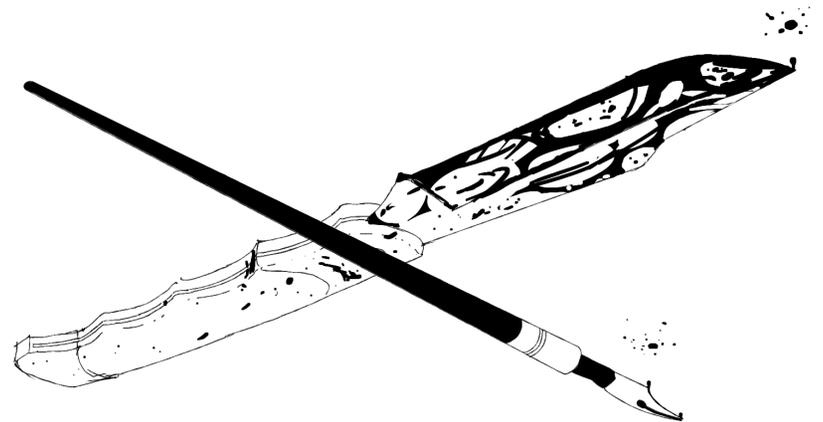


HAEMATOPOETRY

Written by Judas Salieri, Illustrated by Max Banshees



“Farkhad exits the stage too soon.
The Bachelor faces a terrible choice.”

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A Pathologic fanwork.

Loosely based on *Rope*, the 1929 play by Patrick Hamilton.

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*Essentially... What if Farkhad had died while still
in the Capital, and the Bachelor got involved?*

THE BACHELOR turns towards the audience. He approaches the chest. He lifts the candelabra, one in each hand. THE TWINS stand at his sides and take one each. THE BACHELOR begins to open the chest—but his resolve fails him and he leans on it, shaking.

THE TWINS.— What's wrong?

THE BACHELOR.— He loved you.

THE TWINS.— You love us more.

THE BACHELOR.— I do.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Take him. Cut him open.

PETER STAMATIN.— Unseam the bastard.

THE BACHELOR.— Let me catch my breath! How do I keep being tempted into your criminal perversions?

ANDREY STAMATIN.— You must admit it never requires much tempting.

THE BACHELOR.— I speak boldly in theory and you punish me by putting it in practice. Watch. Here in this box lay humanity's worst fears. Will I unleash them for you?

PETER STAMATIN.— Do as you wish. The blood is spilt.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Good friends should die in each other's company.

THE BACHELOR.— If I am to play this wretched part, it's only to remain on your side.

PETER STAMATIN.— We'll carry him together. Time flies for the wicked.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— When the clock strikes again, we lift the chest.

THE BACHELOR.— So be it. So be it. Fate be kind to us all.

THE TWINS blow out the candles. The clock strikes one.

THE BACHELOR opens his eyes and stares into ANDREY's.

PETER STAMATIN.— There you are.

THE BACHELOR.— Your games will be the end of me.

PETER STAMATIN.— You can only lose. Does that comfort you?

THE BACHELOR escapes their grip and turns his back on the audience. He's agitated.

THE BACHELOR.— So you killed him to prove him wrong?

PETER STAMATIN.— I killed him because he refused to understand me. It was a matter of time. We were unable to respect each other, yet destined to share the world. Heavenly bodies dance and collide; one swallows the other. In making the old world die by my hands, I have bonded us forever. Wherever I go, he will follow.

THE BACHELOR.— You fought on the side of my enemy tonight. Should I forgive you?

PETER STAMATIN.— Forgive me if you must. I would rather repay you.

THE BACHELOR.— How?

PETER STAMATIN.— A body this fresh and this cheap is a rare find, is it not? Measure his heart. Clean his bones and sew them together. Display them in your Thanatica, where the living can learn from them. Find a use for the body, let the soul live in our conscience.

A pause.

THE BACHELOR.— I'll take it off your hands.

