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THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN

A Play Concerning the Conquest of Peru

by Peter Shaffer

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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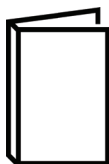
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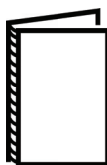


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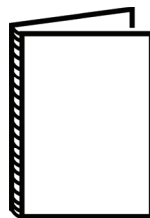
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sir Peter Shaffer, in full Sir Peter Levin Shaffer (born May 15, 1926, London, England), British playwright of considerable range who moved easily from farce to the portrayal of human anguish. Educated at St. Paul's and Trinity College, Cambridge, Shaffer first worked for a music publisher and then as a book reviewer. His first play, *Five-Finger Exercise* (1960), is a tautly constructed domestic drama that almost overnight established his reputation as a playwright. It was followed by *The Private Ear*, *The Public Eye* (both 1962), and *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), a portrayal of the conflict between the Spanish and the Inca – “hope and hopelessness, faithlessness and faith.” In 1965 Shaffer's adroit farce *Black Comedy* was performed. *Equus* (1973; filmed 1977), dealing with a mentally disturbed stableboy's obsession with horses, and *Amadeus* (1979; filmed 1984), about the rivalry between Mozart and his fellow composer Antonio Salieri, were successes with both critics and the public. Later plays include the biblical epic *Yonadab* (1985), *Lettice and Lovage* (1987), and *The Gift of the Gorgon* (1992). Shaffer was knighted in 2001 and sadly passed away in 2016.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Text

Each act contains twelve sections, marked by Roman numerals. These are solely for reference, and do not indicate pauses or breaks of any kind. The action is continuous.

The Set

Essentially, all that is required for a production of *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* is a bare stage and an upper level. However, the setting by Michael Annals was so superb, and so brilliantly succeeded in solving the visual problems of the play, that I wish to recall it here in print.

Basically this design consisted of a huge aluminium ring, twelve feet in diameter, hung in the centre of a plain wooden back wall. Around its circumference were hinged twelve petals. When closed, these interlocked to form a great medallion on which was incised the emblem of the conquistadores; when opened, they formed the rays of a giant golden sun, emblem of the Incas. Each petal had an inlay of gold magnetized to it: when these inlays were pulled out (in Act II, Scene VI) the great black frame remaining symbolized magnificently the desecration of Peru. The centre of this sun formed an acting area above the stage, which was used in Act I to show Atahualpa in majesty, and in Act II served for his prison and subsequently for the treasure chamber.

This simple but amazing set was for me totally satisfying on all levels: scenically, aesthetically and symbolically.

The Music

The musical experts at the end of the book represent the three most easily detached pieces from the remarkable score composed for the play by Marc Wilkinson. This extraordinary music I believe to be an integral part of any production of *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*. It embraces bird cries; plainchant; a fantasia for organ; freezing sounds for the Mime of the Great Ascent, and frightening ones for the Mime of the Great Massacre. To me its most memorable items are the exquisitely doleful lament which opens Act II, and, most amazing of all, the final Chant of Resurrection, to be whined and whispered, howled and hooted, over Atahualpa's body in the darkness, before the last sunrise of the Inca Empire.

The Production

There are, no doubt, as many ways of producing this play as there are of setting it. My hope was always to realize on stage a kind of “total” theatre, involving not only words but rites, mimes, masks and magics. The text cries for illustration. It is a director’s piece, a pantomimist’s piece, a musician’s piece, a designer’s piece and, of course, an actor’s piece, almost as much as it is an author’s. In this edition, as with the set, I have included as many details of the Chichester production as possible, partly because I was deeply involved in its creation, but mainly as a tribute to the superb achievement of John Dexter.

GENERAL NOTE ON THE PLAYING OF THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN

The style in which the Spaniards are played should vary extremely and observably from that in which the Incas are played.

I think it will help if the Incas are played less naturalistically – certainly in a less Western way – than the Spaniards. They should be masked (half masks in gold) to suggest the relentless uniformity imposed on them by their social structure, with its absolute discouragement of individual feature. All hair styles should be the same: deep black, in formal cut, straight and ‘South American Indian’, and ponchos of the same colour or colours – suggesting, where possible, the use of vegetable dyes.

