

An Excerpt From:
MOZART BORN

Written by
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Draft 4.0

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SCENE IV

(Evening. The stage has grown more tropical and lush. Mike is chained by his hands to the end of Denice's bed. Denice is in bed. Downstairs, we hear Gloria playing the piano accompaniment to the second movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in B Flat. Mike is playing the lead clarinet part with a kazoo. After moments, he spits the kazoo out of his mouth and it sails across the floor. A pause.)

DENICE

You have nice...tone.

MIKE

Chipped my tooth. The plastic age is not what it was.

DENICE

She's quite good, what she recalls. My piano hasn't been touched in I think five or six years...

MIKE

Mozart was a guy who wrote these great songs. Everyone thought they were great so he's a kid and they say "pen us another." And another, and another. Gosh, it must be so nice to be in demand.

DENICE

Encouragement builds self-esteem, Michael.

MIKE

Mike. You are correct. It does steam up the self. But you ever hear of Mozart's sister?

DENICE

No.

MIKE

His older sister. She was a composer. But 'ol dad Leopold thought it didn't matter. "The proceeding eight minuets

were learned by Wolfgang in his fourth year." He told her that. Fuckin' Guy!...

(The piano playing stops. We hear the piano cover slam down.)

MIKE

What was her name? Maria? Anna?

DENICE

I don't know.

MIKE

Of course you don't. No one does. I just know her 'cause she's all I remember from poor-fuckin'-music-class.

DENICE

Oh really?

MIKE

Not those century's masters we're all taught to adore. Not the genius minstrels who are aliens to us lowly lifeforms here on earth. No. Out of that whole class I just remember poor little Maria Anna. Told by her daddy that the world expects only one prodigy from the house.

(The door slams open. Gloria is standing there. She is very angry. A moment.)

MIKE

(re: Maria Anna) ...poor stupid kid...

(Gloria stomps towards the kazoo, picks it up and stomps over to Mike where she plugs it into his mouth.)

MIKE

(talking through kazoo in mouth:) Hey lady, I'm sorry?

(Gloria pulls his hair. He plays it.)

DENICE

He chipped his tooth. You shouldn't let him play with that.

MIKE

(with kazoo) "No more words, no more words, no more words..."

(Gloria kicks him hard in the leg. He stops, in pain.)

DENICE

Why'd you even bring him here. Let him go.

(Gloria whips the comforter off Denice's bed and demands she step down.)

DENICE

No.

(Gloria demands.)

DENICE

No. I'm staying. I've been here too long. My brother may have messed up your life but I'm sticking around so they'll speak.

MIKE

Martians?

(Gloria kicks him.)

DENICE

They will. I'll wait 'em out. You'll see.

(Gloria grinds her fists to her eyes.)

GLORIA

(very low, to self) I wish I saw none of this.

DENICE

Amen.

(The church bells ring. Gloria is almost knocked to her feet. She exits. A moment.)

MIKE

The Martians have landed.

DENICE

You got it, Mikey.

MIKE

Mike. I understand you're green. Literally.

DENICE

I wonder where she went. She's silent...

MIKE

She is. She's silent and it lasts maybe a month. Her car's choking down a street and she'll drive to Green Bay and make it on back. These rituals. Gotta flush out the system a few times a year. Proper emotional maintenance.

(Mike toots a melody on the kazoo and stops.)

MIKE

Denice, if I give you a quarter, will you look out the window?

DENICE

I look out the window all the time.

MIKE

Prove it.

(Denice looks out the window while sitting up in bed.)

MIKE

What do you see?

DENICE

It's dark outside.

MIKE

And then there is?

DENICE

The church. People leaving.

MIKE

What kind of people?

DENICE

All sorts.

MIKE

It's nighttime Denice. All sorts do not pray when there's Monday Night Football. There's old people.

DENICE

Yes.

MIKE

Some schoolkids.

DENICE

Them.

MIKE

Mothers.

DENICE

Right there.

MIKE

Now who else is there that's not part of that crowd.

DENICE

The priests.

MIKE
Priests are not mortal men, I agree. Who else?

DENICE
There's some young men.

MIKE
Is one of them hairy and talks like a woman?

DENICE
I'm on the second floor!

MIKE
Oh, yeah. Is one of them tall?

DENICE
Yes.

MIKE
Is the other a blonde?

DENICE
They're both blonde!

MIKE
Good. They are. And maybe there's a starter jacket on one
and a bomber on the other? Is there?

DENICE
Yes.

MIKE
Okay.
(A pause.)
Now scream "Help, I'm handcuffed to a dresser."

DENICE
I can't do that!

MIKE
Thirty cents!

DENICE
No!

MIKE
Seventy-five!

DENICE
I can't!

(A pause.)

MIKE

I'll mow your lawn twice a month.

DENICE

I can't scream. I'm not going to scream!

