
Categorie concurs: *Premiu special*

Tip text: *General*

Everywhere you looked in the Lords there were vast expanses of empty seats. Two Queen's speeches in as many months is at least one too many. Especially when the first one was just a political stunt that was never intended to be implemented. This time the peers were voting with their feet. Just 10 Labour lords could be bothered to pull out the ermine and take up their places. There were rather more Tories, but still not enough to prevent the upper chamber from becoming an echo chamber.

Even the Queen was staging her own dirty protest at having her time wasted. Hell, didn't the government know that the last Thursday before Christmas was the day she traditionally headed off for Sandringham? This time she had given most of her retainers the day off, had dispensed with the state coach in favour of the company Rolls and just pulled on the shabby green coat that had been hanging by the door. Her face never broke from a scowl throughout. She couldn't have made her feelings any more plain.

Boris shrugged and smirked to himself. This was his day and nothing was going to spoil it. He was world king at last. Free to do whatever he wanted, safe in the knowledge that no one could stop him. Right now, he was the supreme leader. It would take time for the people to find out that all the People's Government could be relied on for was to let them down. And by the time they did, it would be far too late.

A couple of hours later, the Commons had reconvened for the opening of the debate on the Queen's speech. Tory Tracey Crouch kicked things off with a few good-natured panto jokes. The MPs who get asked to propose the humble address are usually those whose careers are considered to be behind them, she said. Boris merely ignored her. You win some, you lose some.

Then came Boris. The prime minister has been instructed to be on his best behaviour and not to gloat but he just can't do it. After a brief attempt at "unite the nation" rhetoric – the "trust me" line has never gone down well in any of Boris's relationships – Johnson quickly lapsed into charmless insincerity. It was so charming the way Corbyn believed the silly things he did, he exclaimed. Pity can be crueller than mockery.

Johnson then just went into full-on lying mode. Forty hospitals. Tick. Fifty-thousand nurses. Tick. Get Brexit Done. Tick. The bigger the lie, the more the Tories loved him. He wanted to restore public trust in politics. Said the man who has built his whole career and campaign style on destroying it.

Eventually Boris got so carried away that he went for the biggest lie he could think of. He would build the bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland that every civil engineer had said was technically impossible.

Transfere Necessè Est
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This is the new present. It's also the future. Boris Uncontained. Until it all inevitably goes hideously wrong. And then he'll just walk away. Untouched. Untouchable. As MP Ian Blackford got up to reply, Boris merely pulled out his phone and started playing online CandyCrush with Classic Dom. This One Nation stuff was never meant to include the Scots...

John Crace, *Decline and Fail: Read in Case of Political Apocalypse*, Guardian Faber, 2020