

Grand Prix - short story

by Simon D. Ings

* * * *

The sea is off-white, banded by blue wave-shadow. A line of clotted cloud lies between it and the cobalt sky of La Rochelle. Angele talks but I'm not listening. I'm building sand castles.

I lie down in front of the model and pick away the square and the Boulegrins with a fingernail. I press my little finger at a slant into the model to indicate the tunnel through to the harbor. The finishing touch: I trail sand between my fingers along the edge of the cliff to make the concrete wall Frasnage demolished last year when his throttle jammed at 600 kph.

The Monaco Grand Prix is fifteen days away.

Angele peels off her shirt and heads for the water. I want to join her. The afternoon has steam-ironed my face and my shirt is dripping sweat. I want to dive into sea so cold it churns the gut, but I can't risk getting sea water in my jacks this close to a race.

It's sunset. The haze turns brown and rotten before Angele reaches the diving tiers. When she falls her silhouette is as sharp and black as the wave shadows, a black slash piercing a hyphenated surface. I think of trajectories, Gs and vectors, fire masks, halogens, wheel jacks and robots, flags like bunting said visors filled with drunken kangis.

The jack behind my anus is itching.

We walk back to town through the arcades to the market. A man is hosing the forecourt with seawater. The gutters are full of tabloids and endive.

We get a room above a cafe with a view of the market roof. We fetch our luggage from the station. Angele puts her PC at the foot of the bed, pulls out the IBCN lead and crawls about the floor cursing. We miss the first five minutes of "Danseuses Nouvelles."

They came from Dijon a year ago and they're top of the TVP ratings. They dance to Salieri and Skinny Puppy, to De Machaut and the Crucial Bridging Group. They are a women-only company and espouse the politics of the Programme Pour Femmes Fermees--the Agenda for Expressionless Women. Last year the French parliament, outraged by the atrocities of Aout '34, placed media ban on the Programme. The Amazons of the Sorbonne and the Academic Julienne are silenced now, but Danseuses Nouvelles, whose pieces are the product of their more sober semiotic researches, have never been more popular.

Few have forgotten or forgiven the sack of the Sacre Coeur, the on-stage

emasculatation of Bim Bam's drummer and lead guitarist, the siege of the Jeu de Paume or the situationist over-painting of Seurat's Baigneurs.

And yet. A glamour surrounds Danseuses Nouvelles. Its dances play out strange, deconstructed stories, and act their warped yet familiar roles with an inhuman grace. Their performances whisper of the world as the Programme wants to shape it. They are the dream in its pure state--a glimpse of an end, uncompromised by violent means.

After the show Angele and I make love. It is love with a fluid rhythm. There is a sweet, shared violence to it. Angele gasps and clutches at me, the bed, anything; I gaze into her widening eyes. There, in the wet blankness of the pupil, I can see them. I gaze closer, closer--Angele's tongue flicks at my chin and I catch it in my lips, my teeth, suck at it like baby put to the breast. Danseuses Nouvelles--missionaries from the land of strong women--are dancing in her eyes.

The thing I remember most about Catharine is the way she ate Dublin Bay prawns. She broke their backs with casual, sadistic gestures. When her red tongue flicked back the white pus within them, she put me in mind of a cat.

This was six months ago, in Quimper. I don't know how she got my number. She told me quite openly who it was she worked for, and since the Programme had never to my knowledge worked with men, I was intrigued at her invitation. Perhaps it was naive of me.

"They say racing drivers talk more and do less about sex than men in any other sport." She held the orange carcass of her latest victim between finger and thumb and twirled it by its claw over her plate. I treated her to a bitter smile. The playboy reputation, and its sarcastic flip side, is one we no longer deserve. There is no Baron von Trips on the circuit now, no Count Godin de Beaufort, no Ines Ireland, no Lance Reventlow. Everything has become too competitive and commercial. Indeed, by the nineties the playboy image had all but expired. "Formula Zero has rekindled our infamy," I explained. "New cars. New regulations. They want to rekindle the old magic. It's plastic. Packaged. Our sponsors twist incidents into publicity gimmicks. It sells ratings."

"It does not anger you?"

I shrugged. "If it did not would I be here?" The claw broke and the gutted corpse soft-landed in a pillow of saffron rice. It was her turn to smile.

