



The Family

drama from reality

by Christian Lanciai (2011)

The characters:

Joe Junior
Kathleen
Billy
Rose
Jack
Joe Senior
Lord Fitzwilliam
Jacqueline
Bob
Ethel
Eunice
Sargent Shriver
Pat
Peter Lawford
Dwight
Dick
Chrushchov
Nina
Dag
Winston
Clementine
a general in the Kremlin
Kosygin
Breshnev
Lyndon
Hubert
Bob Jr
Tom
David
John

the other children

The action is in America, Europe and the Kremlin from 1944 to 1969.

Act I scene 1. England.

Joe I am sorry, Kick.

Kathleen It is not your fault.

Joe I never thought I would have to feel ashamed for our parents.

Kathleen It's mother. I know it. But you are here, and that's better than the entire family.

Joe It would have been too dreadful otherwise.

Kathleen We are prisoners of destiny. It is not our fault that we were born in the most ambitiously importuning family in America. It just happened that way.

Joe Daddy won't give in until I have become president.

Kathleen Yes, he is fixed on that ambition for our sake just because he never had the chance himself.

Joe Still he knows more about politics than perhaps any American politician.

Kathleen Then you will certainly become president.

Joe I think you were lucky to happen to Billy.

Kathleen Or was he the lucky one to happen to me?

Joe I don't think so. You are ideal for each other.

Kathleen His parents have been wonderful to me.

Joe Which puts our parents even more in the shadow.

Kathleen It was probably not their fault either that they were born Catholics.

Joe No, but mother takes religion far too seriously. It isn't that serious. No religion is so important as to bypass what's human.

Kathleen Here is Billy now.

Billy (enters) Joe! How lovely to see you! Just *one* Kennedy coming to our wedding is more important than the whole family being present.

Joe Jack would have come also if he hadn't been cleft in his boat.

Kathleen How bad is he?

Joe He is in a rather bad shape. He was weak already from birth, still he made too much effort in his sports and got his spine damage, which his shipwreck only has made worse. He is almost an invalid for life.

Kathleen Good for him that he is an intellectual. Then he won't have his farther's ambitions pressing him.

Joe Those demands will be hard on me instead. It's just to hang on and make the best of it.

Billy Shouldn't you go home to America, Joe? You have done what you should and finished your job. It would be foolhardy to stay on for nothing just to risk your life.

Joe Says you. I want to do what is right and be consistent all the way. The war isn't over yet.

Billy The gods know that. We have a massive invasion of Normandie ahead of us, the frothing wave crest of which no one as yet can see the summit of.

Joe Take it as a man, Billy. Go through with the invasion, and I will bomb Germany to dust. Then we will have an end of the war.

Billy You take it easy.

Joe I try to be realistic. It's unnecessary to exaggerate the challenge.

Billy You are right.

Kathleen But first we shall get married. Then you may make war as much as you like, as long as you come back alive.

Joe Jack shows the way. He was declared dead. We always come back alive. We are Irish, you know.

Billy And an Irishman is as good as an Englishman.

Joe And now my sister will even be a marchioness. Who would have guessed that of an Irishwoman?

Kathleen Or American. Our parents least of all.

Joe Mother's Catholicism is like a handicap.

Kathleen Let her keep it, as long as it only afflicts herself. She doesn't do any harm.

Joe No, she only harms herself, and therefore she is to be pitied.

Billy Leave her in peace. Let's now get married.

Kathleen Yes, Billy. Let's.

(They break it up, the couple together and Joe like a brother to both of them.)

Scene 2.

Rose I am glad you could come, Jack. Father hasn't been himself since it happened.

Jack Who has? It's the worst thing that could have happened to the family.

Rose You'll have to be prepared for the worst.

Jack I know what he wants. I am glad that he at least will speak out at last.

Rose A shock like this paralyzes the entire life, but if you are a real human being you use its might to make even greater efforts than before. Your father has managed this.

Joe (*enters*) There you are, Jack. Good of you to stand up. Leave us alone, Rose. Our secret talk could be extensive. (*Rose leaves without further.*)

Jack I know what you want, father, but I need to know some more. Do you know how it happened? Can you talk about it?

Joe Have a seat, Jack. A drink?

Jack I would rather not.

Joe I am sorry. I got used to drinking before every straining talk in Hollywood. Or else we would all have perished in suicidal depressions. Many did, others turned alcoholics, but the others turned into moguls, like me. For my part the recipe has worked, so I stick to it. To the point. Your brother had fulfilled his duties in Europe and should have returned home. Instead he chose to throw himself out on even more dangerous experimental missions, almost like the Japanese suicide pilots.

These fill their airplanes with loads of extreme explosives and target our ships, so that everything explodes, especially the pilots. Joe was on a similar mission, but his cargo was to be discharged, like bombs, and not explode until they reached their target. No one knows why Joe's plane exploded in the air.

Jack Could it have been sabotage?

Joe It is out of the question. There was no motive, and security was extreme. It was probably a short circuit of some sort. Any airplane could explode in the air without anyone having any idea of the reason. That's why I always wondered how anyone could wish to be a pilot. They are all madmen, especially that Nazi Charles Lindbergh. I don't think Joe was war mad, though. He probably rather felt it as his human duty to take his share in finishing the war and make as good a show of it as possible. That's why he chose the most dangerous way, for he knew he was the best one and able enough to make it. He just wanted to end the war in an efficient way.

Jack How has Kathleen taken it?

Joe Don't talk about it. Rose and I can't talk about it. She insisted on our refusal to sanction their wedding. It wasn't our fault that her husband would perish in the invasion of Normandy. We didn't want it that way. It was a heavier loss to the British aristocracy than to us, since he had such an extremely high position that made him almost indispensable. She was so absorbed in that kind of life that she never had time to come back to us. She will never be a Catholic again. That's not what I wanted to talk to you about.

Jack But?

Joe You know what's expecting you, Jack. You have to take over after Joe.

Jack He had all the qualifications and ambitions. I never acquired any taste for that.

Joe You have to, Jack, for the sake of the family. Bob is too young. He will have time to mature with the years, but you as the eldest son must lead us. You will be president, Jack. I have decided it.

Jack (recovering) Honestly speaking, father, I was always afraid of the political world. Its bog of dirty business filled me with fear. My greatest ambition was to be an honest man and make an honest career. That's why I became an intellectualist and humanist looking forward to a peaceful life as a teacher at Harvard. The damned war ruined our lives by its politics. I almost went down myself and would perhaps have preferred doing so to avoid seeing the continuation of the war, which only constantly could grow worse. I never want to become dishonest, father, and according to what I have seen of politics so far you have to be dishonest in order to be a politician.

Joe Therein are all your qualifications, Jack. Your words fill me with joy and encouragement. You could be the first brilliant exception after Abraham Lincoln.

Jack He was shot for being honest. Is that a good example?

Joe He was the greatest president of America, and he was honest. He carried us through the worst crisis in our history. Isn't that an ideal worth following?

Jack You tempt me, father, with the most irresistible of decoys. You know that I never can resist anything that smells of idealism.

Joe That's the spirit. So you are on?

Jack I see no choice, father. You compel me. I am really completely incompetent. I have an incurable spine damage that could kill me. I suffer from another illness as well which makes me faint all the time. I am far too honest to become a politician. But all right. I have a family to think of.

Joe You will make it, sonny. I will see to it.

Jack I never asked you how you made your hundreds of millions.

Joe It doesn't matter how I made them. I made them for the family.

Jack To make your son president.

Joe When I couldn't be one myself I swore to do everything I could to at least make way for a son to reach that honour.

Jack The question is if it is an honour.

Joe Regard it as a job and the most qualified job in our country, demanding the highest qualifications. You have them.

Jack Not yet.

Joe Then you will get them.

Jack It will be a long hard way.

Joe We Kennedys don't give in. That's the last thing we do.

Jack And only when we die, like Joe.

Joe Do it in Joe's name to make him happy.

Jack Well, in his heaven he is welcome to be happier than me.

Rose (*enters*) You spoke so quietly before, but then you sounded more cheerful, so I couldn't help myself from barging in. That should mean you are agreed. So you will become president, Jack.

Jack I will at least probably be a senator.

Joe You have to start somewhere. Jack's good fortune, Rose, (*hugs Jack*) is that he didn't become a pilot but stayed grounded. Because of that he didn't have to vanish into thin air.

Rose (*serious*) Are you making jokes about your son's death, Joe?

Joe He is irrevocably gone, Rose, but he would want us to work even better and harder without him. Look at it this way, Rose, that one son is gone, but we have three left.

Rose And now you are ready to sacrifice the second.

Joe For a world of honour and glory.

Jack Let him have his way, mother, and that will calm him down.

Rose I have no intention to spite his moods and wills as long as he respects mine.

Joe She always gets what she wants, Jack. She wants you for president as well. So you have no chance.

