

# JFK

## The Rock Opera

by John Kelham  
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where is the vision?



In this very lively street scene, full of colour and dance, young casually dressed Kennedy supporters try to persuade some doubters that the political world really is changing and that life will be better under JFK. A KGB man mischievously tries to egg on the dissenters. The Commentator theatrically announces 'the great moment' – Kennedy's first speech as President

***Why all this celebrating***

**Supporter**

Why all this celebrating in the street  
Can you tell me why  
Why all this celebrating, lighting candles  
In the street  
Can you tell me why  
Can you tell me why  
Can you tell me why

**Commentator**

The Democrats have won the race  
It's going to be a better place  
Haven't you heard the news today  
There has been a shift in power  
This really is the freedom hour  
There are bound to be some changes made

**Supporters**

The Democrats have won the race  
It's going to be a perfect place  
Sure, we've heard the news today  
But tell me while you speak in awe  
What does your man know of the poor  
What does he know about the likes of us

**KGB Man**

You've really got him taped  
You've seen through the pretty face  
It's no different from before  
No doubt that you knew, he's too good to be true

**Dissenters**

We've heard it all before  
It really is a bore  
Can't you see we're in a fix  
So tired of power politics

**Commentator**

It will be different I promise you  
Now is our chance to start anew  
If only you would put your trust in me  
Can you feel it, can you feel it, in the air  
The joy of life has replaced despair  
There's going to be a future you will see

**Supporters**

The Democrats have won the race  
It's going to be a better place  
Haven't you hear the news today  
I say in all propriety  
That we'll transform society  
There are bound to be some changes made



***The Democrats** continued*

**Dissenter**

Where is your hero  
Where is your God  
Who makes so many promises  
You say he'll inspire  
Well let's share the fire

Where is your hero  
Where is your God  
Who makes so many promises

**Commentator**

Meanwhile all over America  
The great moment had arrived  
From coast to coast they waited  
To hear the opening lines

**Supporters**

And they cheered and they cheered and they cheered  
And they cheered in their thousands and they cheered  
And they cheered and they cheered and they cheered





JFK mixes with his followers and then climbs some steps to deliver his speech to his supporters below. Under the spotlight for the first time as President, JFK oozes youthful idealism. He tells the crowd of the kind of world he wants to see. His supporters are ecstatic, becoming almost young disciples.

***I Want to See a World***

**JFK**

I'd like to get this ego thing quite straight  
What I have to offer is not all that great  
It's just the chance to start again  
To rid yourself of yesterday's men  
That is all I really have to offer you

I had these ideas around in my head  
But no one cared to hear a word that I said  
They didn't bother to ask where I stood  
Said I was going too fast for my own good  
That is all I ever heard them really say

Now that has changed  
Been rearranged  
And I am everybody's hero  
I want a world  
Where every man is free  
I want a world of one family

I want to see a world where man can live in peace  
The type of world where there's a reason to live  
A place for everyone – wherever you come from  
And there's only one way to go and that is up

**Commentator**

Now that has changed  
Been rearranged  
And he's a star  
Of the show  
We want a world  
Where men live in peace

This man is magic don't you think



The Commentator hints at problems to come

***This Man is Magic (1)***

**Supporter 2**

This man is magic, don't you think  
He speaks a language we can understand  
It's not as though he promises the earth  
In this he's not like any other man  
This man is magic don't you think

**Commentator**

This man is magic don't you think  
But all is not what it might be  
Amongst the cheers and wild applause  
Is just a trace of uncertainty  
This man is magic don't you think  
This man is magic don't you think





The crowd drifts away, leaving John and Jackie to share the poignant moment of victory. However, even at this time of celebration, there is a sense of foreboding in their duet. JFK is about to face his first test as President. The crowd melts away.

### *A Little Rain May Fall (1)*

#### **JFK**

It's the greatest moment in a man's life  
The time when he makes it to the top  
Looking down on all below him  
And thinking the fun will never stop  
And yet in this moment of reflection  
I know there is so much more to be done  
And amidst all the cheers and celebration  
I feel it's finished though it's only just begun

A little rain may fall before this night is over  
A little darkness now before the day is here

#### **Jackie**

It's the finest moment in a woman's life  
The time when all her dreams come true  
The chance to live a life of glamour  
The First Lady will be entertaining you  
And yet in my quieter moments  
I know life has changed for everyone  
I hear this voice that's deep inside of me  
It's finished though it's only just begun

A little rain may fall before this night is over  
A little darkness now before the day is here

#### **JFK and Jackie**

It's the greatest moment in our lives  
The time when we'll make it to the top  
Looking down on all below us  
And thinking the fun will never stop  
And yet in this moment of reflection  
I know there is so much more to be done  
And amidst all the cheers and celebration  
I feel it's finished though it's only just begun

A little rain may fall before this night is over  
A little darkness now before the day is here



Change of scene to the oval office in the White House. Kennedy sits at the head of the table, surrounded by military chiefs, CIA men and Cuban exiles. They all sit talking. Two young supporters come on to see what is happening. They quickly realise that it is JFK's first day at the office. They also realise that the President is about to be persuaded to sanction the invasion of Cuba and kill Castro. Although the President cannot see or hear them, they advise him to "Hold on tight – talk all night".

Visuals: One Cuban carries a banner with 'kill Castro' written across it. When Supporter 2 sings "he's going to kill the so and so" she points to the placard and makes the sound of a gunshot. When Supporter 2 sings "they just like the feel of the crown" she approaches a CIA man and sings it right in his face. A lot of the song, though, is addressed to Kennedy in the form of advice as the supporters move around the oval table. Supporter 2 even wags her finger at JFK in exasperation as she gives her final warning. Their work done, the supporters leave the stage together, with an air of resignation.

