

THE CUPLESS KING OF VIDÉO

written by

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**EXT. PALACE OF VIDÉO - COBBLESTONE COURTYARD - MIDDAY**

A grand courtyard in front of an orchard, next to a dirt roadway leading from a nearby village, inside the Kingdom of Vidéo.

A MERCHANT (20's) halts his horse and cart, filled with cut branches and leaves, some of them crawling with a visible pestilence.

KING VIDÉO (50's) approaches the cart. His COUNSELOR (60's) follows. A GUARD (30's) by the gate.

KING VIDÉO

What is this tea you bring me?

MERCHANT

The land is changing. It does not give what it once promised.

The King leans into the cart, inspecting the payload. PRINCE VIDÉO (14) gazing from beyond a stone wall.

KING VIDÉO

It has no character, the leaves are small, the veins empty.

The oldest leaves are sickly, and blackened. The King's Counselor approaches the cart.

COUNSELOR

Indeed, the leaves are parched.

KING VIDÉO

You could not feed this to a horse, and yet you ask me to buy a cart full.

COUNSELOR

If the land has changed so, as you say, why do *these* trees give fruit so round.

MERCHANT

The time of rain has ended short of the season. High waters carried from beyond have darkened the river. I fear my toil has been poisoned.

COUNSELOR

Such fantasy he speaks. A *dark river*? Does this entertain the King?

KING VIDÉO

(to Merchant)

You dare speak such innuendo. *Do your words control the weather? The turning of the seasons?* You mock nature, in my presence.

COUNSELOR

Perhaps the merchant seeks employ as a *playwright*, in the King's company?

(gesturing to Guard)

Take him!

KING VIDÉO

And bury his tea, of rocks and twigs, that he dares peddle to my people.

The Merchant is taken from his cart, forced against his will by the arms of the Guard -- the horse feeding on a succulent apple, fallen at his hooves.

KING VIDÉO (CONT'D)

He shall be forced to live outside the walls of The Kingdom,... *for a time.*

GUARD

Yes, your majesty.

MERCHANT

(being pulled away)

*It is not for tea that I have urge!*

(turning back to warn)

*There is something to be known...!*

The King and Counselor walk towards the palace --

COUNSELOR

(heeding the scenery)

The Prince is watching.

**BALCONY OVERLOOKING COURTYARD** -- approaching young Prince Vidéo (14), perched and curious.

PRINCE VIDÉO

Father, what will happen to that man?

KING VIDÉO

He will learn to make evidence of his crop before he makes yield.

(teaching)

(MORE)

KING VIDÉO (CONT'D)

You cannot proffer as a merchant  
when you are begging your fellow  
man to know less than they have at  
hand. That is a given to any  
merchant.

(placing his hand on the  
Prince's shoulder)

It is a question of quality that a  
man is known by.

PRINCE VIDÉO

Were you not harsh to him?

KING VIDÉO

You have a kind heart, though be  
not fooled. Thought and action do  
not marry at all easily. The truth  
is much harder than we imagine.

(profoundly)

He will learn, and return to me, or  
he will seek life in a new trade.

PRINCE VIDÉO

Could *I* learn from him?

KING VIDÉO

Learn, *from him*?

COUNSELOR

In what way, from his *sorrow*?

PRINCE VIDÉO

(to the King)

His sorrow, it seems to have  
overcome him.

KING VIDÉO

You imagine the feelings of others,  
yet you did not speak to him.

(forgiving)

Set your thoughts straight, that to  
judge one must be even to be fair.

COUNSELOR

(to the Prince)

And no man is fair by nature.

KING VIDÉO

(holding the Prince's  
gaze)

I've taught you well.

(now, judging himself)

If I was unfair, I will make  
amends.

(MORE)

KING VIDÉO (CONT'D)

(resolved)

It is what *I* am tasked to do. And  
you will, one day, know this too.

The Prince considers the King's position.

COUNSELOR

Justice is not a gift given to men,  
it is a burden. Even the wisest of  
men have failed in the eyes of  
justice.

PRINCE VIDÉO

(still testing his acumen)

Did he not take leaves from your  
greatest harvester, so as to speak  
an unknown. Or simply, is he a  
thief and a liar?

COUNSELOR

You speak of his character. A man  
is often judged by his manner, in  
spite of virtue. But no fate has  
yet been summoned.

The King sees the Prince's concern is profound.

KING VIDÉO

If I am at fault, mark my words. I  
will pay with my own deed for any  
sorrow. He *will* return.

COUNSELOR

(cheerfully)

And with tea for all The Kingdom!

KING VIDÉO

Do not worry. Nature knows us each  
beyond our waking states.

(confident)

Upon his return, his toil will  
bring bounty. Courage must be  
earned, *and* rewarded.

PRINCE VIDÉO

(taking comfort, finally)

One man can raise *all* of his trade.  
And there will be tea for all to  
celebrate.

KING VIDÉO

A fine day that will be, when a man  
loves his labour, as a mistress he  
has taken with his heart and eyes.

(MORE)

KING VIDÉO (CONT'D)

Until then you shall see that there  
is no love greater than a King has  
for his Kingdom.

(gesturing to Vidéo)

All of this I cherish, though it  
belongs to many. And in your eyes  
you should see the same. What  
belongs to any man, falls upon you.  
And that is what the heart must  
know.

COUNSELOR

To see what nature has given us -  
and to be fair with it. Smile at  
the land and love her everyday, as  
if it were your first.

The King paces toward a tall branch shading the balcony.

KING VIDÉO

(plucking a ripe apple)

The light in the tree gives us  
fruit. And that same light must be  
inside you.

He gives Prince Vidéo the apple, and takes leave with his  
Counselor. The Prince holds the apple, staring at the horse  
down the hill, at pasture by the gate.

**MAIN GATE BY ORCHARD** - The Prince takes the horse by the  
bridle. He puts the apple in the horse's satchel.

PRINCE VIDÉO

(caressing horse's neck)

What does the horse know about  
love? Would you care to show me?

The Prince trots the horse out the gate, mounting the saddle.

PRINCE VIDÉO (CONT'D)

(eyes at the horizon)

Is this the world that lies before  
me that I might love so profoundly,  
as the light loves a tree? Does not  
a tree choose the night, or is it  
only day? *Take me to the village!*

**TRACKING THE PRINCE** - as he rides toward the village, across  
a high trail, leading to the nearby lowlands. Further, the  
vision of a hamlet, just outside the larger village, framed  
by a stand of trees. The Prince stops to take an image, pale  
but idyll, of rustic charm and beauty. Underfoot, a parched  
earth, with a visible harm creeping onto the vines. From the  
horse, the Prince tilts his cap, blocking light from the sky.