Jack No, I guess I haven't.

Joe Will you have that drink now, Jack? The danger is over.

Jack Make it a small one then, father.

(*Joe is happy to pour Jack a whisky, Rose shares another even smaller one, and the scene ends in complaisant harmony.*)

Scene 3.

Fitz Have you got over the loss of your husband yet?

Kathleen I never will. He lives on within me. He is gone but thrives the more in his absence, as if the fact that he was taken off too early only made him the more alive.

Fitz Yes, you really live on in his life, have kept all his friends and become part of the world which was his. If he had lived you would probably have ended up the Queen's first chamber maid.

Kathleen I am content with my life as a widow. And I am especially looking forward to at last seeing my father again. He seems to have forgiven me.

Fitz Catholic Irishmen are sometimes monstrous in their intolerant fanaticism. Your parents' refusal to congratulate you on your marriage with one of the foremost men of England was very unliberal. Is it true that your father sympathized with the Nazis?

Kathleen That's why he was recalled from London. Roosevelt couldn't trust him any more when he inconveniently expressed his view that the English impossibly could resist Hitler's attacks. But he was never for the Nazis. He was an Irish Catholic and nothing else, and he couldn't bear the life of the British upper class that we are leading. He never fathomed aristocracy. That's why he always landed outside. He never entered the Boston upper class society. That's how he by his inferiority complex felt compelled to make his best son president at any price.

Fitz Do you think Jack can make it? He is after all rather sickly.

Kathleen Joe would have made it without doubt and become a popular president. The case of Jack is more doubtful since he himself has a rather ambiguous attitude to politics. He doesn't like the ugly side of its game of intrigues.

Fitz Who does? But if he wants to enter, he has to accept it.

Kathleen That's why he is sickly.

Fitz Will you always remain a widow?

Kathleen It depends. You are kind in driving me to my meeting with my father.

Fitz I happened to have an airplane ready, and I will gladly do it for you.

Kathleen You almost live the same life as my husband.

Fitz I know. That's why we go well together.

Kathleen It's only mother who is hopeless in her Catholic formalism. Father knows the value and necessity of compromise.

Fitz I am sure your meeting will be fruitful.

Kathleen I think he would be able to like you. He surely would have liked Billy as well, if he had been able to meet him more thoroughly.

Fitz Without doubt. No close contact can fail to move a human heart positively.

Kathleen Come, my friend. Daddy is waiting.

Fitz And the plane is waiting for you. *(They walk out with their arms around each other.)*

Scene 4.

Jacqueline How bad is it really, Jack?

Jack I don't know.

Jacqueline You have to be honest.

Jack I wish I could be. I had my diagnosis, the illness is mortal, but the doctors say it could be held at bay. They give me a fairly good forecast, since they so blindly believe in the constant progress of medical science.

Jacqueline Yes, more and more pills to everyone, so that they don't notice how they get sicker and sicker by the side effects.

Jack I might have to get operated on.

Jacqueline Is it for the spine?

Jack Yes. If the operation is successful I might get almost perfectly well.

Jacqueline Fifty-fifty?

Jack Yes, about.

Jacqueline The more reasons for us to marry while you live.

Jack That's what I mean.

Jacqueline Do you really love me?

Jack More than words can tell. I need you, your beauty, your culture, your taste, your elegance, all that which I lack. You compensate me in everything, and I would define you as my better self.

Jacqueline What about your mistresses then? Do I have to live with them?

Jack I am a sloven, Jacqueline. I am painfully aware of it. We Kennedys always went too far and to extremes. I know I made my slips, but they were always casual and passing affairs. I have a tendency to charm anyone. That is maybe my misfortune and a drawback, but I could never deceive you like my father always deceived my mother.

Jacqueline Do you think he will come to our wedding?

Jack He must. We are both Catholics. No problems, like with Kathleen.

Jacqueline Poor Kathleen. I would have loved to get to know her.

Jack She was the best of us, the most extrovert and socially talented. It was natural for her to grow into the British highest aristocracy. Father could not understand that talent, since he always himself was something of a hearty and rowdy oaf. He never noticed when he hurt people's feelings.

Jacqueline Does he have any feelings?

Jack If he has, but they keep blinding him. That's why he agreed to allow Rosemary to be lobotomized.

Jacqueline Did they really think that would make her better?

Jack At least they hoped so. Her case was hopeless. She never grew up. Her mental deficiency only became more obvious with the years.

Jacqueline But how could they believe that lobotomy could help?

Jack It was their last hope. Yes, it was desperate, but they had their punishment. Rosemary is and remains like a zombie who never can have any attacks of reckless rage any more.

Jacqueline What did your father say when Kathleen died?

Jack He was if possible even more inconsolable than after Joe's death. That was one too much. Adding to the disaster was also the fact that he had pangs of remorse for having refused to congratulate Kathleen and Billy on their wedding. Mother refused to accept a misalliance, and father followed her. He was hoping for a reconciliation when they were to meet at the riviera.

Jacqueline I am sure Kathleen did as well. And then she was lost in a meaningless air crash half way with her new suitor.

Jack We don't know how far things had gone between them.

Jacqueline He gave her his own airplane and followed on it himself. Doesn't that say everything?

Jack Maybe.

Jacqueline You are so diplomatic.

Jack It's my strength. That if anything could make me president.

Jacqueline We will probably have to wait long for it. Eisenhower still has a long way to go.

Jack Meanwhile we'll see if I may live or if I have to die.

Jacqueline Live for me, and you will manage.

Jack Okay, Jackie. I will live for you – as long as possible.

Jacqueline Then you will survive everyone else.

Jack Hardly, but at least until further.

Act II scene 1. Outside the hospital room.

Bob He is a hero. I have to admire him. I could do anything for him.

Ethel You already did, and most likely you will go on doing so for the rest of your life. You already did everything for him, like a slave worker.

Bob Don't call me that. I am doing it willingly. He is an idealist, and so am I. It is our illness or obsession, whatever you choose to call it.

Ethel Hurry on now, before the others come. You have to be the first one.

Bob Come then, Ethel. Let us overwhelm him with our congratulations.

(They enter Jack's sickroom, where he is in bed.)

Congrats, Jack! You have survived once more! *(overwhelms him with flowers)*

Jack (faint) Do you think that is anything to celebrate?

Bob You are still a senator, and you are still alive!

Jack That's what I mean. It's the third time I survive myself. I should have died each time, according to the odds.

Ethel Was the operation successful?

Jack It's too early to say. But I think the worst is over. I feel better.

Ethel That sounds promising.

Jack I am so happy to see you here, and that you were the first who arrived. I expect some number of invasions.

Bob Jackie is on her way, and the parents, and some more.

Jack I am afraid so. I can't bear with much at the moment.

Bob Still you want to work.

Jack I have to finish my book. I have much work left on it. For me it means everything, since it is my personal manifestation as a politician of what valuations I praise and wish to follow, the individual struggle for what he sees is right when he sees so many being wrong. It's my most important work. It is more important than everything I could ever achieve as a politician. And what is more, it has been my therapy. That is what has carried me through the crises. I should have died, but the book was my life.

Bob I think I hear Jackie coming.

Jackie (enters) Darling! You are alive! *(comes and kisses and embraces him with more flowers)*

Jack That was the intention. That's why I allowed the operation.

Jackie I know you will make it!

Jack I am afraid that you are right.

Bob You really have passed through the valley of death and a number of times.

Jack Alas, don't remind me.

Ethel Here come the parents.
(Joe and Rose enter with more flowers.)

Joe Jack, my son, you have made it! Now you will make the rest as well.

Jack Don't be too sure.

Rose I am proud of you, my son.

Jack You always were.

Eunice (comes barging in with her husband and more flowers) Jack! I am so glad that you have made it!

Jack There, Eunice, I am not released yet. I still have far to go.

Sargent Shriver You will have plenty of time to be able to finish your masterpiece.

Jack Don't call it my masterpiece until I receive the Pulitzer prize.

Joe How do you feel? How are you?

Jack It doesn't matter, father, but I think I at last have managed to get my spine in order. I think I will be able to rely on it now, even if it always will continue to mess with me. It's my own fault who waged too much on football in Harvard.

Joe You can make it, son. You can manage everything.

Jack Don't be too sure.
(enter Pat with Peter Lawford and more flowers.)

Pat Congrats, Jack! You made it!

Jack With a cry of distress – as usual.

Peter We are proud of you, old boy.

Jack It's too early to be proud yet.

Joe (to Bob) He will need you, Bob. He can't make it alone.

Bob Don't you think I know? Don't you think I am aware of my responsibility? Why do you think I am doing everything for him?

Joe (pats him) That's good, my boy.

Jackie I am sorry, but you are too many in the room. Jack has just been let out after fourteen days in a darkroom. He can't quite manage massive invasions just yet.