She pushed aside her plate, lifted her PC onto the table, licked her fingers and typed. She read: "Cool, rational, seldom angered, seldom sulks when disappointed--" She gave me a cool glance. "Bisexual, last cruised in Groningen four years ago, in '42 had a short relationship with hypertext writer, male, in London, long-standing correspondence with lesbian activists in Seattle New York, Brisbane, Porto--"

She turned the screen round for me to see. “Hardly the stuff of blackmail,” I said.

Catharine tutted. “Of course not. What would be the point? |Publish and be Damned’ --that would be your attitude, no?”

“It has been for a long time. But Havers has a way of buying off the papers before things like that get too far.”

“You must be quite a headache for her; a |new man’ at pole position.”

“Maureen Havers is old,” I said. “Because she’s old, she’s a legend. If a legend runs a company it has an interest in creating subsidiary legends--appropriate legends.”

“So she puts you in the closet.”

“I’m glad of the privacy. If I were Don Juan, I wouldn’t get any privacy at all. She’d make sure of it.”

Catharine stroked her chin. “Is she an evil woman?”

“She is sad,” I replied. “She lost her son to Formula Libre in Brazil. Her engineers built a car that cornered too well for him. The Interlagos circuit curves the wrong way round. He wasn’t properly prepared for the extra G-strain.”

Catharine waved her hand dismissively. “I’m not interested in technicalities.”

I looked at her a long time then said, “He was still burning when I pulled him out. His visor had melted into his face.” She pursed her lips. She even had the decency to blush. “I’m sorry.”

“Formula Libre is just what it says,” I went on, ignoring her apology “a free-for-all, a freak-show for fast cars. But Formula One was outdated, and good new designers were turning to |Libre rather than be straight-jacketed. Havers built up Formula Zero to codify some of |Libre’s better ideas. She made it, and dominated it, and now, because she’s old, it dominates her.”

“And she is hated, is she not?”

“Havers’ constructors spend half their time back-stabbing each other, but there’s no real power to be had till she goes. But that’s not what you meant, is it?”

A smile played about her lips. “Touche.”

There’s a lot of bad blood between the Programme Pour Femmes Fermees and Maureen Havers. When she was young and cared nothing about cars, Maureen revived Psyche et Po, Antoinette Fouque’s 1972 outfit which dominated the French women’s liberation movement into the eighties--all red jumpsutis and internecine foulness and right-wing religious overtones.

The Programme grew up at the same time Maureen was wiring Psyche et Po's corpse to the lighting conductor. Ensuing battles levelled the tactical gulf between the two movements till the main differences were intellectual ones. Psyche et Po read Lacan; the Programme read Levi-Strauss. Psyche et Po were crypto-Capitalist; the Programme were Structuralist. Psyche et Po played the system; the Programme deconstructed it.

The Programme won, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. Without intending it, she became not unlike Psyche et Po: an elite with no popular support.

Catharine drained her wine glass. "Ms Havers is not our prime concern. I don't suppose she will like what we have in mind but--" She shrugged. "What do you know of the language of dance?" The link between Danseuses Nouvelles and the Programme wasn't known then. I was thrown. I muttered something vague about semiotics and looked like an idiot. She told me about Danseuses; it was an honor. Some weeks passed before La Monde got the tipoff.

"Are they the revolution?" I asked.

"A small part."

I toyed with my food. "Top ratings eight weeks running. Small?"

She was silent for some while, staring at me. I'd touched something important. "Since when did the man without a television read TV small print?"

I had to smile. "I don't" I assured her. "My manager does. Danseuses pushed my profile out of prime time last week. PTV wouldn't negotiate."

Catharine nodded. "Danseuses' dancer/choreographer is Helene Ritenour. In '41 she had an accident with a heavy goods vehicle. Surgeons in Sao Paulo rebuilt her. Nonotech CNS upgrades saved her from spending the rest of her life in wheelchair."

I nodded. "And some." Helene is a good dancer. Still. I thought about it. '41. In '42 Helene and Danseuses went on TV. Quick work. "Programme' money?" I asked. I knew rushing the Sao Paulo technique cost a great deal.

"We look after our own," Catharine replied. "So does Havers. Doesn't she?"

The jack behind my arse itched.

We catch a train to Nice. It's out of recession now. It even boasts a sand beach (imported) and a few working public telephones--which is more than could be said of it before.

