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PREVIEW: BREAK OFF YOUR OWN CHAINS

By

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Cast of Characters

Micah: a man imprisoned in a Soviet jail, mid-20s

Synopsis

Micah, imprisoned for his faith in Communist Romania after the end of World War II, is pushed past the breaking point and takes up the tactics of his torturers to escape further suffering. In this short monologue he reveals the reason he abandoned his faith to collaborate with the brutal regime.

Set

A small cell in a Soviet prison in Romania.

When

1950s.

Note

The following monologue is adapted from a scene of the full length play ***We Are the Body*** which premiered in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada in 2015 and toured Western Canada to Calgary and Saskatoon in the same year. The World Premiere was produced by Burnt Thicket Theatre.

Props (2)

A soldier’s uniform
a baton

ACT 1

Scene 1

Lights up on MICAH dressed only in white boxer shorts. His spirit seems to have vacated his body. A pile of clothes are on the floor.

Micah

When we were “liberated”, a million Russians flooded Romania, pillaged our homes, raped our mothers, our sisters. We stood helpless as we were plundered. The breadbasket of Eastern Europe became a barren waste. Communism made it so.

When I look back, it’s clear. Magnificent, even, the trajectory of their cruelty. Like the arc of a falling bomb you can’t see, hurtling toward you.

Words were first. What could be said. What could be written down. What could be spoken in public. What could be spoken in private. And then thought. The thoughts that form belief.

I too was thrown in jail. At first it was easy to resist them. Yes, they beat me. Yes, they inflicted pain so unbearable I wanted to recant. I knew I’d consider doing anything, saying anything for that pain to stop. But it would stop.

The bomb would go off. And whether dead or alive, I would be victorious. With Christ, victorious. And I thought I’d won. Do you understand? I thought I had passed the test!

He reaches to the pile of clothes and puts on an undershirt.

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Micah

And they brutalized me with this. Hit me with it. Penetrated my body with it. Until I had enough. Until I begged them, told them I would do anything if only they would stop. Finally stop.

He throws the baton down. As he delivers the remaining lines: MICAH buttons the shirt and tucks it into his pants. Buttons the pants. He pulls on the jacket and picks up the hat on the floor and puts it on his head. He picks up the baton again. He is in full uniform of a Soviet soldier.

Micah

I was not the one who sang when buried alive, hymns of reverence and praise. I did not mime worship with my hands when my tongue was cut from my mouth with a pocketknife.

I stood where my brothers and my sisters stood. Unmoving. Unflinching in my faith, until that broke too.

Will you understand me if I tell you that the floor became covered in too much urine and blood? Do you not see that the room where we stand filled with my screams also, until I could scream no more?

Some Christians recant under torture. You must understand this. When I did, they handed me a club and said, “Go and do likewise.”

If, to end my hunger, I must starve someone else, that man can free himself from terror by doing the same. We all have the choice to break out of the chains of suffering.

End scene.



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