The walk, posture and speech of the Incas should be highly stylized: formalized gestures for the peasants and hieretic gestures for the court should be used throughout – together with cries, bird calls, chanting, wailing and the stylized speech patterns. Atahualpa himself should be a creature of extreme unfamiliarity and unexpectedness to the audience. A possible image which suggests itself to me is the Firebird: elegant, remote, dazzling, and – like many god figures – bisexual (not effeminate, but giving the effect in the literal sense, of self-sufficiency). It is important to avoid at all times, in playing him or his subjects, even the faintest suggestion of mock-Oriental, theatrical-bizarre, or – even worse – the noble ‘Me Great Chief’ effect of American Western films. Actors should try to suggest the remote, very foreign and now defunct world of pre-Columbian America.

As for the staging, austerity and non-literality should be the key-notes. Avoid realism, and conjure effects (with the help of lighting, of course) of jungles and mountains; and the immense over-organized ritual of Inca life from placing, gesture and acting choices. The thought here is, say, Kabuki theatre filtered through English consciousness: everything – the marching, the fighting, the collection of the treasure and the treasure itself, and in particular the final lament in immense funeral masks, punctuated by long silences – should be informed with a powerful sense of ritual and imaginative suggestion.

Wherever possible, the music of Marc Wilkinson for this play should be used. I regard it as an integral part of the play, and it will perfectly set the tone of the whole performance.

P.S.

THE CHARACTERS

The Spaniards

The officers:

FRANCISCO PIZARRO, Commander of the Expedition
HERNANDO DE SOTO, Second-in-Command
MIGUEL ESTETE, Royal Veedor, or Overseer
PEDRO DE CANDIA, Commander of Artillery
DIEGO DE TRUJILLO, Master of Horse

The Men:

OLD MARTIN RUIZ
YOUNG MARTIN, Pizarro's Page: Old Martin as a boy
SALINAS, Blacksmith
RODAS, Tailor
VASCA
DOMINGO
JUAN CHAVEZ

The Priests:

FRAY VINCENTE DE VALVERDE, Chaplain to the Expedition
 (Dominican)
FRAY MARCOS DE NIZZA, Franciscan Friar

The Indians

ATAHUALLPA, Sovereign Inca of Peru
VILLAC UMU, High Priest of Peru
CHALLCUCHIMA, An Inca General
A CHIEFTAIN
A HEADSMAN OF A THOUSAND FAMILIES
FELIPILLO, An Indian boy, employed by Pizarro as Interpreter
MANCO, A Chasqui, or Messenger
INTI COUSSI, Stepsister of Atahuallpa } non-speaking parts
OELLO, A wife of Atahuallpa }
 Spanish Soldiers and Peruvian Indians

Place – Apart from two early scenes in Spain and Panama, the play is set in the Upper Province of the Inca Empire; what is now south Ecuador and north-western Peru. The whole of Act II takes place in the town of Cajamarca.

Time: June 1529 – August 1533

ACT I – The Hunt ACT II – The Kill

ACT I

The Hunt

SCENE. A bare stage. On the back wall, which is of wood, hangs a huge metal medallion, quartered by four black crucifixes sharpened to resemble swords.

When the lights come up, the stage is empty. OLD MARTIN, a grizzled man in his middle fifties, enters. He wears the black costume of a Spanish hidalgo in the mid-sixteenth century.

OLD MARTIN Save you all. My name is Martin. I'm a soldier of Spain and that's it. Most of my life I've spent fighting for land, treasure and the cross. I'm worth millions. Soon I'll be dead and they'll bury me out here in Peru, the land I helped ruin as a boy. This story is about ruin. Ruin and gold. More gold than any of you will ever see, even if you work in a counting house. I'm going to tell you how one hundred and sixty-seven men conquered an empire of twenty-four million. And then things that no one has ever told: things to make you groan and cry out I'm lying. And perhaps I am. The air of Peru is cold and sour like a vault, and wits turn easier here even than in Europe. But grant me this: I saw him closer than anyone, and had cause only to love him. He was my altar, my bright image of salvation. Francisco Pizarro! Time was when I'd have died for him, or for any worship.

YOUNG MARTIN enters, duelling an invisible opponent with a stick. He is OLD MARTIN as an impetuous boy of fifteen.

If you could only imagine what it was like for me at the beginning, to be allowed to serve him. But boys don't dream like that any more – service! Conquest! Riding down Indians in the name of Spain. The inside of my head was one vast plain for feats of daring. I used to lie up in the hayloft for hours reading my bible – Don Cristobal on the rules of Chivalry. And then he came and made them real. And the only wish of my life is that I had never met him.

