

Bangkok by Antonio Morcillo López

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SECURITY GUARD: *Thirty-four years old*

TRAVELLER: *Sixty-eight years old*

The action takes place somewhere in Spain.

An empty airport terminal with long rows of seats. Behind them large windows filter the light of a sunny day. Outside, a hooded falcon flies majestically. A standing traveller watches it, his back to the audience. Next to him stands a wheeled suitcase. On top of the suitcase, there is a light brown coat, neatly folded. Shortly afterwards a security guard appears. He is surprised to see the traveller. After looking in his direction, he continues to observe the figure of the traveller curiously. The guard is wearing a falconry glove on his left hand. The traveller continues to watch the flight of the falcon in silence until it suddenly disappears out of view.

SECURITY GUARD

What are you doing here?

TRAVELLER

Me? I'm waiting.

SECURITY GUARD

Waiting? What are you waiting for?

TRAVELLER

My plane.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm sorry but I can't let you stay in the airport. It's not allowed.

TRAVELLER

I don't want to stay in the airport.

SECURITY GUARD

I'd be fired.

TRAVELLER

I'm telling you that I don't want to sleep in the airport. I want to go to Bangkok.

SECURITY GUARD

Bangkok?

TRAVELLER

Bangkok. Thailand. Scheduled departure at 2pm. Sunrise fly

SECURITY GUARD

Sunrise fly?

TRAVELLER

Why aren't the screens on? Why isn't there anybody around?

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

May I see your boarding pass?

TRAVELLER

Of course.

The traveller looks in one of the coat pockets, removes a scrap of paper and hands it over. The guard reads it carefully.

SECURITY GUARD

Where did you get this?

TRAVELLER

From the Internet. *(Pause)* What's the matter? Is there some kind of problem?

SECURITY GUARD

How much did you pay for your ticket?

TRAVELLER

One thousand five hundred euros return. With a hotel included.

SECURITY GUARD

What a bargain!

TRAVELLER

With breakfast as well.

SECURITY GUARD

Right. Scrambled eggs, bacon and chocolate croissants. Now listen...

TRAVELLER

Why are you wearing that glove?

SECURITY GUARD

For the falcons.

TRAVELLER

Falcons? What falcons?

SECURITY GUARD

The falcons that we have in the airport. *(Pause)* A lot of people don't know it but falcons are essential for good air traffic control. Can you hear the little bustards? Really annoying birds with black and white necks? The little bustards get into the plane engines and can cause a disaster. They fly like this. *(He extends his arms and imitates the flight of a bird)* flapflapflapflap.

TRAVELLER

And the falcons scare them off?

SECURITY GUARD

Exactly. They cost a fortune but they're worth it.

TRAVELLER

So, you train them?

SECURITY GUARD

That's right. I train them and look after them.

TRAVELLER

Since when have security guards in airports trained falcons?

SECURITY GUARD

Since when?

TRAVELLER

Yes, since when?

SECURITY GUARD

I don't know. Maybe since everything turned to shit. Since when? I couldn't tell you the exact date. 1588? 1898? Or maybe 1939. Around then.

TRAVELLER

I see. Cost cutting. The economic crisis.

SECURITY GUARD

Cost cutting, the economic crisis and a weekend course on the fundamentals of falconry. Adapt or die. I'm also in charge of the ferrets. But they're not as interesting. Before there were ten of us guarding the airport. Now it's only Wei and I left and Wei finds animals disgusting so I'm in charge of them. It seems that's the way all the Chinese are. Well, the Chinese from Wei's region anyway. China's very big. Maybe in Beijing they love ferrets, I don't know.

TRAVELLER

So what do the ferrets do?

SECURITY GUARD

The ferrets are another key to good air traffic control. All the animals that surround the airport are important, of course. But the ferrets especially because they're responsible for getting rid of the rabbits. Their burrows can wreck the runway. All the ground wiring. It's a disaster.

TRAVELLER

Another weekend course on the fundamentals of the ferret?

SECURITY GUARD

You take it or leave it.

TRAVELLER

And there are another fifty thousand like you waiting.

SECURITY GUARD

And on top of it all you have to say thank you.

TRAVELLER

This airport is a zoo.

SECURITY GUARD

No. It's a long story.

TRAVELLER

Listen, where are the other travellers?

SECURITY GUARD

Other travellers?

TRAVELLER

It's almost time and there's nobody at the gate. And, although you probably won't believe it, there wasn't anybody at check-in either. Nobody. I got through without any problems at all. I could have taken a bomb through. Or a gun. Nobody checked my luggage. I know there have been staff cuts and all that but couldn't they reduce the numbers of falcons and ferrets and hire someone to do the check-in?

SECURITY GUARD

Good question.

TRAVELLER

I'm not asking for anything out of this world.

SECURITY GUARD

Absolutely not.

TRAVELLER

Would you like to check my luggage?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not authorised to do that.

TRAVELLER

Do you want to frisk me?

SECURITY GUIDE

I'm not authorised for that either. Sorry.

TRAVELLER

All right then. That's fine. Just don't all of you complain later if the plane explodes at two thousand feet.

SECURITY GUARD

I wouldn't worry about that.

TRAVELLER

I hope that there are more staff in the airport in Bangkok, honestly.

SECURITY GUARD

And planes.

TRAVELLER

And planes. What do you mean by that?

SECURITY GUARD

Take a look outside. How many planes do you see?

TRAVELLER

What do you mean by planes?

SECURITY GUARD

I mean those modern era devices in a cylindrical form with 2 flat extensions that come off the sides, most of the time moving at a supersonic speed around space. How many do you see?

TRAVELLER

Well...I can see, at a quick glance...none...I don't see any planes around here. They must be in the hangars.

SECURITY GUARD

In the hangars...where the fuck are you from? Get your things and get out of here at once. Come on.

TRAVELLER

Excuse me.

SECURITY GUARD

Go home. There are no planes here. The airport isn't in use.

TRAVELLER

What about my flight?

SECURITY GUARD

Your flight? What flight? Your flight doesn't exist. You've been swindled, sir.
You've paid one thousand five hundred euros for a flight that doesn't exist leaving from an airport that has no planes.

Silence.

TRAVELLER

So what do I do now?

SECURITY GUARD

Very simple. You have to leave the building.

TRAVELLER

I can't.

SECURITY GUARD

Yes you can. Come with me please.

TRAVELLER

Just a second, just a second...this...this isn't happening, is it? I have a ticket. A legal ticket. I have the right to travel. What about the falcons? What about the ferrets? What do you train falcons for if there really are no planes at this airport? What...what's really going on here? I want to speak to the head of SunriseFly and be compensated somehow. Or have my flight changed. Something.

SECURITY GUARD

Listen. The only thing that you can do in this airport is go to the bathroom. Do you want to go to the bathroom? I'll take you.

TRAVELLER

No. I have to go to Bangkok.

SECURITY GUARD

Listen, you can't go to Bangkok! You'd have to fly yourself like a falcon! And you're not a falcon! You're a poor idiot that's been fooled in the most foolish way! An old ignoramus, that's what you are! (*Silence*) Excuse me. I'm sorry. Seriously. I didn't mean to say that. It's not your fault.

TRAVELLER

Yes, it is. I'm an idiot.

SECURITY GUARD

No, you're not. It could happen to anyone.

TRAVELLER

Really?

SECURITY GUARD

No. I mean yes. They take advantage of people. That's all. Those bastards don't see people, they see euros. They're sick. We live in a completely commercialised world, you know. There are no people anymore, rather collectives that generate expenses who are subjected to those who can impose taxes on them for the simple act of breathing. It's terrible. But don't you worry about it.

TRAVELLER

No?

SECURITY GUARD

No. Soon everything will completely change.

TRAVELLER

I'll get my money back?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not talking about that.

TRAVELLER

What are you talking about then?

SECURITY GUARD

Soon there is going to be a substantial change in the world order.

TRAVELLER

So then I'll get my money back?

SECURITY GUARD

No.

TRAVELLER

Then, what's in it for me if there is a substantial change in the world order?

SECURITY GUARD

Nothing at the moment but think of the long term.

TRAVELLER

I don't have time! I want my money now!

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not talking about your money.

TRAVELLER

Ah, no?

SECURITY GUARD

No. I'm talking about how the ruling commercialisation of our society will make way for a new dawn based on empathy and equality for all.

TRAVELLER

And that has something to do with me?

SECURITY GUARD

It has something to do with all of us.

TRAVELLER

Where's your boss? I want to speak to him.

SECURITY GUARD

There's nobody here.

TRAVELLER

Where's the Sunrise fly office? I want to speak to whoever's in charge. They sold me the ticket.