### *A Day at the Office*

#### **Supporter 1**

Hey there, what's happening  
It's the first day at the office  
There's a country to be run  
He must show them he means business  
He must start as he means to go on

#### **Supporter 2**

But they have him  
In their pocket  
Gonna trap him  
Won't let him go  
What he's thinking  
Makes your eyes pop  
He's going to kill the so and so

#### **Supporter 1**

Take it easy  
They've feet of clay  
Take it easy, now  
He's going to find, to find a way

#### **Supporter 2**

I know  
I know  
They just like the feel of the crown  
It's the ones who build you up  
Who get it in mind to knock you down

#### **Supporters 1 & 2**

Hold on tight – don't sound right  
Think slow – count to ten  
Hold on tight – talk all night  
If only he could start again



Still in the Oval Office, this scene carries on from A Day at the Office. JFK is surrounded by papers, burning the midnight oil. He wrestles with his first major decision – should he support the exile invasion of Cuba? The exiles are in national Cuban dress, smoking fat Havana cigars. They have banners – ‘Kill Castro’, ‘Next Stop Havana’, ‘Free Cuba’. The CIA men wear CIA caps, the military men are absolutely weighed down by medals. On the table in front of JFK is a cash register, which the Cubans finger lovingly during the song. On the wall are maps of Cuba. The Cuban leader is very sycophantic as he grovels around Kennedy asking for his approval and his money. Jackie is not seated at the table, but stands in the shadows, coming in just once to encourage John to be a “hero overnight”. The Cuban chorus is wonderfully camp. As they sing they also dance with each other and try to get JFK to join in. He is not interested. The jury, dressed all in black, warns Kennedy of the dangers, but John is in a fix. After the final exuberant chorus, with Cubans dancing all around him and on the oval table itself, he goes to the cash register and takes out the money. He gives it to the Cuban leader who holds it aloft and gives JFK some small change. The deal is done. The Bay of Pigs fiasco is underway.

### ***The Boys from Cuba***

**JFK**

We've inherited some deadwood  
Now's the time to cut it out  
Feeble puppets who've grown lazy  
Ike's men with mental gout

A little gentle pruning  
To show the light of day  
We'll thank them for their services  
And we'll get them on their way

**Cuban 1**

In view of what you're saying  
I think you may be pleased  
We have a little proposition  
Your approval's all we need

**Jackie**

You mustn't be faint-hearted  
Everything will be all right  
It can make your reputation  
You'll be a hero overnight

**Cubans**

We are the boys from Cuba  
We've got a little plan  
We're going to take our land back  
We're in it to a man  
They don't know we're coming  
We'll catch them by surprise  
They're too busy with their new friends  
To see what's before their eyes



**JFK**

But I don't know the details  
It sounds no package tour  
I need time to make my mind up  
What you speak of, it is war

**Cuban 1**

You mustn't think of failure  
Castro's head is in the clouds  
He's too busy with his theories  
The fighting won't be loud

**Cubans**

We are the boys from Cuba  
We can put on quite a show  
All we need's a little money  
Our resources are too low  
The people will support us  
They're just waiting for a sign  
Just give them some incentive  
Show them that you're on our side

**Jury**

Be careful what you're doing  
There's one thing you should learn  
They'll do it on your blind side  
When your back is turned

**JFK**

I know you have convinced me  
But I should have checked this out before  
Can you promise me no repercussions  
No fingerprints on Castro's door

**Cubans**

We are the boys from Cuba  
Can't you see the fix we're in  
We're in the liberating business  
It's a game we play to win  
But we face this little problem  
Which would somewhat spoil our fun  
We're a little short of money  
Won't you see what can be done





As the Cubans leave the stage celebrating, the rotund figure of Khrushchev appears at the front of the stage from the wings. He is dressed in his usual ill-fitting suit and open necked shirt. He has overheard the plans for the Bay of Pigs Operation and is plainly delighted with Kennedy's discomfort. He also cryptically points out that not only has JFK made a bad start politically, but he also 'has problems closer to home'. The problem of course is Jackie. During Khrushchev's speech the scene change for *Bright Eyed Fashion Girl* takes place.

### *Nikita*

#### **Khrushchev**

Forgive me for butting in  
But I couldn't help overhearing  
So sad to see our new man in such distress  
I don't think you know me, I'm Nikita Khrushchev  
Of course I would help if I could  
Haven't I already returned his spies  
The ones who so mysteriously dropped from the skies  
And I will tell you one thing not widely known  
He's got problems much closer to home

#### **Chorus**

Bright eyed fashion girl





The first Act comes to an end with ***Bright Eyed Fashion Girl***. Ideally the scene is split in two, partly in Jackie's dressing room and partly in an adjoining room at a White House ball or party. The idea is that Jackie is seen getting ready to go to the ball. She is busy trying on lavish gowns, shoes etc and doing her hair in different styles. Mirrors are everywhere so she can catch glimpses of herself from all angles. She is surrounded by dressers who continually bring her a succession of outrageous dresses to try on. She dismisses some helpers and impatiently summons others. She picks up some pearls and angrily throws them down. Her fawning hairdresser tries to get her to settle so he can add the final touches to her hair. Jackie is excited and defiantly sings about herself and her life. Her entourage enthusiastically joins in the chorus. Her bedroom door is opened from time to time to allow the sounds of the party to filter through. Finally John comes in to get her. He is dressed in an immaculate dinner suit. He joins in the last chorus and they walk out arm in arm into the party room. Jackie is in a long flowing gown. These are the two most glamorous people of the age. They both look wonderful. The party goers gasp and crane their necks to see the couple. The women curtsy, the men bow as John and Jackie walk through them. To the final instrumental passage of the song, JFK and Jackie dance amongst the party goers. Soon they are all dancing. It is an intensely glamorous and happy scene. ***Bright Eyed Fashion Girl (1)***

