

father

by

elvis bošnjak

Translated in English by
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Father – a translation in the works

Father was premiered at the Croatian National Theatre in Split on 8 November 2000 with the following cast:

Father: **Josip Genda**
Tiny: **Milan Štrljić**
Abel: **Milivoj Beader**
Florian: **Elvis Bošnjak**

Directed by: Nenni Delmestre
Set by: Vesna Režić
Costumes by: Irena Sušac
Sound by: Lina Vengoechea
Lights by: Zoran Mihanović

In the original performance, the characters spoke with accents from different regions in Croatia – Father (rural), Tiny (urban), Abel (rural), Florian (urban).

Father was awarded in 2001 with the best performance, best original text, best direction and best actor awards in the Festival of Croatian Drama “Days of Marul” in Split. In the Vinkovci Actor’s Festival it won the award for best ensemble. Father was also produced as a radio drama. Preparations for a film production produced by Croatian Television based on the drama are in course.

A jail cell. Two bunk beds. In the upper cot left lies Tiny. Florian seats on the lower one. Abel paces around the cell.

ABEL: Why are they bringing him back here, for Christ sake? *(Throws furtive glances at Tiny, then at Florian.)* What time is it?

FLORIAN: Eight.

ABEL: They'll bring him any minute now.

FLORIAN: They turn the lights off at nine. They'll bring him before nine.

ABEL: Fuck. For seven days they keep him in solitary and then on his last night they had to bring him back here.

FLORIAN: As if he we hadn't seen enough of him.

ABEL: I don't know, I don't like it. How come he ain't afraid of us now, motherfucker?

FLORIAN: Maybe he is but they don't give a shit.

ABEL: You think they want to scare him shitless?

FLORIAN: Maybe they got sick of guarding shit, so they send him back to stink on us.

ABEL: So, what do we do when he comes?

FLORIAN: Nothing, we pretend he's not here.

ABEL: How can you pretend he's not here, for Christ sake. Tiny, what do we do?

Tiny is reading a book.

TINY: Nothing, we pretend he's not here.

ABEL: Maybe they want one of us to kill him.

FLORIAN: Who does?

ABEL: What do I know, Christ, these guards hate his guts. They started the buzz that somebody is offering ten grand for killing Father... But then again, maybe they're testing us. Christ, ten grand, ain't small money.

TINY: You think they're trying to test me.

ABEL: I don't know. I didn't say anything just that.... ten grand ...Is that a lot for killing a man?

TINY: For this one it is.

ABEL: Christ, ten grand.

FLORIAN: Whoever kills this one, should pay ten thousand.

ABEL: Ten grand, Christ!

FLORIAN: Why do you keep going on about those ten grand, you going to earn them?

A BEL: Why wouldn't I? I don't mean tonight because if one of us whacks him tonight they'd know right away it was one of us. That's why that plan is asinine, I mean if someone wants to test us, but we ain't that stupid. Let's say, I'm the first to get out of the can, when I find him, I whack him and that's the end of it.

FLORIAN: Do you know how many will get out of here before you? You think they'll wait for you?

ABEL: Ten grand. I killed my uncle just because my dad told me "pull". If he'd told me "Pull, I'll give you ten grand", I would've killed him twice, for Christ sake.

FLORIAN: If he had given you ten grand for killing your uncle, would you still talk to him?

ABEL: Ten grand for my uncle?

FLORIAN: Aha, would you talk to your old man?

ABEL: Honestly, my uncle could never be worth ten grand. But if Tiny says that ten is too much for this one, then my uncle could be somewhere around there.

FLORIAN: So, you'd talk to him.

ABEL: Christ, leave me alone. What do I know if I would talk to him?

Florian puts his hand inside his shirt and takes out a letter.

FLORIAN: OK, then we file this one.

ABEL: He gave you a letter again.

TINY: Give it to me.

Florian hands Tiny the letter.

ABEL: Don't you dare read it out loud.