SECURITY GUARD

I've never heard the name of that company. Here, at least, they don't have an office. And do you know why I'm so sure? Because there isn't any office of any airline here. There never has been.

TRAVELLER

There's no justice.

SECURITY GUARD

Not at the moment.

TRAVELLER

Sons of bitches.

SECURITY GUARD

Pisses you right off.

TRAVELLER

Makes me want to beat them to death.

SECURITY GUARD

Skin them alive.

TRAVELLER

Yank their teeth out with pliers.

SECURITY GUARD

Send them to hell.

TRAVELLER

Remove their intestines and strangle them.

SECURITY GUARD

Ok, I think that's enough.

TRAVELLER

Slice off their cocks and stick them up their arseholes after castrating them with a blunt knife.

SECURITY GUARD

That's enough, don't you think?

TRAVELLER

Take a Black and Decker and drill into their bodies, then pour sulphuric acid into the holes, let them melt slowly like Swiss cheese and throw them into the toilet.

SECURITY GUARD

Listen.

TRAVELLER

That's what they deserve. The bastards.

SECURITY GUARD

Listen!!

TRAVELLER

What? Don't shout at me, ok? I can hear you perfectly.

SECURITY GUARD

Sorry. *(Pause)* Why do you want to go to Bangkok?

TRAVELLER

I think it's a good place to disappear.

SECURITY GUARD

Amidst all the people, you mean?

TRAVELLER

No. I mean physically.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey, listen...don't even think of doing something silly in Bangkok, ok? The authorities there take self-harm very seriously. And not in this airport either. We don't even have a first-aid kit. The other day Wei split his eyebrow open

when he fell off the scooter and we didn't even have a band-aid to put on the gash.

TRAVELLER

Where is Wei?

SECURITY GUARD

Over the other side. Sleeping, most likely. He's just had twins.

TRAVELLER

What about you? Do you have kids?

SECURITY GUARD

One. Four years old. What about you?

TRAVELLER

One as well. *(Pause)* Flew the coop a long time ago.

SECURITY GUARD

What does he do?

TRAVELLER

Engineer.

SECURITY GUARD

Does he have a family?

TRAVELLER

No. He was married but he got divorced. I don't know who he's with now.

SECURITY GUARD

Do you speak often?

TRAVELLER

Yes. It's difficult. Both of us travel a lot. But we keep in touch

SECURITY GUARD

When they grow up everything changes.

TRAVELLER

The strange thing is that I miss him a lot more now than I did when he was little. When he was little, I was too busy with work. Now I really get the urge to speak to him. Tell him things. Above all at night.

SECURITY GUARD

Are you sure that he wants to tell you things as well?

TRAVELLER

Yes, I'm sure. He wants to.

SECURITY GUARD

He could be in Bangkok right now, who knows?

TRAVELLER

Who knows?

SECURITY GUARD

It would be funny if you went to Bangkok and found your very own son on the street.

TRAVELLER

Yes, it'd be very funny.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

What's the matter? Wouldn't it be good?

TRAVELLER

Yes, it'd be very good. We'd have a great time.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

Have I put my foot in it?

TRAVELLER

No, not at all.

SECURITY GUARD

You know what? Sometimes I bring my son to the airport to show him the falcons. He loves them.

TRAVELLER

Just the two of you here, you must have a great time.

SECURITY GUARD

It's fun.

TRAVELLER

You seem like a good father.

SECURITY GUARD

I do what I can.

TRAVELLER

Yes, of course you do. *(Pause)* I don't think that I did all that I could at the time. Far from it.

SECURITY GUARD

It's not easy.

TRAVELLER

You do it.

SECURITY GUARD

I work in an empty airport.

TRAVELLER

Do you like working here?

SECURITY GUARD

What can I say? I studied Hispanic Linguistics, Political Science and Economics. I have a doctorate in Economic History from the London School of Economics and for a couple of years I was an associate researcher in the Centre for Economic Policy Research and the Madrid Institute for Advanced Studies. After that I did a Masters in Business Administration, another in Investment Strategies and Financial Management and another in International Relations and Global Government: New Challenges in the New Millennium. I'm an expert in New Information Technologies and Web Design. I speak English, French, Dutch, German and Italian and Wei is teaching me a bit of Mandarin in our spare time. Now I'm studying fourth year Law by distance education, just in case. Apart from that, I have two unedited finished novels and a third that I'm stuck on. I'm thinking about writing a collection of poems next year, but let's wait and see if I have the time. *(Silence)* Do I like working here? In some ways I love it but it also makes me anxious. Both. It's like being inside a dream. You never stop believing it. Is this airport real? Was it really built? Am I here, dressed as a security guard speaking to you or am I still in bed, sleeping? Can it really be possible that I have ended up as a guard when I have such a fantastic résumé? What's more real? My CV or this airport? Why am I not teaching Applied Economics in some American university? What am I *really* doing while I'm taking care of the falcons and the ferrets? Do you see where I'm heading? It's all far too absurd to be true. Every time that I see the turnoff for the airport on the highway and turn right, I tell myself it must be a dream. When I go home at night and talk to my son about the falcons and the ferrets before giving him a goodnight kiss, I tell myself it must be a dream. But the thing is it seems real. It really does. This terminal seems real. You seem real. Or at least as real as Wei. Do they really pay us for doing nothing? And above all, how long can this last? But it does. Sometimes I sit down where we are now and I look at the sky for a good while. I get the feeling that I must be part of some international Think Tank and that I'm reflecting with my whole research team about the future of Europe in the midst of the Global Financial Crisis. A fascinating subject. It completely absorbs me. Along with my research team, I analyse the different geopolitical perspectives on the subject. There are times when we can't come even close to agreement. We argue. We've even come to blows. Europe is a tricky subject. Then we have a coffee and try to relax a little. We're all educated scientists but the thing is, we're passionate. There's a Thai scholarship holder who really works me up. She couldn't be more than twenty but she's already been halfway around the world. It's obvious that she's fucked long and hard with all kinds of men and women. It's obvious from the way she moves, the way she looks at me. In fact, she doesn't move - she saunters subtly and sumptuously. Do you know what I'm talking about? But I don't know how to deal with it. Besides we had a very unpleasant workplace harassment case last year. I don't want to lose my job for having a quick screw in the toilet. I don't want to lose my family. I prefer to jerk off thinking about

Kulap, that's the girl's name. She knows something about me but I don't know what. She knows a secret that compromises me. She leaves ambiguous notes alluding to it in my office. She sends me sardonic emails. Sometimes she insinuates that I'm not really a respected researcher meditating on the future of the old continent but a security guard in an empty airport in the middle of nowhere. It completely unsettles me. Sometimes I suspect that my colleagues know it as well. Anyway, I'm sure that Kulap won't say anything about it. I don't ask myself why but when I look into her eyes at our meetings, I know it. I tell myself that it might be love. Maybe true love. Don't you think?

TRAVELLER

No doubt about it.

SECURITY GUARD

That's what I thought. *(Pause)* What about you?

TRAVELLER

Me? What?

SECURITY GUARD

What do you do?

TRAVELLER

I haven't studied as much as you.

SECURITY GUARD

And what does that matter?

TRAVELLER

I manage operations.

SECURITY GUARD

And what does that consist of?

TRAVELLER

I run projects.

SECURITY GUARD

Now I get it. What kind of projects?

TRAVELLER

All kinds.

SECURITY GUARD

I see. Infrastructure, events, communications?

TRAVELLER

Yes. As long as they pay well.

SECURITY GUARD

And do they pay well?

TRAVELLER

Sometimes. Not always.

SECURITY GUARD

Wow, must be exciting.

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

Operations management.

TRAVELLER

No. It's actually boring. Lately I've been improvising quite a lot so I don't get so bored. I put a bit of imagination into it. The monotony is terrible.

SECURITY GUARD

Tell me. How long have you been working in operations management.

TRAVELLER

I don't remember having done anything else in my life. That's the way it used to be. In some ways you didn't choose your job, your job chose you. To put it another way, the job was an already mature suitor and you were the still virginal girlfriend. And just like a recently married young woman learns day to day about the tastes and character of her husband, we learnt our jobs by doing them. We made a lot of mistakes, of course. And we got beat up a lot for it. But you knew that it would stay with you until your dying days. And then you could say in a loud voice: "I, ladies and gentlemen, know how to do this. I know how to build a wall, fix a radio, make a perfect coffee." That gave you tremendous security. It seems like I'm talking about the Middle Ages but it really wasn't that long ago. It didn't even occur to you to leave your job, to divorce yourself, if you like. You couldn't stay idle. That was a sin. It's not like now when everybody seems to be taking a sabbatical year without ever having lifted a finger in their whole life. People didn't have to go to the other side of the world to think about what they really wanted to do, because people spent the whole day doing it, learning about it. Now, everybody wants to spend their time getting to know their true selves, but nobody knows how to do jack shit. Now people go to the grave and the only thing they can say is: "Ladies and gentlemen, I spent the best years of my life searching for myself without ever actually finding myself. Don't come and tell me to do something now. Ladies and gentleman, thanks to social security, I finally know who I am. I will be forever grateful." What I mean is that, in my day, you knew who you were depending on what you did for a job. It was always the same. One thing was connected to the other. To think that somebody can find out who he is without having a job, or working in any old thing, not caring whether he's doing a good or bad job, while moving around from place to place, is not just stupid, it's a crime.