CAST

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Daniil Dankovsky

A Bachelor of Medicine

(and excellent shot)

Andrey Stamatina

A Renaissance Man

(and Bon Vivant)

Peter Stamatina

An Architect

(and Artist)

farkhad

a talented corpse.

SETTING

There is a large wooden chest in the center of the stage, the kind used to store books or sheets — reminiscent of a coffin. Two brass candelabra sit on top. At the back, a high table full of liquor bottles and three glasses. Next to it, a grandfather clock stained with blood.

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The room is dark. ANDREY lights a match, and with it the two candelabra. He is perfectly calm. The growing candlelight reveals the bloodstains on his arms, clothes and face. PETER stands with his back turned.

PETER STAMATIN.— You can't hold your liquor nor your tongue.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— I can hold a knife well enough.

PETER STAMATIN.— Did you see his hands?

ANDREY STAMATIN.— What of them?

PETER STAMATIN.— They contorted in a curious way. I could swear he was gripping a pen, trying to note something down. A last impulse to correct us. I bet he disapproved of the angle you chose to stab him.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— He was a coward. We've done him a favor; cowards embarrass themselves when times change. Now he'll have a chance to retain what's left of his glory. Death has shrouded him; he cannot show fear.

PETER STAMATIN.— No... No. I see him clearer than ever. He's still here, waiting for silence.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Drink some more to calm your nerves. You'll be drunk when Daniil arrives. I'll do the talking.

The doorbell rings. THE TWINS share an alarmed glance.

PETER STAMATIN.— It's not yet midnight. What is he doing here?

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Are you going to shoot? Do you have what it takes?

THE BACHELOR.— Let me through. I don't want to be involved. I have seen nothing.

PETER STAMATIN.— You misunderstand. Put away that gun. Do you believe you have reasons to fear us?

THE BACHELOR.— I am aiming at your heart. Step aside.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Now you know; you share our sin. I only regret you weren't here when we ended him.

He steps closer, until the barrel of the gun touches his chest, and lifts his hand to THE BACHELOR's face.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Is that not the true reason of your anger? That we didn't wait for you?

THE BACHELOR.— You devil...

PETER approaches them, standing at THE BACHELOR's back.

PETER STAMATIN.— Listen. Listen carefully.

ANDREY holds THE BACHELOR's face in his hands. THE BACHELOR clenches his eyes shut.

PETER STAMATIN.— Do you not feel my touch?

THE BACHELOR.— I do.

PETER STAMATIN.— Are these not my hands? Look at me. Are these not my eyes?

THE BACHELOR.— (taking a step closer, unsure) Peter...

ANDREY STAMATIN.— I upset him earlier. Pay it no mind.

PETER STAMATIN.— I can speak for myself!

THE BACHELOR.— Why did you cover the clock?

PETER STAMATIN.— Andrey proposed an interesting idea: that murder is a natural instinct present in all living beings.

THE BACHELOR.— I find it reasonable.

PETER STAMATIN.— So did I.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Peter.

PETER STAMATIN.— Farkhad differed.

A haunting silence takes place. PETER turns towards the light. He crosses the room, steps between the two other men and places a hand on the wooden chest.

PETER STAMATIN.— He was of the opinion that only some beings possess a killing instinct and thus the right to succumb to it, while others lack both the will and the ability. He used us as an example, as he tends to do.

THE BACHELOR.— When did this happen?

PETER STAMATIN.— He thought we illustrated his point beautifully. That my hands could never wound because for that they would have to touch the world, while Andrey warms his own with the blood of his enemies. The reckless fool... I don't have two hands. I have four.

THE BACHELOR.— What are you saying?!

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Don't make a mistake, Danya.

THE BACHELOR.— This is ridiculous. I'm leaving.

ANDREY blocks his path. THE BACHELOR aims his gun at him.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Damn him! He's always late, and now! Cover the clock and let him in. I'll get rid of these clothes.