**Jackie**

I wonder if they know what kind of woman I am  
That I must do things my own way  
All their whispers are wasted on me  
I don't hear a word that they say  
When I get dressed up and put my bright make up on  
I become the talk of the town  
And that's the only voice that matters to me  
I put my hair up so I can let it down

Bright eyed fashion girl, loving the life that I lead  
Bright eyed fashion girl, the bright lights are all that I need  
Turn up the lights, don't let the music die  
Come dance with me and watch me come alive

I don't mean to shock, it's just the way I am  
And there's one thing I won't pretend  
It's no good trying to be what you're not  
Your true colours show in the end  
Daydream dancing isn't for me  
To hide away is just not my style  
I believe that life is for living  
And I won't have them wasting my time

Bright eyed fashion girl, loving the life that I lead  
Bright eyed fashion girl, the bright lights are all that I need  
Turn up the lights, don't let the music die  
Come dance with me and watch me come alive



The Jury emphasizes the importance that John's affair with Marilyn Monroe is kept secret.

*There are some things the public should not know*

**Jury**

There are some things the public do not know  
There are some things the public should not know  
There are some things the public must not know  
When a President needs relaxation  
**Only the best will do**





Marilyn then enters and immediately assumes her signature pose of the billowing dress lifted by the subway updraft. In a room in the White House she lounges on an exquisite chaise longue, filing her nails and popping pills. To one side of the stage stand the jury – very formal, upright men dressed impeccably in legal garb. As they gaze at Marilyn, they are unanimous that her affair with JFK is something “the public should not know”. Marilyn walks over and flirts outrageously with the jury. They are suitably flustered and shocked, and retire very hot under the collar. Behind the chaise longue stand some macho male dancers. Marilyn wears a slinky, see through dress. As the intro to Sex Queen Goddess gets under way, she comes alive. She carries a long cigarette holder and really starts to vamp it up. As she sings about herself, she enters an erotic dance sequence with her male dancers. The dancers act as a vocal chorus as well. In the last quarter of the song, John comes on stage. Marilyn rushes to him. He joins in the chorus and the dance sequence. Whereas Marilyn has just flirted with the other dancers, with JFK it’s for real. The two of them embrace – not knowing that Jackie is watching from the wings. The audience is only now made aware of Jackie’s presence. The couple’s clandestine meeting is broken by the sound of Jackie approaching. Marilyn and her dancers run off stage, leaving John to face Jackie’s whiplash tongue.

### *Sex Queen Goddess*

#### **Marilyn, Chorus and JFK**

They tell me I’m pretty – I want to believe  
They tell me I’m witty – but they can deceive  
I’m a Hollywood creation – a celluloid sensation  
Star of the silver screen

Sex queen goddess – a star of the silver screen  
Sex queen goddess – the greatest we’ve ever seen  
She’s got all the attributes – she’s got it made  
She’ll stay at the top – until her looks fade

Everybody loves her – but she’s got no friends  
I live off applause – but I know it must end  
I’m a Hollywood creation – a figment of imagination  
Star of the silver screen

Sex queen goddess – star of the silver screen  
Sex queen goddess – the greatest we’ve ever seen  
I’m not very happy – despite her success  
They won’t take her seriously – her life’s in a mess

I wiggle my hips – I’m eager to please  
She’s heavy on pills – it’s her latest release  
She’s a Hollywood prop and some like me hot  
Star of the Silver Screen



*Sex Queen Goddess continued*

Sex queen goddess – a star of the silver screen  
Sex queen goddess – the greatest we've ever seen

I've got all the attributes – I've got it made  
I'll stay at the top – until my looks fade  
Sex queen goddess – star of the silver screen  
Sex queen goddess – the greatest we've ever seen  
She's not very happy – despite her success  
They won't take me seriously – her life's in a mess  
Sex queen goddess – star of the silver screen  
Sex queen goddess – the greatest we've ever seen  
I'm lovingly packaged and put on display  
**I'm owned by the public – she's part of a play**





Jackie enters in a fury. From the shadows she has seen John and Marilyn together. She has also heard the rumours about John's raucous love life, and now she is determined to confront him. At times this is a bitter scene, clearly revealing the weaknesses of the two central characters and the pressures they are under. John sensing the inevitable outburst, turns away from Jackie, but she follows and starts her personal attack on him. The commentator creeps on stage at the front and confidentially tells the audience that this bust up is really what they have come to see. As he rubs his hands with glee, Jackie paces furiously up and down the stage. She then turns on John again, wagging her finger at him and then sitting arms crossed in a huff as the Commentator tells the audience a little about her – "she's extravagant, she's difficult, she's demanding". John, hoping to avoid more punishment, puts his head in some state papers. Jackie, however, does not let him off. She turns on him once more, "there's a coldness in you, John", grabs his papers and throws them down. The sequence is now one of mutual recrimination. She talks of his affairs and he of her extravagance, both are on their feet face to face slugging it out. As Jackie tells John his "fly should be zipped", she reaches down and gestures to pull it up. John is exasperated and he starts to walk away, Jackie follows, threatening to play him at his own game. They row about what the marriage stands for. Jackie then softens again and explains what for her is difficult – "I think you ought to know it's not been easy". John walks off stage; there is no more to be said. Jackie watches him go and breaks down.