SECURITY GUARD

How old are you?

TRAVELLER

Sixty-eight. I've got a pacemaker.

SECURITY GUARD

My father got one too. When he was sixty-eight.

TRAVELLER

Life takes on a different light when you've got something inside you.

SECURITY GUARD

You take it more calmly, right. (*Silence*) Listen, if you want to stay and sleep here, stay. Fuck the rules.

TRAVELLER

I don't want to stay. I want to go to Bangkok.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm just saying so you know, all right? Do as you wish.

TRAVELLER

But what will Wei say? Will it be okay with him?

SECURITY GUARD

Wei? Wei does what I tell him to do.

TRAVELLER

Thank you. You're very kind.

SECURITY GUARD

It's not kindness. It's humanity.

TRAVELLER

You speak like a philosopher.

SECURITY GUARD

It's not the first time I've been told that.

TRAVELLER

What's made you change your mind?

SECURITY GUARD

Have you always worked for the same company?

TRAVELLER

No, of course not. I work job by job. That's the way operations management is. I've been working with some of my clients for more than 40 years though. How time flies, my God.

SECURITY GUARD

Forty years.

TRAVELLER

The truth is I'm tired.

SECURITY GUARD

Always doing the same thing is very tiring.

TRAVELLER

It's worse doing nothing at all.

SECURITY GUARD

What's truly horrible is not doing anything and always doing the same thing, right?

TRAVELLER

Are you speaking from your own experience?

SECURITY GUARD

No. I'm philosophising,

TRAVELLER

I see, but you're right. Routine kills me.

SECURITY GUARD

You should reinvent yourself, learn new skills.

TRAVELLER

At my age? No, thanks.

SECURITY GUARD

Why not?

TRAVELLER

Didn't you listen to what I said before? I have no other skills and I don't want any. I'm fine as I am.

SECURITY GUARD

All right then. But maybe it's time to try something different. I don't know. You said yourself that you're tired and bored. Surely your performance has dropped off.

TRAVELLER

You don't know anything about my performance.

SECURITY GUARD

That's true. I have no idea.

TRAVELLER

My performance continues to be excellent.

SECURITY GUARD

Sorry. Saying that was stupid.

TRAVELLER

Exactly. Stupid.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm sorry. I'm just saying that none of us are truly aware of everything that can be done in life. We can surprise ourselves. It's never too late to try. We just need to be open and listen to our inner selves.

TRAVELLER

Now, are you philosophising or speaking from your own experience?

SECURITY GUARD

Both. *(Pause)* The truth is it's something that I read in a newspaper magazine.

TRAVELLER

I wouldn't know how to do it.

SECURITY GUARD

Do what?

TRAVELLER

Listen to my inner self.

SECURITY GUARD

There's no guide.

TRAVELLER

To me it sounds just as strange as saying "listen to your pancreas" or "listen to your bone marrow." I don't know what my pancreas or bone marrow have to say about me.

SECURITY GUARD

It's not quite the same.

TRAVELLER

Listen to your perineum. Absurd.

SECURITY GUARD

I don't get it.

TRAVELLER

"I've got something very important to tell you. Run."

SECURITY GUARD

"Listen to your inner self" is the same as saying, "listen to your true self."

TRAVELLER

That's even worse. "Listen to your true self". What's that?

SECURITY GUARD

Have you done it before? Have you even tried? (*Silence*) Maybe the fact that you're here now, the fact that you wanted to go to Bangkok and leave it all behind, is a sign that you've started a conversation with your true self, don't you think? The symptom being that it is causing a change. Are you married?

TRAVELLER

What's that got to do with it?

SECURITY GUARD

Why are you travelling alone?

TRAVELLER

What does it matter to you? *(Silence)* My wife died.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm sorry.

TRAVELLER

That's okay. It was many years ago. I've had time to get over it. Sometimes I think I haven't managed to get over it completely.

SECURITY GUARD

My parents are still alive.

TRAVELLER

I'm happy for you.

SECURITY GUARD

I mean, I still don't know what it's like to lose a loved one.

TRAVELLER

Don't be in a hurry to find out.

SECURITY GUARD

It must be terrible. It must be...How is...? *(Pause)* Can I send you my CV?

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

Can I send you my CV? I need a change too.

TRAVELLER

Of course. Do you have any operations experience?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm a fast learner.

TRAVELLER

I can't promise you anything.

SECURITY GUARD

No obligations.

TRAVELLER

Things are very bad and getting worse.

SECURITY GUARD

No obligations.

TRAVELLER

Send it to me and I'll pass it on to my superiors.

SECURITY GUARD

I really want to work in a team, be a part of more solid and wider structures. I'm comfortable here, you know. I couldn't be more at ease. I love the falcons and I get on great with Wei. But, as I told you before, I need some reality in my life. Something tangible. Something that I can tell my son without the feeling that I'm making things up as I go. I think that the operations management could give me the point of reality that I need, that material touch that all real things have. I'm not sure if you get what I'm saying.

TRAVELLER

Yes, I do. Perfectly.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm a mess.

TRAVELLER

It doesn't surprise me. Working here would confuse anyone.

SECURITY GUARD

That's what I'm talking about.

TRAVELLER

Send it to me. No problem.

SECURITY GUARD

Thanks.

TRAVELLER

In any case, don't think that operations management is paradise on earth. There's a lot of pressure. We work towards goals. And if we don't achieve the set goals, we cop it. That causes considerable tension in the team. A large part of my work is to deal with that tension and keep it at bay.

SECURITY GUARD

I understand.

TRAVELLER

No. I don't think you do.

SECURITY GUARD

No?

TRAVELLER

Don't say you understand when they talk to you about something you have no idea about.

SECURITY GUARD

Okay. What should I say?

TRAVELLER

Don't say anything. Listen to your inner self.

SECURITY GUARD

Okay. I get it.

TRAVELLER

One of our internal operating rules is, don't talk bullshit. Bullshit costs money. And money is life.

SECURITY GUARD

Money is the most important thing for me.

TRAVELLER

More bullshit. In operations management you have to be one hundred per cent efficient or you're gone.

SECURITY GUARD

I think I'm starting to understand.

TRAVELLER

Young man, you need to learn more quickly.

SECURITY GUARD

What kind of clients do you work with?

TRAVELLER

All kinds.

SECURITY GUARD

For example?

TRAVELLER

I'd prefer not to give names. *(Pause)* Big banks. International investment groups. Multimillionaires. Even the Bilderberg Group.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

You're kidding.

TRAVELLER

Me. Not at all.

SECURITY GUARD

The Bilderberg group?

TRAVELLER

Yes, although you wouldn't believe it. Still, it's not what it used to be.

SECURITY GUARD

The Bilderberg Group? Do you work for Peter Sutherland? For Etienne Davignon? Do you know that bastard Donald Rumsfeld?

TRAVELLER

Mr Rumsfeld is a good client. And a prankster.

SECURITY GUARD

A prankster?

TRAVELLER

Yes. A very thoughtful one.

SECURITY GUARD

You're the one who's a prankster.

TRAVELLER

I'm being serious.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

I don't believe it. Anyway. Listen. It's not so simple. There are rules, regulations. There are security cameras twenty-four hours a day. Sensors. You can't stay here. I'm sorry.

TRAVELLER

I don't want to stay here. I've already told you.

SECURITY GUARD

It's strictly forbidden.

TRAVELLER

I want to go to Bangkok.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm talking seriously. Get up, please. I can't afford to lose my job and Wei, even less so with his five kids and a mortgage. He could kill you with his nunchuks.

TRAVELLER

I didn't mean to bother you.

SECURITY GUARD

It's not a matter of bothering me. Get up.

TRAVELLER

It's a matter of convenience, right?

SECURITY GUARD

Convenience? Listen, don't fucking mess with me. I'm only doing what I'm told. Why don't you go to a hotel? Why don't you get a room in the Carlton with a Jacuzzi and sea view? Or better still, why don't you go home to your garden, heated pool, sauna, stables, golf course and private airport with planes?