FRANCISCO PIZARRO enters. *He is a man in late middle age: tough, commanding, harsh, wasted, secret. The gestures are blunt and often violent: the expression intense and energetic, capable of fury and cruelty, but also of sudden melancholy and sardonic humour. At the moment he appears more neatly than he is ever to do again: hair and beard are trimmed, and his clothes quite grand, as if he is trying to make a fine impression. He is accompanied by his Second-in-Command, HERNANDO DE SOTO, and the Dominican FRAY VINCENTE DE VALVERDE. DE SOTO is an impressive figure in his forties: his whole air breathes an unquestioning loyalty – to his profession, his faith, and to accepted values. He is an admirable soldier and a staunch friend. VALVERDE, on the other hand, is a peasant priest whose zeal is not greatly tempered by intelligence, nor sweetened by an anxiety to please.*

PIZARRO I was suckled by a sow. My house is the oldest in Spain – the pigsty.

OLD MARTIN He'd made two expeditions to the New World already. Now, at over sixty years old, he was back in Spain, making one last try. He'd shown the King enough gold to get sole right of discovery in Peru, and the title of Viceroy over anything he conquered. In return he was to fit out an army at his own expense. He started recruiting in his own birthplace, Trujillo.

Several VILLAGERS enter, among them SALINAS, a blacksmith, RODAS, a tailor, VASCA, DOMINGO and the Chavez Brothers.

PIZARRO *addresses DIEGO, a young man of twenty-five.*

PIZARRO What's your name?

DIEGO Diego, sir.

PIZARRO What do you know best?

DIEGO Horses, I suppose, if I was to name anything.

PIZARRO And how would you feel to be Master of Horse, Diego?

DIEGO (*eagerly*) Sir!

PIZARRO Who's smith here?

SALINAS I am.

PIZARRO Are you with us?

SALINAS I'm not against you.

PIZARRO What's your friend?

RODAS Tailor, if it is your business.

PIZARRO Well, soldiers never stop mending and patching.
They'll be grateful for your assistance.

RODAS Well, find someone else to give it them. I'm resting here.

The VILLAGERS laugh.

PIZARRO Rest. (*to YOUNG MARTIN*) Who's this?

DIEGO Martin Ruiz, sir. He's a good boy. He knows all his
codes of Chivalry by heart, and he's aching to be a page, sir.

PIZARRO How old?

YOUNG MARTIN Seventeen.

PIZARRO Don't lie.

OLD MARTIN Fifteen, sir.

OLD MARTIN *exits.*

PIZARRO Parents?

YOUNG MARTIN Dead, sir.

PIZARRO Can you write?

YOUNG MARTIN Two hundred Latin words. Three hundred Spanish.

PIZARRO Why do you want to come, Martin?

YOUNG MARTIN It's going to be glorious, sir.

PIZARRO Look, you, if you served me you'd be page to an old slogger; no titles, no traditions. I learnt my trade as a mercenary, going with who best paid me. It's a closed book to me, all that chivalry. But then, not reading or writing, all books are closed to me. If I took you, you'd have to be my reader and writer, both.

YOUNG MARTIN I'd be honoured, my lord. Oh, please, my lord!

PIZARRO General will do. Let's see your respect. Greet me.

YOUNG MARTIN *bows.* *The VILLAGERS laugh.*

Now to the Church. That's Brother Valverde, our Chaplain.

VALVERDE The blessing of God on you, my son. And on all who come with us to alter the heathen.

PIZARRO Now to our Second-in-Command, Cavalier de Soto. I'm sure you all know the Cavalier well by reputation; a great soldier. He has served under Cordoba! No expedition he seconds can fail.

RODAS *makes a derisive noise.* **PIZARRO** *takes a roll of cloth, woven with the design of a llama, from DE SOTO and shakes it out.*

Now look at this! Indian stuff! Ten years ago, standing with the great Balboa, I saw a Chieftain draw this beast on the leaf of an aloe. And he said to me: 'Where this roams is uncountable wealth!'

RODAS Oh yes, pissing uncountable! You ask Sanchez the farrier about that. He listened to tales like that from him five years ago.

DIEGO Who cares about him?

RODAS Uncountable bloody wealth? It rained for six months and his skin rotted on him. They lost twenty-seven out of fifty.

PIZARRO And so we may again. (*to RODAS; slowly*) What do you think I'm offering you? A walk in the country? Wines and jellies in a basket, your hand round your girl? No, I'm promising you swamps. Steaming jungle. Sitting half the day buried in earth to escape the mouths of insects. You may live for weeks on palm tree-buds and soup boiled out of leather straps. And at night you will sleep in thick wet darkness with snakes hung over your heads like bell-ropes – and black men under bushes, waiting – men that eat each other. And why should you endure all this? Because I believe that beyond this terrible place is a kingdom where gold is as common as wood is here, or as iron is in Biscay. I took only two steps in and found cups and pans made out of it solid.

