

A Miracle of Birds

DUPRI - Workshop boss. Asian playing white. Folds many cranes shoddily.

CEZANNI - A worker. Asian playing white. Folds many cranes artfully, efficiently.

ELDATTI - A worker. Asian playing white. Barely folding anything.

ROGOLLI - A worker. Asian playing white. Folding one crane methodically.

CEZANNI

Yes! 10,000!

(lights up. paper cranes. so many paper cranes. everywhere. on counters. on tables. in bags. lots of bags. how can there be so many paper cranes? it must be a paper crane workshop. rustic. two desks too many on the workshop floor. diagrams on the walls. colored paper of all hues. tons of failures on the floor. 4 workers at their desks working ceaselessly folding cranes. Dupri is dressed in a visor and a pair of glasses, vest, the usual gear of an head engineer: mustache too. Cezanni vibrant and joyful, mustache. Eldatti somehow once thought this was a good idea as if maybe they'd feed him; doesn't remember what convinced them to stay so it doesn't look like they belong, mustache. Rogolli looks like a poet on their last legs, they have a cup of coffee, mustache. dialogue continues through lights up.)

DUPRI

That's it? Show me the last one? *(Cezanni shows it)* Horrible. And still not enough. Nowhere near enough. The order is much higher than that.

CEZANNI

How many is it? You've never said.

DUPRI

Unimportant! Come on, team! We are here to do the Moon a favor: chain a miracle of birds to pass through the moonbow. A very important contrac; there's no backing down.

CEZANNI

A miracle of birds?

DUPRI

Don't you know? It's the word to describe a flock of flocks of birds. Many many birds.

ROGOLLI

A flock of flocks?

ELDATTI

When's lunch?

DUPRI

Yes, a flock of flocks. And all in single file. Like the line to heaven.

ROGOLLI

You call it...? *(doesn't look away from their crane)*

DUPRI

A miracle of birds, that's right.

CEZANNI

Wouldn't it just be -

DUPRI, CEZANNI, and ROGOLLI

A really big flock.

DUPRI

Right, you'd think that would be enough, but it is not enough. Just like your poor stash. You've gotta sweat to please the genies who snort comet dust, granting glory to those who are worthy! Now, more cranes! We'll make it, and sooner too the more we strive.

ELDATTI

Is it cold in here?

DUPRI

Who opened the window again? Heating is not cheap. Not at all.

CEZANNI

It's closed, boss; and it's quite warm in here y'know.

DUPRI

That's right. I can't tell sometimes, because I'm doing my job!

ELDATTI

My hands are shaking.

DUPRI

It's the birds telling you you're gonna fly soon, mon cherie.

ELDATTI

I think I maybe might perhaps need a glass of something, perhaps water, to, I guess, sip at; I'm a bit parched.

DUPRI

After all I've given you... a table, paper, such opportunities, and you're going to turn away when one of us has created 10,000 cranes. That's 10,000! It's an incredible achievement!

CEZANNI

I think that was me.

DUPRI

Are you sure?

CEZANNI

I don't know. / O haha!

DURPI

Would you bet your job on it? A limb? Money?

CEZANNI

What, no I don't think I could do that. No no.

DUPRI

Isn't it amazing to just believe? To see the vision?

CEZANNI

- I can smell the miracle, friends! See! I told you! Hahahaha!!!!

DUPRI

Ambition! The blood of heroes can flow in your veins too! Believe!

CEZANNI

Hahahaha!!

ELDATTI

Cold.

CEZANNI

Cold?

ELDATTI

Cold.

CEZANNI

He's cold?

ELDATTI

So cold.

CEZANNI

He's cold!

DUPRI

Belieeeeeve!!

ELDATTI

I used to just shit my pants, but now I don't even have it in me to shit my pants. There's nothing there. I am nothing but wind wrapped around another wind.

CEZANNI

Don't you think maybe we could just take a break?

DUPRI

(incredulous) A break?

CEZANNI

I was thinking that we've been so wonderfully productive, that maybe we could afford to put on some tunes and smoke a cigarette, y'know, give each other hugs. I like hugs. It's been a while. Since my last hug.

DUPRI

Hugs...

CEZANNI

Besides, I think there's a baby in the cabinet over there. I think I started dreaming about 4 hours ago y'know. I don't know about time. Maybe a year. Maybe a week. Maybe this is still a dream. But it feels like I'm awake and folding. Folding dreams maybe. Folding myself. I was folding, and I could swear for a moment I was hearing a baby crying. Maybe I was losing it, y'know, but I was still believing. I really need you to know I believe! I still believe in our miracle!

DUPRI

Look, you, I understand you've finished 10,000 cranes now and -

CEZANNI

I did? That was me?!

DUPRI

Inconsequential, because yes, it was an achievement of sorts, but that doesn't mean we can just ... invent stories of such consequence that would cause us to fearfully abandon our work. There are others depending on us. Let's not be selfish when we have to uphold our responsibility!

CEZANNI

It was only a thought.

DUPRI

Thinking again?!

CEZANNI

Maybe we could have a meeting?

ELDATTI

Yes a meeting!

DUPRI

Now now, don't go googooing about a meeting now. / Ahh barrels in a flood. Come on...