TRAVELLER

Believe it or not, I live in an eighty square metre apartment.

SECURITY GUARD

And I'm the Queen of England.

TRAVELLER

Inherited the throne from my dead mother.

SECURITY GUARD

Call your helicopter then and get out of here and go to your mother's house.

TRAVELLER

Have I said something that has bothered you?

SECURITY GUARD

No.

TRAVELLER

Do the kind of clients I have bother you?

SECURITY GUARD

Bother me? No.

TRAVELLER

They should. They're bastards.

SECURITY GUARD

They are?

TRAVELLER

To a considerable extent.

SECURITY GUARD

I would never have imagined it.

TRAVELLER

They have no morals.

SECURITY GUARD

Really? Who would have thought it?

TRAVELLER

I see that it bothers you.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not bothered. Not that I'm aware of.

TRAVELLER

But if you want to work in operations management you'll have to swallow more than one bitter pill.

SECURITY GUARD

Everyone is responsible for their own actions.

TRAVELLER

That's what I'm saying.

SECURITY GUARD

What does it matter to me if they're bastards?

TRAVELLER

That's what I'm saying. And what *does* it matter to you?

SECURITY GUARD

It doesn't. Not in the slightest. That's the way the world is. I'm not going to change it. There have to be bastards whose considerable importance crushes the majority of the population. It's a lesser evil. What's important is to take initiative, right? And those fat cats do it. Good luck to them. Look at this airport. Really look at it. This airport is the result of an initiative of the fat cats. They've given me a job. I'm very grateful to them for that. Of course, more are needed. Do you want something from the machine? A coffee? A soft drink ?

TRAVELLER

No thanks.

SECURITY GUARD

Actually we don't have vending machines.

TRAVELLER

Thanks anyway.

SECURITY GUARD

How much do you make a year?

TRAVELLER

It depends on the year.

SECURITY GUARD

Why is that?

TRAVELLER

I already told you. I work towards goals.

SECURITY GUARD

How much?

TRAVELLER

How much does it cost?

SECURITY GUARD

What?

TRAVELLER

To maintain the airport.

SECURITY GUARD

Let's see. Counting the staffing costs of Wei and I, the director of the airport and the intermediate and administrative staff, maintenance and management costs, electricity and water for a ten thousand square metre terminal, the falcons and the ferrets as well as the publicity and patronage contracts which have the objective of letting people like you know that you can't fly from here. Then there are other financial costs of an amount that's impossible to establish...*(Silence)*
Not much, I don't think.

TRAVELLER

Not much?

SECURITY GUARD

Not much.

TRAVELLER

Say a figure.

SECURITY GUARD

You say one. How much do you make on average per year?

TRAVELLER

Why don't they close it?

SECURITY GUARD

I don't know. I suppose that, for the small amount that it costs, they prefer to leave it open. It would be a shame to close it down and then for a plane to appear one day. It would be a scandal. *(Pause)*. Five million euros.

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

Your salary averages around five million euros a year.

TRAVELLER

I've never seen five million euros in my life.

SECURITY GUARD

They're bastards.

TRAVELLER

Who?

SECURITY GUARD

The banks. The people who work for the banks.

TRAVELLER

Fifty thousand euros a month.

SECURITY GUARD

What?

TRAVELLER

That's what it costs to maintain this airport.

SECURITY GUARD

Impossible. They'd have to close it.

TRAVELLER

It's more expensive to close it than to have it open, surely.

SECURITY GUARD

How could it be more expensive to close it than to keep it open?

TRAVELLER

Sometimes the value of things isn't determined by what they really cost but by what they mean.

SECURITY GUARD

Are you an economist?

TRAVELLER

No, not at all. I just read the Wall Street Journal like everyone else.

SECURITY GUARD

The meaning of this airport is equal to zero, believe me.

TRAVELLER

That's what you say. But there are a lot of people who think the opposite.

SECURITY GUARD

Who?

TRAVELLER

A lot of people. The Anti-Establishment, for example.

SECURITY GUARD

What are you talking about?

TRAVELLER

What am I talking about? I'm talking about all those people who en masse, at this very moment, are withdrawing their bank deposits, literally burning down the branches. Don't you watch television or what? They go in, take their money and throw a Molotov cocktail. Burning down banks has become a fad! I'm talking about this whole fad. What do they call themselves? Those rebels have a name.

SECURITY GUARD

Who are you?

TRAVELLER

The Unforgiven? No, that's a movie.

SECURITY GUARD

How have you got here?

TRAVELLER

To the wall? No, that's not it either. *(Pause)* Does the blowfly hurt you? No, that couldn't be it. It's too ridiculous.

SECURITY GUARD

Little Thieves, Big Thieves.

TRAVELLER

That's it! Little Thieves, Big Thieves. Thanks.

SECURITY GUARD

The Movement for the Definitive Liberation of Bank Tyranny: Big Thieves, Little Thieves.

TRAVELLER

Exactly. I see that you are well informed.

SECURITY GUARD

No, not at all. I just read the Wall Street Journal like everyone else.

TRAVELLER

Well, as I told you, all those people in the Movement for the Definitive Liberation of Bank Tyranny and the whole thing with this airport seems somewhat shameful and criminal to you. They're people too, don't you think? They deserve to be respected too.

SECURITY GUARD

Of course. Could you show me your national identity card please?

TRAVELLER

What for? What are you getting at? Have I said something I shouldn't have?

SECURITY GUARD

No, not at all.

TRAVELLER

We're just talking.

SECURITY GUARD

Could you show me your ID please?

TRAVELLER

I don't have any problem showing you my ID but I think that you don't have the legal right to ask me to show you my ID. That's all. You're just a simple security guard, not a police officer. You look after the falcons and feed the ferrets.
(Silence. He puts his hand into his pocket, removes his wallet and hands his ID to the guard) Take it, fuck. Here's my ID but I don't understand where you're going with all this.

SECURITY GUARD

Thank you.

TRAVELLER

I thought we were friends.

The guard carefully studies both sides of the ID card.

I've still got to go through security. It's incredible. This country's the pits. Can I know what I've said to upset you so much?

SECURITY GUARD

Is your name Federico Gonzalez Sanz?

TRAVELLER

What do you think?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes or no.

TRAVELLER

Yes, I'm Federico Gonzalez Sanz.

SECURITY GUARD

Were you born in Madrid?

TRAVELLER

Of course I was born in Madrid!

SECURITY GUARD

What is the purpose of your journey?

TRAVELLER

What journey? Do you see me travelling, possibly travelling, probably travelling in the immediate future?

SECURITY GUARD

Why do you want to travel to Bangkok?

TRAVELLER

(Snatching his ID back from the guard's hands) To screw a teenage girl, don't fuck with me! That's enough! You have no right to interrogate me! I haven't even checked in! You don't even have any planes here!

SECURITY GUARD

Raise your arms.

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

I have to frisk you.

TRAVELLER

This is the last straw.

SECURITY GUARD

Raise your arms.

TRAVELLER

(Raising his arms) This country is the pits. Seriously.

SECURITY GUARD

Open your legs.

TRAVELLER

(Opening his legs) You don't have the authority to do this.

SECURITY GUARD

More. *(Pause)* Even more.

TRAVELLER

(Opens his legs further. The guard frisks his whole body, bottom to top) This is an abuse of authority. I want to lodge a complaint. Tell me your registration number.

SECURITY GUARD

We don't have complaint forms.

TRAVELLER

You don't have complaint forms. How could I have been so naïve to think that you would have complaint forms? Excuse me. Could I speak with your boss?

SECURITY GUARD

What boss? It's only Wei and I here.

TRAVELLER

Could I speak to Wei?

SECURITY GUARD

Do you speak Mandarin?

TRAVELLER

No.

SECURITY GUARD

Then it would do you no good to speak to Wei. *(Pause)* Just a moment. What?

The guard removes a pistol from inside the traveller's jacket.

What's this?

TRAVELLER

Don't make a scene please. I have a gun license.

SECURITY GUARD

(Emptying the cartridge and putting the bullets in his pocket) I don't give a shit if you have a gun license. Would you care to tell me how you thought you would go through security with a gun?

TRAVELLER

Yes, I can tell you. By declaring it. If you declare the gun you can travel with it, idiot.

SECURITY GUARD

Idiot?

TRAVELLER

I'm sorry. It was a reflex action.

SECURITY GUARD

Why are you carrying a gun?

TRAVELLER

As a precautionary measure. Do you know what the crime rate is in Bangkok?

SECURITY GUARD

No.

TRAVELLER

Neither do I, but it's surely one of the highest in the world. Bangkok smacks of a blow to the head, reeks of a holdup in an opium den. I've been held up twice. Once with a knife held to my throat. It was terrifying.

