

Royal Master Degree
IPC Soliloquy (with Optional Sections)

(Soliloquy – First Round)

BUT FRIEND A_____, DEATH IS A SUBJECT THAT ADMITS OF NO LEVITY WHEN MENTIONED BY MORTAL MAN; THE YOUNG MAY DIE, THE OLD MUST DIE, THE WISEST KNOWETH NOT HOW SOON. THE YOUNGEST ENTERED APPRENTICE UPON THE CHECKERED PAVEMENT BELOW DWELLS EVER IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH, WHILE THE INVISIBLE HAND EXTENDS EQUALLY ABOVE KING SOLOMON ON HIS IVORY THRONE. WE WALK UPON THE ASHES OF GENERATIONS WHO HAVE GONE THIS WAY BEFORE US, AND OUR BODIES, TOO, MUST SOON CRUMBLE INTO DUST. IT IS NOT FOR ME, FRIEND ADONIRAM TO HOPE THAT I SHALL ESCAPE THE COMMON DOOM OF MAN, I MAY NOT LIVE TO SEE THE TEMPLE COMPLETED, THE SECRET WORD MAY BE LOST; *(Taps and points)* BUT IF I DIE, THEY WILL BURY IT THERE.

(Soliloquy – Second Round)

FRIEND A_____, DEATH TERMINATES OUR PHYSICAL LABORS; THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM IN THE GRAVE; THENCEFORTH THE GENERATIONS MAY BUILD AND OCCUPY BUT WE WILL NOT BE THERE. THE TEEMING BRAIN, THE SKILLFUL HAND, AND THE SINEWY ARM ARE ALIKE USELESS AND SUPERFLUOUS IN THE GRAVE; WHAT AN INCENTIVE TO AN INDUSTRIOUS USE OF OUR FACULTIES, THAT WE SHOULD LABOR DILIGENTLY TO COMPLETE THAT INNER TEMPLE FOR GOD'S ETERNAL PRAISE, AND BE READY TO SLEEP IN PEACE WHEN THE WEEK CLOSES AND THE SABBATH OF ETERNITY SETS IN. MY WORK, FRIEND ADONIRAM, IS NOT YET COMPLETE, *(Taps and points)* BUT IF I DIE, THEY WILL BURY IT THERE.

(Optional Section)

(IPC stands in place at the veil through this section)

FRIEND A_____, ALL MEN DWELL IN THE SHADOW OF THE KING OF TERRORS, AND THOUGH FOR A LITTLE WHILE WE MAY FORGET, YET AT THE FIRST SIGN OF HIS APPROACH TO OURSELVES OR A LOVED ONE, WHAT ICY FEAR GRIPS THE HEART. THE UNTHINKING MAN MAY AND OFTEN DOES FEEL THAT DEATH IS NOT FOR HIM, THAT ALL MEN ARE MORTAL BUT HIMSELF; BUT WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKETH BY DAY AND THE TERRORS THAT FLIETH BY NIGHT HE REALIZES THAT THE BOAST OF HERALDRY, THE POMP OF POWER, AND ALL THE BEAUTY, ALL THE WEALTH E'ER GAVE, AWAIT ALIKE THE INEVITABLE HOUR; THE PATH OF GLORY LEADS BUT TO THE GRAVE. AFTER DEATH, WHAT? IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN? FRIEND A_____, IF THE OMNIPOTENT JEHOVAH, WHO BY HIS ALMIGHTY WORD DIDST SPEAK INTO BEING THE STUPENDOUS ARCH OF HEAVEN, DIDST TOUCH WITH DIVINE POWER THE COLD AND PULSELESS HEART OF THE BURIED ACORN AND CAUSE IT TO BURST FORTH FROM ITS PRISON WALLS AND SPRING INTO LIFE ANEW, WILL HE LEAVE

NEGLECTED IN THE EARTH THE SOUL OF MAN, MADE IN THE IMAGE OF HIS CREATOR? IF HE STOOPS TO GIVE THE ROSE BUSH, WHOSE WITHERED BLOSSOMS FLOAT UPON THE AUTUMN BREEZE, THE SWEET ASSURANCE OF ANOTHER SPRINGTIME, WILL HE REFUSE WORDS OF HOPE TO THE SONS OF MAN WHEN THE FROST OF WINTER COMES? IF MATTER MUTE AND INANIMATE THOUGH CHANGED BY THE FORCES OF NATURE INTO A MULTITUDE OF FORMS, CAN NEVER DIE, WILL THE IMMORTAL SPIRIT OF MAN SUFFER ANNIHILATION AFTER IT HAS PAID BUT A BRIEF VISIT, LIKE A ROYAL GUEST, TO THIS TENEMENT OF CLAY?

