

THE IRON CROWN

June 2013

Humanities Studio, University of Warwick

Production Team

Director/Lighting Designer – Matt Bent

Assistant Director – Laura Kurlansky

Set/Costume/Make-up Designer – Cordelia Keston

Texts by Cat Turhan and the ensemble

Publicity Designer - David Levesley

Ensemble

Laura Bennett (2nd Woman/Spirit)

Gaya Chanrai (Narrator)

Phoebe McIndoe (Priest)

Jack Perkins (Man)

Zoe Templeman-Young (Oracle)

Charlotte Thomas (Woman)

The Iron Crown was a total theatre piece, documented as a series of textual fragments, a storyboard and in photographs. Here are the words written collaboratively between performers and directors, guided by and formally completed by Cat Turhan.

Photographs may be found here: http://darklingimages.com/gallery/2013-productions/iron_crown/

The Iron Crown

Texts

1. Prologue: Introduction.

NARRATOR

Like all strange stories, it started in the night.
There's a woman, a wife, frightened
By her dreams of her husband with another,
A lady, a better looking lover-
Tormented by her visions she climbs to the top
Of the temple, hoping, praying it might stop.

But her visions never ceased
Only started to increase
So she sought a means to make him suffer,
Him and his pretty other lover.
Then there is a priest, a priest who knows it all
One who hears the chants and foresees the fall
He begs for mercy, prays for his life
But his prayers are futile for the deranged demon-wife.

But a storm approached in the middle of the night.
It was storm of blood, and raged with fury's might.
It was a storm of fire, a storm of death and pain.
The tempest screamed 'the iron crown will rise again.'

Now, it might seem imperative but I've forgotten what to say,
Perhaps I will remember as we go along the way
But... somewhere lights went dim
- something burnt red
- something went in

And all of the life drained from that bed...

2. Prologue: Entrance of the 'Gods'.

3. A praying woman has visions of her husband having affairs with other women.

Let it burn, gods, let it burn. Let it batter, let it burst, let it burn, let it break, let it shake, let it burn, let it reel, let it writhe, let it burn, let it fester, let it fight, let it burn, let it twist, let it turn, let it burn, let it swallow, let it lick, let it burn, let it blind, let it bleed, let it burn, let it smother, let it cover, let it burn, let it rip, let it tear, let it burn, let it batter, let it burst, let it burn, let it break, let it shake, let it burn, let it reel, let it writhe, let it burn, let it fester, let it fight, let it burn, let it twist, let it turn, let it burn, let it swallow, let it lick, let it burn, let it blind, let it bleed, let it burn, let it smother, let it cover, let it burn, let it rip, let it tear, let it burn, let it burn, let it burn, **let it burn.**

4. A priest is visited at his bed by a divine oracle.

ORACLE: You did not expect me, but I have come-
come from the temple-
temple is under watch-
watching a woman-
a woman who prays before you-
you have seen her, she comes at night

Silence.

ORACLE: *You have seen her?*

PRIEST: Yes.

ORACLE: at night she is plagued by hate-
hate for her husband's lies-

her husband lies with another woman-
woman has begged us for vengeance-
vengeance is an iron crown
an iron crown and a red face -
a red face will replace her own-
her own husband will see her black eyes-
black eyes burn in fire-
fire is a gift from the gods-
from the gods there are no secrets-

Beat.

ORACLE: no secrets can his lover see-
see the woman who comes at night-
at night she will pray to you-
you must inform the woman-
the woman who we watch-
watch her face flicker in the temple-
the temple is where the woman comes-

COME.

(Oracle disappears)

5. A man wakes up in bed next to his lover having had a nightmare involving his wife.

Lights on. Sudden intake of breath - Man sits up, Woman's eyes open.

W: What's the matter?

M: Bad dream.

W: What dream?

M: Not sure.

W: Can you remember?

M: Vague.

W: Can you tell me?

M: Yes.

W: What happened?

Breath – Man.

M: My wife.

W: Your wife?

M: Not exactly.

W: What do you mean?