SECURITY GUARD

It must have been terrifying.

TRAVELLER

That's what I just said.

SECURITY GUARD

What about the other time?

TRAVELLER

What other time?

SECURITY GUARD

The other time you were held up. What happened?

TRAVELLER

I've been held up twice? I've forgotten. PTSD. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

SECURITY GUARD

Do you think I'm stupid?

TRAVELLER

Yes. No! No, I don't think that, of course not. It's just, I'm afraid. That's all. Afraid that they'll hurt me. You know that the world is full of bad people that wait all day for a stupid, absent-minded old man to show up at an international airport and blindly asks for a taxi.

SECURITY GUARD

Come on. So now you're a stupid, absent-minded old man who blindly asks for a taxi.

TRAVELLER

I've always been a stupid, absent-minded old man who blindly asks for a taxi.

SECURITY GUARD

You don't look like a stupid, absent-minded old man who blindly asks for a taxi.

TRAVELLER

Ah, no? What do I look like then?

SECURITY GUARD

You look like an old know-it-all fox.

TRAVELLER

Don't judge a book by its cover.

SECURITY GUARD

That's exactly what I'm doing.

TRAVELLER

Don't you think it's stupid and absent-minded enough to buy a ticket for a plane that leaves from an airport that doesn't even have planes or taxis?

SECURITY GUARD

No, now it seems a very intelligent thing to do.

TRAVELLER

Very intelligent? Have you gone completely mad? I paid one thousand five hundred euros for a flight that doesn't exist!

SECURITY GUARD

It's strange, isn't it? Because we're talking about a stupid, absent-minded old man who makes a living in operations management for the Bilderberg Group and some of the world's most important financial institutions. Curious.

TRAVELLER

Working in operations management doesn't make me more intelligent than you.

SECURITY GUARD

Anybody else would think the opposite.

TRAVELLER

Young man, I don't know what you imagine operations management to be. I really don't but...

SECURITY GUARD

I don't know. What do I imagine?

TRAVELLER

Does it bother you that I worked for those people? Is that what's made you upset?

SECURITY GUARD

Upset? No.

TRAVELLER

Well, I'll have you know that I don't like it either.

SECURITY GUARD

And what do I care if you don't like it?

TRAVELLER

You should.

SECURITY GUARD

It's within your rights.

TRAVELLER

Everything's interconnected.

SECURITY GUARD

Really? Are you and I interconnected?

TRAVELLER

Of course.

SECURITY GUARD

You're skipping the first rule of operations management.

TRAVELLER

More than you think.

SECURITY GUARD

Don't talk bullshit. *(Speaking on his walkie-talkie)* Wei?

TRAVELLER

I'm just a subordinate. Like you.

SECURITY GUARD

You and I are not equals. Do you agree?

TRAVELLER

Is a falcon the same as a little bustard? No, of course not. But both are connected to their respective natures, don't you think?

SECURITY GUARD

Are you calling me a little bustard?

TRAVELLER

No.

SECURITY GUARD

Are you telling me that you're a falcon?

TRAVELLER

No.

SECURITY GUARD

What the fuck are you saying then?

TRAVELLER

I'm saying that in the world there are predators and there is prey and the bond that unites their respective natures is something beautiful and indescribable.

SECURITY GUARD

Are you a poet?

TRAVELLER

No. When I was young I wrote verses. That's all.

SECURITY GUARD

Wow. What happened to that vocation?

TRAVELLER

I left it.

SECURITY GUARD

That's a shame.

TRAVELLER

I had to start working. Feed my family. Get ahead.

SECURITY GUARD

Fucks up your adolescence.

TRAVELLER

And your childhood.

SECURITY GUARD

It marks you completely.

TRAVELLER

Can't complain.

SECURITY GUARD

Have you ever thought...?

TRAVELLER

What's done is done.

SECURITY GUARD

That's what they say.

TRAVELLER

I was giving you an example.

SECURITY GUARD

Fuck your example.

TRAVELLER

Very good. Fuck my example.

SECURITY GUARD

That's the way.

TRAVELLER

It was a mistake.

SECURITY GUARD

Idiocy.

TRAVELLER

It was idiocy.

SECURITY GUARD

Here I'm the falcon and you're the little bustard. Is that clear?

TRAVELLER

Yes.

SECURITY GUARD

Who's the falcon?

TRAVELLER

You.

SECURITY GUARD

And who is the little bustard?

TRAVELLER

Me. *(Pause)* What I want to say is that it is them who rule the roost. They tell me "Go there and do that." And off I go and I do it. No other choice.

SECURITY GUARD

They are fucking the world up.

TRAVELLER

I don't dispute it.

SECURITY GUARD

All they're interested in is money.

TRAVELLER

I don't dispute it.

SECURITY GUARD

You don't dispute it?

TRAVELLER

I don't dispute it.

SECURITY GUARD

What do you think then? What is *your* opinion?

TRAVELLER

What's my opinion? What does it matter what I think? I don't like those people. But the fact is that they are the one's who rule the roost. What do I have to say about it? Nothing. My opinion doesn't matter. Don't think either that ruling the roost is easy. Let's just say that they don't make too many friends. Rather, you incite a considerable hatred. What I mean is that ruling the whole roost is not the same as training falcons in a phantom airport. They see things differently. On one hand, they have to make decisions, difficult decisions and on the other hand you spend the whole day scratching your balls with a leather glove. Do you get it? I don't like all the decisions that they make. Lots of them turn my stomach. But that doesn't mean they shouldn't make decisions. Someone has to do it. Somebody has to have a large-scale view of how the world works and act upon it. Not everyone can spend the day scratching their balls with a leather glove while their favourite falcon flutters around the sky. It's very easy to have an opinion about the most disparate and complex subjects, about the divine and the humane after having massaged your scrotum with a polished lambskin. I haven't tried it but it strikes me as something relatively simple.

SECURITY GUARD

Don't believe it. It also has its art.

TRAVELLER

I agree. I could be wrong.

SECURITY GUARD

(Offering his glove) You want to try it?

TRAVELLER

Thanks. Some other time.

SECURITY GUARD

I insist. *(Pause)* Come on.

Silence

TRAVELLER

Very well. All right then. *(He puts the glove on his left hand)* Not even made to measure. *(Pause)* Maybe you're right and I should completely change. Learn new skills.

SECURITY GUARD

You only know how to do one thing.

TRAVELLER

Nobody is aware of everything that they are capable of doing in life.

SECURITY GUARD

You spend your whole life doing it.

TRAVELLER

I just have to be open and listen to my inner self.

SECURITY GUARD

Operations management.

TRAVELLER

I can learn.

SECURITY GUARD

Implement projects.

TRAVELLER

Describe it to me.

SECURITY GUARD

Surprise me.

TRAVELLER

Could you give me my gun back, please?

SECURITY GUARD

Don't fool yourself.

TRAVELLER

Why do you say that?

SECURITY GUARD

You and I are not equals.

TRAVELLER

We already established that.

SECURITY GUARD

You won't change. That's your nature.

TRAVELLER

I'll give you a surprise all the same.

SECURITY GUARD

You were born for operations management. It shows.

TRAVELLER

What about you? What were you born for?

SECURITY GUARD

I was born to scratch my balls with a leather glove. Doesn't it show?

TRAVELLER

It's in your nature.

SECURITY GUARD

This is a war. An ancient war.

TRAVELLER

Give me the gun back.

SECURITY GUARD

Between those who rule the roost, the big bastards and the rest of the humans that inhabit this planet. Resources are finite. Life is short. What's left? What lasts? Money. Something artificial, infinite. Something that the big bastards invented to subjugate the people in a variety of ways. That's what it's about. It's about how a small few can subjugate the majority without the majority asking why they must be subjugated in such a stupid way. It's about having people, the

Beast, tamed and numb. But the Beast is waking up from its lethargy. Oh, yes, believe me. And its strength is impressive and devastating. Believe me. It will crush those bastards with a single blow.

TRAVELLER

Are you naïve?

SECURITY GUARD

Am I?

TRAVELLER

Gullible as well. None of that will happen.

SECURITY GUARD

No?

TRAVELLER

No, you better believe me now. It may be that the Beast inflicts a couple of blows, I don't deny that, but after that the eyelids will grow heavy again and it will fall into a deep sleep. Come on, you know history better than I do. The Beast, as you aptly call it, is strong but it's easy to control.

SECURITY GUARD

That was before.

TRAVELLER

Before? There has never been a *before*. And there has always been *the same thing*.

SECURITY GUARD

People have learnt their lesson.

TRAVELLER

People have learnt their lesson?

