

THE MONTAGUES

BY STAN RICHARDSON

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August 2014. Two American guys in Mantua:

A, Palestinian-American
AA, Midwestern American

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"I will tell you what war is. War is a psychosis caused by an inability to see relationships. Our relationship with our fellowmen. Our relationship with our economic and historical situation. And above all our relationship to nothingness, to death."

— John Fowles, *The Magus*

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the montagues

They kiss.

AA

Thus with a kiss I age

A

What

AA

Thus with a kiss I age “Thus with a kiss I die”

A

Ah okay

AA

You just said you were having daddy issues

A

Ah okay

AA

Sorry I’m not old enough To make you feel safe

A

I was talking about the Patriarchy “Daddy issues”

AA

“Ah okay”

A

Let's look at the art

AA

That's the attitude Surely they have wifi So we can see what's happening over

A

My family's in Ramallah They're not

AA

Yes I know But last night on the news you were saying me you'd been there you'd been there you'd been

A

Visiting friends They're all in the States now

AA

So “Safe” Ha

Tell me about this painting A

What do you notice about it AA

What's its history A

This is a private collection We can look it up later You want an Oedipal An edible Ha AA

No are you having another A

No I'm enjoying my level of anxiety AA

What are you anxious about A

You just implied that I was part of the Patriarchy AA

I was being passive-aggressive A

Ah okay AA

Sometimes I feel like I'm trying to communicate and you're turning everything into a work of art A
A literary

What's the difference AA
There's information which is a basic need like like "help!" and
there's the expression of that need and the expression of need is art That's why they say
The Art of Communication

Help A

Exactly Or "care to lend me a hand" or AA

Help A

Yes You already said that one	<u>AA</u>
I need help	<u>A</u>
With what	<u>AA</u>
With you You're going on and on about Italian art	<u>A</u>
We're in Mantua it felt appropriate but you're unhappy	<u>AA</u>
I'm not unhappy I'm scared	<u>A</u>
Talk to me	<u>AA</u>
I don't want to	<u>A</u>
Fine Then look at the	<u>AA</u>
I don't want to look at art	<u>A</u>
Then go outside	<u>AA</u>
I don't want to go outside	<u>A</u>
How's your blood sugar Let's get lunch I'm sure some place isn't taking a "siesta"	<u>AA</u>
You don't even know the word for it	<u>A</u>
Neither do you	<u>AA</u>
You only speak one language	<u>A</u>

AA
And you speak several When I was younger I wasn't that interested in learning

A
I didn't learn out of interest

AA
Yes I wasn't made to I wasn't in The political climate was such that

A
Your political climate What you felt not

AA
Yes I did not grow up like you I want to understand you

A
The political climate

AA
Yes What's the more "real" way of saying

A
I shouldn't be with you

AA
Of course not I thought that was part of the erotic Breaking ties with your family your people But it sounds like I'm too I probably shouldn't be with you either

A
No I mean your use of language You absorb everything I say like you thought of it yourself and then nothing changes

AA
Would you rather I get defensive

A
I think you are defensive

AA
Say more

A
Fuck you

AA
You always say the f-word It's a violent energy to put between us

A
There is violence between us

AA

How What Let me hold you

A

It's not okay It's not okay and it's not going to be okay

AA

We decide that

A

No we don't

AA

We don't decide if we're okay Then who decides Tension is essential to any structure
That's just physics I think

A

You don't know physics Why are you relating things to things you know nothing about

AA

Because you're tired of hearing the things I know about And so am I Can we just have

A

Don't say "peace"

AA

I was going to suggest lunch Or a nap Or spending the rest of the day solo

A

You've never been traumatized

AA

No It sounds terrible And I feel like I'm doing it to you right now "Help!"

A

I wasn't joking

AA

You were telling the truth in the form of a joke

A

I wasn't joking

AA

Well you said it in a way that Hey I know that you feel un

A

"unsafe in the world I do too" I can't be in Italy right now

AA
If you had a magic wand and unlimited financial resources What it's an imaginative

A
You use the Socratic method to make me realize that I actually want to be here with you

AA
But you don't

A
You don't understand how scary it is

AA
Italy

A
Sure

A
I love it here I said I'd be perfectly happy going alone What's wrong with Italy now that

A
It makes sense

AA
Thank you

A
I wasn't agreeing with you I was answering you

AA
What's wrong with Italy is that it make sense Why is everything a koan

A
Because you choose to see it that way You choose to say well it's unresolvable it's a part of life Conflict is beauty

AA
I never said conflict is beauty

A
Conflict tension

AA
Conflict and tension are two very different

A
I don't want to talk about words I want to go home

AA
It's not safe

A
What do you mean

AA
Oh you mean like the hotel

A
Home The place we live Where we keep our towels

AA
We're going back tomorrow We can go back tonight if there are flights with enough

A
I'm not saying

AA
What are you

A
Just because I want doesn't mean I need for you to do anything

AA
I'm not suggesting you can't do it yourself But your home where you were born is terrible right now

A
Terrible

AA
People are terrified for their lives

A
That's how it's always been

AA
If you liked it so much why did you move

A
Fuck you Fuck your *Twin Peaks* harm noir

AA
Don't fucking bring *Twin Peaks* into this What should I watch What should I pay attention to You won't show me things You won't even watch the news with me You hate watching me watch

Things you can never understand A

If anyone ever did anything to you AA

It's not the same A

How is it not the same AA

You will never be attacked for who you are A Ethnically Nationally

So my friends who died in the World Trade Center AA

I'm sorry but that's not the same thing A

Yes I know We brought it on ourselves AA But that doesn't mean that I wanted it I spend hours in the grocery store now trying to find the tiny words "made in wherever"

You shouldn't be doing it for me A

How else am I supposed to care about something if it's not because of who I love AA

You don't get it A

Help me AA

You can't get it because you're in it A

So are you AA

Help A

Help AA

Help	<u>A</u>
Help	<u>AA</u>
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The word repeats until one of them stops.