***I think you ought to know***

**Jackie**

Watch out for your back John  
You know what the doctors say  
They'll put you in plaster  
And take all your pleasure away  
All this cavorting  
It's taking its toll  
You're getting no younger  
Why won't you be told

**Commentator**

That's more like it  
I'm bored by all this politics  
It's their private lives you've come to see

**Jackie**

Did you think I wouldn't notice  
That I'd turn the other cheek  
Well I think you ought to know that's not my style  
But why should you care – just as long as I'm there  
When you need someone to show up and smile

Should I stay home and wait  
For your affairs of state  
To finally exhaust themselves of passion  
But why should you care  
Just as long as I am there  
When you need someone to show the latest fashion



**JFK**

Perhaps it's time to ration  
Your persistent craving for fashion  
Instead of you spending money like water  
You treat it as a merry dance  
And everything must come from France  
Why you're certainly your daddy's daughter  
A First Lady who is so demure  
Just like the ones who went before  
Is that really how you want me to play  
Well your wings should be clipped  
And your fly should be zipped  
Now have you got it – okay

**JFK**

How do you think it seems to me  
The nation is on my back  
War's around the corner  
And you're fiddling around with hats

**Jackie**

You're not sure of your place  
You just want a pretty face  
And then you complain of competition  
But I'll remind you if you please  
That I too can be a tease  
And I won't be asking your permission

You can keep your politics  
I like the finer things of life  
You should have married your own kind  
If you wanted that sort of wife

**JFK**

Let's face it – we give each other what we need  
You give me class – and I give you power

**Jackie**

A marriage of convenience, political expedience  
Is that all it means to you  
But why should I care  
Just as long as you're still there  
When I need a dress or two

I think you ought to know it's not been easy  
While you're campaigning I'm often all alone  
No wonder that I go spending  
Or would you have me just sit by the phone



There's part of me that loves the life  
But another part says no  
There's part of me that wants to stay  
But another says go

I think you ought to know for you it's different  
No wonder you take it in your stride  
From early days you were groomed for high office  
But who then could see me by your side

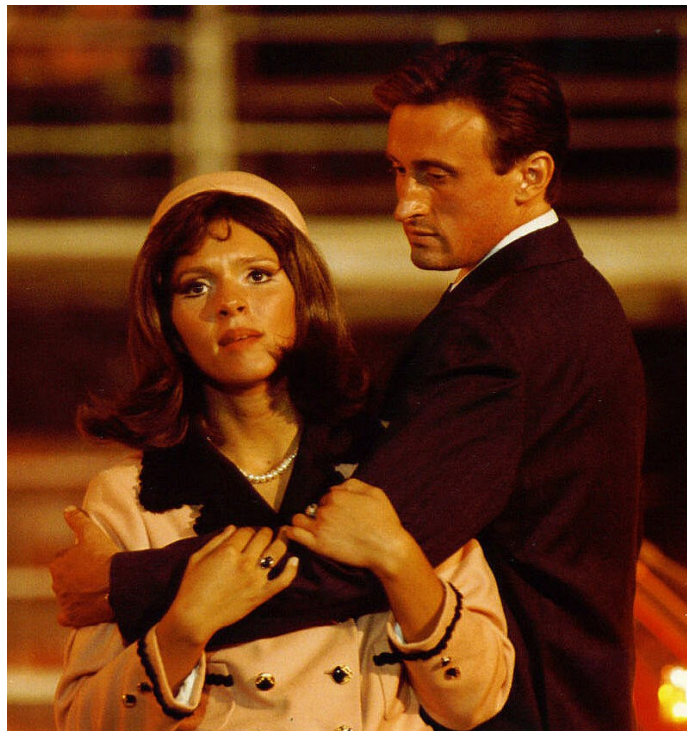
So many times I've wanted to go back  
To days when we were young and free  
I think you ought to know it's not been easy  
Knowing that I'm public property

**JFK**

Then lean on me I'm strong enough for both of us

**Jackie**

Yes it's true  
The political game is you  
But if you belong to the country  
**Who then belongs to me**





Back to politics and the first meeting between JFK and Khrushchev. The footsteps which precede the song are Kennedy's as he walks apprehensively towards the conference room. He opens the door and immediately sees Khrushchev surrounded by his aides showing off about what he is going to do to Kennedy – "A mere President on lease". Khrushchev talks directly and brashly to the audience. Kennedy joins in the chorus but sits at the opposite end of the conference table. He too is surrounded by advisers. He takes some papers from his briefcase and puts them on the table in front of him. Khrushchev continues to brag in his usual bumptious way about how he will put JFK "in his place". He makes sure Kennedy and his advisers can hear. He is trying to intimidate the young President. Finally he sits down on the far side of the table. The two look at each other eyeball to eyeball. Khrushchev is surrounded not by papers, but by vodka bottles. JFK tries to shore up his own confidence by pointing out, for all to hear, that Khrushchev "is passed his best". Khrushchev immediately gets up and does one-armed press-ups as his aides cheer him on. He goes over to JFK and tries to get John interested in an arm wrestle. In this song the advisers play a key role. Waving national flags, and taunting their opponents, they act almost as football supporters pulling for their team. The scene is full of camp humour and the participants leave the conference in one long line doing the conga. Khrushchev, without a care in the world, joins in the dancing and Kennedy is left all alone with his thoughts. The only other person who remains is the Commentator, he now sits in silence in Khrushchev's chair at the opposite end of the room to JFK, his feet upon the table.