We eat at Le Safari. Angele is pissed off and she won't tell me why. I'd show her the town, God knows I have sufficient plastic in my wallet, but hers is righteous anger, not to be bought off.

We haven't been together long. Catharine gave her to me--a contact and Woman Friday--not two months back. I find it hard to predict her moods. Maybe it was Catharine's idea she sleeps with me; maybe she's got tired of playing the whore. It's not a thought I want to go to bed with so I try to get her talking.

Like an idiot I mention the Programme. She screws up her face like she's swallowed something fatty. "I've no time for that," she snaps. "It's just play to them. Can't you just see them wanking off to the press reports after one of their sadistic little outings?"

"They're pointing up the language of repression," I say, all the while wondering at my own arrogance. Angele doesn't know these kinds of words. She's an Arab street kid who was kicked once too often to stay lying down, not a semiotics graduate. "They're targeting metagrammatic nodes in the cultural matrix--"

Her look is enough to shut me up. "Don't talk to me about language!" She's the first woman I've met growls when she's angry. "What do I care that this word and this colour and this dress mark the boundaries of chauvinism? What comfort is that to the mother with a husband who beats her? Or the rape victim or the dyke or the pensioner? Go tell you good news to every lacerated clit in Africa then look me in the eye and say this is worth the money!"

She slams her hand down on the table, lifts it, and there's a tiny gold wafer winking at me like the promise of El Dorado from the marble tabletop.

I pick it up and weigh it gingerly in my hand. It's a ROM wafer--a packet of hardwired information. It slips into the port between my shoulders--the same kind of port they fitted to Helene Ritenour.

It's strange how Angele can read me so well, even in anger. She leans over and strokes my hand with dark fingers. "Do you want to talk about it?"

I don't, but it's the only way I can thank her for tacitly forgiving me.

"It was bad," I say. "I slid off the track sideways--the near side of the monocoque took the impact. The whole thing failed in tension at the rear bulkhead. The engine and avionics went one way, the rear wheels the other. The heat exchanger was torn off. The steering column broke. All the underbelly ceramics sheared--"

"I didn't mean the car."

"So--" Something misfires inside me and the old anger is back. "Papers have back issues."

She starts back like I'd slapped her. "That wasn't fair. I'm not a ghou. I didn't mean the accident, anyway. I meant the treatment. How you got better. What it did to you." She rubs her face with her hands. "I want to know you. What am I to you? A friend or a whore?" Maybe this playboy bullshit is rubbing off on me because I really don't know. Sorry is the best answer I can come up with. We sleep

in the same bed but we don't touch.

I want to tell her what she wants to know. I want to tell her about Sao Paulo, and what they did to me. And why. I want to tell her it hurt like hell.

She is asleep.

The Grand Prix is six days away.

Maureen Havers honestly believed she was doing me a favor. No one spends eight figures sterling on one man without some feelings behind it. She could have left me in a wheelchair. It wasn't her fault I was in that state, after all--I was the one who crashed. Instead, she save me. After a fashion.

I remember how proud she was when Dr. Jacobs demonstrated the lumber jack. I swear she made eyes at it. As far as she was concerned then, I was just the meat it plugged into.

Did I resent that? Not at the time. I was still in shock from the accident. I still couldn't quite get my head round the fact I could walk again--walk with a spine shot in five places.

Imagine you're lying there with a hospital bed your only future. Then they plug ROM cartridges into your back. On them are programs which teach your brain how to access and control a whole new nervous system. You can walk again, even shit when you want to. It's miracle--and it takes a while to adjust. Then, but too late for it to make a difference, it occurs to you--all that expensive tech, just to get you toilet trained again? of course not.

At least when the Programme paid for Helene they let her be her own boss--or so the popular science programs tell us. She uses an expert system, writing her prize-winning solo choreography direct to a ROM cartridge.

Me? I get fresh ROMs sent me every month from Achebi, where they analyse my race data. It helps me drive better. Only they went one stage further.

They built me a second jack, behind my arse. When I strap myself in, I hotwire myself to the car. I don't drive it; I become it.

This has its consequences. My body is a corporate concern. It has no solid boundaries. In short, it is a whore.

