

CHARLES.

A moment please, alone, before it starts.

JAMES goes.

Camilla you as well, I'm sorry but...
You understand?

CAMILLA.

I do.

She kisses him, and goes.

CHARLES.

At last. I needed room for thought to breathe
In every second since my mother passed
I'm trapped by meetings, all these people ask
Me questions, talking, fussing, what to do,
Expect I'll have opinion there, all good
To go, like Findus ready meals for one,
Pre-wrapped and frozen, 'This is what I think.'
As if I know! My better thoughts – they start
From scratch, slow cooked, and brewed with time.

My life has been a ling'ring for the throne.

Sometimes I do confess I 'magine if

My mother hap'd to die before her time,

A helicopter crash, a rare disease

So at an early age I'd be in charge –

Before me years of constant stable rule.

But mostly I have hoped she'd keep in health

That since for most, outrageous dreams and hopes

Are all they'll ever have, and yet their life is full,

So I am better Thoughtful Prince than King.

Potential holds appeal since in its castle walls

One is protected from the awful shame

Of failure.

JAMES enters.

JAMES.

Your Majesty, the Prime Minister's here.

CHARLES.

Bring him in.

JAMES goes.

No more, exactly as Camilla said,
Although the crown has yet to sit upon
My head and burden me with gold,
I am the King default, and will ascend.

MR EVANS, *the Prime Minister, enters.*

MR EVANS.

Your Majesty.

CHARLES.

Prime Minister.

MR EVANS.

Sincere condolences upon your loss.

CHARLES.

A loss I think that all her subjects share.

MR EVANS.

Of course, we miss our Queen. But you will feel
A sharper pain, I'm sure.

Pause.

You felt she would have liked the service?

CHARLES.

I trust she would, for planned it was by her.

Pause.

MR EVANS.

I hope you heard the people outside cheer?

CHARLES.

When? No. A cheer? A cheer for what?

MR EVANS.

Towards the end from through the doors and walls

We heard hip-hip and all at once there came

Hooray, and then three times repeated same.

And, although perhaps the tone was wrong

At least it showed they cared and loved the Queen.

CHARLES.

I didn't hear, my mind must have been somewhere else.