*The man from the East meets the man from the West*

**Khrushchev and JFK**

I am excited by the prospect of meeting the new man  
He will be no match for me  
He will become my biggest fan  
He does not know my tricks  
He does not know my wicked ways  
In fact it seems to me  
That America's about to pay  
Who is this candyfloss President  
This peddler of peace  
Just a typical capitalist  
A mere President on lease

When the man from the East  
Meets the man from the West  
Something's got to give  
Someone will come off second best  
The eyes of the world straining to see  
One thing's for certain it had better not be me

I can't wait to see the new man and meet him face to face  
I will greet him with a smile and then  
I'll put him in his place  
I will not show my hand  
This is the golden rule



I think it's time they realised  
This Russian is no fool  
Who is this candyfloss President  
This peddler of peace  
Just a typical capitalist  
**A mere President on lease**

### **Khrushchev and JFK**

Bring on your western hero  
He is nothing but a boy  
Just a wandering idealist  
A mere capitalist toy

When the man from the East  
Meets the man from the West  
Something's got to give  
Someone will come off second best  
The eyes of the world straining to see  
One thing's for certain it had better not be me

Across the room he sits, with his dead pan face  
The tyrant of the East and of the human race  
I know he's got plenty to get off his chest  
But I've heard it said that he is passed his best  
When our eyes meet one of us will freeze  
His throat will go dry and he'll go weak at the knees

When the man from the East  
Meets the man from the West  
Something's got to give  
Someone will come off second best  
The eyes of the world straining to see  
One thing's for certain it had better not be me

I've heard a lot about these old Bolsheviks  
They speak pretty fast and they're full of dirty tricks  
He likes these sort of meetings I understand  
He's known of in the business as quite an old hand  
It's about to start, I think he's going to speak  
Whatever I do, I mustn't show I'm weak  
The people will desert me, there'll be consternation  
This is the very heart of confrontation



When the man from the East  
Meets the man from the West  
Something's got to give  
Someone will come off second best  
The eyes of the world straining to see  
**One thing's for certain it had better not be me**





In this song JFK returns to the scene of his previous triumph I want to see a world. He is back on the streets and once more he is faced by dissenters as well as supporters. He has lost a bit of authority and he feels the need to stay close to the crowd. A newscaster rushes forward and thrusts a microphone under John's nose. He asks the all important question. Did Khrushchev get the better of the President in their meeting and has JFK agreed to let the Russians have Berlin? In Ich bin ein Berliner Kennedy is at his most passionate, highlighting just what Berlin means to him and Western freedom. He comes down from the steps and walks amongst the young people who carry banners demanding Berlin remains free. A girl supporter kisses him, other supporters cheer and wave as Kennedy commits himself so totally to Berlin.

### *Ich bin ein Berliner*

**JFK**

I love your spirit  
I love your style  
Daughter of peace  
With a gentle smile  
Soul of the clown  
Divided in two  
One part is joy  
But there is sadness too

Flame of freedom  
Shining in your face  
Tears of love  
That fall without a trace  
The young girl  
Not knowing where to begin  
Soon to be  
The first flower of spring

Today, in the world of freedom  
The proudest boast  
Is ich bin ein Berliner  
Let them come to Berlin

To those people who think they stand alone  
That man's an island on his own  
For those people that have  
That lonely feeling  
Let them come to Berlin

From out of the wasteland  
A city was born  
From broken lives



After the euphoria dies down, it becomes plain that all are not satisfied. A group of blacks and poor whites, dishevelled and alienated, let JFK know that Berlin is of little interest to them. They are poor and without jobs. Although *The Misfits* is about social problems, it is sung with a lot of humour. The young misfits also express themselves through dance – it is their street language.

### *The Misfits*

#### **Commentator**

Hey JFK  
I hear of problems on the 'phone  
So no more chat  
With Russian fat  
I think it's time we got you home

#### **Misfits**

We are the misfits of society  
The no hoppers with nowhere to go  
Just aimless drifters being told to move on  
The people nobody wants to know

#### **Misfit 1**

I was born in the deep black south  
My father long since gone  
But I can still remember  
The sound of the same old song  
Son, nothing is too good for you  
The city's got the lot  
So I went to the city  
And nothing's what I got

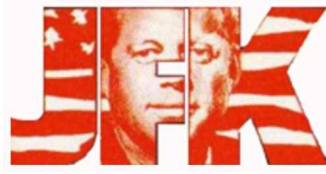
#### **Misfit 2**

Well I'm just a ghetto kid  
My dreams are all brand new  
All I ask is half a chance  
To show what I can do  
You say that I must bide my time  
Don't run before you can walk  
But brother you don't live round here  
So who are you to talk

#### **Misfits**

What about the ghettos, what about the poor  
What about the blacks and what about the war





JFK again replies to his critics. He moves amongst them asking for their support. The speech is forceful, yet sympathetic. John is still identifying with American youth. His optimism remains, but he asks for more time.

