

INTERIOR. DRAWING ROOM. NIGHT

MARC ISAMBARD BRUNEL (mid fifties) enters. He is wearing the dress of the time. Black waistcoat, with silver watch fob, black trousers, white shirt with winged tip collar, black bowtie, black frock coat, black leather spectator spat boots

MARC

Come son, the light of the drawing room will prove sufficient

ISAMBARD

(os)
I shall not!

MARC

Come son

There is no movement

MARC (CONT'D)

Isambard!!!

ISAMBARD

(os)
It is interminably long. I shall not be seen in this fashion

MARC

You shall look perfectly presentable

ISAMBARD

(os)
This is not the fashion in Paris

MARC

Je suis un Français. Ne me parlez pas de la mode vous sot anglais

ISAMBARD

Je ne suis pas le port de cette

MARC

Yes you are

ISAMBARD

No I'm not

MARC

You shall wear it

ISAMBARD

I am unprepared for the consequences of that Pere

MARC

If only you shall be seen. Unknown
to all, unseen by any can only be
deemed as an entire failure

ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL (late teens) enters. He is wearing a red Victorian night shirt. Instead of the cap he has on a long stovepipe hat

ISAMBARD

In some distant colony perhaps this
is perfectly presentable. Perhaps
solitude makes you confused?

MARC

Come here

Isambard approaches and Marc stands him square at the shoulders

MARC (CONT'D)

(adjusting the hat)

There are those, no doubt our
Parisian brethren amongst them who
say it should be set at a slight
perpendicular to the brow. I am of
the mindset to ignore them

ISAMBARD

At my expense papa

MARC

Challenge isn't following. It is
leading

ISAMBARD

Sir you are an engineer not a
milliner. Events have proved one
might stick to one's speciality

Marc removes a pencil from his pocket

MARC

Those set of unfortunate
circumstances have passed over

As he talks he draws a pencil moustache on Isambard. Each time Isambard tries to speak, Marc pauses his drawing and closes Isambard's lips.

MARC (CONT'D)

We shall go into the future as
Brunel and Son

ISAMBARD

Papa....

MARC

Your tutor speaks to your
brilliance. Euclidian geometry at
eight, French, ancient Greek, Latin

ISAMBARD

Papa..

MARC

Master Breguet wrote to me many
times of your potential Isambard

ISAMBARD

If I might reapply to the ecole?
Perhaps the Duke might put his name
to the correspondence?

MARC

Adulthood cannot wait for time's
movement Isambard

ISAMBARD

Must we grab it?

MARC

Bring me the River Neva plans

Isambard doesn't move. Marc crosses to the writing table

MARC (CONT'D)

This shield shall work. It is
proven

Marc rifles through a number of plans, unable to lay his hand
on the correct one. Isambard crosses and almost immediately
retrieves the plans. Marc snatches them

ISAMBARD

The compartments are too small

MARC

The constituency of the material is
different. We have good English
sod, clay and quicksand

ISAMBARD

It is too close to the surface

MARC

It shall suffice

ISAMBARD

Father? The cost

MARC

Innovation. Now is the time for
innovation. Soft clay and
quicksand.

(MORE)

MARC (CONT'D)

Those Cornish miners refuted the necessity to change when circumstances dictate. Dodd similarly

ISAMBARD

How do we manage the cost?

MARC

A true first. A world first

ISAMBARD

Father I am not a potential investor

MARC

We have plenty of those

ISAMBARD

Enough to start but only

MARC

Yes and the start will ensure the finish

ISAMBARD

But at what cost?

MARC

The boon to trade, tremendous, almost incalculable

ISAMBARD

It is the height of winter. Perhaps in Spring

MARC

Our benefactor the Duke bested Napoleon before my boot making device managed a full capacity run. I must get ahead of time

ISAMBARD

But a tunnel under a navigable river?

MARC

We have the royal assent

ISAMBARD

But what is the cost?

MARC

We shall charge... a penny... to pass through, ameliorate some immediate costs

ISAMBARD

We can be the vapour and not the
steam engine

MARC

Enough. Tonight I shall lay the
first brick. You the second not
Cochrane

ISAMBARD

The principle is unfounded

MARC

Only in actuality

ISAMBARD

One thousand tons of weight...

MARC

1818 my shield patent. Seven years,
lobbying, persuading. Tonight I lay
the first brick... and you the
second

Isambard looks at the plans

ISAMBARD

I think this needs further
adjustment

MARC

Go ahead. Son?

ISAMBARD

Yes Father

I shall lay the first brick. You
the second

ISAMBARD

Yes Father

They study the plans

ISAMBARD (CONT'D)

Shall I get dressed now

MARC

Perfectly presentable as is current

THE END