CEZANNI & ELDATTI

Meeting! Meeting! Meeting! (*Eldatti continues until he's just saying "meat! meat! meat! meat! ... etc" ceaselessly*)

CEZANNI

Yes and maybe we can finally learn why we're -

DUPRI

What?

CEZANNI

Y'know, how many are actually requested by the order

DUPRI

That is entirely not your business. It's not polite to inquire into such personal matters.

CEZANNI

Well I've folded enough to know that wishes don't really come true. I was never

superstitious, but I do still believe! And maybe for morale you could reveal the ultimate reason why -

DUPRI

Well what was your first wish, then? How do you know it didn't come true?

CEZANNI

It's... it's been a while. I just want to remember. I wish that I may remember.
(*Eldatti still saying "meat! meat! meat! meat! but he's losing steam, getting weak, tired"*)

DUPRI

Remember what?

CEZANNI

I don't know. That's why I'm wishing to remember what I need to remember! That's it!

DUPRI

(*pause*) We've been here before, haven't we?

CEZANNI

Maybe it's because we're not Japanese, huh? And maybe we have to be Japanese to gain wishes from folding cranes, like maybe if the miracle can make us Japanese then we'd be able to have our wishes come true and then we can take a break and eat and smoke and drink and dance and hug.

DUPRI

That's as good a reason as any to get back to work!

(*Eldatti's head hits the table*)

Hey. Hey, hey, hey! No sleeping on the job! I'll be giving 200 of your cranes to me, 200 to each of the others too, and you'll just have to start all over -

ROGOLLI

It's done. (*holding up a crane*)

DUPRI

Don't think because you got 200 at a penalty from someone else that -

ROGOLLI

No, this is the one.

DUPRI

What do you mean? We're going for quantity here, quantity not quality.

ROGOLLI

You don't understand, because I know you've been sifting your hand through the falling sands to seek a single grain, a particular grain; to catch, perhaps, the one hope that would be the key for you. Your key.

DUPRI

What key? Stop talking / nonsense.

ROGOLLI

I know you've long ago abandoned miracles at a filthy curbside covered in crushed

soda cans and candy wrappers, somewhere south of where your heart used to rent. You never took the time to find a map. I've been following the breadcrumbs of a broken promise and now I've realized it is possible. Look. Just look.

DUPRI

What are you talking about?

ROGOLLI

Look. You will understand.

(shows them the crane, aloft. keeps holding it. Dupri and Cezanni look at it. It is beautiful. It is different.)

DUPRI

Is...? Is this truly...? / How is it possible? I - I - I - it's magnificent!

ROGOLLI

Yes. Yes. Yes, yes, yes. It is my masterpiece.

DUPRI

I dare say our work has produced something truly special. Give it here.

ROGOLLI

But even the supreme miracle, the masterpiece of us, our bodies, are fashioned in a coil.

DUPRI

What, a coil?

CEZANNI

Did he say a coil?

ROGOLLI

Imagine, if you will, a wire, a copper wire: one end in your hand and the other stretching out forever. Now coil the wire again and again in a tight spiral. Give all yourself to the coiling of this wire. Turning and winding and coiling round and round and round itself til you have a kind of cord. It stays that way, in that form. It's a very special wire. Now zoom out from this, take this cord and coil it and coil it and coil it into a spiral all its own until even that coil becomes a much more sizable and substantial cord than the one that it is made of. Eventually, this cord too becomes long enough to be a wire that can be coiled and coiled and coiled and coiled -

DUPRI

Is this truly necessary?? What is the point?

ROGOLLI

Exactly, there can be no point in a world wound so many times upon itself, to then be wound upon itself again and again and again and again / and again and again and again and again and again and again unto infinity.

DUPRI

Stop it. Stop it I say. Stop. Stop. Stop. Give me the crane.

CEZANNI

(regarding Eldatti) Friends... I don't think he's doing so good.

ROGOLLI

This one is for me.

DUPRI

It's mine! It's my key! I've got to leave this place! I'm getting out of here! It's -

DUPRI & ROGOLLI

- inevitable.

ROGOLLI

Yes.

CEZANNI

Is he dead? / Oh my goodness I think he's dead!

ROGOLLI

Which is why I have become so damn thirsty all of a sudden. (*grabs the cup of coffee*)

DUPRI

Where did you get that cup of coffee?

ROGOLLI

It was right here.

DUPRI

Who made it? / Who made that cup of coffee?

CEZANNI

I want a sip! / Let me!

ROGOLLI

I don't know. I don't have the answers. I never did.

DUPRI & CEZANNI

Give it to me! (*as they reach out to the cup of coffee, Rogolli dips the crane into the coffee and eats it*)

DUPRI

Nooooooooo!!! What have you done?! You fool!

ROGOLLI:

I only have questions. That's all I ever had.

CEZANNI

I'm so scared.

DUPRI

I'm going / to kill you!

ROGOLLI

I accept the consequences of my actions.

(*the sound of a baby crying*)

(all pause. they follow the sound of the crying. Cezanni goes to the cabinets, opens it, and takes out a bundled baby. they take the baby over to Eldatti, place the baby on top of Eldatti's slumped body and all three look at the baby. the baby continues to cry.)

END OF PLAY