Rose Jackie is right. Jack has to have some rest most of all. He still has much left until he can be with us as usual. The main thing is that we all came here to show our joy that he has come through the worst.

Eunice Get better, Jack. We'll meet again soon enough.

Sargent You will be up and kicking the next moment.

Jack Don't exaggerate.

Sargent No exaggeration, an understatement. I know you.

Ethel Get out, all of you! Leave at last Jack alone with Jackie!

Joe Come, everybody. We were just so immensely happy that you managed to get through the crisis.

Jack One of them.

Joe I know you will manage them all. (*pats Bob and goes out with him*)

(All the others also gradually retire.)

Jackie Alone at last, Jack. How do you really feel?

Jack Like a wreck pulled ashore against his will.

Jackie We will get you together again. The mast is already raised. The doctors say the operation was successful.

Jack That remains to be seen.

Jackie You have a fantastic family all supporting you like one man.

Jack (grabs her hand) You are my greatest support, Jackie. Without you I would be nothing, a playboy, a spoiled blue-eyed boy, an unbearable rich man's yokel.

Jackie Don't say that.

Jack You can't imagine how much I loathe all affectation, all hypocrisy, fawning and empty phrases.

Jackie You always mean what you are saying.

Jack I hope so indeed. And I mean what I am saying now. Forgive me my slips, Jackie.

Jackie I did that long ago.

Jack Also those that are to come.

Jackie You mean you will not be able to contain yourself?

Jack I know myself, Jackie. I am my father's son. He could never restrain himself. Mother was always a heroic angel of forbearing patience. She endured many humiliations without moving a lip. When I get up and active again I know that certain demons will run amuck with me. I know that I will not be able to check myself.

Jackie (sighs) I have learned much of your mother, Jack. We who know her respectfully venerate her. I can take it, Jack, but only until you become president. If one day I will be the first lady I will not be able to keep my face like your mother.

Jack Thanks for your warning. Fortunately it will be long before then, if it will be at all.

Jackie Your father is determined. He will pay the bills for any show at all.

Jack I know. He rules both me and Bobby and always will. We will never be rid of him.

Jackie Until you are president.

Jack Then, perhaps.

Jackie See it as a challenge, a carrot. Fight for the liberation as a president to at last be free from your father's throat reins.

Jack There is something in what you say.

Jackie Let him pay everything until you reach the goal, and then you will be rid of him.

Jack You are wiser than all my family.

Jackie That's why you married me.

Jack Come, Jackie. I can't manage without you. Stay here for the night.

Jackie Would the hospital allow it?

Jack You could be helpful with all kinds of things, procuring books, research assistance, and above all your company.

Jackie You have many assistants.

Jack You are the most important.

Jackie I will talk with the doctors.

Jack Give me a hug first.

(She does, they embrace each other long and sincerely, and thus ends the scene.)

Scene 2.

Dwight I am sorry, Dick. Take it as a man.

Dick It is unfair!

Dwight Yes, it is.

Dick He is just a boy! And born rich! His father has paid everything for him!

Dwight You almost won, Dick. It was fair play. He had the disadvantage but succeeded in catching up, and it was not by money.

Dick Was I that bad in TV?

Dwight Not at all. Make the best of it, Dick. You have to congratulate him.

Dick I already did. I always had to congratulate him. He should have died a number of times, and each time I had to welcome him back. I always did it with joy and sincerity until now.

Dwight The good news is that his brother will be Attorney General, and he is really one of us.

Dick How dares he! That brat!

Dwight He is sharper than his brother. It's actually he who is his father's favourite. He is sharper and more ambitious than Jack, who really only is a scholar. And he was Joe McCarthy's right hand.

Dick For a short time before I got that job. Yes, we actually had the same position. Bob never waives or ducks or stops and never compromises. As Attorney General he will put the whole mob behind bars.

Dwight Then he would go against his father's inrerests.

Dick I don't know how much business Joe Kennedy had with the mob, perhaps none at all, and absolutely not more than necessary.

Dwight How did he get his hundred million during the prohibition if not by liquor? And who ran the liquor business during the prohibition if not the mob?

Dick The president and his brother could have some problems with their father's dark past.

Dwight That's what I mean. Perhaps we should warn them?

Dick I think they are painfully aware of it already.

Dwight Their daddy did everything for them, and Bob did everything for Jack. Bob is their dad's favourite horse. They will not get free of him very easily.

Dick It will be interesting to see what will happen.

Dwight Jack has to take sides. That's for sure. He is the president now.

Dick Whatever happens, I can be president afterwards.

Dwight That's what I mean. Your race isn't run yet, Dick, while they will sweat.

Dick Let them sweat. We'll watch them hard.

Dwight That's the main duty of the opposition. The opposition is there to replace the regime and must constantly keep watch for the right moment to do so.

Dick Exactly.

Scene 3. The White House.

Jack How bad is it, Bob?

Bob Frankie Boy is bragging about it.

Jack This won't do, Bob.

Bob I am very well aware of it.

Jack I have invited him here. Make ready for a painful talk.

Bob He will make resistance.

Jack No matter how hard he will try to defend himself, he will not be able to defend himself. That's the painful part.

Bob Do you think he will make it?

Jack It is the hardest thing of all. Not the entire war, not both my operations and not the entire election campaign were so difficult as it will be to reprove your father, who still is the one who has done everything for you.

Jackie Your father is here, brothers. He says you are expecting him.

Jack We are indeed.

Jackie May he not even know what it is all about?

Jack It is a family affair, Jackie, which as few as possible in the family should know anything about. The less he knows before he comes here, the better.

Jackie I'll show him in. Don't be too hard on him. He has done everything for you.

Jack and Bob Don't you think we know?

Jackie Thank you. I think I understand. I leave. (*leaves*)

Jack Smarten up now, Bob, and stay in control. Say nothing until I lose it.

Bob We will work at it in relay.

Joe (enters, beaming with joy) Well, my sons, what more can I do for you?

Jack Take a seat, father.

Joe Your solemnity appals me. Has anybody died?

Jack No one has died – yet.

Joe Who is at risk?

Bob You, father.

Joe (surprised) What has happened?

Jack What's happened is the following, father. A certain boss, whom you unfortunately know, has laid claims of gratitude from us for having in agreement with you given us Chicago. Frank Sinatra has openly bragged about enjoying the same protection as we.

Joe What has that got to do with me? I never made any agreement with him.

Jack The sad thing is that he considered it an agreement.

Joe It was on his own responsibility in that case. What does he want? Is he blackmailing you?

Bob We have to prosecute him together with Hoffa and other mobsters, but he demands freedom from prosecution.

Joe He has no right to do that.

Bob He refers to our debt of gratitude to him and adduces you as his communicant.

Joe I am sorry, boys, but if he got any fancies it was entirely on his own responsibility.

Jack The sad thing is that you let him believe that we had an agreement and that he therefore thinks he gave us Chicago.

Joe (recovers) My sons, there is one thing you don't understand and which should be made clear to you. You don't win elections by friendly persuasion. Politics is not just honest and fair play. No one has ever won an election contest without blows below the belt and manoeuvres under the table. In war and love all means are allowed, and politics is both war and love. You must not hesitate to negotiate with the devil when you can get some assistance from him. If you don't compromise with evil you will get it against you and lose against it. I have never taken evil into my service, but I never refused his voluntary service. If I had done so, I would never have got rich, and you would never have entered this house.

Jack (interrupts) Do you know what it is called, father?

Joe What would you call it if not what it is, political realistic compromises?

Jack Corruption.

Joe (recovers) What is done is done. You are masters of the White House. Would you have it undone? Can you go back?

Jack We can do nothing about it, but we have to take precautions for the future. We can't manage our political responsibility if you carry corpses in your cargo.

Joe The evil is there, my sons. You have to handle it. Tame the dragon and let him serve you, or let him destroy you. That's your only choice as politicians.

Jack We must ask you, father, to stay out of our politics from now on. Nothing of this must come out, and there must be no consequences. Frank Sinatra must not have anything political to brag about.

Joe That miserable deadbeat! We should have shut his mouth from the beginning!

Bob He was proud of being part of our team. Unfortunately he was also part of the mob and didn't see the difference.

Joe I warn you. If you make any difference you will get a number of implacable and powerful enemies that could mean your destruction and death.

Bob We already have those enemies, father. We know them. I know Hoffa and his hoodlums. We will rather fight them to death and die in a fair battle with them than compromise with them.

Joe You think you can keep your idealism and honesty perfectly clean. Politics is only mudslinging and muckraking. Nothing else. If you don't agree to get all muddied down you have nothing to do in politics.

Jack The responsibility must be carried with clean hands. We can't have our responsibility besmirched.

Joe Do what you like. I only wished to help you.

Bob Then help us, father, by keeping out.

Joe I will keep out. But I can always help you if you need it.