Tiny opens the letter, reads it.

ABEL: If you read it out loud, I'll stick my head under the pillow and shut my ears. *(To Florian)* Didn't I tell you not to accept any letters, one day I'll tear them all to pieces.

FLORIAN: Anyway, you'd still like to know what it says.

ABEL: I don't give a shit what it says, the old fool...

He climbs unto the upper bunk bed at right.

FLORIAN: Why are you like that? The poor old man looks at you like you're God.

ABEL: Fuck him...

Tiny laughs.

FLORIAN: What does it say?

Abel covers his head with a pillow.

TINY *(to Florian)*: Out of here.

Turns his back to the wall. Goes on reading. Florian goes to Abel's cot and takes the pillow off his head.

ABEL: Go to Hell, you bitch!

Florian laughs. Tiny throws the letter to the floor. Abel jumps from the cot but Florian grabs the letter first.

ABEL: Give it to me.

FLORIAN: I won't

ABEL: Give it to me.

FLORIAN: I won't. What for?

ABEL: Give to me, didn't you hear me?

FLORIAN: You want to read it?

ABEL: What do you care what I do with it? It's my letter, and you give it to me!

TINY: Give him the letter.

FLORIAN: Here.

Hands Abel the letter. Abel tears it.

FLORIAN: You are really a shithead. You're lucky you'll never know like your dad what it means to have a prick for a son. There's no woman that would let someone like you make her pregnant.

ABEL: Christ, maybe a fag will get you pregnant. (*Climbs on his cot.*) Anyone has a cigarette? Christ. Listen, one guy told me today that he'd kill him for five grand. For Christ's sake, if you don't know who is offering the money how will you collect it?

FLORIAN: Didn't you just say it was a test?

ABEL: Tiny won't tell. He just reads. How can you read at a moment like this, for Christ sake.?

FLORIAN: Maybe somebody is, for the Hell of it, for no reason. Has money, hates bastards like him. If I had money...

ABEL: No way. Who'd be such a fool to offer money for someone that didn't harm him? What does he care what someone he didn't know did. It's either his daughter or that kid's father, no one else. If I was the kid's father, Christ, I'd never rest till I wasted him. But I'd do it myself, wouldn't pay anyone to do it. Is it tough killing a man?

TINY: Was it tough for you?

ABEL: It's not the same. I just did it, it happened, but kill a man for money, in cold blood I mean.

TINY: Could you kill for money.

ABEL: Christ, I don't know. If he'd hurt someone in my family, maybe I would.

TINY: Someone you don't know. Someone just offers you ten thousand to kill him. You know nothing of him.

ABEL: Christ.

TINY: Maybe he's a good man, has wife, kids.

ABEL: A good man I wouldn't.

TINY: He just owes fifty thousand to the wrong man.

ABEL: Fifty grand. Why would a good man owe someone fifty grand?

TINY: It happens. Maybe he liked gambling, maybe he's kid is sick, who knows.

ABEL: Don't tell me you killed people like that, for Christ sake. But if someone told me what this guy did, killed two kids, raped his daughter, raped and

killed another one, Christ, I would cut his head off and carried around in a pitchfork.

TINY: I don't think you could.

ABEL: I couldn't?

FLORIAN: Maybe Florian

ABEL: Sister could and I couldn't?

FLORIAN: Don't call me Sister or I'll turn your head around!

TINY: Didn't you hear what Sister said. He'd pay for the chance of killing him.

ABEL: That's 'cause that guy raped him and he hates rapists.

FLORIAN: He didn't rape me. I told you he didn't rape me.

ABEL: So, he didn't go all the way, don't get all fussed up.

TINY: You see Flo, tonight you can kill another one just some hours before he goes free. You'll do a year, maybe two. In the can you'll become popular and no one will dare call you Sister again.

FLORIAN: Because of this shithead I wouldn't do a minute more time.

TINY: Don't get excited your ulcer will burst.

ABEL: How many years did you share a cell with him?