SECURITY GUARD

People have learnt their lesson.

TRAVELLER

What lesson is that that people have learnt?

SECURITY GUARD

It's them or us.

TRAVELLER

It's them or us? That's the big lesson?

SECURITY GUARD

Them or us.

TRAVELLER

Listen, people have been trying to learn that lesson since the ice age, without any result. There's no way. It doesn't get into their head. They don't care if it is a charismatic, hirsute *homo sapiens* explaining it to them around the bonfire or the latest blogger on social networks. It goes in one ear and out the other. It's a characteristic of our species, in case you didn't know.

SECURITY GUARD

Now it's different.

TRAVELLER

Why is it different now? Because you say so?

SECURITY GUARD

No. Because humans have progressed.

TRAVELLER

Excuse me, but not only are you naïve but you're a little pathetic as well.

SECURITY GUARD

Now we're more aware of our weaknesses and that makes us stronger.

TRAVELLER

You don't get it, do you?

SECURITY GUARD

What do I have to get?

TRAVELLER

Don't you get it that everything is the same? Them and us, the small few and the majority, all this anarchist stuff. It's all the same.

SECURITY GUARD

Is the bank the same as the debtor?

TRAVELLER

Of course.

SECURITY GUARD

The rich man and the poor man?

TRAVELLER

Without any doubt.

SECURITY GUARD

The loan shark and the philanthropist?

TRAVELLER

Sure!

SECURITY GUARD

The Beast says "No."

TRAVELLER

The Beast can say mass, but I'm telling you that the moment in which that Beast crushes those who now rule the roost, the big bastards, in that very moment, the Beast itself will turn into one of the big bastards only it will be bigger and more ruthless than the one that it just destroyed. It's a law of life.

SECURITY GUARD

That's a lie.

TRAVELLER

You say that human beings have progressed. Yes, but only in order to perfect their schizophrenia. If they've always been a box of surprises, now they're a box of surprises inside a box of surprises within another box of surprises. They've refined their unpredictability and improved the wickedness of their excuses. Centuries have passed without understanding why one does what he does, why one wants what he wants! What are you waiting for? Clarity and conscience? Balance? We continue without understanding anything. Clarity and conscience haven't been of any use to understand our deeds. They've only helped to expose them in a more intelligent and seductive way. In that, indeed we have progressed. We've become exceptional lecturers of our own double standards. We're very satisfied with the multiple aspects and complications of our ambivalence. Great. Fantastic. That's what you call progress. I call it sickness.

SECURITY GUARD

You're the one who's sick.

TRAVELLER

And you're the one who's sane, right?

SECURITY GUARD

You have to be very sick to think that the rich man is the same as the poor man.

TRAVELLER

You have to be an asshole to think that the poor man wants to keep being poor and that the rich man will never be as poor as a rat. Some day.

SECURITY GUARD

This world is unjust.

TRAVELLER

What a surprise! Really?

SECURITY GUARD

You can either fight against this injustice or defend it.

TRAVELLER

But what does it matter? If it's not this injustice it'll be another. If they're not these crimes, they'll be others. You said it yourself. The world is unjust. There's

no way out. Suffering is all there is. All right then. Come on. Please, I'm not talking about gunpowder!

SECURITY GUARD

No, all you do is light the fuse.

TRAVELLER

What do you say that for?

SECURITY GUARD

(Talking on the walkie-talkie) Wei 你有嗎?

TRAVELLER

We don't know what we're capable of. All of us have a banker and an anarchist within. Even I do, even you do. You could end up working in a bank, on the stock exchange or in Lehmann Brothers, where they need workers. It's called survival. Survival puts us all in the same boat. Survival takes the fumes away. Do you understand me? We all want the same thing, we're all the same but we're not all equal. We can't all get it. Do you see where I'm going?

SECURITY GUARD

I don't want the same as a bank. Do you see where I'm going?

TRAVELLER

That's because you haven't suffered enough.

SECURITY GUARD

That's because it's people that are most important to me.

TRAVELLER

People? Who are these people that you are talking about? Are *people* more important to you than your son, for example? Would you stop feeding your son in order to save *the people*? Are you sure that *the people* would do the same for you? *(Pause)* *The people*, don't fuck with me with *the people*, please.

SECURITY GUARD

It's called ethics.

TRAVELLER

It's called hunger.

SECURITY GUARD

They're called principles.

TRAVELLER

They're called balls. You know? It reminds me of that online stirrer, that anonymous blogger, the troublemaker...what's his alias? That guy who is making everyone withdraw their money from the banks and burn down the branches. That Lenin of the 21st century. What's that bastard's name? The smoke detector?

SECURITY GUARD

(Speaking on the walkie-talkie) Wei, where the fuck are you?

TRAVELLER

No. That's not it. The arse-cutter? No. It couldn't be the arse-cutter. It's too aggressive. Do you know who I'm talking about?

SECURITY GUARD

Of course. He's very well known. *(On the walkie-talkie)* Wei, for fuck's sake!

TRAVELLER

He's naïve, like you and just as pathetic. What's that moron's name?

SECURITY GUARD

The One-Against.

TRAVELLER

The One-Against! That's it! The One-Against! Thanks. You remind me of him.

SECURITY GUARD

Why's that?

TRAVELLER

I already told you. You speak the same as him.

SECURITY GUARD

Do you follow him a lot?

TRAVELLER

Lately, quite a lot. What about you?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm actually a fan of that guy.

TRAVELLER

Ah, really?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes. He's managed to mobilise consciences. Theirs and ours.

TRAVELLER

What I don't understand is why he doesn't show his face. Why does he hide?

SECURITY GUARD

He doesn't hide.

TRAVELLER

Ah, no? Nobody knows where he lives or what he looks like. I'd say that he hides.

SECURITY GUARD

He doesn't hide. He simply doesn't want to become the leader of anything or anybody. He's not the protagonist.

TRAVELLER

I'd say that he is, precisely, the principal protagonist.

SECURITY GUARD

The fight is the protagonist.

TRAVELLER

I think you're full of shit.

SECURITY GUARD

I think being afraid is a very human and understandable thing.

TRAVELLER

I think you're a coward.

SECURITY GUARD

He has received death threats. Did you know? He and his family.

TRAVELLER

He has family?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes.

TRAVELLER

I didn't know that.

SECURITY GUARD

It came out in the media.

TRAVELLER

Excuse me for contradicting you. You surely know more about the subject but I've read everything that's been published about the One-Against, both online and in the written press and nowhere does it say that he has a family.

SECURITY GUARD

It's a comment that's been floating around in some forums.

TRAVELLER

I thought that you'd read it in the media.

SECURITY GUARD

Forums, the media. What do I know about where I read it? What's important is that a person who has committed no crime has been threatened with death simply for saying what he thinks.

TRAVELLER

On the other hand, what I have read is that the big banks have always known who the One-Against is and keep him under surveillance even though he's been changing his hideout all this time.

SECURITY GUARD

I haven't read that anywhere.

TRAVELLER

And various channels have been warning him to stop talking nonsense to the people who still believe in the functioning and solvency of our good bank system or he will end up paying a very high price. You already know that the banks end up paying.

SECURITY GUARD

That will change with time.

TRAVELLER

Sure. When there is a substantial change in the world order. But in the meantime, here, whoever has a debt ends up forking out one way or another. Because what is clear is that this individual has completely ignored those warnings, don't you think?

SECURITY GUARD

I think he doesn't give a shit.

TRAVELLER

I think the same. *(Pause)* Another thing that I've read is that he works as a security guard in a place very similar to this.

SECURITY GUARD

No. Really? In an airport?

TRAVELLER

I don't know if it's an airport without planes or in one of those half-finished housing developments in the middle of a mountain or an abandoned hotel on the coast...something like that.

SECURITY GUARD

It would be funny.

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

That he worked in a place like this. It would be ironic.

TRAVELLER

What are you talking about?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm saying that, if it were true, he'd be working in one of the symbols of precisely what he criticises. In one of those emblematic constructions that seem to be vestiges of an idiotic and backward civilisation. Working in one of those places would underline, even further, the absurdity of his existence. It would be as if he were laughing in the face of those people who follow him. A great ironic roar of laughter. I don't give a fuck about you. That's what he would seem to be saying.

TRAVELLER

Now I understand you.

SECURITY GUARD

He must be pissing himself laughing.

TRAVELLER

I think I can actually hear it. The laughter.

SECURITY GUARD

What are you saying? Right here?

TRAVELLER

Yes. Listen. *(Long Silence)* Can't you hear it? A mean and insulting laugh. Like a hyena.

SECURITY GUARD

I don't hear anything.

TRAVELLER

That's strange. It's right here. *(Looking into space)* Don't you hear it?