The VILLAGERS laugh and start to exit. PIZARRO claps his hands twice. FELIPILLO enters. The VILLAGERS stop. FELIPILLO is a slim, delicate Indian from Ecuador, loaded with golden ornaments. In actuality, FELIPILLO is a treacherous and hysterical creature, but at the moment, under his master's eye, he sways forward before the stupefied villagers with a demure grace.

I present Felipillo, captured on my last trip. Look close at his ornaments. To him they are no more than feathers are to us, but they are all gold, my friends. Down. Examine him.

The VILLAGERS move to FELIPILLO and examine him.

VALVERDE Look at him well, my sons! This is a heathen – a being condemned to eternal flame unless you help him. (*He turns to PIZARRO.*) Don't think we are merely going

to destroy his people and lift their wealth. We are going to take from them what they don't value, and give them instead the priceless mercy of heaven. He who helps me lift this dark man into light, I absolve of all crimes he ever committed.

PIZARRO Well?

SALINAS That's gold right enough.

PIZARRO And for your taking. (*to the VILLAGERS*) I was like you once. Sitting the afternoon away in this same street, drunk in the inn, to bed in the sty. Stink and mud and nothing to live for. Even if you die with me, what's so tender-precious to hold you here?

VASCA You're pissing right!

PIZARRO I tell you – over there you'll be the masters and that'll be your slave.

VASCA There's a thought: talk about the slave of slaves! (*He makes the sign of the cross.*)

DOMINGO (*timidly*) Do you think it's true?

PIZARRO Do you say I lie?

DOMINGO Oh no, sir...

VASCA Even if he does, what's to keep you here? You're a cooper: how many casks have you made in the last year? That's no employment for a pissing dog.

PIZARRO Well, what d'you say?

JUAN I say right, sir!

VASCA Me, too. I'm going to get a slave or two like him!

DOMINGO Yes. Vasca's right; you can't do worse than stay here.

RODAS Well, not me, boys. You won't catch Rodas marching through no pissing jungle.

SALINAS Oh, shut your ape's face. (*to PIZARRO*) He'll come, sir.

The VILLAGERS cheer.

PIZARRO All right, then! Diego, make your way to Toledo for the muster. Enrol them all and take them along.

DIEGO Sir!

The VILLAGERS exit. YOUNG MARTIN starts to exit in the opposite direction. PIZARRO stays him.

PIZARRO Boy. *(He holds out his arms for his cloak to be taken off.)*

There is a pause, then YOUNG MARTIN takes off the cloak.

Master me the names of all officers and men so far listed.

YOUNG MARTIN *(bowing)* Yes, sir!

PIZARRO You're a page now, so act like one. Dignity at all times.

YOUNG MARTIN *(bowing)* Yes, sir.

PIZARRO Respect.

YOUNG MARTIN *(bowing)* Yes, sir.

PIZARRO Obedience.

YOUNG MARTIN *(bowing)* Yes, sir.

PIZARRO And there's no need to salute every ten seconds.

YOUNG MARTIN No, sir.

VALVERDE *(smiling)* Come, my son, there's work to be done.

There is a pause. YOUNG MARTIN stares adoringly at PIZARRO, then runs off. VALVERDE follows.

PIZARRO Strange sight, Yourself, just as you were in this very street.

DE SOTO Do you like it?

PIZARRO No, I was a fool. Dreamers deserve what they get.

DE SOTO And what are you dreaming now?

PIZARRO Gold.

DE SOTO Oh, come. Gold is not enough loadstone for you, not any more, to drag you back to the new world.

PIZARRO You're right. At my age things become what they really are. Gold turns into metal.

DE SOTO Then why? You could stay here now and be a hero for a province. What's left to endure so much for – especially with your infirmity? You've earned the right to comfort. Your country would gladly grant it to you for the rest of your life.

PIZARRO My country. Where's that? My country?

DE SOTO Spain, sir.