One of Formula Zero's damn few rules states: one car, one driver. Havers got round that--they saved my spine and in return have turned me into a databus, a way of loading the aggregate wisdom of Achebi's Research Institute into a racing car; a smart messenger with a spine full of--what? Software? Limpware? Wetware? Why not a new term altogether? Slime.

The Casino is fashioned in flamboyant style with towers at the corners and,

sitting on the roof, great bronze angels, picked out by floodlighting which extends into the Boulengrins. Angele and I walk among the cacti. She is scared. Maybe it's the race. More likely it's being undercover, working for terrorists. I wonder how much they're paying her--she has no respect or liking for them. Her politics are much more homely. Maybe they've agreed to fund some rape-crisis centers.

"Do you think that wafer will kill you?"

"Maybe." Is this her job--to frighten me? Test my nerve? She may be right. To have the world's best speed driver die twirling in flames through the bijou houses of Monte Carlo

No. Accident themselves have their own phallic semiology. No spot on Earth so quickly forgets its widows. Grand Prix's finest take Death as their bride. Whisper their names in awe. Depailler, Villeneuve, Willy Mairesse.

I do not think the Programme will kill me. Perhaps I lack the cruelty to credit such deception. Perhaps, if I were a woman, I could be that cruel. Perhaps (I look at Angele, the stoop of her shoulders, her tired eyes, the way she twitches her fingers through her hair)--perhaps I would have to be, to survive.

We return to the Hotel de Paris. We have a suite overlooking the Casino. Tomorrow Angele will sit on our balcony; she will see the cars as they stream into the square and snake down the hill.

Perhaps she will think of me.

We watch Danseuses Nouvelles. There are only five dancers in the company including Helene. I count while I watch--if I didn't know better, I would say there were twenty-three. This is the heart of DANseuses' enduring novelty. The way they dance alters their appearance. They toy with the semiology of movement, with their audience's stereotypic racial and social expectations. They move in a way we expect certain kinds of people to move, and they become those people. The eye is tricked by the conditioned expectations of the brain. The Government are outgraded by the Programme's violent acts. But I suspect they fear this quiet revolution far more. They can handle terrorism.

But seduction?

The credits spool and I undress. I sit cross-legged on the bed. Angele pushes the wafer into my back.

It does not take long for the headache to clear. Two green circles appear, one above the other, center-vision. In an eyeblink they are gone. They are the first and the last I will see of the Programme's system. It will perform its acts regardless. I will have no opportunity to intervene.

"It's all right now," I say.

Angele turns on the light. She looks at me and she is afraid.

Inside me something flexes.

Formula Zero is a race for cars, not drivers. It is a vicious testing bed for crackpot ideas, the way Formula One used to be till the nineteen-seventies and the iron rule of Jean Marie Balestre.

Formula One's rule book ceased to reflect technical progress around that time. Formula Zero was conceived in the nineties as a way round the rule book and into the twenty-first century. Anyway, crashes are good for business.

My eyes are full of lignocaine. Underlids count off the seconds. I tense my arse and spool the revcounter into the red, just out of my line of focus. I pop the clutch plate into my mouth and bite down. The throttle glows green. I blink. The visor snaps down. It's made of Kevlar. A projector micropored to my head beams eight external views onto the inner surface of the visor then settles for center-forward.

Eight seconds.

At minus seven point two seconds the car handshakes the processor behind my lumbar jack. Point nought nought one seconds into the race the handshake is complete and all this touch-and-blink gear takes second fiddle to Achebi's direct-feed wizardry.

Four seconds.

Engine status icons mesh and flow behind my eyes.

Zero.

I'm in a different place. A green hillside. The track is a smooth black nothing under my wheels, swirling round the hill. I follow it with cybernetic eyes. Gentry in the Ferrari is a blue proximity-danger icon on my left near-side. He cuts me up on the first corner. I'll use him as a pacemaker. I'm so far ahead of the league table I'd be happy to let him win. But if I don't pass the post first, then Catharine's meme-bomb sits in me, waiting for the next victory. It only triggers if I'm race champion. A kind of sick fascination is driving me. That and a hope that the Programme's attack on the machismo-oriented Grand Prix might dovetail with my own wish for vengeance on Maureen Havers.

My tires are the sort that go soft and adhesive in the heat of acceleration. I have five laps advantage over the opposition, five laps glued to the road, before they lose their tack and I slip into something more hard-wearing.

