

2016 CREATIVE ARTS STUDENT CONTEST

MOTHERS AND FATHERS: STORIES OF LOVE AND LOSS

Middle School – Honorable Mention

“To Prevail is to be Given Wings” by Megan Robertson

Dalton Middle School

2016 CREATIVE ARTS STUDENT CONTEST
"TO PREVAIL IS TO BE GIVEN WINGS" BY MEGAN ROBERTSON

CHARACTERS:

YOUNG MISA..... A hopeful young boy who stays positive in the midst of discrimination. (This actor must be able to repeat phrases in German and play the harmonica.)

TEENAGE MISA..... A depressed sixteen year old boy who has lost his hope while living in Auschwitz. (This actor must be able to recite phrases in German and play the harmonica as well. Because his character is living in a concentration camp, this actor must be very thin and scrawny.)

GROWN MISA..... He is essentially the narrator of the show. This actor is the main character of the play, taking the audience through his childhood. (This actor needs to be very emotional, as he has many touching monologues.)

MISA'S MOTHER..... The kind motherly figure of the show. This character encourages Misa for the entirety of the play.

MISA'S FATHER/ MAN #1.....The strong fatherly figure of the play. He is not on stage that often. (This actor must be able to play an instrument very well. In the script it is a fiddle, but it can be replaced for any instrument.)

JOE/MAN #2..... Joe is the annoying but kind friend to Misa in Auschwitz. (This actor must be able to speak fantastic German.)

MAN #3..... A survivor of the Holocaust who comes to New York City with the others.

MAN #4/ FLEA MARKET MAN..... A man who gives Misa the letter his mother his mother left him. This actor also performs the role of the man who finds the letter years later.

(A single spotlight shines on YOUNG MISA standing center stage left. He is wearing nice clothes, and has a joyful innocence in his voice. He stands quietly for a moment.)

YOUNG MISA:

(In a serious but playful tone) Ich werde vorherrschen.

(He then pulls out a harmonica and begins to play it throughout this scene. Another spotlight shines on TEENAGE MISA. He is also standing. He looks hopeless, has his hair cut, is in a concentration camp uniform, and is upset. Speaking well is not one of his attributes.)

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TEENAGE MISA:

Wir werden vorherrschen.

(TEENAGE MISA takes an identical harmonica out of his pocket and joins the young boy in the sad melody. A spotlight shines downstage center on GROWN MISA. He stands quietly for a moment, and the harmonica is the only sound heard.)

GROWN MISA:

Ich werde vorherrschen. Ich werde. I will. My father used to tell me that death is inevitable. He used to tell me that what mattered is what I accomplished in my lifetime. Everything was perfect. All that I knew in the world was good. Life was worth living. (Pauses) But when the sun is shining on one section of the world, it is pitch-black on the other.

(Harmonica music abruptly stops. The spotlights go off of YOUNG MISA and TEENAGE MISA, leaving the spotlight on GROWN MISA, standing downstage center. The lights change and reveal his childhood home.)

GROWN MISA:

As a child there was always music playing in my home.

(GROWN MISA is no longer the focus on the stage. YOUNG FRANKIE, MISA'S MOTHER, and MISA'S FATHER are sitting on a couch. MISA'S FATHER is playing a fiddle as MISA'S MOTHER and YOUNG MISA clap to the rhythm. GROWN FRANKIE is standing to the side, watching. FATHER stops playing after a moment, and applause follows.)

YOUNG MISA:

Father, when did you know that you wanted to be a musician?

MISA'S FATHER:

Well, I knew the moment I first touched an instrument.

MISA'S MOTHER:

When you listen to destiny's voice, you can never be wrong.

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(Lights change, making GROWN MISA the focus again. A spotlight shines downstage center on him.)

GROWN MISA:

From that moment on, I was never easily satisfied. I attempted to do everything that I could. The art program at my school thrilled me. It seemed as if destiny had finally spoken up, loud and clear. (Suddenly in a depressing tone) One must remember that opportunities can end any moment. In 1939, an optimistic ten year old boy was expelled from school based simply on his faith.

(Lights change again, revealing YOUNG MISA sitting on his bedroom floor in tears. MISA’S MOTHER walks into the room, seeing the boy in despair.)

MISA’S MOTHER:

Misa, is there anything I can do?

YOUNG MISA:

(crying and screaming) Why me? Why? I don’t even go to the synagogue that often! How can they kick me out of school if I haven’t been to the synagogue in weeks? All of my friends are there mom! My art is still at the school! They can’t do this to me!

MISA’S MOTHER:

(Hugging YOUNG MISA) I promise, everything will turn out the way it’s supposed to. Just remember, wir werden vorherrschen. We will prevail. Together.

(GROWN MISA moves downstage center once more. a spotlight shines on him.)

GROWN MISA:

Since I no longer had schoolwork, I suddenly had a lot of spare time. If it was destiny or God that called me to paint, I cannot say. Nonetheless, art saved my life. Painting was how I spent my time. My family was one of the luckier ones. Because of the neighborhood we lived in, we were not sent to Auschwitz until 1944. As a fifteen year old boy, I managed to sneak a sketchbook and harmonica into the camp. When my time wasn’t spent being a pessimist, I was either drawing or playing the harmonica.