PIZARRO Spain and I have been strangers since I was a boy. The only spot I know in it is here – this filthy village. This is Spain to me. Is this where you wish me comfort? For twenty-two years I drove pigs down this street because my father couldn't own to my mother. Twenty-two years without one single day of hope. And when I finally turned soldier and dragged my arquebus along the roads of Italy, I was so famined I was beyond eating. I got nothing and I gave nothing. And though I groaned for that once, I'm glad with it now. Because I owe nothing. Once the world could have had me for a pretty farm, two rocky fields and a *Señor* to my name. It said 'No'. Ten years on, it could have had me for double – small estates, fifty oranges and a Sir to them. It said 'No'. Twenty years more, it could still have had me cheap; Balboa's trusty lieutenant, marched with him to the Pacific and claimed it for Spain: state pension and dinner once a week with the local mayor. But the world said 'No'. Said 'No' and said 'No'. Well, now it's going to know me. If I live this next year I'm going to get me a name that won't ever be forgotten. A name to be sung here for centuries in your ballads, out there under the cork trees where I sat as a boy with bandages for shoes. I amuse you.

DE SOTO Surely you see you don't.

PIZARRO Oh yes, I amuse you, Cavalier de Soto. The old pig-herd lumbering after fame. You inherited your honour – I have to root for mine like the pigs. It's amusing.

The lights become whiter, colder. PIZARRO kneels. An organ sounds – the austere polyphony of Spanish celebration. VALVERDE enters, bearing an immense wooden Christ. He is accompanied by his assistant, FRAY MARCOS DE NIZZA, a Franciscan, a man of far more serene temper and intellectual maturity. All the VILLAGERS enter, wearing the white cloaks of chivalry and carrying banners. Among them is PEDRO DE CANDIA, a Venetian captain, wearing a pearl in one ear and walking with a lazy stealth that at once suggests danger. OLD MARTIN enters apart from the others, and speaks out front.

OLD MARTIN On the day of St John the Evangelist, our banners were consecrated in the Cathedral Church of Panama. Our muster was one hundred and eighty-seven, with horses for twenty-seven.

VALVERDE *(to the assembly)* You are the hunstmen of God. The weapons you draw are sacred. Oh God, invest us all with the courage of Thy unflinching Son. Show us the way to beat the savage out of his dark forests on to the broad plain of Thy Grace.

DE NIZZA And comfort, we pray, all warriors that shall be in affliction from this setting out.

OLD MARTIN *(indicating DE NIZZA)* Fray Marcos de Nizza, Franciscan, appointed to assist Valverde.

DE NIZZA You are the bringers of food to starving peoples. You go to break mercy with them like bread, and pour out gentleness into their cups. You will lay before them the inexhaustible table of free spirit, and invite to it all who have dieted on terror. You will bring to all tribes the nourishment of pity. You will sow their fields with love,

and teach them to harvest the crop of it, each yield in its season. Remember this always – we are their New World.

VALVERDE Approach, all, and be blessed.

During the following, the MEN kneel and are blessed, afterwards rising again.

OLD MARTIN (*indicating*) Pedro de Candia, Cavalier from Venice, in charge of weapons and artillery. These villagers you know already. There were many others, of course. Almagro, the General's partner, who stayed to organize reinforcements and follow in three months. Riquelme, the Treasurer. Pedro of Ayala and Bias of Atienza. Herrada the Swordsman and Golzales of Toledo. And Juan de Barbaran whom everyone called the good servant out of love for him. And many smaller men. Even its youngest member saw himself with a following of Indians and a province for an orchard. It was a tumbled company, none too noble, but ginger for wealth.

ESTETE enters, a stiff and haughty man, dressed in the black of the Spanish Court.

And chiefly there was...

ESTETE Miguel Estete. Royal Veedor, and Overseer in the name of King Carlos the Fifth. You should not have allowed anyone to be blessed before me.

PIZARRO Your pardon, Veedor. I do not understand affairs of before and after.

ESTETE That is evident. General, on this expedition my word is the law: it is spoken with the King's authority.

PIZARRO Your pardon, but on this expedition *my* word is the law: there will be no other.

ESTETE In matters military.

PIZARRO In all matters.

ESTETE In all that do not infringe the majesty of the King.

PIZARRO What matters could?

ESTETE Remember your duty to God, sir, and to the throne, sir, and you will not discover them. Continue!

PIZARRO (*furious*) De Soto! In the name of Spain our holy country, I invest you as Second-in-Command to me. Subject only to me. In the name of Spain our holy country, I – I... (*He falters, clutching his side in pain.*)

There is a pause. The MEN whisper among themselves.

DE CANDIA Be still!

PIZARRO Take the banners out...

DE SOTO (*commanding*) Take up your banners. March!

The organ music continues. All march out, leaving PIZARRO and YOUNG MARTIN alone on the stage. Only when all the rest are gone does PIZARRO collapse. YOUNG MARTIN is frightened and concerned.

YOUNG MARTIN What is it, sir?