There's the sea--a grey graphic nothing. My eyes spool white prediction curves and hazard warnings. I take Gentry on the skid in a maneuver that shortens my tire life by a lap. I feel the difference, the loss of traction. I'm picking up sensory

information from every stressed member of the vehicle, directly, through my spine. I am the car--and the car is feeling queasy. At the pit robots tend me, probing and swopping and inflating the things that make up this surrogate body of mine. My wheels feel tight and warm, hugged near to buckling by fresh, high-pressure tires. I scream away from the pit. The Longines people send me a stop time and ETF. They're counting me down for the World Record--a special etherlink tells me how I'm doing. The real dangerr now is the back-markers don't have the decency to pull in for me. They do not like me, because Havers and Achebi have made me far too good. With me around, no one else can hope to get near the championship.

By next season, I reckon FISA will rule against my kind of driving for the good of the sport. Then I'm back to the clench-plate and dataskin and honest dangerous driving. And in another twenty years Formula Zero will have accreted its own four-inch-thick Yellow Book and the whole process will start over again. A new breed of Formula Libre. From Sao Paulo, maybe.

My shoulder blades itch. There's something strange in my nervous system. I wonder what it does.

Something dreadful happens.

I'm tearing towards the tunnel (look no hands) when there's the most appalling jolt. The gearbox tears its guts out and my ribs try streining themselves through the crash-webbing. I round the bend along the harbor road and my neck isn't up the G-strain.

I slide into the pit and nausea overtakes me. The car realizes I'm going to throw up. The helmet snaps open and the clench plate grows hot to make me spit it out. I throw up over the side of the car. A valet trolley wheels over and scrubs off the mess, revealing a smeared ELF decal.

My whole body burns green fire.

Every nerve sings with power.

Achebi's unmistakable Go signal. I scabble under my seat for the clench plate. Its taste of sour saliva is nauseating and I wonder idly if I'm going to be sick again on the circuit. My helmet slams itself down and the graphics blink on. It only takes a moment to become a car again. But this time it's different. This time, I'm way down the field and will be lucky to be placed. This time--the first time this season--I will have to race.

I am compelled. What atrocity have they given me to perform? will karate the neck of the President of FOCA? Will I tear Maureen's eyes out--or my own--in front of a billion couch potatoes?

Some of Angele's special anger flows through my veins and into the car.

It feels good and dangerous, like the Grand Prix I remember. The difference

is, back then I knew when I was stretching the car to its limits. Now I can feel it. I'm an athlete with a steel body, a middle distance runner doubling speed on the last five laps.

My arrogance is rewarded.

The car starts fallingg apart.

It's not anything you can see. Even though they're wired up my back, I nearly miss the signs--ticks and prickles and a hot metal taste in the back of my throat. I'm an athlete, pushing my body and doing it damage and before long my knees are crumbling, my toes are burning away, my lungs are full of acid phlegm. I'm screaming cybernetic agony into my helmet as I come in sight of the prize pack. They are jockeying for position with all the cumbersome grace of whales. My scream becomes a roar. I think of the horrrr dozing fitfully in my spine, I think of the hurt behind Angele's eyes, and every hurtful stupidity under the sun--and I hurl myself forward. Danger icons spill blood behind my lids.

Four and Three concede with grace and let me past. I run tandem with place 1--Ashid in the Bugatti. I know from old he's no gentleman. We hug wheel-space through the square.

Data chitters through me. I take hold of the wheel. I want to be ready. If this goes wrong it might crash my systems. The wheel recognises my grip and unlocks, shaking me boisterously like an over-friendly scrum half.

I watch the odds-window, turn the car in, Ashid jerks sideways and back and already I'm wheeling past him. Our back wheels kiss and make up, then I'm runniing for pole. Martineau leads and he is Havers' Number Two. If I can get within five lenghts of him he'll slow down like a good boy and let me win.

All of sudden I have a pacemaker to get me there.

I leave Gentry behind at number three. Why Gentry--why not Ashiid? The Bugatti is still sound, my icons tell me--which is good because even a kiss can send an unlucky car tumbling--so maybe Ashid's nerve's gone, |cause he's more than a match for this prick. I think Gentry must have popped a pill.

I let him come alongside. I know he rides with a clear visor so I let go the wheel and wave to piss him off.

Then I change gear.