*A star into the night*

**JFK**

I know exactly what is on your mind  
Tell me should I feel ashamed  
My heart so torn and tattered  
By everything you say

Is it true I've let you down  
Perhaps I've tried too hard  
To shield you from the way it is  
To keep you from the cold

What man hasn't made mistakes  
I'd really like to know  
Tell me that you are that man  
And I'd be the first to go

But I won't tell you that you're okay  
That you deserve your way of life  
I know what you are going through  
Those phantoms of the night

When a young man feels cornered  
And he's got no place to run  
He thinks he's a nobody  
So let me be the one  
Who'll give him his identity  
And soothe away the doubts  
Who'll take the frown he's wearing  
From his soul and throw it out

If only you would trust in me  
I can make it right  
If only you would follow me  
A star into the night





At the end of *Star into the night*, one of the Misfits walks forward and shakes JFK's hand, another embraces him. The Commentator is plainly delighted that the President has again won over the youngsters. He explains to the audience that JFK "is a master of stage management". The KGB man, who has been encouraging the dissenters, realises the danger in John's ability "to raise passion in the masses". He decides that he must ring home quickly and warn Moscow of the President's great quality. He heads for a telephone box and is seen painfully explaining the situation to the Kremlin. During the song the young people talk in an animated way amongst themselves and to Kennedy. Slowly they start to disperse. John is left sitting alone and exhausted. As we hear the final strains of *This man is magic*, John is seen putting his arm round the Commentator's shoulder as they walk off stage.

### *This man is magic (2)*

#### **Commentator**

And they cheered and they cheered and they cheered  
And they cheered in their thousands and they cheered

This man is magic don't you think  
The crown they simply hang on every word  
What man could ever get the better of him  
Why forgive me the thought is quite absurd  
This man is magic don't you think

#### **KGB Man**

This man is magic don't you think  
He rises passion in the masses  
But such a talent can be dangerous  
It's time this madness were controlled

There is no time to be lost  
Phone home and never mind the cost  
It's something our leaders must be told  
And the message should be clear  
For about this time of year  
Siberia they say gets rather cold  
This man is magic don't you think





Marilyn lies on her bed, surrounded by booze and tablets, and makes one last vain effort to phone John. The phone goes dead and with it Marilyn's life ends. A heartfelt tribute from John follows.

*A Last goodbye*

**Marilyn Monroe**

Good evening sadness  
For the last time in my life I feel alone  
No one there – I should have guessed  
Just called to say you're different from the rest  
No regrets – just a final goodbye

***Princess***

**JFK**

You took time as a modern girl  
Drifting round and round the world  
You stayed fast as fast could be  
Then you stopped awhile for me

You took time out and showed me how  
Gave me times I hadn't had till then  
Simple joys from simple things  
Then you stopped and I could sing

Princess you made things easy for awhile  
Graciously you gave the world a smile  
Princess the world took you away  
Punished me by making me stay

You were better than life itself  
Your heart contained a host of wealth  
You lifted people to the sky  
Made them touch and wonder why

Now I sit around and dream  
About the past and what might have been  
You showed me just how good it felt  
Wait patiently for me Princess  
Wait for me, Princess





The Commentator and a supporter try to get JFK 'back on track'. They can see trouble brewing and they do not want John brooding over the past.

*You've got to get her out of your mind*

**Commentator**

All this love talk frightens us  
We've got so much to lose  
And pretty faces complicate  
So keep it simple is the rule

**Supporter**

And did it really mean that much  
Or was she just one more  
An idea – more than a special touch  
Just a way of keeping score

You've got to get her out of your mind  
You've got to get her out of your mind

Drive the self pity from your mind  
It's something you can ill afford  
For matters of the flesh  
Have driven great men overboard

**Commentator**

And did it really mean that much  
Or was she just one more  
An idea – more than a special touch  
Just a way of keeping score

You've got to get her out of your mind  
You've got to get her out of your mind

It's fair that you feel bad  
Men would have died for what you've had  
But you've got to move on, you've got to move on

You've got to get her out of your mind  
You've got to get her out of your mind





John accepts that he has been wounded, but insists with cold certainty that he is still very much in control.

*I'll be the judge*

**JFK**

I'll miss her, God knows  
But I'll be the judge

Did you think I'd chuck it in  
All I need is time  
To get right back again  
Let me make it clear  
I know what we're doing here

I'll be the judge  
I'll be the judge

They said I was too young  
And I was a Catholic  
That I was just a bubble that would burst  
But little did they guess  
How sweet would smell success  
This man was born to be first

I'll be the judge  
I'll be the judge  
I'm back in control





Khrushchev awakens suddenly from a terrible dream. He is still suffering from a heavy drinking session the night before. He wears a long night shirt with a hammer and sickle emblazoned on his back and an outrageous night cap. His volatility is very evident, as he lurches from fear to blind arrogance. At the end of his bed stand his guards 'the camp followers'. In a comic song that derides Kennedy's 'pretty boy' status, they hatch a plot to put missiles in Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis is about to begin.

### *The Cuban Rock*

#### **Chorus**

Hey JFK

#### **Khrushchev**

Oh, what a terrible dream  
What a ghastly affair  
I saw my old friend Jack  
He was sitting in my chair

He got the better of me  
He got the better of me

He was laughing his head off  
As he listened to a Yankee tune  
He was drinking all my vodka  
Said he put a man on the moon

Should I tremble  
Should I go weak  
Should I salute him  
Or should I just kiss his feet  
No no no no no no no

It's getting near Christmas  
And all that hoo-ha  
Perhaps I'll send him  
A Havana cigar  
A missile or two  
Just for good luck  
And we'll bring in the New Year  
With more bang for his buck

#### **KGB Man**

Hey JFK  
We're sending missiles  
With postage paid  
And other things  
That go tick tock  
All goes to make  
The Cuban rock



*The Cuban Rock continued*

**KGB Man**

He's no medals on his chest  
So why should I be impressed  
Just 'cause he's prettier than me  
If it were just a beauty show