TINY: Eight.

ABEL: Did you ever feel like beating the crap out of him?

TINY: No.

ABEL: Did you know from the beginning what he'd done?

TINY: Yes.

FLORIAN: I didn't know right away. I tried to match that face with the horrible thing he had done, but even his face isn't revolting enough.

TINY: The man has an ordinary stupid face and nothing more. The rest you made up in your head.

ABEL: And tomorrow he goes free and I still have two years and three months, for Christ sake.

FLORIAN: Stop whining, you got three years, I would've given you thirty and slapped you for that stupidity.

ABEL: Who you gonna slap, you can only give me your ass, Sister.

Florian spits on him.

ABEL: You motherfucker!

FLORIAN: Didn't I tell you not to call me Sister!

ABEL: And you keep calling me stupid. A fag wanted to fuck you. At least they didn't raise my sentence in court when I appealed. He appealed for the five years he got and they gave him two more for killing the fag who wanted to fuck him. You should've let him fuck you first and then kill him. Then you'd have the evidence up your ass

Tiny laughs. Florian clinches Abel.

TINY: What if he's coming here tonight to kill one of us?

Florian and Abel freeze.

ABEL: Fuck!

Florian releases Abel. They both look at Tiny

FLORIAN: What do you mean kill one of us?

Long pause. Tiny reads. Florian and Abel stare at him.

FLORIAN: Tiny?

ABEL: Tiny?

TINY: Why is he spending his last night with us? The day the buzz about the ten thousand started, he jumped on the bars and called for help even though neither one of us moved. He was sure we'd kill him that same night. Why would he now, all of a sudden, trust us?

FLORIAN: Maybe he thinks that no one is stupid enough to kill him here in the cell.

TINY: Maybe so, but he's still taking a risk. When your life's on the line, no one risks it so stupidly.

FLORIAN: Maybe he wants to play the martyr.

TINY: I don't believe Father has become such a fanatic. He's an insane convert. Yesterday he was an alcoholic, today he's a convert, tomorrow who knows what.

ABEL: Fuck the man who starts believing in God when he turns fifty.

TINY: OK, we cross out faith. What's left? He could've quietly spent his last night in solitary; tomorrow he sneaks out and disappears without a trace.

FLORIAN: OK, so why couldn't he do that?

ABEL: Do what?

FLORIAN: Get out of jail Abel and disappear without a trace.

ABEL: And the daughter?

FLORIAN: What's with her?

ABEL: What if she ordered the killing.

TINY: You've got it Abel. What if his daughter or the father of the other kid ordered the killing?

ABEL: Christ, he doesn't have to be killed in the can, he can be killed outside.

TINY: On the nose. Pays a guy to pull the trigger and goodbye.

FLORIAN: Then why send the word in the can?

TINY: It's easier to find someone to do the job in the can. Lot's of candidates and cheaper. Today someone said he'd do it for five thousand, and then there are those who'd kill him like that, for the Hell of it, just if you poke them.

ABEL: Christ, you're really smart.

TINY: Abel, these are all your ideas, just that you didn't add them up, you didn't add them up, that's all.

FLORIAN: I just don't understand why he'd want to stay in the can when outside he's safer. You just said that here anyone can kill him.

TINY: Who says he's safer? Outside a professional waits for him, he'll kill him for the money. If he kills one of us, they'll send him to another jail, isolate him, he'll feel a little lonely in solitary but fuck, he's alive. If he goes out, he's hundred percent dead. Tomorrow, as soon as he crosses the gate he's bird of prey. Here he's calmed down, he found the light and that sort of thing. He's afraid of freedom. Your mother waits for you outside, who waits for him? He's been here twelve years; this is his home, here his guts are in balance, why would he go free?

ABEL: Christ.

TINY: He comes back to this cell, kills one of us and stays in the can. Here his life is organized.

ABEL: Christ, it can only be like you say.

FLORIAN: OK all of that can be true. But how's he going to kill? With what?