Time for my 550 kph Sunday drive.

Longines send regrets. The record is safe. But my mind's on something else. Martineau is tootling towards the line. I'd ride a dignified half-length ahead of him only Gentry's been driving like a madman behind me for the past two minutes and I'm too hyped to slow down.

And as I pass the line I realize: I'm no different. I too am wedded to danger, which is a longer name for death. Achebi made me fast, yes, but they so made me safe. I don't hate Maureen Havers, or what she did to me. I hate Achebi for protecting me. I hate the doctors for repairing me. I hate myself. I'm like all the others. A life-hating thing--a phallus-cocoon finding new ways to die. Why else did I let the Programme infect me? What have I done to myself?

Whisper their names. Depailler, Villeneuve, Willy Mairesse.

Me. My helmet snaps up on a view of a hundred thousand cheering would-be suicides. I smile and wave; the sun and the wind dry my tears.

I pull the jack out and adjust my flights pants and get out of the car.

Next stop the champagne.

Maureen Havers is up on the podium. She has a smile like death and I envy it. A nude girl hands me the champagne magnum. It's very hot here.

My hands are shaking. It gets dark.

I look up at the sun, puzzled.

A blood-spot on my retina, receding fast. . .

I wake up in my hotel room. Catherine is sitting by the bed. I look round. Angele's not there. "Is it over?"

Catherine smiles. "It's over."

"Did I do--what did I do?"

"Rest first."

"No!" I sit up in bed and it feels like I just shoved my head in a mincer. I take a deep breath. "Show me now."

She lights up Angele's PC.

Where is she? I watch the rerun. I see what a billion TV addicts have lived for all season.

Me. I don't believe it. There, on the podium, in front of them all--

I'm masturbating. Wanking myself through my overalls.

It's terrible. I don't know whether to laugh or throw myself out the window. When it's over my voice is high with hysteria. "How did you--how could you--I didn't--I--" I force myself to stop. Tears of rage heat my cheeks.

"You didn't. Do. Anything. Look again."

My eyes are drawn to the screen.

She is right. I don't do anything, but by the end of it's shaking afresh with disgust and self-loathing and fascinated revulsion. It's worse than the act itself could ever be. The power of suggestion. . .

"I can't believe I did that--didn't do--" I'm babbling again. I turn to Catharine. Angele must have told her I like Irish. She's pouring me a tumbler full.

"You didn't. Our water did. It took you through a very special dance. Helene's been working on it for months."

"A dance."

"Yes." She hands me the tumbler.

I drink it down in one. "A repulsive dance." When I calm down she sits beside me and says, "The Grand Prix. A phallogentric institution, wouldn't you say? But will men ever be able to draw that kind of strength from it, now its figurehead has lampooned it so ably--so cleverly?"

My eyes widen with shock. "Oh, you bitch." The truth clicks home. "I'll never race again."

She shrugs. She is prepared for my reaction. I feel vivisected.

"There are other ways to drive," she says. "When Havers sacks you, as she surely must, we have other games for you to play. Networks. Security systems. Stock exchanges."

Through a veil of shock I sense the potential behind her words. I glimpse the power that is mine as a servant of the Programme, the riches my skills and my lumbar jack might yet yield--for me, and for the women of Brazil, Africa, the whole twisted world.

But. "How will I ever show my face again?"

"Which face?" She gets off the bed and walks over to unplug the IBCN lead and as she walks her legs grow stocky, her hair lengthens, her skin grows dark and when she turns to me, her mouth is more full, her forehead less pronounced, her cheeks have swollen a little--and Angele smiles. It is beautiful.

"Everything has its place in the matrix of signification," Angele says, in a voice I do not recognise. "You claim no prejudice, no chauvinism--yet a gesture, a turn of the head, a way of lowering the eyelids, all of that plays on your stereotypic view of things. See how the white bitch becomes the dusky whore."

"Oh no," I murmur. "Not now. Not anymore." I slip off the bed and walk clumsily towards Angele and hold her in humility and run my hand over her back. I feel for the first time the ROM port between her shoulder blades. Her disguise hid

that, too, till now. What a clever dance Helene has written for her!

My heart jolts up into my mouth. “Helene?”

“Hello.” Her tongue is hot on my cheek. She laughs, and the sound is a promise. peace. . . riches . . . revolution . . .