

The Business Man's Lament
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CHARACTERS:

A Business Man

SETTING: A bare stage, or
with a desolate scattering of
papers.

(The lights come up on a business man.)

BUSINESS MAN

How came this day? Am I an evil man?
I cannot recall some moment when I
Chose to deceive. Always, this game's charge
Has been bluff and bluster, entire kingdoms
Carved from nothing but the shadow of a dream.
I wanted to be my own man, that I
Recall. Tall enough to walk down the street,
And stare in the eye, any man who came my way.
Why am I punished thus? Yesterday this
Chair, this desk, this building stood here and
All was well. Today, I am ruined,
Yet building, desk and chair are all untouched.
Why am I punished? I am still myself.
Do pencil marks on a scrap of paper
Mean the end of the world? Am I not a
Father? Grandfather? Husband? Lover? Friend?
How am I to make sense of all of this?
What God has such a sense of humor, that
He would elevate me to the roof of
The very world, only to yank it away,
Leaving empty desert sands to the horizon.
Why am I punished? For breaking some rule?
What rule? What justice? I know better than
Anyone, success comes to he who forges his
Own path and does not follow the
Well-worn groove of mediocrity.
There is not one action I have taken,
Not one deal I have crafted, that was not
Copied a thousand times over by every
Bank and investment hack on this same street.

Why am I punished? What is my sin?
Do the others, each morning face a thousand
Greedy, clamoring princes that demand
Profits without sacrifice? Demand that
Money, stinking, reeking money, flow like
A river of filth into the maw of bottomless
Desire? Desire that knows no bounds,
That cannot be tempered or fulfilled?
I am swallowed by greed, I am chewed
And spat out by the god of profit.
I am destroyed by that howling mob who
Do not want more kindness, or beauty, or
A better world in which to spend their days.
Apes, who screech at one other as they
Stack endless Mountains of paper on paper
And on top they fling themselves, and cry: King!

~fin~