(Soliloquy - Third Round)

FRIEND A_____, IT IS THROUGH THE GATE OF DEATH THAT WE FIND AN ENTRANCE TO THE PLACE OF WAGES, REFRESHMENT, AND REST. THE SUPREME MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE, BEFORE WHOM WE BOW IN ADORATION AND WHOSE ALL-SEEING EYE HAS MARKED OUR LABORS IN THE LODGE BELOW, PROMISES, IF FOUND WORTHY, TO SPREAD BEFORE US IN THE STUPENDOUS LODGE ABOVE ALL THE GLORIES OF HIS ETERNAL SABBATH. AFTER THE STRONG HAND OF DEATH HAS LEVELED ALL IN THE HUMILIATION OF THE GRAVE, THE ALMIGHTY HAND OF THE SUPREME MASTER SHALL PREVAIL AND EXALT EVERY WORTHY BROTHER TO THE GLORIOUS COMPANIONSHIP OF THAT UNDISSOLVING LODGE;

(Optional Section)

AND IF DOUBT HAS EVER BECLOUDED YOUR EYES, WHEN YOU STAND UPON THE BRINK OF THAT FABLED RIVER AND YOUR ENFRANCHISED SPIRIT IS WHISKED INTO THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF THAT SUPREME COUNCIL, IF YOU SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO STOP, TURN AND LOOK BACK, AND VIEW THE PATHS YOU HAVE TROD IN LIFE; ONE MAY SEEM STRANGE AND SHORT, CLUTTERED WITH BRAMBLES AND THORNS, CHOKED WITH THE GRIM WRECKAGE OF WASTED YEARS AND SHATTERED HOPES; ANOTHER PATH MAY SEEM LONG AND UNEVENTFUL, DIRELY FILLED WITH THE VAGUE MONOTONY OF INACTIVITY, THUS ENDING IN UTTER DARKNESS; PERHAPS ANOTHER WAY MAY BE ADORNED IN VICTORY, CROWNED WITH SUCCESS, DRIVING FORTH IN PREEMINENT RADIANCE, YIELDING BEATITUDES INTO THE LIVES AND DESTINIES OF ITS FELLOW BEINGS, THEN YOU WILL SEE THE LIGHT, AND FOR AS THE MYSTERIES UNVEIL, ALL THE ANSWERS WILL COME.

(End of Optional Section)

THERE THE DESIGNS UPON THE TRESTLE BOARD WILL BE SEEN COMPLETED; THERE THE ADORATION OF THE TWELFTH HOUR WILL BE THE EVERLASTING JOY; THERE THE NOON-TIDE OF BLISS WILL ETERNALLY SHINE; THERE THE SCALES OF DOUBT AND DARKNESS SHALL FALL FROM OUR EYES, AND THE WISE PURPOSES OF THE DIVINE ARCHITECT BE DISPLAYED IN ALL THEIR SPLENDOR. WITH THIS FAITH BEAMING UPON ME, O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING? MY HOPE, FRIEND ADONIRAM RESTS IN THE HIGHER LODGE TO WHICH I AM ADVANCING, AND IF I DIE BEFORE THE TEMPLE IS COMPLETED, *(Taps and points)* THE SECRET WORD OF A MASTER MASON WILL BE BURIED THERE.

(Leads Candidate to the anteroom)

NOW FRIEND A _____, YOU WILL RESUME YOUR LABORS, AND MAY YOU NOT ONLY SEEK TO BE FOUND WORTHY TO ENTER THIS EARTHLY SANCTUM SANCTORUM TO BEHOLD THE GLORY OF ISRAEL, BUT BY A LIFE WELL SPENT AND DUTY FAITHFULLY PERFORMED MAY YOU BE FOUND WORTHY TO ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES ABOVE, INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE SUPREME GRAND MASTER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND FROM HIM RECEIVE THE REWARD OF EVERLASTING JOY.