TINY: With a knife.

FLORIAN: Where's he going to get a knife?

TINY: Where did you get your knife?
ABEL: He has a knife? You have a knife?
FLORIAN: Quiet, you ape.
ABEL: What the fuck are you doing with a knife?
TINY: Our Flo is afraid of rape, aren't you Flo? When Father was free he liked girls. Here he has no girls, so maybe he'll settle for boys.
FLORIAN: OK, I have a knife, ok. Maybe that knife will come in handy tonight. But, how do we know that Father has a knife?
TINY: We don't. I meant to say that here you can easily get a knife.
ABEL: How's he going to get a knife in solitary?
TINY: Anything can be arranged Abel. If Flora got a knife, anyone can.
FLORIAN: Maybe he left it here in the cell.
TINY: Why would he take it with him when they could easily take it away from him.
ABEL: Let's search his cot, for Christ sake.

Tiny and Florian search Father's cot.

TINY: You can get a knife even solitary. Father's been in here long enough, he knows people.
FLORIAN: I think it's a little farfetched but...
ABEL: As if he was normal, Christ.
TINY: That's enough for me. Now we have to find the answer to one more question.
ABEL: Which?
TINY: Which one did he pick?
ABEL: What do you mean which?
TINY: He can't kill all three of us, he must pick one.
FLORIAN: Abel.
ABEL: Fuck you.
TINY: Very possible.
ABEL: Why me?
TINY: Because it would be the easiest.

Florian laughs.

ABEL: Why wouldn't he kill you Flo? You think that knife will save you when he suddenly knocks you down?

TINY: We can't rule that out. Flo disgusts him, he gave him the name Sister. Maybe old instincts come back to him and he stabs him for pleasure.

ABEL: Where does that leave you?

FLORIAN: I have a knife.

TINY: That's for certain. You have the advantage. But I somehow think he'd rather kill me.

ABEL: Why you?

TINY: First of all, he can't be sure that I didn't accept the ten thousand. In a few years I'm out, if he survives I might look him up, that's why he has to catch me by surprise. Second, he doesn't fear anyone as much as he fears me. Eight years of fear turned into eight years of hate. He's not like Flo. Flo scoops everything up in his ulcer. This other one is a volcano, he's held it for a long time and now it's the right time to explode. If he must kill someone to stay in jail, he'd love killing me.

ABEL: So, it's you.

FLORIAN: Did a weight get lifted off your shoulders?

TINY: Abel, maybe in the end he decides for the easiest way out. And that means you.

ABEL: Why would I be the easiest way out?

FLORIAN: Because, Abel, you're the dumbest.

TINY: He sleeps under you, he doesn't have to sneak up to you. It's enough that he tickles you with the knife from underneath and you're done.

ABEL: Fuck him if he thinks I'll sleep over him tonight.

FLORIAN: You just have to tuck yourself in his cot and you can fall asleep on his shoulder.

ABEL: You fall asleep on his shoulder, Sister. Who knows how many times he stuck it into you this past few years.

FLORIAN: You want me to beat the shit out of you?

TINY: Maybe in the end he decided on you Flo.

FLORIAN: But you just said that he'd rather kill you...

TINY: Very possible, very possible, I don't run away from it. Only that we can't be one hundred percent sure.

ABEL: That means the three of us are in deep shit.

TINY: You're right Abel.

ABEL: But we have a knife.

TINY: Flo has a knife, Abel.

ABEL: Have him give you the knife.

TINY: That's his decision. He can do with that knife whatever he wants, doesn't he. He might give me the knife, me might not give me the knife.

ABEL: But he can't keep the knife, Christ.

TINY: Flo has a right to that knife, Abel.

ABEL: Flo, don't think twice about it, give Tiny the knife and that's the end.

FLORIAN: It's my knife.

ABEL: What are you going to do with that knife. You can only stick it into your frozen shit.

FLORIAN: If he turns on me, I'll kill him.