Jack That's all, father. I think we understand each other.

Joe So you exile me.

Jack Only from politics. Never from the family.

Joe Thanks for that. Then I will go home to bed.

Bob We will keep in touch. You don't need to contact us any more.

Joe (rising) Damn it, boys, you have reached this far, and you still haven't learned anything about politics! *(leaves, somewhat upset)*

Jack Then we have our next worries, Bob, the Bay of Pigs and the CIA. What the hell shall we do about the CIA?

Bob What have you learned?

Jack I have walked into an infernal political trap, Bob, and that's the first thing I do as a president.

Bob The nation has accepted your excuse. And they know it was not your fault.

Jack It was on my responsibility. I am the president, Bob, and on principle responsible for all mistakes committed in the nation. I allowed myself to be persuaded to sanction the operation. I was deceived. We were assured that nothing could go wrong. And then exactly everything went wrong.

Bob Who messed it up for us?

Jack The CIA, who also persuaded us to implement the operation. You can make it smell like a trap set up by the republicans. Eisenhower helped Castro to reach power and allowed the CIA to provide him with weapons. Naturally everyone wanted to get rid of the old rotten dictator Battista. No one would miss him, and everyone would rejoice at his fall. That's the usual way for all dictators to end. So there was nothing wrong in Eisenhower and CIA helping Castro to power. The problem was only that he became a new dictator, and certain units of the CIA continued supporting him. It was these units that sabotaged the operation, which unfortunately I cannot identify. So we have an ambiguous CIA on our hands, where different interests secretly work against each other, like in a kind of perpetual jungle war in the drains, while we get to learn nothing. And I have landed in the crossfire. Certain CIA fractions blame the failure of the operation on me for being doubtful about it from the beginning and will never forgive me, while others will continue undermining and sabotaging practically everything I do.

Bob Can't you scrap the CIA?

Jack That would be the only right thing to do and what I would most like to do, but you don't scrap the intelligence of the world's most powerful state just like that. You could have done it in the Soviet Union, but that state has every interest instead of pandering its irregularities. We represent a democracy. As an attorney general you know, that it would be something of the most impossible thing we could ever try to do.

Bob So we have to live with all these unreliable false spies and saboteurs.

Jack And constantly be aware of always remaining in the binocular sight of these anonymous assassins. I should never have agreed to the operation, but now it's finished. I have ruined my prospects myself, and realistically I can now only regard my way as a president like an inevitable downhill slide towards a certain execution.

Bob We are in the same boat.

Jack I am aware of it. That's why I dare to tell you all about it.

Bob We have managed to unburden us of daddy's irregularities, which only are a speckle of dust to what we stand against in the CIA and FBI which we will never get rid of.

Jack That's a correct assessment of the situation.

Bob We are lucky to be two knowing about it. I will always stand by you, Jack, with whatever and do anything for you, like so far.

Jack Thanks, Bob. With some luck we might be able to make it.

Bob It's our duty to make it as long as possible. If we have to fall we will have to do it standing. But we will need considerably higher protection than just mother's fanatical catholicism.

Jack Our highest protection is common sense, but it has unfortunately no power over us. It is just a means to make as good use of as possible. I don't believe in any higher power any more. This world is too evil to make any other power than common sense possible.

Bob How is your spine?

Jack Thank you, it is still on location. It hasn't slipped out of joint again yet, although the threat is always there.

Bob Does it hurt?

Jack All the time. It always did.

Bob When needed I could always be of service to you with my stronger back.

Jack Nothing can break you, Bob. I was broken from the start. Still you and father managed the miracle to make me president.

Bob It was you yourself all the way. The will is everything, and you were the will. You are the core of the family integrity. That's why we all depend on you and admire you.

Jack I feel that Jackie is on her way in.

Jackie (enters with a coffee tray) Some coffee, gentlemen? I felt that you might need it. I assume you have as usual solved all the worst problems of the world and are now all worked up by all the difficult decisions.

Jack Worse than that, Jackie. But as usual you come at the right moment.

Bob Would you like to join us?

Jackie That's why I added a third cup.

Jack All the world needs you, Jackie, and especially we.

Jackie No, you are the ones it needs. I just help you holding out. Have your coffee now. I will not ask any more questions.

Jack We are much obliged. *(lifts his cup, toasts Jackie, and they have coffee.)*

Scene 4.

Chrushchov He is a puppy, a poor miserable stray puppy, who has no business in world politics!

Nina But Nikita, he is still the president of America.

Chrushchov Don't you think I know? And what's worse, he is young and a blue-eyed idealist who will go at any length. He is like from another world.

Nina You only know your ugly old men from the Kremlin, one worse than the other, horrible monsters all of them.

Chrushchov And that's why Russia was lucky enough to get me, a Ukrainian! Or else it would all have gone down the drain, one murderer after another, all transcending each other in beastliness. I have brought Russia out of the valley of death, and I have only begun!

Nina That's why I think Kennedy could help you.

Chrushchov How?

Nina Like you, all he wants is peace.

Chrushchov Does he? What about Cuba then? He tried to invade our satellite state, take it by force and rape our newest colony!

Nina Don't try it, Nikita. They were exiled Cubans who wanted to get home to their country, and their only way was to try to get rid of the dictator. It wasn't Kennedy. It was their KGB, which failed since they didn't really feel like it either, since they lacked the president's full support.

Chrushchov He is the youngest president of America ever, only 43 years and a total greenhorn, and the first thing he does as president is to mess it up. Well, that will maybe make him the easier to manoeuvre. Eisenhower was an old impossible sourpuss with whom you could never talk. Fortunately his vice president didn't take over, that swine of a witch hunt inquisitor targeting honest American communists.

Nina So you should be grateful. Russia has the best head of government she could have had after so many disasters, and America has got a president with whom you might be able to talk.

Chrushchov A sickly upper class snob with only experience of books.

Nina Wasn't he in the war?

Chrushchov Yes, he was torpedoed, and his brother went down, who was the one supposed to become president. His sister and her husbands also perished in the war. Half the family was lost. And then he had a retarded younger sister, who was lobotomized and locked up in an asylum. It is a great mad Irish family.

Nina So he has experience.

Chrushchov Only human. As an idealist he knows nothing and understands nothing of politics.

Nina Then he will have to learn.

Chrushchov He will learn indeed!

Nina But what do you hold against him? What are you afraid of?

Chrushchov The combination.

Nina What combination?

Chrushchov He and that terribly superior Hammershield, who rules all the UN.

Nina But they have nothing to do with each other, have they?

Chrushchov They are two idealists leading world politics. Could it be worse? We control only a third of the world, and it's all mostly just misery and decay, a bombed out backyard of a rusty enforced industrialization and concentration camp – that Stalin left behind the worst hell of history – for us!

Nina I know.

Chrushchov The whole western world is sparkling of beauty and idealism. No, I just can't bear it.

Nina Have some vodka then.

Chrushchov Yes, fortunately, the one thing we always have here is vodka. *(has a large drink)*

Act III scene 1. The UN meditation room.

Jack I am glad you could come.

Dag I have made certain that no one will disturb us.

Jack We have a world of troubles against us.

Dag We are here to handle them.

Jack The question is if we can do it together.

Dag The problem is, that we are in the same boat but must not be seen together.

Jack We are not seen now. So at least we can talk.

Dag You will find me far easier to talk with than Chruschov.

Jack He is worried.

Dag I know. He has messed it up for us both in Berlin and the Congo.

Jack The Berlin wall is sheer suicide for communism. I thought better of Chruschov and his abilities.

Dag He hasn't done anything, but he likes it. Yes, it could very well be the beginning of the end of communism, a measure of despair to at any cost stick to untenable lies with total moral bankruptcy for a result which they in their socialistic blindness refuse to realize themselves and only suppress, to in the long run unavoidable destruction to themselves. It's the typical socialistic self-destructiveness of political arbitrariness. And the worst thing is that we can do nothing about it, while the East German dictatorship keeps gunning down all new efforts of escape by the wall. I suppose you are not going to do anything?

Jack Absolutely nothing. As you say, they have dug their own grave in the subconscious intention to fall in it themselves. I see it quite clearly. In the long run it could only lead to the reunification of Berlin and Germany.

Dag I hope you are right, but it could take many years.

Jack The situation in Congo is more imminently dangerous.

Dag I know.

Jack Do you have to go there?

Dag I have to. Diplomacy is the only thing that could work. I regard it as a personal responsibility. I have been held accountable for Lumumba's death, and I feel that responsibility, even if no one wanted it to end in such a bad way.

Jack I don't think he knew what he was doing when he asked the Russians for help.

Dag We were the ones who let him down. He became desperate. He saw no other possibility. It was political madness, but he was too inexperienced to be able to see it. And Congo is only one out of a number of freshly hatched and immature African states, of which most of them almost immediately set their course for dictatorship and civil war. Even the colonial order was better than what Africa is facing now.