PIZARRO A wound from long ago. A knife cut to the bone. A savage put it into me for life. It troubles me at times. You'll start long before me with your wounds. With your killing, too. I wonder how you'll like that.

YOUNG MARTIN You watch me, sir.

PIZARRO I will. You deal in deaths when you are a soldier, and all your study should be to make them clean, what scratches kill and how to cut them.

YOUNG MARTIN But surely, sir, there's more to soldiering than that?

PIZARRO You mean honour, glory – traditions of the service?

YOUNG MARTIN Yes, sir.

PIZARRO Dungballs. Soldiers are for killing; that's their reason.

YOUNG MARTIN But, sir...

PIZARRO What?

YOUNG MARTIN It's not just killing.

PIZARRO Listen, Martin: know something. Men cannot just stand as men in this world. It's too big for them and they grow scared. So they build themselves shelters against the bigness. They call the shelters Army, Court, Church. Well, they're useful against loneliness, Martin, useful – but they're not real, they're not true, Martin. Do you see?

YOUNG MARTIN No, sir. Not truthfully, sir...

PIZARRO No, sir. Not truthfully, sir! Why must you be so young? Look at you. A colt the world will break for its sightless track. Listen once. The world of soldiers is a yard of ungrowable children. They play with ribbons and make up ceremonies just to keep out the rest of the world. They add up the number of their blue dead and their green dead and call that their history. But all this is just the flower the bandit carves on his knife before shoving it into a man's side. What's Army tradition – this great tradition you hear of? Nothing but years of Us against Them. Christ-men against Pagan-men. Men against men. I've had a life of it, boy, and let me tell you that it's nothing but a nightmare's game, played by brutes to give themselves a meaning.

YOUNG MARTIN But, sir, a noble reason can make a fight glorious.

PIZARRO Give me one reason that stays noble once you start hacking off limbs in its name. There isn't a cause in the world to set against this pain. Noble's a word, Martin. Leave it for the books.

YOUNG MARTIN I can't believe that, sir.

PIZARRO Look at you. Hope, lovely hope, it's on you like dew. Do you know where you're going? Into the forest. A hundred miles of dark and screaming. The dark we all came out of, hot. Things flying, fleeing, falling dead – and their death

unnoticed. Take your noble reasons there, Martin. Pitch your silk flags in that black and wave your crosses at the wild cats. See what awe they command. Be advised, boy. Go back to Spain.

YOUNG MARTIN No, sir. I'm coming with you. I can learn, sir.

PIZARRO You will be taught, not by me. By the forest.

PIZARRO exits. YOUNG MARTIN is left alone. The stage darkens and the huge medallion high on the back wall begins to glow. Great cries of 'Inca' are heard. YOUNG MARTIN bolts off the stage. Exotic music mixes with the chanting. Slowly the medallion opens out to form a huge golden sun with twelve great rays. In the centre stands ATAHUALLPA, sovereign Inca of Peru, masked, crowned, and dressed in gold. When he speaks, his voice, and the voices of all the Incas, is strangely formalized. VILLAC UMU, the high priest, CHALLCUCHIMA, MANCO and others, all masked and robed in terracotta, enter below the Inca Court. They prostrate themselves.

VILLAC UMU Atahualpa! God!

ATAHUALLPA God hears.

MANCO Manco your Chasqui speaks. I bring truth from many runners what has been seen in the Farthest Province. White men sitting on huge sheep. The sheep are red! Everywhere their leader shouts aloud: 'Here is God.'

ATAHUALLPA The White God!

VILLAC UMU Beware.

CHALLCUCHIMA Beware, Inca!

ATAHUALLPA All-powerful spirit who left this place before my ancestors ruled you. The White God returns!

CHALLCUCHIMA You do not know this.

ATAHUALLPA He has long been waited for. If he comes, it is with blessing. Then my people will see I did well to take the Crown.

VILLAC UMU Beware, beware, Inca. Your Mother Moon wears a veil of green fire. An eagle fell on to the temple in Cuzco.

MANCO It is true, Capac. He fell out of the sky.

VILLAC UMU Out of a green sky.

CHALLCUCHIMA On to a house of gold.

VILLAC UMU When the world ends, small birds grow sharp claws.

ATAHUALLPA Cover your mouth.

All cover their mouths.

If the White God comes to bless me, all must see him.

The Court retires. ATAHUALLPA remains on the stage, motionless in his sunflower. He stays in this position until the end of Scene VII.