ANDREY rushes across the room and exits the stage on the right. PETER takes off his coat and covers the grandfather clock with it.

PETER STAMATIN.— Come in!

THE BACHELOR enters from the left. He shakes snow off his coat with his gloves as PETER pours himself a drink.

THE BACHELOR.— This weather! I planned to visit the graveyard, but I couldn't stand the cold. Has Farkhad arrived?

PETER drops his glass. He stares as it crashes against the floor, spilling liquor on his shoes.

PETER STAMATIN.— Not yet.

THE BACHELOR.— Oh... Let me help you.

THE BACHELOR crouches to pick up the broken glass and accidentally cuts himself.

THE BACHELOR.— Ah, dammit!

PETER STAMATIN.— Careful.

PETER kneels next to him, takes the wounded hand and brings it to his mouth.

THE BACHELOR.— It's only a scratch. Ah, sorry... I stained your sleeve.

PETER freezes. He stares at his sleeve, stands and returns to the bar to wordlessly pour another drink. THE BACHELOR stands too, a little confused.

THE BACHELOR.— Only three glasses. Did you forget I was coming?

ANDREY reenters the stage from the right, wearing clean clothes. He stops in his tracks, grins brightly and runs to lift THE BACHELOR into his arms.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Ah, my dearest friend! You don't know how glad I am to see you.

THE BACHELOR.— It shows. Can you put me down?

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Come, come. Have a drink. Tell me about your latest experiment.

He pours the remaining glass full of liquor and hands it to THE BACHELOR.

THE BACHELOR.— So you did read my letter! Andrey, you have no idea! The properties of matter as affected by death, melting point included. I have measured everything. I got my current headache last Friday.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— My, Danya, you're in dire need of heartbreak. Find yourself a cold heiress and fall in love with her.

THE BACHELOR.— Why would I ever search for a Mistress when none is crueler than flesh? Look at me. I am made of blood and shame in a shape I did not choose.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— You and your tragedies. Are you not in awe? Is it not a miracle that you can be in so much pain and not bear a single wound? Body, betray me —I will love you anyways.

THE BACHELOR.— Easy for you to say.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— How so?

THE BACHELOR.— Don't tease me. You're an Apollo.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— A self-made one. A graft chimera. I beheaded the Tree of Knowledge and replaced its fruit with hemlock flowers. And you're my co-author, don't forget. If you envy me, forge yourself as you did me.

THE BACHELOR.— You mistake my affliction. The only cure is immortality. No, I feel no urge to chase a beauty that shall pass.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Nonsense. What good is anything that doesn't corrupt? There are scars on me, yes! Life will change you long before death does, and with more success! It has punched my teeth out, it has broken my ribs and filled my cup with vices. Boy, am I grateful!

THE BACHELOR.— I cannot share your taste for change. These hands will tremble. These eyes will blur. These limbs will ache and rot. They will all be dust. I would mock whoever desired them. A body... Isn't that what I lay on my dissecting table? Not a person, but a body. I will do everything in my hand not to become a voiceless corpse, stripped of everything but its shape, allowed as much dignity as unfamiliar gazes care to grant me. Forgotten in a wooden box like an old toy... who would understand me then?

ANDREY STAMATIN.— I've always loved your inability to aim low.

PETER STAMATIN.— You digress. We'll find no love in flesh, nor in death.

THE BACHELOR.— Peter, are you alright? You're trembling.

The clock strikes twelve. The sound reverberates and swallows the room. PETER throws the table to the floor, shattering everything on it. THE BACHELOR jumps in place. ANDREY pulls out his cigarette case and puts one in his mouth.

ANDREY STAMATIN.— Ah, to Hell with everything.

PETER STAMATIN.— A voiceless corpse... You're blind. Is the Colosseum a voiceless corpse? Would you step into the Great Pyramid and feel nothing but walls around you? Do the unseen marvels of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon not take shape in your mind? Do you not weep for the Pharos of Alexandria, crowned with fire and mirrors?