Jack Is Tshombe a man you can speak with?

Dag I have to. He is ruthless and only wants power, an antipode to Lumumba, who yet was intelligent, human and sensitive. Tshombe just wants to rush on, get power and money, a typical monster of the new African model, the supreme dictator on a low level. I am afraid we will see a number of such specimens.

Jack Many regard your personal involvement in such a hopeless chaos with great concern.

Dag No chaos is hopeless. It is asking for getting sorted out. I managed all my missions so far. I see no reason for certain defeat in Congo.

Jack Neither do I. The great risk I find in the uncertain conditions. It's a vast continent of wilderness and jungle and capricious weather. I have lost two of my own in airplane accidents.

Dag I know. I see it as the least danger. The greatest is the lawless mercenaries. They can do anything. They are only led by money. Everything led by only money is thoroughly rotten, evil and corrupt.

Jack I think we stand on the same moral grounds in that context.

Dag All the Soviet empire also rests only on money and greed. All they want is more. That is why Chruschov is challenging me in Congo. He also wants their diamonds. The greed of the Moscow empire controls 30% of the world and demands more.

Jack I never wanted to be a politician but had to stand up for the family when my brother died.

Dag Do you think I had any aspirations for becoming the General Secretary of the United Nations, the most impossible job in the world, according to my predecessor? The responsibility of the calling just couldn't be turned down.

Jack I think we are the two loneliest men in the world.

Dag Don't forget the pope.

Jack And the pope.

Dag That makes three of us. *Tres faciunt collegium.*

Jack (pats him lightly) Good luck in Congo, Mr Secretary General.

Dag Even if we can't cooperate, we could always support each other at some distance.

Jack Moral support could be more significant than practical aid.

Dag It does and comes first. Don't hesitate to consult me.

Jack The same to you. I had better leave first. *(leaves)*

Dag Could God help us in this? I doubt it. Everything depends on that we ourselves always do what is right in the best way we can. At least that intention of mine and Kennedy's no one will ever be able to doubt. *(resumes his prayers)*

Scene 2. The White House, Jackie, the children and Bob.

Bob How does he take it?

Jackie As usual. Like a man. But nothing could have been worse for him.

Bob It's the worst thing that could have happened for the entire world.

Jackie Except a nuclear war.

Bob He if anyone could have kept it away.

(*enter Jack.*)

How is it? Any further news?

Jack Not much. One pilot survived but never regained consciousness, and of what little that could be made out of his expressions, there appears to have been another plane, probably with mercenaries, that wanted to stop Hammershield from coming to Ndola. They probably tried to force down Hammershield's plane, maybe to kidnap him. There is no indication that the Secretary General's plane was shot down.

Jackie No one else survived?

Jack The spooky thing is, that Hammershield's body was found intact outside the plane but dead, just like in the case of Kathleen. Why do all the best people have to be sacrificed around us by destiny? If there was anyone indispensable for the world, it was Dag Hammershield. Suddenly I feel more lonely than the pope.

Jackie You have us.

Jack Thank goodness.

Bob It doesn't look any better, Jack, than that you now have to be the world's most indispensable man.

Jack Alone against Chruschov and his mad world of dictatorships. He spreads his poison everywhere. I just had some new worrying reports from Vietnam.

Bob Whatever you do, don't get mixed up in any more wars or invasions.

Jack That's the last thing I'll do. I would rather die.

Jackie Who will we have instead of Hammershield?

Jack No one knows, but they will probably choose someone much less prominent and controversial, maybe from Burma. They don't want to have any more controversy with Chruschov.

Jackie He has acted like a peasant villain and made a fool of himself in the United Nations as the basest bully in the world.

Jack The communists are like that, Jackie. We can expect no better of them. Look how they fire at the Berliners to forbid them to move around in their own capital. Chruschov accidentally happens to be the best communist in the world.

Bob Is it U Thant from Burma you mean?

Jack Yes, that's his name, a perfectly honest and sincere man, a top diplomat with only satisfying merits but at the same time without initiative and authority. Hammershield could handle the entire world. U Thant will constantly bow to it.

Bob Then the UN will lose its importance together with its power of initiative and respect.

Jackie And what will now happen to the Congo?

Jack Tshombe was at least innocent. He has shown his sincere regrets and geared down. Although Hammershield was not enabled to negotiate with him it seems as if his death would lead to the same desired results. Katanga will retract its

claim for independence for the sake of peace. I assume Tshombe considers himself rich enough anyway.

Bob What happens in Vietnam?

Jack The peace will not hold. Ho Chi Minh got his North Vietnam, and France abandoned the stage, but that was not enough. The communists started making trouble in Laos and have now advanced their trouble to South Vietnam.

Bob Guerilla warfare for a civil war?

Jack Of the worst imaginable kind in tropical jungles. And the communist guerilla only attacks in the dark – and advances.

Bob That could be a real hard sourdough.

Jack It already is. China seems to be worse than Soviet when it comes to pandering communist aggression and destabilization in Asia. I think we could reach some agreement with Soviet but never with China. Mao is like Stalin, an enemy of humanity who satisfies himself by watching his own people perish. His argument seems to be that it doesn't matter how many million lives are lost since the Chinese are too many anyway. The starvation disasters as a result of Mao's enforced industrialization and insane agricultural policies appear to have claimed 40 million Chinese casualties.

Bob That's worse than the second world war.

Jack Hitler appears as the worst mass murder monster in history, but we don't know yet the number of victims to the Stalin regime, only that they were more, and Mao will probably overshadow both of them, for he has still many years left.

Jackie Come and play with the children now, Jack. They need you.

Jack Alas, and I surely need them. Let us forget the rotten world politics, Bob, but let us never forget Hammershield.

Bob You should talk with Churchill like you talked with Hammershield.

Jack Yes, I should. But there is not much left of him. He will soon be 90.

Bob He is tougher than everyone else.

Jackie De Gaulle and Adenauer are surely equally important.

Jack If not even more important. Alas, Bob, it feels like having lost a more important big brother than Joe. I have great apprehensions about the future and how much more difficult it will be to manage it without him.

Bob Prepare for the worst. Cuba is still there. The Russians are intriguing. China is infiltrating Southeast Asia. Africa is going to hell. So what? You have the family, and we have the children.

Jack (takes Caroline in his arms) Come, Caroline. Do you want to play?

Jackie She only wants to be with you.

Jack And no one shall take that privilege away from her. Daddy's only daughter is more important than the whole world to daddy. *(plays with her to her delight)*

Bob (to Jackie) We are a great but united and happy family in spite of all disasters.

Jackie May it always remain that way.

Scene 3. England, Chartwell.

Winston I don't want to see him.

Clementine But darling, you must. He is after all the American president.

Winston His father was a mean idiot. He did everything to hinder America from entering the war. He was almost a Nazi sympathizer and even almost a communist sympathizer. I insisted on Roosevelt discarding him. He was reluctantly compelled to it in the end when that politically incompetent oaf openly professed that England never could resist the onslaught of Germany.

Clementine He is a well meaning young man. He is not to blame for his father's blunders.

Winston He is a whippersnapper who goes on chasing stupid blondes although he lives in the White House and has the world's most beautiful woman for a wife.

Clementine He could get better. You could tutor him.

Winston I could only teach him manners.

Clementine That's what he is expecting.

Winston If he wants to see me he will have to do it by his own accord. We will not send him an invitation.

Clementine It isn't necessary. He is already here.

Winston You don't mean it?

Clementine Informal visit. You can't refuse it.

Winston Show him in at once then, by George! What are you waiting for? Here you have kept him waiting for an audience for hours!

Clementine I knew you would be reasonable. *(leaves)*

Winston An incorrigible playboy born rich, who only by the fortunes acquired by his father's corruption and rackets by bootlegging was made a president, whereupon that upstart even brings his whores into the White House! Preposterous!

Clementine (enters with Jack) Speak gently with him, Winston.

Jack An honour to meet you, Sir. *(offers his hand)*

Winston (ignores it) Have a seat, boy. I hope you are aware that your father was an impossible idiot.

Jack Fortunately he was wrong.

Winston How is he?

Jack Unfortunately he has had a serious stroke. He had it shortly after I had visited him. I had hardly come home to Washington when I had the news and immediately had to fly back to Florida.

Winston How serious is it?

Jack His entire right side is paralyzed. He has lost all powers of speech and writing and can only sit in a wheelchair.

Winston So he is reduced into a parcel. You could happen to worse things. My legs are wasted, but I still have my brains, thanks to whisky. I have been drinking whisky all my life. It has kept me well and sober.

Jack Roosevelt wanted to discard you at first as a drunk.

Winston He was only jealous. He was a parcel himself, you know.

Jack Some tea, gentlemen?

Winston Thank you, Clemmie. And something with it.