The Province of Tumbes. The lights become mottled, suggesting a forest. Screams and whoops of alarm are heard, imitating tropical bird cries. A horde of INDIANS rushes across the stage, pursued by SOLDIERS, PIZARRO, DE CANDIA, DE SOTO, VALVERDE, ESTETE and FELIPILLO.

DE CANDIA Grab that one! That's the chief.

The SOLDIERS capture the CHIEF. At the sight of this, all the INDIANS fall silent and passive. DE CANDIA approaches them with drawn sword.

Now, you brownie bastard, show us gold.

PIZARRO Gently, De Candia. You'll get nothing from him in terror.

DE CANDIA Let's see.

PIZARRO Put up! God's bread... Felipillo, ask for gold.

FELIPILLO adopts a set of stylized gestures for his interpreting, in the manner of sign language.

CHIEF We have no gold. All was taken by the great King in his war.

PIZARRO What King?

CHIEF Holy Atahuallpa.

INDIANS (*chanting*) Ata-huallpa.

CHIEF Inca of earth and sky. His kingdom is the widest in the world.

DE SOTO How wide?

CHIEF A man can run in it every day for a year.

DE SOTO More than a thousand miles.

ESTETE Poor savage, trying to impress us with his little tribe.

PIZARRO I think we've found more than a little tribe, Veedor.
(*to the CHIEF*) Tell me of this King. Who did he fight?

CHIEF His brother Huascar. His father the great Inca Hyayana grew two sons. One by a wife, one by a not-wife. At his death he cut the kingdom in two for them. But Atahuallpa wanted all. So he made war, and killed his brother. Now he is lord of earth and sky.

PIZARRO And he's the bastard?

All the INDIANS cry out: "Ka-wai-ya!"

Answer! He's the bastard?

CHIEF He is the Son of the Sun. He needs no wedded mother. He is God.

INDIANS (*chanting*) Sapa! Inca! Inca! Capac!

PIZARRO God?

CHIEF God!

PIZARRO God on earth?

DE SOTO Do you believe this?

CHIEF It is true. The sun is God. Atahualpa is his child sent to shine on us for a few years of life. Then he will return to his father's palace and live for ever.

PIZARRO God on earth?

VALVERDE Oh, my brothers, where have we come? The land of Antichrist! Do your duty, Spaniards! Take each an Indian and work to shift his soul. (*He shows the cross to the INDIANS.*) The cross, you pagan dust!

The INDIANS try to escape.

Stay them!

The SPANIARDS ring the INDIANS with swords.

Down! Repeat after me. Jesus Christ Inca!

FELIPILLO *interprets.*

INDIANS (*uncertainly*) Jesus Christ Inca!

VALVERDE Jesus Christ Inca!

ESTETE (*moving to the CHIEF*) Jesus Christ Inca... (*He kicks the CHIEF.*)

The CHIEF runs across the stage and leads the INDIANS off. The SOLDIERS herd them away. Their cries punctuate the end of the scene. All exit except PIZARRO and DE SOTO.

ATAHUALPA (*at the fourth "Jesus Christ Inca"*) He surely is a God! He teaches my people to praise him!

PIZARRO He's a God all right. They're scared to hell of him. And a bastard, too. That's civil war – bastards against bastards!

ATAHUALPA I will see him. Let no one harm these men!

PIZARRO Let's see you, then! What's it like to be Son of the Sun?

DE SOTO That's something in Europe no one's ever dared to call himself.

PIZARRO God on earth, living for ever!

DE SOTO He's got a shock coming!

DE SOTO *exits.*

PIZARRO Did you hear that, God? You're not going to like that! Because we've got a God worth a thousand of you. A gentle God with gentle priests, and a couple of big cannon to blow you out of the sky!

VALVERDE (*offstage*) Jesus Christ Inca!

PIZARRO Christ the Merciful with his shackles and stakes! So you enjoy yourself while you can. Have yourself a glorious shine! (*He makes the sign of the cross with his sword.*) Take that, Antichrist!

PIZARRO *runs off, laughing.*

ESTETE (*offstage*) Jesus Christ Inca!

INDIANS (*offstage*) Jesus – Christ – Inca!

VILLAC UMU *and* **CHALLCUCHIMA** *enter.*

VILLAC UMU (*to* **ATAHUALLPA**) Your people groan.

ATAHUALLPA They groan with my voice!

CHALLCUCHIMA (*to* **ATAHUALLPA**) Your people weep.

ATAHUALLPA They weep with my tears!

CHALLCUCHIMA He searches all the houses. He seeks your crown. Remember the prophecy! The twelfth Lord of the Four Quarters shall be the last. Inca, beware!

