

Power Play: A play about power today in one act

by stephen hastings-king

1.

I have a couple pages done. But what happens in them is already in the middle.

So how should we start?

How about "It was a dark and stormy night."

No.

But these are the sort of doings that would happen on a dark and stormy night.

No stormy. My hair. You know.

Right.

How about "Interior. Indeterminate time. Lots of gold."

But there are not the sort of doings that would happen in an interior at no particular time.

Why not?

It makes no sense.

I say it makes sense.

So why don't you write this yourself?

Maybe I'll bring one of my people in.

Suit yourself.

They know what I like.

I'm sure they do. But they don't know anything else.

I'm president. What does anything else matter?

This is stupid.

You're not a supporter are you.

Of what?

Of me.

OK. Read this.

2.

You seem like some radical left lunatic. You don't understand power. Power means I only have to see what I want to see. I have power. People who are loyal understand I have power and tell me what I want to hear. That is how I know they are loyal. They do what I tell them when I tell them: they won't oppose me with horseshit about any so-called reality and so-called its "problems." What I say goes. If the data says there's a problem, change the data.

If I say "Get a horse, bring it in here and cover it with gold" they'll make it happen and not only will they make it happen they'll go further, they'll fit the gold horse in with all the other gold things in The Gold Things Room of the White House and we'll all act like it's always been there even if the horse is alive and does horse things we'll all act like those things are part of it, whatever it is, because that's power.

I tell them "Talk to me like I'm a 12 year old" so they do it and not only do they do it, but they pretend they're not doing it because it's normal so what would it mean to be doing something it's just how they talk so they talk to everyone like they're 12 years old and now we're all 12 year olds, we talk like we're 12, we think like we're 12 we act like we're 12 because I said so that's power.

We're a gang of 12 year olds people defy us its like a playground and they're saying fuck you and it's a playground that's not smart so we surround them and say submit or bad things and they say fuck you so we send in the National Guard and change all the data about crime so there's a crime other than saying fuck you to me and the National Guard go and they stand around because who cares what they do, all that matters is they're there because I sent them there, it's like fuck you, o yeah, well FUCK YOU that's power.

I hate Spanish I don't like hearing Spanish I say no more Spanish and we're 12 so we start arresting people who say fuck you to me by

still speaking Spanish even though everyone knows I hate hearing Spanish and they keep doing it our people they're loyal for some reason they wear masks I say who cares enough with the Spanish these people tell me to fuck myself because they're speaking Spanish in defiance of me who has power and only has to hear what he wants to hear and then they say OK so what do we do with these people and I say who cares and we're 12 so no-one does just send them somewhere I can't hear them so they do that are we're 12 and things are fine and when lunatic communists say "that's a problem" they do it in English so I win that's power.

I shit myself, I do it on purpose, I had to train, it took a long time, I like to impose it on others when they can't notice, they can't flinch, they can't mention it, they can only endure and when you're 12 the most normal thing is to loudly react to what I am, but they have to ignore because I watch them, I'm the vortex, my shit spins outward, it's ambient and everyone has to act like it's not there that's power.

3. He puts the pages in his pocket.

I'd never say any of that, you know. And why would I have to be outside in some storm if I did? Funny guy you are. I should send the National Guard into your skull, have them stand around and we won't provide port-o-potties so you know what that means yeah right there in your fucking skull.

You really are a 12-year-old.

The smell comes like rotting flesh and illness.

He laughs in the way someone who doesn't know how to laugh laughs.

The smell is overpowering. I can't speak.

I win, he says over his shoulder on his way out of the room.