Clementine Of course. (*leaves*)

Winston Well, to the point. Why have you come here?

Jack I desired to have your view of the world situation. It has become more difficult after the death of our Secretary General.

Winston A constructive top diplomat who did his best and accomplished nothing.

Jack You saw through communism from the beginning. Roosevelt never did.

Winston He was helplessly naïve. He could be fooled into anything. He refused to believe the reports of the Jewish situation in Germany until it was too late, and then he refused to do anything about it. But Einstein made him wage on weapons of mass destruction, which never were necessary to use. That will be a miscredit to America for all future.

Jack Patton wanted to use them against Moscow, and McArthur wanted to use them on Peking. Truman succeeded in stopping them.

Winston He took the responsibility for their use, saw what an unoverstimable damage they caused and learned the lesson at once.

Jack Even your philosopher Bertrand Russell advocated their use against Moscow.

Winston A harmless theoretician, but theoretically he was right. Moscow has been the worst snakepit of gangsters in the world since 1918. All evil in the world since then has been spread out from there. It's a concentration of the worst megalomania in history with only one-sided and disastrous universal consequences.

Jack What can we do about it?

Winston A good question. Unfortunately not much. It's like a malicious disease. It has to ache out by itself. The Berlin wall is a symptom of a certain condition of crisis, which in the long run only could lead to collapse.

Jack Exactly my own opinion.

Winston But it will take time before such a vast empire will tumble down, even if it was totally rotten from the beginning. It was because of the first world war. It should never have happened, but the German emperor made it inevitable in his deplorably absurd vanity. Russia was then superior in practically everything, productivity, resources, future possibilities, welfare and development. Its culture was the highest in the world with writers like Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov and outstandingly excellent composers like Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Rachmaninov, let alone the Russian ballet, the finest in the world! And then came the bolsheviks ruining everything and overturning an enlightened cultural state into a society of gangsters and murderers possessed by paranoia urged to perpetual human slaughter, where everyone were forced to send each other to execution by informing to survive themselves, a much worse realm of terror than the brief one of the French revolution, where the worst was over in only a few years. Watch them carefully, my boy. They will make very much trouble. Cuba is just the beginning. How could your invasion effort abort so tremendously? Didn't you

realize that you couldn't invade an island without being discovered at night under a full moon?

Jack The operation was sabotaged from the outside.

Winston I thought so. Fifth column. Soviet has spies especially in the CIA. You can't trust that firm. Even your dirty old man Hoover is then more to be trusted.

Jack You are comparing a dunghill with a latrine.

Winston It's worse than that, my boy. Their shit is alive and spreading, but the KGB is the nutriment stressing and developing the rot.

Jack And Peking?

Winston Peking has no teeth so far but will get them. Mao is worse than Stalin. That is a fact. I can't forgive Roosevelt that he fell for Stalin's feints.

Jack You worked with Stalin yourself.

Winston We had to. Hitler's assault on Soviet was something of a relief. Thereby Germany was finished. Stalingrad was inevitable, as long as we just gave Stalin what he asked for. Roosevelt continued giving Stalin what he asked for after Stalingrad. He should never have done that.

Jack I have learned, that if Hitler hadn't attacked first, Stalin would have attacked Germany.

Winston I know. Hitler was compelled to it. His only chance was to strike first, and he took it. He didn't realize it was doomed from the beginning. He was a naïve idiot who thought we would all join up in his crusade against the bolsheviks. He imagined that we wouldn't react to his slaughter of Poland. We had to stick to the rules and keep our word, in contrast to the bolsheviks. We failed Czechoslovakia. We could not fail another country.

Jack How do you explain the phenomenon of communism? Can you explain it? How could we reach the secret of its innate evil?

Winston It is only a matter of greed, resulting in lust for power, which is blinding. Power is like a blinding loss of sense and mental disease, which makes you lose perspective. Detachment to life and to what you are doing is the only mental soundness. That's why it is so beneficial to associate with death and always keep it in mind. I haven't many days left, but I always managed to keep sober, and it's not only thanks to the whisky. My life experience of death and war at an early stage in India and South Africa and above all my education was helpful. Without education man is lost and soon falls a victim to the temptations of greed that only could lead to perversion of the senses. The Kremlin consists of a collection of hysterically deranged power maniacs, where the desire of power over the world has replaced all natural soundness, and China has walked into the same trap. Every dictatorship is stuck in that trap, which blocks all realistic apprehension. They live in a dreamworld of wishful thinking in which they imagine the whole world could be conquered by rape and afterwards contained. Who strikes for power always loses the entire grip, and there will be absolutely nothing left but endless charges. The Germans will have to eat up their concentration camps forever, and the settlement with the communist world epidemic in the form of inhuman parasitic dictatorships will be worked out

even longer. Your nuclear bombs also still give a very bad taste and will always go on doing so.

Clementine Some tea, gentlemen? (*enters with a tea tray*)

Winston You arrived just in time. Have some of mother's tea now, Jack, and then run along home and resume the necessary struggle against all the mad communists in the world.

Jack Thank you, I will enjoy the Churchill tea like a respite from that is expecting me later on. (*They have tea.*)

Act IV scene 1. The Kremlin.

Chrushchov Comrades, our initiative has brought us into an unpleasant situation which forces us to compromise. By the American aggressive threat of global nuclear war I have decided to save humanity and refrain from our program.

general Does that mean we have sounded a retreat?

Chrushchov President Kennedy demands all our ships armed with robots to return and our robot installations on Cuba to be disassembled. The Soviet Union wants peace. Therefore I have agreed to his demands. No one wants a nuclear war and least of all ourselves.

general This is not acceptable. It is surrender and a humiliation of the Soviet Union. We can't tolerate this. It's the sacred duty of the Soviet Union to spread the revolution and implement it globally. America must not stand in our way.

Chrushchov The fact is that it does stand in our way, and it is stronger than we. Comrade general, do you wish humanity to be extirpated?

Kosygin What do we get instead? Surely you haven't surrendered unconditionally.

Chrushchov Comrade, I was expecting that question. In return the USA has promised to disassemble their robot ramps in Turkey. The result would be a global relaxation which should satisfy all parts.

general It is not enough. We must not withdraw like a dog with our tail between our legs. Think of all our allies. China will laugh and point their finger at us. Communism must not be disgraced in this manner.

Chrushchov The order has already been given, and president Kennedy is notified.

general I demand a counterorder! Comrade Chrushchov, it appears to me that you have gone too far. We must insist on a new ultimatum.

Breshnev Calm down, comrade general. The ships have already turned around. We can't turn them around a second time. That could result in confusion and mutiny. I am content with having their threat from Tuirkey undone. That is reasonable.

general I still have to insist on an alternative formulation of the damned capitulation, to at least save our face for the world!

Chrushchov You will have it, but it will not change anything. Comrades, try then to be a bit realistic! We and America have nuclear weapons enough to be able to blow

up the entire planet into sand pebbles a thousand times around! It is absurd! We have had peace now for seventeen years and wish to maintain it. The only sensible thing is to move on from here to gradual disarmament and the liquidation of unnecessary nuclear weapons, and I will suggest this to president Kennedy. He is a wise and sensible president whom I have underestimated and so far misjudged. I take the responsibility.

Kosygin Comrade Chruschov, I hope you will handle this matter better than the UN conflict with Dag Hammershield, which only brought disgrace to you yourself and the Soviet Union.

Chruschov We would have been reconciled if he had been permitted to live, I assure you, comrade Kosygin. We have no quarrel with president Kennedy, since he never interfered in our concerns. Instead we have in our bold Cuban adventure trampled on his toes, and he has the right to react. Or else he would have been that sick weakling whom I thought he was. That is all, gentlemen

Scene 2. St. Paul's church in Frankfurt, June 25th 1963.

Kennedy (ascends the pulpit, assesses the audience and then gives his speech)

A hundred and fifteen years ago a parliament gathered in this historical room which among its members counted the most enlightened souls of Germany... Among them there were poets and professors, jurists and philosophers, teachers and priests who had been chosen by free elections in all parts of the country. No nation applauded its aspirations warmer than my own. No parliamentary congregation has ever made a greater effort to accomplish something really perfect. And although these efforts ultimately stranded, there is no building in Germany that could claim to be "the cradle of German democracy" with greater justification.

But what about such a denomination actually? In my own hometown Boston the Faneuil Hall – once the meeting place of the initiators of the American revolution – has long been known as "the cradle of American freedom". But when the Hungarian patriot Kossuth in 1852 spoke to an audience there, he criticized this denomination. "It is", he said, "a great denomination, but there is something to it that makes me feel sad at heart. You should not say 'the American freedom'. You should say 'freedom in America'. Freedom must not be American or European - it should just be plain 'freedom'."