VILLAC UMU Ware, Inca.

CHALLCUCHIMA Ware!

ATAHUALLPA (*to CHALLCUCHIMA*) Go to him. Take him my word. Tell him to greet me at Cajamarca, behind the great mountains. If he is a God, he will find me. If he is no God – he will die!

The lights go down on the Sun. VILLAC UMU and CHALLCUCHIMA exit.

Night. Wild bird cries are heard. DOMINGO and VASCA enter on sentry duty.

VASCA There must be a bloody thousand of 'em, every night we halt.

DOMINGO Why don't they just come and get us?

VASCA They're waiting.

DOMINGO What for?

VASCA Maybe they're cannibals and there's a feast day coming.

DOMINGO Very funny. Six weeks in this pissing forest and not one smell of gold. I think we've been had.

VASCA Unless they're hiding it, like the General says.

DOMINGO I don't believe it. God-damned place. I'm even starting to rust.

VASCA We all are. It's the damp. Another week and we'll have to get the blacksmith to cut us out.

ESTETE enters with DE CANDIA carrying an arquebus.

VASCA }
DOMINGO } (*together*) Who's there?

DE CANDIA You talk on duty again and I'll cut you out.

DOMINGO Yes, sir.

VASCA Yes, sir.

DOMINGO and VASCA separate and exit.

DE CANDIA They're right. Everything's rusting. (*to the gun*)
Even you, my darling. What sacrilege. Strozzi's most perfect
model. She can stop a horse at five hundred paces. You're
too good for brownies, my sweet.

ESTETE What are they waiting for? Why don't they just attack
and be done with it?

DE CANDIA They'd find nothing against them. A hundred and
eighty terrified men, nine of these and two cannon. If your
King wasn't so mean we might just have a chance here.

ESTETE Hold your tongue, De Candia.

DE CANDIA Ah, good. Loyalty: that's what I like to see. You
puzzle me, Veedor. What do you get out of this? They tell
me Royal Overseers get nothing.

ESTETE Any man without self-interest must puzzle a Venetian.
If you serve a King you must kill personal ambition. Only
then can you become a channel between the people and its
collective glory – which otherwise it would never feel. In
Byzantium court officials were castrated to resemble the
Order of Angels. But I don't expect *you* to understand.

DE CANDIA You Spaniards! You men with missions! You just
can't bear to think of yourselves as the thieves you are.

ESTETE How dare you, sir!

*There is a loud burst of bird cries. PIZARRO and YOUNG
MARTIN enter upstage.*

DE CANDIA Our noble General. They say in the Indies he traded
his immortal part to the devil.

ESTETE What for, pray? Health? Breeding? Handsomeness?

DE CANDIA That they don't tell.

ESTETE I dare say not. I only wonder His Majesty could give
command to such a man. You know that he can neither
read nor write. I believe he's mad.

DE CANDIA No, but still dangerous.

ESTETE What do you mean?

DE CANDIA I've served many men: but this is the first who makes me afraid. Look into him, you'll see a kind of death.

DE CANDIA and **ESTETE** move upstage as **PIZARRO** and **YOUNG MARTIN** come down. Bird cries fill the forest.

PIZARRO Listen, Martin, listen to them. There's the world. The eagle rips the condor: the condor rips the crow. And the crow would blind all the eagles in the sky if once it had the beak to do it. The clothed hunt the naked; the legitimate hunt the bastards, and put down the word Gentleman to blot up the blood. Your chivalry laws don't govern me, Martin. They're for belonging birds – like *them*: legitimate birds with claws trim on the perch their fathers left them. Make no error. If once I could peck them off it, I'd tear them into gobbets to feed cats. Don't ever trust me, boy.

YOUNG MARTIN Sir? I'm your man.

PIZARRO Don't ever trust me. Or if you must, never say I deceived you. Know me.

YOUNG MARTIN I do, sir. You are all I ever want to be.

PIZARRO I am nothing you could ever want to be, or any man alive. Believe this: if the time ever came when you harried me, I'd rip you too, easy as look at you. Because *you* belong too, Martin.

YOUNG MARTIN I belong to *you*, sir!

PIZARRO No. You belong to hope. To faith. To priests and pretences. To dipping flags and ducking heads; to laying hands and licking rings; to powers and parchments; and the whole vast stupid congregation of crowners and cross-kissers. You're a worshipper, Martin. A groveller. You were born with feet but you prefer your knees. It's you who make Kings – bishops – generals. You trust me, I'll hurt you past believing. (*He pauses.*) Have the sentries changed?

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