SHAH How terribly kind of you. I'm touched.
- EMPRESS What is it?
- SHAH *(Unwrapping it)* Er, it's a frog.
- NORIEGA China. I collect them. This is a little golden frog. They are famous in Panama.
- SHAH Well, thank you, Colonel. It's... most appropriate.
- EMPRESS Mister Armao, perhaps you'd be so good as to carry Beno to the plane. He's very weak and a bit snappy. But I know you're fond of him.
- ARMAO Of course, Your Majesty.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

Exit.

EMPRESS Thank you so much.

SHAH So. We might have a bit of turbulence. Never mind. Don't you just love that moment when you finally climb clear of the clouds into the sunlight and everything is white and bright and blue? ... Please extend my thanks to General Torrijos. Good-bye Mister Martinez. Colonel, thank you once again. Mister Moss. Come along, everyone.

EMPRESS Good-bye.

MOSS Good-bye, Your Majesty.

JAHANBINI Good-bye.

CHUCHU Good-bye, my friend.

They are gone. Chuchu, Noriega and Moss remain.

MOSS And so they go. Someone else's problem now.

CHUCHU And so they go. With smiles and kind words. All the sadness, the cancer inside, this slow death as he looks back on his life, it has purified him. His suffering has given him a dignity he would not have had otherwise. Only through suffering do we become worthy. In this bitch of a world.

Moss and Chuchu move off.

NORIEGA And so they go. Sadat is asking for trouble: he's another one who'll get what's coming to him. Principles, friends, you keep 'em long as they're useful, then you trade 'em in for some new ones. When your coat's out of fashion, you change it.

Torrijos comes out of the trailer. He seems pale and tired, and holds a bottle of whisky in his hand.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

TORRIJOS And so he disappears into the night.

NORIEGA It's daytime.

TORRIJOS Not where he's going.

The sound of an airplane taking off. Torrijos looks up, then settles in the hammock. Noriega moves to the trailer and speaks to the guard inside.

NORIEGA OK, start de-wiring. Careful with my mikes.

The guard comes out and extracts some wires from the bushes. Noriega takes out a walkie-talkie and talks into it, turning his back on Torrijos but not bothering to lower his voice.

NORIEGA Noriega. Get me Carlos.

He waits a moment, turns to Torrijos.

NORIEGA When they write my biography, it's gonna start: "Chapter One, Noriega Protects the Shah".

TORRIJOS And what's chapter two?

NORIEGA *(To walkie-talkie)* Yuh. How'd it go? ... No no no. He gives it all to the pilot. He never sees me. He crazy? *(To Torrijos)* Enjoy the cassette?

TORRIJOS Wonderful. I watch it at Rory's. I knew she'd look good in a bathing suit.

NORIEGA *(To walkie-talkie)* Thirty thousand? And you said? ... He's agreed to a hundred thousand? Ha, what'd I tell ya? *(To guard)* OK, go clear the mikes in the bedroom.

TORRIJOS Tell them not to touch her bed. I may not have slept with her but at least I shall sleep in her sheets.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

NORIEGA *(To walkie-talkie)* Good. Right, ya can tell Floyd he's got a meeting with the man in Medellin.

TORRIJOS I never liked him. So why do I feel so empty?

BLACK.

EPILOGUE

Lights up. The Shah is once more seated on the balcony, Torrijos lying in the hammock. The other characters, except Noriega, stand around the terrace in semi-darkness. They speak directly to the audience.

KEAN Doctor Michael DeBakey removed the Shah's spleen on the 26th of March 1980 at the Ma'adi Hospital in Cairo. He also removed a sample of liver for me to examine. The moment I cut the liver I knew the Shah would die soon. I told the Empress to cut back on the chemotherapy and let him spend his last months in as much comfort as possible.

GARCIA Chemotherapy was resumed. The Shah began to suffer from pains in the stomach and nausea. He developed a fever. His white cell count dropped dramatically.

ARMAO DeBakey returned to Cairo at the end of April. Flandrin thought the Shah was suffering from a subphrenic abscess that should be drained. DeBakey disagreed.

JAHANBINI The Shah's condition continued to deteriorate. On the 30th of June a French specialist in post-operative complications opened the Shah's abdomen and drained it. A litre and a half of pus was removed.

GARCIA The Egyptian doctors began to resent the fact that all responsibility for the patient was removed from them.

KEAN On the 26th of July his temperature soared as the result of a new infection. He began to hemorrhage badly and went into shock. Before dawn he went into a coma and died just before ten o'clock in the morning of the 27th of July 1980.

EMPRESS During all the period preceding his death, everyone around him was complaining about one thing or another. My husband never, never complained, never said anything about anybody. I think he had elevated himself above everything. And when you have seen so much, suffered so much, what is there to say?

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

- ARMAO The American hostages in Teheran were finally released after complicated financial agreements, minutes after Ronald Reagan took over the US presidency from Jimmy Carter on the 20th of January 1981.
- MOSS General Manuel Antonio Noriega took effective control of Panama in 1983. His regime was notorious for its corruption and widespread use of torture and murder. Torrijos' name soon faded from the world's memory, replaced by that of Noriega, who soon became one of the best known criminals on the planet. He was deposed by an American invasion in December 1989.
- CHUCHU The invasion did not go quite as smoothly as planned. Twenty-five Americans and perhaps a thousand Panamanians were killed. Noriega was able to take refuge in the Vatican Embassy, which the Americans could not attack. He stayed there ten days, before finally giving himself up on the third of January 1990.
- Noriega is pushed forward into a spotlight at the front of the stage. He is handcuffed and wears a dirty T-shirt, as at the time of his arrest.
- NORIEGA The Americans did not invade to uphold the law. They invaded to keep control of the canal, and because I was an embarrassment. I had arms in the Vatican Embassy. I could of killed myself or got myself killed. An honourable death, everybody happy. But I prefer to be an embarrassment.
- MOSS General Omar Torrijos was killed on the 31st of July 1981, when his plane crashed into a mountain in bad weather.
- CHUCHU "Thundering through the clouds, streaking down like the wrath of God" - his was a death the Shah would have envied.
- JAHANBINI Anwar Sadat was assassinated by members of the Muslim Brotherhood on the 6th of October 1981. His funeral was attended by a multitude of foreign leaders.

TUMULT IN THE CLOUDS

ARMAO The funeral of Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, Shah of Iran, was attended by ex-president Richard Nixon and the former King Constantine of Greece. President Sadat was the only head of state to attend. The United States, West Germany and France were represented by their ambassadors. Great Britain sent its chargé d'affaires.

CHUCHU The General once told me: "When you find grass uncut in a village cemetery, you know it is a bad village. A community that doesn't honour its dead will not honour the living."

The half-light turns to BLACK.

Noriega, in handcuffs, Torrijos in the hammock and the Shah on the balcony remain fully lit.

TORRIJOS Ours is a lonely profession, is it not, Senor Shah?

The Shah turns to look at Torrijos. BLACK.

CURTAIN