Kossuth was right. Because if freedom does not flourish in all countries, it cannot flourish in one of them. It could be begotten in a hall, but from there it must be carried forth to many others. Thus the seed of the American revolution had long before been brought over from Europe, and later these seeds were rooted around the world. And the German revolution in 1848 sent out ideas and idealists to America and other countries. Today, in the year of 1963, democracy and freedom are international to a higher degree than ever.

It has made progress in spite of all, but we still have much to do. We have made a small beginning and taken a few primary staggering steps in the right direction, and

that is all. At the same time obstacles have been raised to block our course, which seem insuperable but at the same time almost pathetically temporary – an absurdity like the Berlin wall has to have a limited lifetime and could at length only lead to the reunification of Germany and Berlin (*booming acclamations and applauses*) and simultaneously the downfall of the communist empire, since a dictatorship resting on the grounds of tyranny and lies and living on the limitation of rights of its citizens of both movement and information, thereby must dig the grave for its own downfall and destruction. (*more acclaims and applauses*)

But we still have much to do. I see the growing world population as an inevitable problem for the future, since sooner or later its maintenance no longer can be sustained, since the resources of the earth after all are limited. We have to fertilize and cultivate the deserts of the world and turn these green again, like they once were before the advent of man. But to be able to implement such a project and others like it for the survival and advancement of man we must first of all have peace in all the world. This has been my primary ambition and target as a president to reach, and in spite of the crises we have gone through by the Berlin wall and the Cuban confrontation, I at least see this world peace as a realistic possibility, since the Russian leaders are aiming for the same goal today and we are agreed. The next step towards this target will be a global limitation of nuclear weapons and a prohibition against nuclear tests above and under the earth. We are on our way. Progress will be slow, but all we need is endless patience, and time will work for us. If only we can maintain peace, the world could in spite of all the apocalyptic disasters and adversities of this century survive and reach a brighter future than the world has ever seen. (*more storming applauses and acclamations.*)

Scene 3.

Bob Why does he have to go?

Jackie Don't worry. I will go with him.

Bob Senator Fulbright seriously advises against his going to Dallas at all. Both Johnson and Adlai Stevenson have been derided and abused in Dallas. It's not a healthy place. It is perhaps the most dangerous spot in all America for Jack.

Jackie You should speak with him yourself. Here he is. (*Jack enters.*) Bob joins the alarmists.

Jack It can't be helped, Bob. It's a political necessity. We must patch up the party there. Johnson can't do it alone. So Jackie and I have to make a formidable good-will journey to Texas and propose to the masses in Dallas. We have no choice. We have elections next year, and we need the 25 electoral votes of Texas.

Bob I don't like it. Is the election really that uncertain next year? You have saved the world from civil war, checked the Russians and accomplished a nuclear test stop agreement, which practically terminates the cold war. You are self-evident as president next year. You don't need Texas.

Jack What do you say, Jackie? Does Texas need me?

Jackie The world needs you. America needs you. So Texas needs you as well.

Jack I will go there on a good will tour together with Jackie. We will be irresistible. All we need is good weather. Thus we will definitely save the party in Texas and the elections for next year. It's just a parenthesis, Bob. When I come home we will deal with halting the cancer in Vietnam.

Bob That will be your next giant task. You will have the CIA and the whole military command against you, let alone all those who make exorbitant fortunes on the drug traffic from there in our military planes.

Jack That's why we must end it. Regard Dallas as a temporary vacation, a chance for Jackie and me to sparkle in the eyes of the public and not just in the salons of the White House.

Bob I will stay worried until you return.

Jack (appeasing) Thanks, Bob. We will be back. Let's now go in to the children.

(They go in to the children.)

Scene 4. Chartwell.

Winston Those bloody villains shot him.

Clementine Do you really think it was that Oswald?

Winston What do you hink yourself? An American president has seldom caused such an extreme polarisation between those who loved him and those who hated him. No president has so consistently challenged and made all the worst crooks of his country his enemies. Most have compromised with them and allowed at least some discreet and inofficial corruption, but Kennedy refused. He made his own intelligence service his enemies by not forgiving them the washout at the bay of Pigs, while parts of the CIA never could forgive him considering him responsible. That chief of the FBI drooled of lust in outspying the president's relaxing affairs since he hated the brother Bob's command. The racists hated him for consistently allowing the negroes their human rights. The entire military establishment nourished a growing hatred against him for restricting the war inustry and pulling America out of Vietnam before it went down into the swamp. The entire drug industry saw him as a threat since the drug traffic from Vietnam is growing into the most profitable business in the USA. It doesn't matter who shot him. Someone did, and the motivation was massive among all the worst shitbags of America, especially the rich ones, the established and the powerful.

Clementine So you think it was a conspiracy and dirty plot and game?

Winston I am afraid we shall never know the entire truth, like in the case of Abraham Lincoln. In both cases I consider the hand that held the gun less accountable than those who had interest in the murder. America will never be able to thoroughly investigate the matter. I think I will give Bertrand Russell a hint of the need of an examination of the American investigation.

Clementine Johnson is taking over now.

Winston He will not pull America out of Vietnam. That war will amount into a nightmare for America by the interests of the war industry and the drug business, and just the fact that he more than anyone else profits from the fact that Kennedy is gone makes him a suspect. I am sorry, Clemmie, but I think the good show is over. We might as well leave this life behind.

Clementine We are excused. We are aged enough, and no one has any interest in our execution.

Winston At least I am old enough. It's just as well. It isn't any fun any more.

Act V scene 1.

Bob Jackie, we all stand by you.

Jackie It's your turn now, Bob.

Bob May it be postponed as long as possible. Johnson manages it well. It gives me a respite of at least five years. That's not enough for bewailing a brother.

Jackie We can grieve constructively. We have our memories. The great days in the White House will never fade. It was too good to be true, and still it was true.

Bob We have much to live on when it comes to memories, but the pain weighs heavier. It will weigh me down for years to come. The question is if I will ever be the same again. I have lost half of my life and half of myself.

Jackie So have I. We have that in common.

Bob You have your children, and I have my family. We can't live together even with our grief. But from a distance I can do everything for you.

Jackie We are both in-laws, but our common loss brings us closer together than a brother and sister.

Bob And we have a common future for the family to live for.

Jackie To the highest degree. That's what we have to live for. And our memories. The dream of the bliss and the ideal goes on. You carry on the ideal, and I will keep it up for the rest of my life. Nothing can take it away from us, not even the shots in Dallas.

Bob They least of all. They fired us into eternity.

Jackie How has Joe taken it?

Bob Like a man. He is unchanged. He can't talk anyway. He understands everything but can't express anything. It must be worst of all for him.

Jackie He said, that Jack always would manage, that he had some kind of a golden protection. Four times he saw Jack return from death and each time with a higher moral energy. It's almost like you start imagining that he will return a fifth time.

Bob He will never leave us. He is always there. He is immortal more by his example than by his faith.

Jackie Still it is good to cry together.

Bob The travail of sorrow has only just begun, Jackie. We have a long way to go.
Jackie I know. But we will make it and come out of it on the other side.
Bob You will make it better than me.
Jackie Then I will help you.
Bob Thanks, Jackie, for being so brave.
Jackie I learned from my husband.
Bob He taught us all more than we will ever be aware of.
Jackie You have a job to manage. You are still attorney general.
Bob Johnson asked me to stay on, although he actually never could stand me.
Jackie He thought of the best for the nation.
Bob That's what we all who have any responsibility must do and be willing to sacrifice ourselves for.
Jackie And for the family.
Bob The family above all, Jackie. Even if we die and grieve ourselves to death we must never let our children down.
Jackie There isn't any risk, Bobby. They have you and me.
Bob Thanks, Jackie. You will help me get through all this. (*embraces her. They embrace each other like brother and sister.*)

Scene 2. The White House. Five years later.

Lyndon Welcome, Hubert.
Hubert How are you?
Lyndon Better, after yesterday's settlement.
Hubert You took all America by surprise.
Lyndon My entire Vietnam policy has been wrong, Hubert, from beginning to end, and I admit it. I never wanted to be a mass murderer.
Hubert Who would?
Lyndon I called for Bob to be here too. One of you will have to take over.
Hubert Then it will be Bob. He is at it. He wants to finish the Vietnam war.
Lyndon I wish I could do it myself, but I haven't got the time. I have gone too far and will soon be finished.
Hubert Here he is.
Lyndon (rises and shakes his hand) Welcome, Bob. Have a seat.
Bob You took us all by surprise yesterday. Still I am not surprised.
Lyndon I have committed a fatal mistake as a president and must pay for it. That's how simple it is. It will gnaw on me for the rest of my life, which therefore probably will not last much longer.
Hubert You have stood your ground well, Lyndon. The good you have done no one could have done better.
Lyndon They will remember me for the other things. I have shitted my pants full for good. Then you forget everything you did with your clothes on.

Bob What was it you wanted to talk with us about, Lyndon?