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

No. There's nobody laughing here.

TRAVELLER

How strange. Wait. *(Pause)* Now he's stopped. *(Silence)* I must be hallucinating.

SECURITY GUARD

I think you need to rest a while.

TRAVELLER

I haven't taken my medication.

SECURITY GUARD

You've got the wrong person.

TRAVELLER

Sometimes I hear my wife's voice at night. Can you believe it?

SECURITY GUARD

You're wrong.

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

You're wrong.

TRAVELLER

Who is? What are you talking about?

SECURITY GUARD

All of you.

TRAVELLER

Who are *all of you*?

SECURITY GUARD

The whole political – economic-financial-military framework. You're wrong.

TRAVELLER

What are we talking about now?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not the One-Against.

TRAVELLER

Are you the One-Against?

SECURITY GUARD

No.

TRAVELLER

I didn't say that you were the One-Against, just that you remind me a lot of him.

SECURITY GUARD

And it's not without reason that you say it.

TRAVELLER

Thank you. Give me back my gun, please.

SECURITY GUARD

It's one thing to agree with certain ideas expressed by the One-Against about the importance of social justice and the ethical foundations of democracy and something completely different that I am that man.

TRAVELLER

Sounds reasonable. The gun.

SECURITY GUARD

It's one thing that I deeply admire the courage and charisma of that man in facing up to the most powerful banks on the planet, mobilising millions and millions of deceived and hopeless people against them, people who have been neglected and battered by an elite of arrogant and greedy plutocratic bastards and another completely different thing that he and I are the same person. Don't you think? Doesn't this reasoning have a crushing logic?

TRAVELLER

It does. The gun.

SECURITY GUARD

Is it possible?

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

That you've made an error. With me. Is it possible?

TRAVELLER

What kind of error?

SECURITY GUARD

A tragic error.

TRAVELLER

Explain yourself.

SECURITY GUARD

It happened to the Greeks more than two thousand years ago. But it's highly topical at the moment. Basically it means missing the mark. Getting the wrong person. Mistaking somebody for somebody else. Myself, for example. Imagine that a group of big banks mistakenly thinks that I'm a famous anti-system blogger that's fucking them over. It's not their fault. They've been given false information. But they're convinced it's right and decide to contract a killer to get rid of me. And they do. *(Pause)* Well. Later they realise that I'm just a somewhat stupid security guard, a bit of a dickhead, but at the end of the day a man full of good intentions, harmless, a family man. Not just that. Later they discover that I'm the younger brother of my killer. Or his long lost son. His beloved son. His son whose whereabouts doesn't let him sleep at night. That's why it's tragic. Because there is a lot of blood all over the affair. There is no remedy. Because of that, the conclusion that the Greeks reached more than two thousand five hundred years ago, in Athens, was that it was better to be safe than sorry. It's better to be sure. For the good of everybody. I think it's a very wise conclusion, don't you?

TRAVELLER

There's a mistake here.

SECURITY GUARD

That's what I'm saying.

TRAVELLER

Do you take me for a hit man?

SECURITY GUARD

Are you one?

TRAVELLER

No. I'm an operations manager.

SECURITY GUARD

But that's a euphemism, right? Operations management is taking care of the company's dirty matters. That's the way you speak amongst yourselves.

TRAVELLER

Are you paranoid?

SECURITY GUARD

It's possible.

TRAVELLER

Of course it's possible.

SECURITY GUARD

I may show it.

TRAVELLER

You've already shown it.

SECURITY GUARD

It's who I am.

TRAVELLER

There's no need. You're not the One-Against, are you?

SECURITY GUARD

Thank you. Are you sure of that?

TRAVELLER

Me? It's you who needs to be sure.

SECURITY GUARD

That I'm sure isn't important. I'm completely sure. What's important is that you're sure.

TRAVELLER

Me?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes, of course.

TRAVELLER

And who am I, if I could know?

SECURITY GUARD

I don't know! Just fucking tell me!

TRAVELLER

I already told you! What I think is of no importance.

SECURITY GUARD

Do you swear?

TRAVELLER

I swear.

SECURITY GUARD

Then I've got no reason to worry.

TRAVELLER

That's not what I said.

SECURITY GUARD

Ah, no?

TRAVELLER

No.

SECURITY GUARD

What is it that you said?

TRAVELLER

It's not important what I say, that's what I said.

SECURITY GUARD

And I say, let's avoid a tragedy.

TRAVELLER

What?

SECURITY GUARD

Let's make sure, before it's too late.

TRAVELLER

Who?

SECURITY GUARD

You and I.

TRAVELLER

It's nothing to do with me.

SECURITY GUARD

I'd like to show you my identification.

TRAVELLER

What for?

SECURITY GUARD

To assure you.

TRAVELLER

To assure me? I don't have to assure myself of anything. I already know who you are.

SECURITY GUARD

Who am I?

TRAVELLER

Who are you?

SECURITY GUARD

The security guard of this shitty airport.

TRAVELLER

Are you sure of that?

SECURITY GUARD

Absolutely.

TRAVELLER

You see? Matter resolved.

SECURITY GUARD

Thank you.

TRAVELLER

You're welcome. You wouldn't be mistaken and actually be someone you say you're not?

SECURITY GUARD

No. Believe me. Seriously. If there's something I have clear at the moment, it's who I am.

TRAVELLER

Then I have nothing to worry about.

SECURITY GUARD

Then I have no reason to worry.

TRAVELLER

That's not what I said.

SECURITY GUARD

Ah, no?

TRAVELLER

No.

SECURITY GUARD

What did you say?

TRAVELLER

That I wouldn't worry but that you should worry. That's what I said.

SECURITY GUARD

Why?

TRAVELLER

They already threatened you with death.

SECURITY GUARD

Not me, the One-Against.

TRAVELLER

In this case, it's the same.

SECURITY GUARD

It's not the same.

TRAVELLER

It appears that you've been confused on the subject.

SECURITY GUARD

It's a mistake.

TRAVELLER

It doesn't matter.

SECURITY GUARD

It doesn't matter?

TRAVELLER

They'll go after you.

SECURITY GUARD

It's a tragic error.

TRAVELLER

They don't give a shit if it's a tragic error or a nostalgic error.

SECURITY GUARD

How can we fix it?

TRAVELLER

We can't. They think you're an irresponsible bastard.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not.

TRAVELLER

That's what you say.

SECURITY GUARD

That's what I say. Help me.

TRAVELLER

Help me first by giving me back my gun.

SECURITY GUARD

Can I trust you?

TRAVELLER

You're paranoid.

SECURITY GUARD

Can I trust you?

TRAVELLER

(He moves closer to the security guard) Up to a certain point.

SECURITY GUARD

What does that mean?

TRAVELLER

That you shouldn't trust anyone, not even your father.

SECURITY GUARD

I agree. *(makes a gesture to return the gun but without having decided to do it)* I don't trust easily. But I want you to know, before anything else, that everything will be different from now on. Meeting you has completely opened my eyes. You've moved me within. The Greeks also had a word for this feeling. Catharsis. I want you to know that meeting you has been very cathartic and it will be a long time before this feeling completely goes away. I assure you. I've learnt my lesson. Thank you.

Before the guard is able to hide the gun, the traveller punches him in the pit of his stomach. The guard falls to the ground, scarcely able to breathe.

TRAVELLER

Thank you. *(Taking the gun, removing the bullets from the security guard's pocket and placing them in the chamber)* You know what? You're paranoid. What kind of stories have you got into your head? I haven't understood any of the shit you've said.

Silence. Wei's voice is heard on the walkie-talkie "Little bustard two to little bustard one, what's happening man? Jerking off? Everything cool! Everything cool! Over and out." Silence. Wei's voice, "Little bustard two to little bustard one".. is interrupted when the traveller throws the gun against the wall, destroying it. Then he sits.