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(GROWN MISA moves as the lights change, revealing the barrack inside a concentration camp. Bunk-beds are tilted, opening up the stage. TEENAGE MISA sits on one of the bunks, as JOE sits on another.)

JOE:

(angrily) Is that all you do? Draw in that stupid book? You’ll be killed once they see you with that!

(TEENAGE MISA puts the book away. He then pulls a harmonica out of his pocket and begins to play it.)

JOE:

You are impossible! Blöd! Blöd! Blöd! Wenn Hunger uns nicht tötet, dann werden sie sicher!!

TEENAGE MISA:

Have you ever played an instrument?

JOE:

I can't say that I have.

(TEENAGE MISA hands JOE the harmonica. When JOE begins to play it, it does not sound very appealing.

He keeps playing for a while, then smiles.)

TEENAGE MISA:

That’s why I play the harmonica. It calms me, and helps me remain positive.

(They sit in silence.)

So, how long have you been here at Auschwitz?

JOE:

I was moved to this camp about a month ago. What about you, harmonica boy?

TEENAGE MISA:

First of all, my name is Misa. Secondly, I just got here about a week ago.

JOE:

Was your family sent to this camp too?

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TEENAGE MISA:

My father is in another barrack somewhere, and my mother is in the women's section.

JOE:

(Sighs) I'm sorry.

TEENAGE MISA:

About what?

JOE:

About the fact that you'll never see your family again. Let me tell you, it's horrible. Nothing in the world compares to that feeling. Loneliness will kill you before the Nazis do.

(TEENAGE MISA is too shocked to speak. The stage lights go off, as GROWN MISA moves downstage center into the spotlight.)

GROWN MISA:

How I have come to wish that he would have been right. How I have come to wish, that I never would have seen my father again. How I have come to wish that I would have never seen my mother's dead body being moved out of the gas chamber. A wish is only but an image that one attempts to create. A wish is only a way to create regret and despair. A wish can destroy what was once a man. (Pause)

Wir werden vorherrschen. That's what my mother used to say to me. We will prevail. (Mumbling) We will prevail. It can be hard to prevail when you see everyone around you dying. Preserving is not a game for the pessimist. Before I was sent here, to The United States, I was that pessimist. My mother was dead. My father was dead. To prevail is to be given wings, and I was stuck on the ground.

(The lights change, revealing TEENAGE MISA. The stage looks like New York City as jazz music is playing. Along with other men, TEENAGE MISA has dirt on his face and a number tattooed on his arm. The other men are looking up amazed, but TEENAGE MISA is sadly looking down. The focus is no longer on

GROWN MISA.)

MAN #1:

Can you believe America?

MAN #2:

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I've never seen anyplace so huge!

MAN #3:

Can you believe that we are actually here? Just a month ago we were in Auschwitz!

TEENAGE MISA:

(Angrily) Never. Never, say that word again. Do not dwell on the past any longer.

(MAN #1, #2, #3 and TEENAGE MISA walk on the sidewalk through New York. THE MEN and TEENAGE MISA walk into a building stage right. MAN #4 is standing at a counter inside. He looks at TEENAGE MISA for a moment as THE MEN are chatting.)

MAN #4:

Excuse me, are you Misa Grunewald?

TEENAGE MISA:

(He pauses for a moment.) Yes....

MAN #4:

This just came in the mail. I was told to hand this to a Mr. Misa Frantisek Grunewald.

TEENAGE MISA:

Oh. Well thank you.

(The lights change and a spotlight shines on TEENAGE MISA. TEENAGE MISA opens the letter and begins to read it, and MISA'S MOTHER joins him offstage, until only her voice is heard.)

TEENAGE MISA:

Dear Misa, I love you.

TEENAGE MISA and MISA'S MOTHER:

I have always loved you. I will always love you.

MISA'S MOTHER (offstage):

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As much as I love you, I cannot imagine a World where you do not know the truth. I am writing this letter to you to tell you that I am happy. Therefore, do not worry on the present. Your father and I are about to go in peace, together. We *both* love you. The Nazis may destroy your body, but do not let them destroy your spirit. There will be a time in the near future when love and kindness will reign once more. Both happiness and perseverance are my wish for your life. Remember, your father and I will love you forever. Wir werden vorherrschen. We will prevail.

TEENAGE MISA (On Stage):

Love, Mama

(TEENAGE MISA starts to cry, as jazz music is heard in the New York background. The lights change, leaving GROWN MISA downstage in the spotlight.)

GROWN MISA:

That was when I changed. That was when the pessimist inside of me died. Even from her grave, my mother had changed my life. She had given me hope. In that moment, I was given wings. To prevail gives you the opportunity to see the world. To prevail helped me take flight, and I never came back down.

(The lights change, and the stage looks like a Flea Market. People are looking around, carrying on their business. FLEA MARKET MAN is looking at a booth downstage right. The sound of harmonica music can be heard coming from somewhere on the stage. FLEA MARKET MAN grabs a letter and opens it. It is clearly Misa's letter.)

FLEA MARKET MAN:

Hmmmmmm... (Pauses)

(Amazed) This letter is dated 1946.

Wow.

Wir werden vorherrschen. I wonder what on Earth that means.

(All lights fade to black. Harmonica music is still heard, even after the lights fade to black. It is the same sad song that was played at the beginning of the show.)

END OF PLAY