Lyndon To the point. Either of you will have to take over, and therefore I must inform you of the situation. I thought the Vietnam war could be won. I thought we could bomb North Vietnam to a status quo. The aggression was theirs for hell's sake, and South Vietnam could not defend herself against a guerilla war at night of the most invidious kind by terror and brainwash. They asked for our help. Therefore Jack Kennedy offered it but soon realized it was a war that could not be won but only grow over our heads. I don't want to discuss if it was because he wanted to pull us out and thereby put a stop to the bolting of the drug invasion and the war industry beyond all possible control, but I know that some top guys couldn't forgive him for giving up. I decided not to give up and have all the same been forced to finally give up. The Vietnam war has cost us the confidence of the whole world and our own credibility. But it will not be easy to pull out.

Hubert Who says that we can't?

Lyndon No one says that we can't, but many say that we must not, the generals and the war industry first of all. Unfortunately the war industry is the most profitable in the world, since it always was the most invidious by shamelessly and methodically selling weapons to both sides in a war, and those who run it are the most powerful forces in the world. If either of you will try to pull America out of the war you will have to deal with them.

Bob Cynical monsters of profiteers. There are no people more inhuman.

Lyndon You know them. The risk is, that if you try to pull out, you may not succeed anyway. The Vietnam war with its enormous power and its profiteers on weapons of mass destruction and drug traffic has run away with itself and become a global mass murder machine and Frankenstein monster which nothing can stop. I got stuck in its morally devastating trap. I committed the mistake of believing that I could use the mad monster as a means for winning the war, and thereby I became its prisoner.

Hubert There is another alternative.

Lyndon What are you thinking of?

Hubert The democrats could lose the elections.

Bob In that case we would get Nixon, a corrupt maniac.

Lyndon Yes, he is so mad that he could carry on the Vietnam war forever and enjoy it. That would be the worst scenario of all.

Hubert It has to be you, Bob. You can make it.

Bob To put a stop to the Vietnam war is the only right thing to do. The whole world demands it. America is bleeding to death in Vietnam both physically and morally. It is not acceptable.

Lyndon So you stand as a candidate for the presidency in spite of the risks and what happened to your brother?

Bob Do I have any choice?

Hubert I will stand also. If Bob should miss something, I could present a softer and more long term termination of the war which even the worst hawks would be able to accept.

Bob We have to end the war. How it will be done is a secondary issue. You can terminate it in different ways and gradually find the best way.

Lyndon Then we are agreed, gentlemen. I have warned you of the problem I regret that I have to leave to you for a troublesome legacy, but I myself have perished in combat with its monstrosity. I hope you will not.

Hubert We will do our best, Lyndon.

Bob You have done what you thought was best and right. That's the main thing.

Lyndon Thank you, my friends. I think Lady Bird is offering us some tea. (*They break it up.*)

Scene 3. Ethel with the children and Jackie.

Ethel No, no, not again! Not the same hell all over again!

Jackie Be comforted, Ethel. I have been through the same ordeal as you. We are sisters now.

Ethel Why was one not enough! Why did both have to fall! Not just the best one but also the best one after him! What does Rose say? Does she claim that God's ways are inexplicable and that it's best what happens? She is mad!

Jackie She is old, Ethel. We are still young and still have the best part of our lives ahead.

Ethel Do you believe in what you yourself are saying? Who will now take care of the children, when their only possible father is gone? You have only two, but we made ten! And he was the best imaginable, the only possible father!

Jackie Don't give in, Ethel. Don't let grief get the better of you.

Ethel I know that he often spent the night with you when Jack was gone.

Jackie He was like a brother to me.

Ethel But he was My Husband! I can't make this, not all the children without him.

Jackie I will help you.

Ethel Do you think you can? You with your fine manners and your Aristotle Onassis! Just leave the family and enjoy yourself with him! Save yourself from the sinking ship of the Kennedy family! Now all the children will derail. I know it. Jack was the disaster, but Bob was the annihilation, which we will never be able to survive! He was well and healthy, while Jack was ill, he wasn't afraid of anything while Jack always was tactical and cautious, Bob was always straightforward and never compromised with anything wrong while Jack always was accomodating and treaded carefully with diplomacy, Jack was president, but Bob never even got the chance! And when finally the light was green they shot him down at once! What kind

of monstrous freaks are controlling this world? Is there no room for human people in it any more, since they have to be murdered?

Jackie Ethel, both of them are still with us. They will never leave us, and we will never forget them.

Ethel Not even you can comfort me, Jackie! (*embraces her children crying her heart out, who all cry along with her, and Jackie shares their tears.*)

Scene 4. The young ones. Midnight on the seashore.

Bob Jr We have nothing to lose. Let's invoke him.

Tom Who will stand for the invocation?

David Let me. I was closest to him.

John Carry on, David. We are all lost. God has abandoned us and proved his non-existence by cursing our family with misfortunes which it did not deserve and which struck the whole world.

Bob They say Nixon is a very pious Christian.

Tom That's why he can fire away at Vietnam with no restrictions. He is certain to be forgiven all his sins.

John Go for it, David!

David We praise you, Satan, and invoke you and confess ourselves to you, for you are the only one we have left, the prince of hopelessness, who exists for the damned and the only comfort for those who have been wronged so far that they never will be able to have any justice!

John Take the sugar cubes now, and we might see him!

Tom Isn't it enough with all the grass we smoked?

John It is never enough! Take LSD and meet the only true god Satan himself, who is in everyone who is closest to himself!

David We belong to you, Satan, since our fathers were betrayed and murdered by the Catholic god they believed in and worshipped!

John Come, Satan, and take us!

Bob We are yours forever!

John Now I see him! He is ablaze in blood and fire!

Tom It's yourself and your monstrous subconscious.

John Where are the girls? Why aren't we celebrating orgies?

Bob But that's what we are doing. Do you want rape and human sacrifice as well?

John Why not?

David We implore you, Satan, who rules us and have taken care of us in the absence of others, to give our fathers back!

John Give us back our fathers!

David We belong to you forever if you only give back our fathers!

all (in chorus) Give us back our fathers! Give us back our fathers!

(They dance orgiastically in the light of the full moon by the surge of the sea while they all the time become more intoxicated and finally completely unmanageable.)

Scene 5.

Rose (by Joe's deathbed) The end is drawing nigh. I am with you until the end, Joe. We have lost three of our four sons, but they were the best sons ever brought up by any family. Press my hand if you get what I am saying. *(Joe presses her hand.)* You are clear in your head. I know it. You can just not communicate any more. I still love you, Joe, although I don't even know exactly how many times you betrayed me, *(Joe presses her hand.)* like Jackie still loves Jack although he is dead and he constantly betrayed her, while she remarried Aristotle Onassis. I understand her. Our family ended up in an abyss. Our last son is a cheat and a coward who will never be more than a senator, but at least he may live. Only the good and the just are punished in this world because they are too good. *(Joe presses her hand.)* It's over now, Joe. They can't kill any more of our children, for those who are left won't amount to anything anyway, and let's say nothing about their children: drugs and black masses, despair and suicide, grief has taken us by the throat and struck us out, and the only thing we can do any more is to cry. And you can't even do that. *(He presses her hand.)* I cry for you, Joe, for the rest of my life, and God will punish me with many more years just because we gave the world so wonderful children. *(He presses her.)* You will leave before me, but I will stay on and go on crying for you until past my hundred. And then perhaps there will be no more Kennedys left of our family. We all keep ending up as just old terrible ghosts.

Joe (manages to get it out) Jack.

Rose Yes, Joe, what about Jack?

Joe (with extreme effort) He lives.

Rose Yes, I know, Joe, he lives. The world will never be rid of him, for it killed him only because he was the best of all presidents. At least he gave obvious promises of that, but he got no time for more. *(Joe presses her.)* He lives, Joe. You are right. He and Bob live forever. That is our reward.

(She quietly leans over him and cries over him. They have never let go of each other's hands.)

The End.

*(Rishikesh 4.11.2011,
translated in September 2021)*

Comment

Only the beginning of the speech in Frankfurt 25.6.1963 is given here but has been completed by fragments from other speeches of his.

Bertrand Russell actually initiated an independent examination of the Warren commission investigation of the murder of president Kennedy, on account of a number of question marks to this, which independent examination resulted in 16 relevant questions, which never had any answers, which didn't exactly moderate the speculations about who really was behind the murder. Not until 50 years afterwards Lyndon B. Johnson's advocate revealed that he influenced the occurrence, to what degree still remaining to be brought to some light.

In July 1999 John F. Kennedy's only son was killed only 38 years old in an unnecessary airplane accident together with his wife and sister-in-law, just like his uncle Joe, his aunt Kathleen and both her husbands. Five years earlier his mother Jacqueline had passed away in cancer 64 years old as a consequence of her smoking three packets of cigarettes a day.