

So to explain this piece a bit more in depth, it is meant to be (part of) the manuscript for a stage play about a Raven who is attempting to get revenge for his brother's "murder". This is meant for a larger game, in which you play the actor in the main character's role, and try to unravel a mystery which only takes place behind the scenes of the stage- which you as a player never witness. That's less relevant here, however, as this is only a portion of the full script and as such doesn't lean as heavily into the game elements. Anyway, thank you for your time in reading this, and enjoy!

Darkness. Nothing can be seen on the stage, and a pin drop can be heard. The air becomes and remains stagnant, in an amount of time seemingly impossible for it to do so. Then, all of a sudden, there are words.

Narrator:

The Sunk Cost Fallacy.

A spotlight. It shines on a tall, lanky man sitting on a stool, in the middle of the stage.

Narrator

A term often used by many who have experienced it. Despite knowing of this fallacy, many choose, still, to participate in it. A book you have long since decided started well enough, yet was left lacking after the first few chapters. Do you finish it, or simply put it down? Having come to our show, this opening may serve to interest you- or it may not. However, if you ever find your interest dipping drastically, or your attention waning; we encourage you to walk out.

The Narrator lets this sit for a moment, before getting up and approaching the front of the stage.

Narrator

Today's performance serves as a message against the sunk cost fallacy, in a way. You will witness our main character struggle at the edge of their wits, as they attempt to avenge the murder of their younger brother. In a race to the bottom, they will sacrifice something they held very dear. When you lose, you are always presented with a choice. You can look past it, suck it up, and learn to live another day. Or...

Darkness returns

Narrator

You can struggle against it.

When the stage is next set, we open on our main character, overlooking a mountain top visage. Draped over their shoulders is a feathered cloak. From the neck up, we can only see jet black hair, leaving it to the imagination of the viewer whether or not a true crow will be revealed. Although it is very clearly a backdrop, the imagery should seem to be rolling along, almost mesmerizing them. Suddenly, a voice can be heard from Stage Right, panting as if quite out of breath.

Rhion

Your... Your Highness.

Suddenly, they look to their right, revealing their side profile for the first time. Though they are supposed to be a crow, it is clear that in order to preserve the integrity of the actors, they have simply painted their face and bodies in a way to make them resemble the beasts. The servant enters Stage Right. They are a somewhat slender, above average height man who is clearly attempting to maintain his composure after the climb, but is struggling to keep it together. Even with all this, however, he keeps a familiar air with his liege. While he is recovering to catch his breath, our character turns his gaze back to the scenery.

Rhion

You may have become accustomed to... to taxing journeys on your several expeditions, but... I remember quite a few more breaks the last time we trekked up this mountain.

For a beat, there is silence. Then, the player turns their head and reveals a neutral glance on their face.

Player

I distinctly remember the inclusion of a picnic as well.

After saying this, their mouth curves and turns into a smile, alleviating any look of worry from Rhions' face.

Rhion

Just as *I* distinctly remember who ended up being unable to resist the allure of the raspberry pie during the journey, leaving us stranded without dessert at the top of this...

The crow steps over to the backdrop, appearing as if to peer at the bottom.

Rhion

Very tall mountain.

The two share a laugh, and silence returns once again, yet significantly less deafening. When The Player speaks again, it is in a somewhat mocking yet playfully defensive tone.

Player

To be fair, it was a *very good* raspberry pie. I remember you and-

Silence again. This time, however, it's hard to hear. The Player's expression once again returns to neutral, but just before doing so flashes a hint of anger. They return to looking forward, showing us only the back of their head, and look down slightly. After a beat, but without haste, the servant interjects.

Rhion

Yes, it took us all night. He was so very bad at crimping the crust, but insisted I let him finish.

Another pause.

Rhion

You didn't seem to mind though.

The Player looks up, but not to either side as he had when speaking before.

Player

I suppose you're up here to let me know I've taken leave of an important duty in preparation
which must be seen to post-haste.

Rhion

...

Player

Figures.