M: Hard to describe.

W: What did she do?

M: She stared.

W: What did she say?

M: I hate you.

W: She was angry?

M: I hate you.

Breath – Woman.

W: Then what?

M: She was angry.

W: With who?

M: With me.

W: With me?

M: No.

W: It was a just a dream.

M: Just a dream.

W: Just a dream?

M: She was transformed.

W: It was just –

M: Her face.

W: It was –

M: Scarlet.

W: Just a –

M: Her eyes piercing.

W: Did she hurt you?

M: Not. No.

W: So, it was just a dream?

M: Just a dream.

W: A dream?

M: Just a dream.

Sharp intake of breath. Lights out. Lie down.

Lights on. Sudden intake of breath - Man sits up, Woman's eyes open.

W: What's the matter?

M: Bad dream.

W: What dream?

M: Not sure.

W: Can you remember?

M: Vague.

W: Can you tell me?

M: Yes.

W: What happened?

M: My wife.

W: Your wife?

M: Not exactly.

W: What?

M: Hard to describe.

W: What did she do?

M: She stared.

W: What did she say?

M: I hate you.

W: She was angry?

M: I hate you.

W: Then?

M: She was angry.

W: Who?
M: With me.
W: Me?
M: No.
W: Just a dream.
M: Just a dream.
W: Just a dream?
M: Transformed.
W: Just a –
M: Her face.
W: Just –
M: Scarlet.
W: Just –
M: Eyes piercing.
W: Did she hurt you?
M: No.
W: Just a dream?
M: Just a dream.
W: A dream?
M: A dream.

Sharp intake of breath. Lights out. Lie down.

Lights on. Sudden intake of breath - Man sits up, Woman's eyes open.

W: What?
M: Dream.
W: What?
M: Not.
W: Remember?
M: Vague.
W: Tell?
M: Yes.
W: What?

M: Wife.
W: Your wife?
M: Not.
W: What?
M: Hard.
W: What do?
M: Stared.
W: Say?
M: I hate you.
W: Angry?
M: I hate you.
W: Then?
M: Angry.
W: Who?
M: With me.
W: Me?
M: No.
W: Just a dream.
M: Dream.
W: Just a dream?
M: Transformed.
W: Just a –
M: Face.
W: Just –
M: Scarlet.
W: Just –
M: Eyes.
W: Hurt?
M: No.
W: Dream?
M: Dream.
W: Dream?
M: Dream.

Sharp intake of breath. Lights out. Lie down.

6. The woman enters the temple and begins to pray. The priest enters and tells her about his visit from the oracle, and about her power.

WOMAN: (almost inaudible) Let it burn, gods, let it burn. Let it batter, let it burst, let it burn, let it break, let it shake, let it burn, let it reel, let it writhe, let it burn, let it fester, let it fight, let it burn, let it twist, let it turn, let it burn, let it swallow, let it lick, let it burn, let it blind, let it bleed, let it burn, let it smother, let it cover, let it burn, let it rip, let it tear, let it burn, let it batter, let it burst, let it burn, let it break, let it shake, let it burn, let it reel, let it writhe, let it burn, let it fester, let it fight, let it burn, let it twist, let it turn, let it burn, let it swallow, let it lick, let it burn, let it blind, let it bleed, let it burn, let it smother, let it cover, let it burn, let it rip, let it tear, let it burn, let it burn, let it burn, **let it burn.**

PRIEST: (joins, repeats lines from the oracle, also almost inaudible)

at night she is plagued by hate-
hate for her husband's lies-
her husband lies with another woman-
woman has begged us for vengeance-
vengeance is an iron crown
an iron crown and a red face -
a red face will replace her own-
her own husband will see her black eyes-
black eyes burn in fire-
fire is a gift from the gods-
from the gods there are no secrets-
no secrets can his lover see-
see the woman who comes at night-
at night she will pray to you-
you must inform the woman-
the woman who we watch-
watch her face flicker in the temple-

the temple is where the woman comes-

WOMAN: Who is there?

PRIEST: They are watching you, child.