TINY: And if he turns on one of us?

FLORIAN: I'll kill him.

TINY: Did I hear a little pause before that?

FLORIAN: I'll kill him.

TINY: Good enough for me. If you think you can, I'm cool.

ABEL: Not enough for me. We're talking about our own heads, if he keeps the knife it's the same as not having any.

TINY: Let me see the knife.

FLORIAN: Why do you have to see it?

ABEL: Let him take a look at it, for Christ sake.

TINY: It doesn't look like the best of knives. You'll have to know what to do with that knife. Where will you stab him?

ABEL: At least let him show you where to stab him.

FLORIAN: I'll stab him in his stomach, it's sharp enough.

TINY: That's it. That's what I thought. You know what you're doing. I just wanted to make sure you knew what you were doing.

He climbs to his cot.

ABEL: Christ, I'm not so sure. Let me just look at the knife.

FLORIAN: I won't give you the knife, get it?

ABEL: Just let me look at it.

Florian lies in his cot, takes the knife out of somewhere.

FLORIAN: Did you take a good look at it?

Abel reaches for the knife, Florian gets up.

ABEL: We can take that knife away from you. Tiny! Let's do it. Are we going to loose our head just because this stupid cunt won't give us the knife.

TINY: Abel, it's his knife, he stole it, the man has a right over the knife. He'll kill him, we'll both be witnesses to self-defense, later we'll split the money. Of course, Flo gets the biggest share. He has the knife he risks the most.

FLORIAN: What if this whole story is not true and he doesn't come here to kill one of us? You've explained everything very nicely, but is Father that smart? He's an animal, he's just afraid at what threatens him today, he doesn't think about tomorrow.

TINY: He's an animal, but he's not stupid. If it occurs to him he won't stop. The question is did it occur to him.

ABEL: Who cares why is he coming, for Christ sake, piece of crap.

FLORIAN: OK, so we kill him and later they find out that he didn't carry a weapon.

ABEL: We supply him with a knife.

TINY: That's right Abel. It was never our knife it was his knife.

ABEL: So long as you don't cut your finger first, Sister.

FLORIAN: I think we should wait.

TINY: Then we'll wait. I can wait.

Florian hides the knife in the back of his pants.

ABEL: Why are we going to wait when he might come all of a sudden? Why don't we jump on him first, search him to see what he carries, if nothing we let him loose.

Whistles and yells are heard – UUUAUUUUUUUU!

ABEL: Christ, they're bringing him. Where am I going to lie? I won't lie up there.

TINY: Then sit, and if he pricks you in the ass it won't hurt.

ABEL: Christ...

Abel climbs up his cot, shifts position several times. Florian lies in his cot.

Yells UUUUUUAAAAA!

ABEL: Give Tiny the knife.

Tiny goes back to his book.

ABEL: Give him the fucking knife! You stupid cunt. Look at him. Motherfucker. Christ.

Long pause. Florian stands up and hands Tiny the knife. Tiny hides the knife. Florian goes back to his cot. Abel sighs. Father comes in, stands still. Tiny reads, Abel and Florian stare at Father. Father sits in the cot under Abel. Takes out a flask from his pocket and places it on the cot. Throws two packs of cigarettes in the bed. Long pause. Father sits quietly in his cot, head bent down. Abel tries to find the safest position in his cot, looks down at Father, then at Tiny. Tiny lies reading a book. Abel and Florian concentrate on Father's movements.

TINY: Give me those cigarettes.

Father throws him a pack. Tiny lights up, throws the pack at Abel, then the lighter.

While lighting his cigarette, Abel's hand shakes. Throws pack at Florian, Florian kicks the pack to the floor.

ABEL: Here.

Throws Tiny back his lighter.

TINY: What's in the flask?

FATHER: Whiskey.

Father grabs the flask and looks at Tiny.

TINY: Whiskey?
FATHER: Yes, whiskey.
TINY: Drink.
FATHER: What?
TINY: Drink.

