

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

A TEN MINUTE MONOLOGUE

By Jerry Rabushka

Copyright © MMIII by Jerry Rabushka

All Rights Reserved

Heuer Publishing LLC in association with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

ISBN: 978-1-93240-432-6

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this work is subject to a royalty. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All rights to this work of any kind including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing rights are controlled exclusively by Heuer Publishing LLC and Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Inquiries concerning rights should be addressed to Heuer Publishing LLC.

This work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

All organizations receiving permission to produce this work agree to give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production. The author(s) billing must appear below the title and be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with production of the work must include the following notice: **"Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC in association with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC."**

There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the work, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language unless directly authorized by the publisher or otherwise allowed in the work's "Production Notes." The title of the play shall not be altered.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second-hand from a third party. All rights, including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing, recitation, lecturing, public reading, television, radio, motion picture, video or sound taping, internet streaming or other forms of broadcast as technology progresses, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved.

COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW. One copy for each speaking role must be purchased for production purposes. Single copies of scripts are sold for personal reading or production consideration only.

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC

P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406

TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

by
Jerry Rabushka

It was raining. A spring rain falling through the trees, wetting the ground on a North Carolina morning. An early rain, before you know it's gonna get so hot – so, so, so hot and it just won't cool down. A rain you hope will make all that go away.

All this water – it's not really water at all. It's Murdoc. He's hot, he's sweating, he's wet just like dew under an early sun back at home. Then it starts pouring off him like that same rain. He's laying in a bed looking up at me. Sweat rolls off him and soaked white sheets surround him like wet grass, and he's scared – so scared.

We're both in the army infirmary. I give him some water – he drips morphine into his bloodstream through a tube in his arm. It cools his pain like that same rain – just a bit – just hope that the pain will wash away like water, down the sewer, down somewhere where you can't ever retrieve it.

He's not talking right. He's scared of losing the leg. Scared he'll wake up one day and I won't be there with the water. Scared he won't wake up at all.

"It should be *you* laying here." He has a weak moment. "I took your watch, Travis – I let you sleep, Travis. I was your friend." I just hope he won't still blame me when the drug wears off.

You never know who the enemy is – not by dress, not by language. You assume it's all of them. You don't want to, but you do to stay alive. They drove up asking for water – clean water. Water like that same rain we miss so much back at home, and poor Murdoc – he went to answer and they opened fire on him.

They shot up his leg – they tried to blow up our whole building. We killed eight people and it made the news. We keep computers here. Records and data. They know it. They think they can shake us loose of here if they blow up our computers. But mostly they just want to kill. Break down some random lives, make someone cry and pour wine and laugh about it later.

Murdoc looks at me and he hates me. Just for now. He says "We shoulda stayed home, Travis. We shoulda just kept fighting with your dad

about music. I'd rather be beat up at home than die so far away." We always knew at home, we could escape. So we did. We joined the army to have peace. Murdoc was my friend. Best friend. He had long stringy hair like a rock star. He wore sandals all the time and he'd pick up dirt on his feet, and my dad said he was a loser, and so was I for hanging with him.

Dad and Mom fought. Dad and my sisters fought. I lived in a cave in my room. Me and Murdoc. Played suicidal rock songs to drown it out. Family said count your blessings – I counted that I had a door I could shut. It was no better at his place.

Someone drunk – someone on drugs – they all blamed it on someone else. Your hand puts the pills in your mouth, pours the drink over your liver like acid rain falling in eastern Pennsylvania, but you insist that *someone else made you do it*.

It was always a burden – a rain, a storm – pummeling someone so innocent. We thought any war, any hell, anywhere, was an escape. When you're 17 you have few options. Few safe ones. On the streets you become a slave and die. I begged Grandma.

Take us in! I can't - I can't - I can't live like this.

She says, "Work it out, Travis! A son and a father should get along with each other."

So we went to the recruiter. Me and Murdoc.

Father says "Good, I hope they shoot you."

He was drunk or something. I know he... ***(we can tell HE only hopes this is true)*** didn't mean it.

Murdoc's hair came off. All that long mess of hair on the floor, falling like rain and swept away. More falling like snow. A rare thing in North Carolina. Like snow, quietly. You don't hear it. You wake up and all you know changed, silently.

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH by Jerry Rabushka. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Heuer Publishing LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-800-950-7529 • Fax (319) 368-8011

HITPLAYS.COM

DO NOT COPY