**Khrushchev**

Marilyn would have had a go  
And he'd still be on his father's knee

He's just out of kindergarten  
Why he's barely starting  
To learn the tricks of the trade  
So tell me why should I be afraid  
Can't you see he doesn't bother me

We can destroy him whenever we please

**Chorus**  
**(led by KGB Man)**

Hey JFK  
Just ninety miles  
As the crow flies  
The Russians are dancing  
Right around the clock  
To a little thing  
Called the Cuban Rock

Hey JFK  
Hey JFK  
Hey JFK





John reaches breaking point and tells his people that the Russian menace must go no further. This is a very moody song with JFK drawing up all his inner strength. It is accompanied by an elaborate dance sequence where Kennedy is faced by all the groups who oppose him, particularly by the Russians. They are seen marching bombs and missiles into Cuba, but are finally defeated – the stars and stripes triumph over the hammer and sickle. In the background can be heard samples of speeches made by Kennedy at the height of the Cold War.

## **Kennedy**

### ***I'll take no more***

Children of America watch out – beware  
Out there is danger in the night  
People who would do you down  
So many people spoiling for a fight

Should we be frightened all our lives  
Or should we stand and face them down  
Show the world we can be strong  
In simple words the bully understands

I'll take no more  
But now the time has come  
And we must see it through  
I'm telling you, I won't give in  
No going back  
No open door  
I'll take no more

The moment that I feared the most  
Was when I would sit all alone  
With a million lives held in my hands  
And a heart the weight of stone

So many times I've tried to warn  
That this day would surely come  
When dreams would wither on the vine  
As clouds eclipsed the sun

They're listening, they want to know  
You may give in, they hate you so  
So don't look down and you be strong  
Together we'll survive

I'll take no more  
But now the time has come  
We must see it through  
I'm telling you I won't give in  
No going back, no open door  
I'm telling you  
I'll take no more



After the Commentator calls for others to loyally support their man, Khrushchev accepts defeat with an acknowledgement that he underestimated JFK and that he knows the price that he must now pay. There is a sense that the burdens of leadership have even created a bond between the two leaders.

*This man is magic (3)*

**Commentator**

This man is magic don't you think  
He tells us just how it must be  
Now is no time for second thoughts  
We must stand by him faithfully  
This man is magic don't you think

*The Cold of the sea*

**Khrushchev**

I'm beaten  
I must concede  
I got you wrong  
You made me bleed

Only the two of us  
Know what this means  
The price to be paid  
The cold of the sea

How close we came  
Makes my flesh creep  
As fathers fight  
And mothers weep  
The noise so loud  
How could I tell  
Those tunes we played  
Came straight from hell

Only the two of us  
Knows what this means  
The price has been paid  
The cold of the sea





The Commentator, dressed in a Texan outfit, hams it up as he announces that JFK, with the missile crisis now over, must start electioneering. Jackie is full of foreboding, though, for she sees the danger in John going to Dallas. He, however, is adamant – he will never ‘run and hide’.

*It's time for electioneering once again*

**The Commentator**

Well, it's time for electioneering once again  
To Texas, John must go to get the votes  
The party down there is in one hell of a mess  
And the top men are at each other's throats

Now Jackie's heard that Dallas isn't nice  
It's no place for John to be alone  
Electioneering bores her half to death  
And she would rather that he would stay home





A reprise of the earlier song. In it Jackie reflects on JFK's time in office, the way her life has changed and her role in The White House.

***Bright Eyed Fashion Girl (2)***

**Jackie**

Bright eyed fashion girl – it's no longer as it seems  
Bright eyed fashion girl – these bright lights were only in a dream  
Turn down the lights, but don't let the music die  
Just watch me come alive

I didn't mean to shock  
It's just the way that I was  
But there's one thing they'll have to admit  
That the world looks better in colour  
And that I woke them up quite a bit  
Sometimes I feel I still want to hide  
But now I know I'm tougher inside  
And I'm through with acting the girl  
Thinking my kisses could heal the world

Bright eyed fashion girl – it's no longer as it seems  
Bright eyed fashion girl – my bright lights were only in a dream  
Turn down the lights, but don't let the music die  
Come, touch me and watch me come alive

Sure, everybody hurts now and then  
I'm a woman who's walked in the rain  
And done her fair share of thinking  
But now I know the rules of the game

Bright eyed fashion girl – it all seems so long ago  
Bright eyed fashion girl – some other time, some other show  
Turn down the lights, but don't let our music die





A reprise of a *Little Rain May Fall* reminds us of Jackie's earlier foreboding. Lee Harvey Oswald lies in wait.

*A little rain may fall (2)*

**JFK & Jackie**

It was the greatest moment in our lives  
The time when we'd made it to the top  
Looking down on all below us  
And thinking the fun would never stop  
And yet in this moment of reflection  
I know there is so much more to be done  
And amidst all the cheers and celebration  
I feel it's finished though it's only just begun  
A little rain may fall, before this night is over  
A little darkness now before the day is here





The Supporters and the Commentator finally track down Oswald. The scene takes places in a street in Dallas, with Oswald perched above the stage in the ‘book depository’. At the beginning of *Man man man*, a supporter is seen pointing up at Oswald and identifying him as the “most hated man since Judas”. Oswald’s face is caught in the spotlight. His face is drawn, with weasel like features, his complexion is sallow. This song is not only a personal condemnation of Oswald, but a cry of frustration about the wickedness of man in general. The supporters show their anger at Oswald, taunting him and eventually hoisting him aloft as a sacrificial crucifix.

