

Hell's Mouth (Extract)

Enter BUTCHER, STEAK, MINCE, LIVER'N ONION and SAUSAGE. They all wear bloodied butcher's aprons and carry buckets with bits of JOHNNY THROTTLE in them. They place them on the table and stand to one side. Zeus jumps and paws at the nearest bucket.

DUKE

Down Zeus! Giddaway! Giddown! Bad dog!

ZEUS sits reluctantly, hid tongue hanging, slavering for flesh.

PSEUD

What's in the bucket Duke?

DUKE

Johnny Throttle.

A silence, whilst the paparazzi contemplate the thought of human flesh in the buckets.

DUKE

I put out an order to pick up all his bits.

BUTCHER

They was strewed right across Cornwall.

STEAK removes a small round object from her pocket and held it up.

STEAK

I found his kneecap embedded in a telegraph pole the other side of Menacuddle.

She plops the kneecap into a bucket.

TRUTH

Anything missing?

The bucket-bearers are silent. They shuffle and look at one another.

DUKE

Well? Answer the question. Is there any part of Johnny Throttle missing?

The bucket-bearers cower and push forward SAUSAGE.

SAUSAGE

(mumbles) Yes sir.

DUKE
Speak up.

SAUSAGE
Yes!

DUKE
What?

SAUSAGE
His foot?

SLEAZE
Which foot?

SAUSAGE
Right foot.

PSEUD
His throttle foot!

DUKE
Don't read nothin' into that!

The paparazzi are so excited they break into song:

TRUTH
Johnny Throttle's throttle foot is missing!

SLEAZE
Johnny Throttle's throttle foot is gone!

DUKE
It's nothin' to write home about, it's stuck up in a tree
no doubt-

BUTCHER
No. We had it in a bucket fulla bones.

PAPARAZZI
You had it in a bucket fulla bones?

SAUSAGE
I was the one who was guard; they said you look after
that. The bucket was there, stood on a chair, right next
to where I sat.

SLEAZE

Johnny Throttle's throttle foot was stolen?

PSEUD

It was taken from under your nose?

DUKE

Don't be some damn preposterous, It id'n no great loss to us-

SAUSAGE

They'll use it as a trophy I suppose.

TRUTH

You gotta get it back

SLEAZE

What d'you propose?

PAPARAZZI

You gotta get it back, what d'you propose?

Duke stands and picks a bucket off the table. He dredges round inside it and produces a shin.

Silence.

DUKE

This ere is Johnny's shin.

He holds the bone above ZEUS's head. The dog barks and slavers.

DUKE

Cameras loaded? Flashbulbs in?

The photographers aim their lenses at ZEUS. DUKE drops the bone and the dog attacks it. The cameras click and flash furiously.

DUKE

Print this:

The paparazzi scribble DUKE's words. As he speaks his advisors join in, one by one, and their words become a sinister mesmeric chant.

DUKE

Whoever took Throttle's foot, if you want the rest of im he's up amongst the furze on Hell's Mouth Cliff.

+ IRAQI

So before the crows and gulls pick and wrench with
vice-bills at his flesh;

+ PAPAL EDICT

Before they open-throat his strips of skin; before they
gulge and gurgitate him down and spew him stinking
out across the sand:

+ FOGOU

Before the pack-dogs crunch and salivate his splintered
bones; before they yelp his tongue-hot soul across the
vacant sky –

You better come and get him.

Hell's Mouth. Dusk. A strange metallic light.

The buckets are ranged amongst the furze on the cliff.

*The wind blows hard across the sea, gulls and fulmars wheel and screech. A skinny
DOG lopes up, panting. It noses round the buckets, knocks one over and spills putrid
flesh and bone across the turf. Immediately a frenzy of gulls and crows swoop and
fight over the carrion, wings beating and screeching. A pack of dogs slinks up and
they snap at the birds who in turn mob them.*

*GONNIETA arrives and wades amongst the animals and buckets. Birds peck at her
and the dogs bite her heels but she beats them back with a stick.*

*She unfolds a Kernow flag, white cross on black ground, gathers the buckets, empties
them onto the turf and covers the contents with the flag.*

*She weights the flag with stones, heaps turfs and rocks onto, building a pyre and
offering incantations to nature as she does. Gulls and crows circle and swoop, dogs
growl in the shadows.*

*When she has built the pyre and blessed the remains of her brother, she takes from the
bag his foot and places it on top of the stones.*

She stands back and views her work, lit only by the rising moon.

*Suddenly she is bathed in torchlight. Strong beams flash all round her. The dogs and
crows vanish.*

BRIGADIER ROTHENKOPF speaks from a distance through a megaphone.

BRIGADIER

We have you surrounded. Don't attempt to resist. You
are under arrest.

GONNIETA stands proud. The torchbeams pin her to the spot. BRIGADIER emerges from the shadows.