

Crowley & Alastor: "The Devil's Due" (Final Libretto)

[Infernal cabaret. Crowley, glass of Scotch in hand, faces Alastor, cane twirling, radio static humming. The orchestra launches into a brisk, witty patter.]

CROWLEY:

I'm Crowley, King of Hell, I run the place with flair,
Why bother with the torture when I've paperwork to spare?
Delegation is my doctrine, bureaucracy my game,
Let the damned queue up for centuries, efficiency's my aim!
Deals and contracts, souls for favors—leverage, not just gore!
If Heaven's got a golden gate, I'll slip in through the door.
I'm not here for pointless drama, nor for carnage on display—
Just keep the throne, the whisky neat, and threats well locked away.

ALASTOR:

Ah, Crowley, such a manager! But tell me, where's the fun?
Hell's a stage for grand performance, not a ledger to be run!
I want chaos, I want carnage, I want music, I want screams,
But every act's a stepping stone to further-reaching schemes.
I savor every spectacle, but always with intent—
Each alliance, every secret, is a means to circumvent
The leash that keeps me tethered, the contract's binding chain—
For freedom is the truest prize, and power feeds the game.

CROWLEY:

You misunderstand the business, Alastor, let me make it plain:
A kingdom needs its structure, or the rabble go insane.
Deals with angels, bribes for demons, contracts ironclad and neat—
I keep Heaven second-guessing, keep my rivals in retreat.
Why wage a war with Heaven when I profit from détente?
Let them keep their halos shining—I'll take souls, and all I want!
I'm not here for open conflict, nor for chaos just for show—
I'd rather rule from shadows, let the fools believe they know.

ALASTOR:

But Crowley, where's the artistry? The vision? The delight?
Heaven's dull and monochrome, but we can paint the night!
Let the angels have their order, let them judge and let them sneer—
I'll just turn the dial higher, fill the void with dread and cheer!
I want power for a purpose—to be free, to pull the strings,
To stand behind the curtain as the true director of kings.
Redemption's but a fantasy, their order just a cage—
I'll break the rules, rewrite the play, and stride upon the stage!

CROWLEY (with a sly grin):

Perhaps, my dear Alastor, we're not so far apart—
Both tired of Heaven's order, both masters of our art.
You want freedom, I want comfort, but the path is much the same—
A subtle hand, a clever mind, the ever-shifting game.
I'd rather be the power behind the power, never seen—
A whisper in the darkness, the machinery's unseen.

ALASTOR (with a theatrical bow):

And I, the princess's advisor, with a smile so polite,
Spin my webs behind the scenes, and keep ambitions out of sight.
Let the hopeful chase redemption, let the angels play their part—
While I cultivate my allies and outmaneuver every heart.
For freedom's not just chaos, nor is power just a throne—
It's the art of being master, yet appearing quite unknown.

BOTH (accelerating, overlapping):

CROWLEY:

Order, power, leverage, deals—

ALASTOR:

Chaos, cunning, hidden wheels—

CROWLEY:

Keep the angels guessing, always hedging every bet—

ALASTOR:

Let them see the theater, let them never once forget—

CROWLEY:

A kingdom's built on cunning, not on spectacle or show—

ALASTOR:

But what's the point of ruling if you never let it go?

[They finish in unison, grinning with mutual respect.]

CROWLEY:

Hell's a business—run it smart, keep the angels in the dark!

ALASTOR:

Hell's a stage—let's light it up, leave a never-fading mark!

[Curtain.]