

CLOTHES FOR THEIR SOULS

by MICHAEL RUDD

CHARACTERS

ANOMALY

GUARDS

VOICE-SOPHIA

VOICE-FATE

VOICE-THAN

SETTING

A prison cell with a block on the floor and a single window

AUTHOR'S NOTE: All quotes are taken from Ayn Rand's novel *Anthem*.

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *Clothes for their Souls* is subject to a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright convention and the Universal Copyright Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including professional and amateur stage performing, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound taping, all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as information storage and retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved.

Inquiries concerning all rights should be addressed to the author at michaeljruddjr@gmail.com

Copyright © 2010 by Michael Rudd

CLOTHES FOR THEIR SOULS

[Lights up on ANOMALY holding a book.]

ANOMALY

[V.O.]

I see these untruly speaking Voices. Bastards of Ausonius! Sanctimoniously stupid. Voices. Mindless chattering. Vindicating decay ...

ANOMALY

[Reading]

"We are one in all and all in one..."

[He begins laughing. Enter GUARDS with a bowl of food.

ANOMALY slips the book into his clothing.]

GUARDS

Here is food.

ANOMALY

For me?

GUARDS

It is for the prisoners.

ANOMALY

I am the only prisoner.

GUARDS

It is. For all prisoners to share.

ANOMALY

There is only myself. So it is just for me, then? ... Do any of you know why I am in here?

[The GUARDS set the food down and exit.]

ANOMALY

[V.O.]

Lemmings.

ANOMALY

[V.O.]

But. They were uncertain. Uncertainty is doubt, and if there's doubt there is hope. There is hope. But how do I show them, their nakedness. They have clothes on their souls.

ANOMALY

Hey—that's not half bad—"clothes on their souls..."

[From offstage, there is the sound of CHILDREN passing by. They begin to sing the two songs "Row, row, row your boat" and "Ring around the rosy" simultaneously, dissonantly. Hearing this, ANOMALY grabs the bowl of food, dumps it out, then rushes to the window and begins to use the bowl to play percussion to their song. During this, enter GUARDS.]

CHILDREN

[O.S.]

Row, row, row your boat
 (Ring around the rosy)
 Gently down the stream
 (A pocket full of posy)
 Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
 (Ashes, ashes)
 Life is but a dream
 (We all fall down)

[Their voices fade away. ANOMALY keeps playing as he turns back, but ceases once he sees the GUARDS.]

ANOMALY

[Tossing the bowl to the GUARDS and sitting on the block.]

Mulțumesc—it was exquisitely delicious. Oh—but please do inform the chef that the filet mignon was a bit undercooked. But I'll gladly overlook that with a complimentary dessert.

GUARDS

Stand up and hear our Voices.

[Enter THAN, FATE, and SOPHIA.]

THAN, FATE & SOPHIA

Good morning, Anomaly.

ANOMALY

Anomaly? Is that what I'm being called? Groovy. Very enigmatic. Which one of you thought of that?

SOPHIA

Incongruity within the collective was recognized.

ANOMALY

By you?

THAN & FATE

By all.

ANOMALY

Oh. By all.

SOPHIA

By all.

ANOMALY

By every single individual. Collectively speaking, of course.

SOPHIA

Anomaly, we are not incapable of processing the singular. We have simply seen the wisdom and strength of the plural.

ANOMALY

You are so hot.

SOPHIA

We—

ANOMALY

I have processed that singular.

THAN

Excuse me?

ANOMALY

Certainly. And I can see the wisdom in our plural.

SOPHIA

We are the Voices.

ANOMALY
You are so much more. You are Sophia!

THAN
Anomaly!

ANOMALY
Than, I told you you're excused.

THAN
Go to hell!

ANOMALY
Ha! That would be your solution—

FATE
One bad apple will spoil a barrel.

ANOMALY
—But does Wisdom follow?

FATE
It is our decision for the collective—

ANOMALY
I am really not the kind of guy to leave it up to Fate.

FATE
You have no choice in the matter.

ANOMALY
Yes I do. I have every choice!

SOPHIA
Anomaly.

ANOMALY
Sophia.

SOPHIA
Why are you here?

ANOMALY

What?

SOPHIA

What are the circumstances that led you to this?

ANOMALY

Well, all the hotels in town were booked.

FATE

Do not waste our time.

ANOMALY

What are you looking for? Some kind of confession?

SOPHIA

It was collectively agreed prudent to interview the Anomaly, vis a vis.

ANOMALY

"Collectively agreed prudent" ... Did any of you fine gentlemen agree to this?

THAN

That is not their purpose. We are the Voices.

ANOMALY

Of course, my mistake. They are just guards. Hmm. Will you tell me then—what do you want to know?

THAN & FATE

Why.

ANOMALY

"Why"?

FATE

Yes, "why."

ANOMALY

Hmm. I don't think so.

THAN

Excuse me?

ANOMALY
There's the door—

THAN
ENOUGH!

SOPHIA
Peace.

ANOMALY
Yes! Enough! Because you, Than, don't want to know "why?"—you only want to know "when?" *When* will this formality be over? *When* will this bad apple be extracted?

THAN
Sooner than you think!

ANOMALY
Not soon enough for you!

SOPHIA
Please, calm—

ANOMALY
But there is a query with an even more perilous outcome. How?

THAN
How?

ANOMALY
Yes, how. How will each one of these guards feel and how will they react?

SOPHIA
To what?

[ANOMALY kisses SOPHIA. The GUARDS stare but do not move.]

THAN & FATE
GUARDS!

[The GUARDS separate ANOMALY from SOPHIA and restrain him. THAN knocks ANOMALY to the ground.]

THAN
And what about me, what about how I would react?!

[SOPHIA, FATE and the GUARDS stare at THAN and ANOMALY.]

THAN
What?

SOPHIA
Not "what." How long?

THAN
Don't be childish.

SOPHIA
Than. How long have you deceived us?

FATE
What are we talking about?

THAN
We are talking about the unfortunate spoiling of a Voice. Guards!
[The GUARDS grab SOPHIA and ANOMALY.]

ANOMALY
It's a beautiful thing, the blossoming of Wisdom. Like a flower in spring.

THAN
Execute.

GUARDS
We hear.

[All GUARDS comply save one. No one notices this. Exit THAN, FATE, and the other GUARDS. The remaining GUARD picks up the book which has fallen away from ANOMALY.]

GUARD
[V.O., reading.]
"And it seems to us that our spirit is clear as a lake troubled by no eyes save those of the sun. And in our heart—strange are the ways of evil!—in our heart there is the first peace we have known in ... years."

* * *