### *Man man man*

#### **JFK Supporters**

The most hated man since Judas  
The devil in disguise  
A man so full of poison  
A man with murder on his mind

Man man man you’ve got a lot to answer for  
Man man man you’ve really done it now  
Man man man you really killed yourself today  
I accuse you of the greatest crime in time

He doesn’t know his victim  
He selects by rolling dice  
He kills without compassion  
His eyes as cold as ice

They tell you that he’s mixed up  
That he really means no harm  
That he’s never had a chance  
And that he’s noted for his charm  
Well don’t believe a word of it  
This time he’s gone too far

Man man man you’ve got a lot to answer for  
Man man man enjoy the bitter taste  
Man man man we hope you’re proud of what you’ve done  
Man man man where is your sense of waste

You started all this chaos  
You started all this hate  
You always do the devil’s work  
And then you call it fate  
Why can’t you change your wicked ways  
Before it is too late



*Man man man continued*

**JFK Supporters**

Weren't you satisfied with Hitler  
And all that Fascist stuff  
Have you forgotten all that slaughter  
When you tried to play it tough  
Why do you have to ruin things  
Wasn't that enough

Man man you've got a lot to answer for  
Man man man you've really done it now  
Man man man you really killed yourself today  
We accuse you of the greatest crime in time





This is Oswald's song of justification. A bedraggled and broken Oswald dredges up some final defiance, a concoction of madness and reason.

**Oswald**

*Child of the devil*

Can't they understand  
I'm just an evil man  
Doing what I've got to do  
And ready to be damned  
Why ever can't they see  
The victim here is me  
It is me who is the sacrifice  
I am the tragedy

Child of the devil  
Maker of evil unknown  
Satan is my God  
And hell is my home  
The world is on fire  
Let it burn, let it rage  
Flames spreading higher  
Nothing can be changed

I know it's over now  
The end is near  
Revenge will soon be theirs  
I see it oh so clear  
But it's really not my fault  
I just do history's dirty work  
I may be finished, but I will be famous  
There'll be no mistaking, they'll know what my name is

Child of the devil  
Maker of evil unknown  
Satan is my God  
And hell is my home  
The world is on fire  
Let it burn, let it rage  
Flames spreading higher  
And nothing can be changed

Child of the devil  
Maker of evil unknown  
Satan is my God  
And hell is my home  
And the world is on fire  
Let it burn, let it rage  
Flames spreading higher  
And nothing can be saved



The jury is unimpressed by Oswald's words of justification and find him guilty. Despite the solemn nature of the sentence, the jury is depicted as rather portly, camp characters, clearly enjoying its moment centre stage. It is comically pompous, with a misplaced sense of its own importance. Perhaps the jury is dressed in supreme court garb or some fantastic Alice in Wonderland type costume.

### ***We are the jury***

#### **Jury**

He's not like our type of victim as a rule  
Why forgive me he is nothing but a fool  
We must be careful  
We must be fair

To judge on what we see  
And not on what we feel

We are the jury, we are the jury  
We never miss a trial  
We are the jury, we are the jury  
We never miss a trial

### ***Guilty***

Are we the type of jury  
That is easily fooled  
Or do we find the case  
Against this man proved

We find him guilty  
We find him guilty  
This man is guilty as proved

Guilty guilty guilty guilty  
We find him guilty

You're so eager to condemn  
But aren't you the guilty men  
Let your politicians muse  
Who'll step into his shoes  
And while the world dries its eyes  
You can eulogise  
And then go and talk of your advancement



Oswald continues to protest his innocence.

*I'm not the guilty man*

**Oswald**

Why do they despise me  
Why do they deride me  
Don't they know the madness swirling round in my head  
I know I do offend you  
But without me there would be no legend  
There simply would be no legend

I'm not the guilty man

So the world needs a scapegoat  
Anyone will do  
Someone unimportant  
Someone no one knew  
No good protesting innocence  
I know there can be no defence  
It's the oldest trick in the book  
Let's cook the evidence

I'm not the guilty man

How can you have a jury without a crime  
You can't play the future before its time  
But the last laugh is mine you'll agree  
Did I conspire, or was it just me

I'm not the guilty man





The Commentator tries to lift everyone by reminding them just what the Kennedy era meant. This is particularly poignant because he was JFK's most devoted supporter. He is feeling great pain, but he is still able to sound optimistic because he believes that the eternal flame of the youth movement, despite losing its political beacon, will continue to shine. The whole cast joins him in song.

*For just a minute*

**Commentator**

I've asked myself time and time again  
Who is it that would take the devil's hand  
And raise it up above his head  
To cut into the spirit of man

But then I looked at it a different way  
What is victory without any cost  
Are the winners those who feel no pain  
Or the ones who some time have loved and lost

For just a minute  
The world stood still  
For just a minute  
The spirit soared and the heart was filled  
For just a minute  
With all the joy that man can bring  
For just a minute  
And the young girls cheered their approval

Although you never met, you know him well  
A hero yet marked the same as us  
Judge him not by what he said or did  
But simply judge this man by what he was  
Let the flame now pass to the young  
Tell your sons and daughters of these times

For just a minute, man flew on the wing  
For just a minute, the door hung back and the light shone in  
With all the hope that the sun can bring  
And the young men roared their approval

And so for the dreamers say a prayer  
For those charged to keep the dream alive  
And then thank God that you were there  
When to hope was not a waste of time

For just a minute, the world stood still  
For just a minute, the spirit soared and the heart was filled  
With all the love that a man can bring



And the whole world cheered its approval