I'm tired, little bustard one. Very tired. *(Silence)* This country exhausts me. It's not that you can't do stupid things, everyone does. I take the first place. It's the vigorous defence of the stupidity that gets to me. It's this idiotic stubbornness, this ridiculous pride in being stupid against all odds. I admit it exhausts me. It's as if for all these people, our compatriots, there were something unavoidable in stupidity itself. As if nothing could be done against it. Once you've been an idiot, you have to keep on being one. There's no turning back. You can't take things back. If you've done something stupid, the usual thing is that society expects you to keep doing stupid things, one after the other, until...I don't know...until you fall down exhausted. *(Silence)* I think the time has come to turn this country over to the Chinese. I'm saying it seriously. Let them do the same thing as they are doing with the bars and restaurants. Have you noticed that tapas are made by a Chinese man or woman and not by a Galician? They can make them just as well or even better. They should do the same thing with the country. We wouldn't even notice. At the end we'd get used to having a Prime Minister who doesn't speak a word of Spanish. We wouldn't understand anything but we wouldn't notice the difference either given that we don't understand fuck all and we speak the same language. I think we'd get used to it quickly. People see the Chinese as a threat. On the other hand, I see them as a salvation. Do you think

the Chinese would have built an airport without planes? No fucking way. The Chinese would have never built an airport without planes and they never would have had it open twenty-four hours a day, three-hundred and sixty-five days a year wasting money on electricity, water and your poor soul. No way. If a Chinese man did something stupid like this, they'd put him in a labour camp and re-educate him through torture. They'd hang him upside down and leave him to have a good think. So that he reflects with a puddle of blood accumulating in his cranium. They'd make him cut grass naked in the countryside under a hailstorm and an icy wind. They'd make him write, "I will never build another airport without planes, I will never build another airport without ..." a billion times on rice paper with Chinese ink. Not here. Here they make you a minister. They give you a small palace. It's exhausting. In that sense, I agree with you, Little Bustard One. Everything must be burned. We must destroy the foundations of this society and start again from zero. And prohibit stupidity and shamelessness by law. And if that were not to happen, I'd be the first to burn down a bank and attack the parliament. I'm telling you. I'd be the first to confront the police and break the legs of one of those bastards. I'd gouge their eyes out with a spoon and smash them against their stinking wagons to see if that would stop them from shooting their fucking rubber bullets. Those hyenas would invoke no pity in me. I'd be the right-hand man of the One-Against. His loyal deputy. His faithful squire. *(Silence)* Maybe in another life. *(Pause)* What? Have you recovered?

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

Why...why did you hit me?

TRAVELLER

I'm sorry. It was a reflex action.

SECURITY GUARD

A...what? A reflex action?

TRAVELLER

Yes. You made a strange gesture with your arm. Like this! And I instantly reacted.

SECURITY GUARD

I couldn't breathe.

TRAVELLER

It was instinctive.

SECURITY GUARD

I thought I was going to die.

TRAVELLER

That's normal. I've seen people die from a blow to the stomach.

SECURITY GUARD

Seriously?

TRAVELLER

A couple of times. In terrible agony.

SECURITY GUARD

You didn't do it on purpose?

TRAVELLER

Don't be paranoid.

SECURITY GUARD

It seemed like it was on purpose.

TRAVELLER

That's violence for you. It always seems like someone's pissed off.

SECURITY GUARD

What happened to my walkie-talkie?

TRAVELLER

You dropped it when I hit you.

SECURITY GUARD

(Picking it up) But...It's destroyed.

TRAVELLER

It was a terrible blow. Come on, get up. Do you want me to bring you something from the vending machine? A coke? A bottle of water? Some peanuts?

SECURITY GUARD

No...just...let me rest a little bit...thank you.

The security guard sits down. The travellers mobile rings.

TRAVELLER

(To the guard) Excuse me. *(Speaking on the phone)* Yes? *(Pause)* No, not at all. The other way around. Touching. *(Pause)* Mr Alexander hasn't collected the clothes yet, but that doesn't mean that they're dirty. *(Pause)* I'll call you. No, no problem. Piece of cake. It's not a big surprise either. Exactly. We're not exactly shitting ourselves, right? Exactly. Forget it. How's everything over there? *(Pause)* You guys take care of the millenary culture. Yes. Right now. One pack, yes. *(Pause)* No, you won't need it. I'll do the laundry. *(Pause)* I'll hang it out to dry. Yes, myself. That's what I said. I'm getting older. Yes, I need some holidays. *(Laughs ironically)* They'd do me good. My back's destroyed. *(Pause)* I don't know. It's been like that all year. My neck. And kidneys. Sometimes I can't even bend over. *(Pause)* Ibuprofen. Sometimes diclofenac. *(Pause)* Diclofenac pensa. An anti-inflammatory. Listen. Tell the Lady not to worry. The washing machine doesn't have to stop. All right? *(Pause)* The same detergent as always. *(Pause)* Okay. Bye. *(He finishes the call and puts the mobile away. Silence. To the guard.)* Work. I'm sorry. I can't leave them alone even for a second. They're a disaster. *(Silence)* Is something wrong?

SECURITY GUARD

No, nothing.

TRAVELLER

Why are you looking at me like that?

SECURITY GUARD

Me? I'm not looking at you.

TRAVELLER

When you look at me like that, it makes me afraid. Did you know that?

SECURITY GUARD

Like what?

TRAVELLER

Is something the matter?

SECURITY GUARD

What does “Mr Alexander hasn’t collected the clothes yet, but that doesn’t mean that they’re dirty. “ mean?

TRAVELLER

Sometimes we speak in code.

SECURITY GUARD

What does it mean?

TRAVELLER

I’m sorry. I can’t tell you. It’s a professional secret. My contract prohibits me from revealing the company matters of those I work for.

SECURITY GUARD

Who is the Lady?

TRAVELLER

Better that you don’t know.

SECURITY GUARD

Somebody from the Bilderberg group? What does it mean that you’ll personally do the laundry? And “ you guys take care of the millenary culture”? Is that about Wei? It’s not his fault at all.

TRAVELLER

Calm down, okay? One of the first things they teach you in operations management is to keep your big mouth shut. If you really want to work with us, you have to learn to be more discrete and restrained.

SECURITY GUARD

I thought that you’d left operations management.

TRAVELLER

I’m trying to. But as you can see, it’s not so easy. It’s been many years. Send me your CV and I’ll see what I can do.

SECURITY GUARD

Thanks but I’ll stay in this airport.

TRAVELLER

In this airport?

SECURITY GUARD

Will it be painful?

TRAVELLER

As you wish.

SECURITY GUARD

Make it quick, please.

TRAVELLER

In this airport, you won't progress much. Let's say that there aren't many possibilities for promotion. Can I ask you a personal question? *(Pause)* If today were the last day of your life, what is it that you'd like to do?

SECURITY GUARD

Why do you ask me that?

TRAVELLER

Just answer.

SECURITY GUARD

Speak to my wife. And my son.

TRAVELLER

And if that were not possible? I mean, because you don't have the possibility of calling by phone or rather because someone next to you doesn't let you.

SECURITY GUARD

By coercing me in some way?

TRAVELLER

Yes. What would you do?

SECURITY GUARD

What would I do? I'd go to Bangkok.

TRAVELLER

To Bangkok? Why Bangkok?

SECURITY GUARD

It's a good place to disappear.

TRAVELLER

Amidst the people, you mean?

SECURITY GUARD

No. I mean physically.

TRAVELLER

I agree. As you wish.

Silence. Through the windows a jet appears, slowly rolling down the runway until it stops in the middle of the airport.

SECURITY GUARD

Am I dreaming or is that a plane out there?

TRAVELLER

You're not dreaming. That's a plane. A real plane, like you wanted. Specifically, a Diamond D-Jet.

SECURITY GUARD

A jet? Come on. How luxurious. What's it doing here? This airport isn't operational.

TRAVELLER

It's a plane destined for Bangkok.

SECURITY GUARD

It's my lucky day.

TRAVELLER

Seems to be.

SECURITY GUARD

I'd like to make that call that we talked about before.

TRAVELLER

There's no time. We have to board.

SECURITY GUARD

You're coming too?

TRAVELLER

If it doesn't bother you.

SECURITY GUARD

Bangkok. What's the weather like there?

TRAVELLER

It's the rainy season.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not prepared.

TRAVELLER

We'll make a stopover halfway and you can buy everything you need.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not prepared.

TRAVELLER

Are you afraid of flying?

SECURITY GUARD

Very.

TRAVELLER

Don't worry. I've got some pills that will help to make it more bearable.

SECURITY GUARD

Thanks. *(Pause)* I never imagined that I would see a plane at this airport.

TRAVELLER

It was hard to imagine.

SECURITY GUARD

Sounds like science fiction.

TRAVELLER

It's not science fiction. It's happening.

SECURITY GUARD

Nobody will believe me when I tell them.

TRAVELLER

I don't think you should worry about that. *(Pause)* We have to go.

SECURITY GUARD

It's a miracle.

TRAVELLER

I wanted to ask you. Does it bother you if I keep the glove?

SECURITY GUARD

No. Keep it.

TRAVELLER

Thanks. I'll take it then. As a souvenir. *(Pause)* So? Let's go?

SECURITY GUARD

A true miracle.

The traveller stands and picks up his suitcase. He moves to the side and then stops. He turns towards the security guard. After a few seconds, he stands too and moves towards the windows, his back to the audience. He looks around the airport and the lights go out.

Barcelona, March 2014