WOMAN: Who?

PRIEST: They watch you nightly, they hear everything.

WOMAN: They know?

PRIEST: There is a price to pay for vengeance, child.

WOMAN: The fire?

PRIEST: They say vengeance is an iron crown.

WOMAN: Speak plainly.

PRIEST: I saw a vision, a vision in my own sleep- the gods will grant your vengeance, child.

WOMAN: The price?

PRIEST: A demon's face, an iron crown.

Beat.

WOMAN: Thank you.

Transformation. (Priest and Woman speeches here overlap.)

(Priest runs away in fear- Woman left on stage.)

7. Interlude: Narrator's intro to landscape/storm.

The sky is on fire, the rain is burning
The clouds above will gasp and sigh-
the storm has come, the crown's returning.
The running rivers now are churning
Their bloated banks are bursting high.
The sky is on fire, the rain is burning
Creatures in the caves are learning
The lesson is to swim or fly:
the storm has come, the crown's returning
The cackling winds can sense the yearning
Of bleeding waves which wonder why
the sky is on fire, the rain is burning.
Stones shake and mutter, rock unfirming
Smashed and shattered, the shell-shocked cry
"the storm has come, the crown's returning"
The tempest is screaming, the tides are turning
Something surely has to die.
The sky is on fire, the rain is burning
the storm has come, the crown's returning.
The sky is on fire, the rain is burning
the storm has come, the crown's returning.
The sky is on fire, the rain is burning
the storm has come, the crown's returning.
The sky is on fire, the rain is burning
the storm has come, the crown's returning.

8. Landscape: a storm strikes, causing devastating damage.
9. The man goes to visit the priest's home, and tells him about the nightmares he has been having. The priest tells him the only way he can survive is by going home and praying all night.

MAN: Sanctuary

PRIEST: Child

MAN: Anyone?

PRIEST: You ask for help,

MAN: Can you hear me?

PRIEST: You come here running,

MAN: She was a seed

PRIEST: What you have seen you cannot unsee.

MAN: Smallest

PRIEST: She will come again,

MAN: Fragile

PRIEST: And not when you dream.

MAN: Dug her way to the depths

PRIEST: You must pray, my son.

MAN: The depths of the earth

PRIEST: You must pray.

MAN: Down

PRIEST: Pray, my son.

MAN: Down

PRIEST: You must.

MAN: Down

PRIEST: You must.

MAN: Down

PRIEST: Pray for hope.

MAN: Down

PRIEST: Pray for beauty.

MAN: Down

PRIEST: Pray.

MAN: Down to hell

PRIEST: Against the fire

MAN: Down

PRIEST: Against the blood

MAN: Down

PRIEST: Against the crown

MAN: Down

10. The woman is visited by an evil spirit, who paints her face red, stands her hair on end and places an Iron Crown on her head. She is transformed.
11. The man recites prayers to himself, alone. His lover kisses him goodnight and leaves to go to bed. The woman enters and kills the man.

NARRATOR

The iron crown upon her head,
And all her human traits were shed
A man was praying on the bed
A man to whom she once was wed-
Her bloody footprints to him led,
The iron crown upon her head.
The iron crown upon her head
See her face a scarlet red,
See the blood her husband bled
For no one heard the words he said
As all around the house had fled
With the iron crown upon her head.

MAN

Gods above, look down on me with mercy, gods look down and hear my prayer, gods above, know I have followed your path, I have answered your wishes, come and save us from her actions, come and save us from the storm, come and save us from these nightmares, come and save us from the dawn, come and save us from her changes, come and save us from her

powers, come and save us, come and save us come and save us- The Fire. The Blood. The Crown. The Fire. The Blood. The Crown. *etc*

NARRATOR

The iron crown upon her head,
But a silver knife, the bloody thread
Feeds the fire she had fed
And wrecks the room with rage and dread
Who could have known he'd end up dead
The iron crown upon her head
Who could have known he'd end up dead
The iron crown upon her head
Who could have known he'd end up dead
The iron crown upon her head