MIKE

(suddenly:) ANTON! BILL! I'M HANDCUFFED TO A BED HERE!
HELLO YOU FUCKS I'M TIED TO A BED!

DENICE

Quiet!

(Denice reaches for the window.)

MIKE

ED'S HOUSE! WITH A NUN! IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

(She shuts the window with a bang. A pause.)

DENICE

I pay rent here.

(A long pause. He is defeated. He rolls over.)

MIKE

Si.

(The church bells chime outside.)

MIKE

Fucking bells, fucking bells!

DENICE

What bells?

MIKE

Just ring in no pattern whenever they want. The new ones
they test and they test all the time.

(A beat.)

You can't hear them?

DENICE

No.

MIKE

No. You both could be sleepover pals you're so close.

DENICE

I hear nothing.

MIKE
Want 'em gone?

DENICE
No. People enjoy them I guess.

MIKE
That's too bad.

DENICE
Why?

MIKE
That's-too-bad. That's too bad you like 'em.

DENICE
I'm used to them. That's different than like.

MIKE
That's too bad the same.

DENICE
(beginning to read underneath the lines) Really.
(A pause.)

MIKE
Maybe.

DENICE
Are you used to them?

MIKE
Never. Loudest bells in the city. I was in Pilsen on
business and I swore they shook my insides. All that way
away...

DENICE
Making a message.

MIKE
Oh, it made a message.

DENICE
Really.

MIKE
Loud and clear.

(A pause.)

DENICE

I think I like you tied up, Michael.

MIKE

Mike.

DENICE

You're built like a Mike.

MIKE

Way back when.

DENICE

Before.

MIKE

Yes.

DENICE

You met Ed.

MIKE

Yes.

DENICE

You were Michael.

MIKE

Not so. I discovered, see, my chubby fat fingers got wider along with my shoulders, my gut and my feet. I thought it was sex that did it. For one full year I cursed Natalie Tantero and her luscious rack. But it wasn't heró

DENICE

No.

MIKE

It was my fate to be like an ox. My muscles wanted it. In one year my clarinet was a tiny wooden stick shook by these bearclaws. There were others good as me anyways. "God only picks a few," doesn't he sister?

DENICE

Maybe He does.

MIKE

"The rest he must spew."

DENICE

Uh-huh.

MIKE

All the rest of the fucking red ants.

DENICE

Uh-huh.

MIKE

Raise the world so the mighty make merry.

DENICE

Yes.

MIKE

The visionaries. Those with vision. Visions. Like UFO's?

DENICE

Oh. It's a natural world. I've seen it.

MIKE

Where.

DENICE

All around.

MIKE

Are UFO's?

DENICE

Gloria doesn't think so.

MIKE

Gloria?

DENICE

She could see.

MIKE

What could she see. You know what she is? A waitress at the Burgundy. A two-tip girl.

DENICE

She had the power.

MIKE

She's-a-simpleton, Denice. She lost it.

DENICE

She saw it.

MIKE

No--The bitch lost it when she gave up too!

DENICE

Gave up what?

(A pause.)

MIKE

Piano.

(Denice turns on the tape.)

DENICE

I heard her.

MIKE

She even sold the fucking thing two years ago for a used car. Man ... a car. Everybody's got a car.

DENICE

I don't.

MIKE

Yeah, "The Flying Nun." I heard a'you.

DENICE

I'm not a nun, Michael.

MIKE

And I'm not a Michael.

(A beat.)

What she see.

DENICE

Spectacular things. She was calm.

MIKE

Gloria? Probably had a blackout. Listen: Gloria's a lost girl. She uses men up. She promises them something then she forgets. She gives up.

DENICE

(listening) She has talent.

MIKE

She has no talent!

(A long pause. Mike closes his eyes and listens to the music.)

MIKE

See...we didn't know any better.

DENICE

You knew something.

MIKE

No. That was the beauty of it. We knew nothing. When you're at that age, you don't know what the hell you're doing. But, for some reason, you do it. My mom used to tell me the hand of God was placed over all of us but it was me and my cousin who felt it.

DENICE

Everyone has the hands of God on them.

MIKE

Yeah sister, but it's kids who got the time to feel it!

DENICE

Kids.

MIKE

Mostly. If they're lucky.

DENICE

Do you feel it?

(A long pause. Mike's eyes are closed.)

MIKE

Maybe.

DENICE

How does it--I mean, hell, why should I even--I know, right?

(A pause.)

DENICE

It must be warm.

MIKE

Yeah.

DENICE

Familiar.

MIKE

It's like you've been held there your whole life.

DENICE

No fear.

MIKE

You got it. No one can say anything to you. You're on this plateau and you're cupped, like in a hand, and it never lets go, it may let you free and you fly but you know (that's what this is), you know and you trust it'll never--

(Mike opens his eyes and sees the flowers.)

Denice. MIKE

Yes. DENICE

You better untie me. MIKE

Why? DENICE

I'm here. MIKE