*The Player takes a deep breath, enjoying one last moment of solitude, and goes to walk past the
servant. As he's just past him, he stops for a moment without turning around.*

Player

Since I assume I'll be around a little more often, it wouldn't kill you to bring a meal up here next time.

The Player walks off Stage Right, leaving the Servant alone. He gives a quick smile at the remark, and slowly follows behind. Fade to black.

When we pick up once more, The Player can be seen traversing their way down a hill, with his servant in tow. The view is still breathtaking, but lacking the same gravitas as was seen at the top, as trees mostly fill the skyline. As they walk down the mountain, there is little conversation, but it is not out of grief. Instead, The Player is simply being considerate of their servant, who although is now traveling downhill, is still struggling to keep up.

Rhion

My liege, although I appreciate the speed with which you intend to fulfill your lot, I do wish you would allow me to stay by your side for the sake of-

There is a rustling in the trees, followed by the bated breath of our two characters. For the first time, we see the player turn with their front towards Stage Left. On their hip can be seen a scabbard for a short sword nestled within. Their hand is on the hilt. Next to them is the servant,

who rushed to the players side and has a hand on 3 daggers in a pack on the back of his waist.

They are not immediately evident. There is tension in the air.

Player

There's no use now, turn around before we descend upon you.

A group of 3 walks out from Stage Left, weapons brandished in turn.

Bandit Leader

The cub bears fangs it's not yet ready for. Perhaps it should let 'em go before it gets hurt.

Bandit #2

The mane it adorns which it did not earn should be dropped before the weight of responsibility catches up to it.

Bandit #3

The... Your-your claws that... Um

The two other bandits turn back to look at the third.

Bandit #3

Your...scales?

A pause, before Bandit #3 rushes up to the others.

Bandit #3

(Whispering)

Did you guys practice this without me??

Bandit #2

What? No, it just seemed like the obvious next step.

Bandit Leader

Yeah it just seemed like one of those mysterious openings.

Bandit #3

But they were perfectly connected! You didn't leave any lion parts for me! This always happens!

Rhion eases his posture, but The Player maintains their alert.

Bandit #2

Can we just - just get back to it? I promise I won't leave you out of any more intentional animal references.

Bandit #3

Intentional?! I have to worry about "unintentional" references?

Rhion

If you three need some time, we can just come back... you know after, or what have you.

There's a silent look among them, almost seeming like they're thinking about it. Bandit #3 sighs.

Bandit #3

Alright we can come back to this.

Rhion

Because I mean, if you intended to fight us that was pretty disrespectful.

Bandit Leader

No, I- we get that. Hugely unprofessional, we can keep going. Look, I'll let you go first so just get on with it.

The fight tutorial begins. The bandits are scripted to lose here, but can win if the player fails the tutorial.

Bandit Leader

You may have gotten us this time, but just like a phoenix, we'll rise from the ashes and return!

Bandit #2

As with the revenant, we will rise from the dead to pursue you until your death!

The first two bandits leave the stage, leaving the last in a state of awe.

Bandit #3

Are you serious?! You really didn't hear that?!

He runs after them, Stage Left.

Rhion

I apologize for not informing you of the bandits sooner, your highness. There have been several companies which have taken root in the hills near Murder, though they've yet to be so bold as to approach the castle.

He begins to retrieve his knives from the trees around the battle.

The Player

You knew what you were doing.

Rhion smiles softly, and lowers his head.

Rhion

Shall we move on, your highness?

Curtains close. When they rise we are approaching the royal chambers of the castle. The halls are ornately lit, and guards adorn the floor. They're all wearing black accents to their armor. From Stage Left enters both Rhion and The Player. Eventually, they arrive at the door of the chamber.

Rhion

Unfortunately, this is as far as I can escort you for now. It seems your mother wished for this meeting to be limited to family.

The Player moves to the door.

Rhion

And-

The Player waits for the door to be opened by the guard.

Rhion

Maintain a close eye around what you believe to be important, your highness. Let it not be taken from you.

When the door is opened, he walks through, leaving us alone in the seemingly infinite leadup to the chamber of Aneira and Dai. Footsteps echo without the warmth that, although scarce, was present in the halls. As The Player approaches, they are silent yet reverent, as if one were approaching an altar. There are few guards standing along the rug approaching the throne, but at the base of the seats stand several. Sat upon them are Aneira and Dai, with Aneira's throne being slightly higher. As their title suggests they are incredibly regal, with an air of stoicism and noblesse which would make any person bow in their presence. Their motions are concise and calculated, no movement is taken without first consulting their finer judgment. Though they are incredibly similar in this way, they each play their respective parts. Being neither a matriarchal or patriarchal society, power is given to those who are born into or deserve it. Though at the moment, Aneira is crowned and Dai is consort- the eldest child is The Player, meaning they are a crowned heir. As such, Aneira is made to maintain her composure somewhat more so than Dai, who although with equal responsibility is granted less courtly presence and status and allowed more earnesty.

Dai

My child.

The Player

My King.

The Player bows to Dai slightly, yet not too low as to betray their position, then to Aneira a small amount lower.

Dai

What is the meaning behind the deference of your duties?

The Player

My lord, I have no valid excuse, I will attend to them posthaste.

Dai

We would very much like to learn of even *invalid* excuses, so as to ascertain an image in our mind of the tasks which so deftly pulled you from *your brother's funeral rites*.

A silence hangs in the room, thick with tension stemming from words which are seemingly hanging in the air.

Aneira

That is enough. Your silence speaks volumes. You will be given one last chance to get this right.

Prove to me that I have appointed the right person to this job.

A pause. The Player seems as if he has something- or many things- to say, but elects to keep them to themselves. This is not lost on Aneira. After a moment, The Player bows.

The Player

My liege.

Aneira

Dismissed. Do not let me down.

The Player turns and leaves, the door to the throne room seeming much closer this time. As they approach the door, it opens, and in comes Morwyn. On first look, Morwyn seems to be evil. Her figure is quite tall and slender; she has a plastered smile on her face, and never seems to look you right in the eye. The Player stops for a moment on approach.

The Player

Aunt.

Morwyn

So cordial, you are. You can use my real name- it's not as if I'm a demon who will wither at its mention.

The Player scoffs, and leaves the room. Fade To Black.

Morwyn

Your Highness.

Aneira

Sister.

Morwyn

Guards, the door if you would?

When we open next, we are in The Player's room. They are at a desk, with a map and several books open aside. A candle is burned low, and The Player seems to be in deep focus. Outside the window it is dark, and wind beats at the window. Suddenly there is a knock at the door. There is no answer from The Player. A few moments later, another knock. This time, The Player seems to snap out of their focus, and attend the door. As soon as the door is open, The Player returns to their studies, with Rhion entering from Stage Right.

Rhion

My liege, you sent for me?

The Player

I need for you to ready my horse.

Rhion

Will you not be traveling with the procession?

The Player

No, I will not.

Rhion

...Will you be attending the ceremony?

The Player

I do not have the right to mourn as of yet. This was no accident.

Rhion

Justice can be sought *after* you pay your respects. You will not be given another chance to do so.

The Player

I do not belong here- this is not where my true duty lies. Evidence of a cross kingdom conspiracy was discovered at the site of the crime, and *nothing* has been done of it.

Rhion

Messages have been sent and forces have been mustered, my lord.

The Player

They have been gathered for a week. There will not be a deployment. This is not a mission the kingdom can publicly undertake, nor is it one they will order the heir to carry out.

Rhion

You cannot-

The Player

Enough. I do not need much, only assistance in preparing resources for a journey and someone who will not arouse suspicion in doing so.

Rhion

It seems your mind is made up. I will need some time to prepare enough rations for 2. How long do we expect to be away?

The Player

I would not ask this of you. There are many dangers.

Rhion

Do not mistake this for compassion. When it is discovered that in the little time I have been reassigned to your personnel you have disappeared, you will have to travel to the dungeons for visitation upon your return.

The Player

Once again, you offer a logic I cannot argue with. I will have my part ready within the hour.

Rhion

I will meet you in the stables then.

Rhion exits Stage Left. End Scene