Father drinks. Tiny jumps off his bed.

TINY: Was that the first time?
FATHER: Yes.
TINY: And?
FATHER: What?
TINY: How is it?
FATHER: It's over. I don't feel anymore.
TINY: Where did you get it?
FATHER: Asked for it.
TINY: Bribed for it?
FATHER: Yes, bribed.
TINY: To treat us.
FATHER: Yes.
TINY: See it can be bought. Didn't you want to become a saint?
FATHER: All the things they say about me are true, except that I killed those kids. I didn't... those kids. The wife did them. I lay drunk and watched, it's true, in God's eyes same sin as if I had killed them myself. I know God won't turn away from me, even though he doesn't like those like me. I wanted him to forgive me but has given me this cross which I can't carry, that's why my soul will go to Hell.
ABEL: Christ!
FLORIAN: You came here to whine, I can't listen to you.
FATHER: I know that you rather I stayed a sick bastard. Back then, you talked to me. You hated me, but still you talked to me. But now, I make you sick, you make fun because I found God, you're making fun of God.

TINY: Father, the problem is you change believes too fast. Ten days ago you wanted to go paradise, now you want to go to Hell again. We can't keep up with you.

FLORIAN: What do you mean Hell? Haven't you done enough or are you going to try to outdo yourself.

TINY: Whiskey Flo?

FLORIAN: No.

TINY: Abel, you? Don't be afraid. Abel is afraid you'll try to poison him.

FATHER: I tried it.

TINY: He tried it. (*Hands Abel the flask, Abel doesn't take it*). Come on, the man came here to celebrate his release.

FATHER: I came to say goodbye.

TINY: You think we were that close?

FATHER: We are sinners.

TINY: We spilt blood all four so now we are like family, it that it?

FLORIAN: You think my crime and yours can be compared?

ABEL: No way.

FATHER: I have learned to love people. I know you hate me, but I have learned to love those who hate me. If I love those who love me, what good do I do?

ABEL: And who loves you, for Christ sake?

FATHER: None of the living.

FLORIAN: Maybe you're dead children love you.

FATHER: God loves me, and His Son and all the Saints...

ABEL: Yeah, the whole Heaven went crazy for you.

TINY: If you loved us so much, why did you run away from us?

FATHER: I thought you might want to kill me, I ran away to keep you from sinning.

FLORIAN: Thanks a lot.

TINY: Then we'll toast because you saved our souls.

FATHER: I won't drink, and it doesn't matter anymore.

TINY: Why are you so sure we won't kill you tonight?

FATHER: Tonight I'm sure.

TINY: In your place, I wouldn't be so sure. You see, Abel let's say, is very interested in the ten thousand. Keeps talking about it. He's thinking over who's offering, how will he collect, etc. He killed his uncle, just for the Hell of it, and now he's attracted to the ten thousand.

ABEL: I didn't say anything, I was just talking. Christ, why would you kill him if right away they would know who did it.

TINY: Florian says that he would even pay ten thousand for doing you. See with kind of people you want to spend your last night in jail with.

FATHER: I understand you. No living man can love me.

ABEL: No one can love you, not even God.

FATHER: Don't you talk of his love, he died in the cross to save us, all of us.

TINY: Yeah, you had to rape and kill those children to find your God. That's your way, fucked up, isn't it? You found your peace...

FATHER: I found it.

TINY: Peaceful man is afraid of no one.

FATHER: I'm just afraid of myself.

TINY: And me? You're not afraid of me?

FATHER: I could go out tomorrow and never see you again.

TINY: I get out in four years.

FATHER: Ugh, in four years a man can get lost anywhere.

TINY: That's what I say, but if I accepted the ten thousand you won't sleep that easily.

FATHER: If I loose my life, I don't loose anything, so I'm safe.

TINY: You're not afraid of me.

FATHER: I'm not afraid of those who kill flesh.

TINY: Then why did you run away?

FATHER: I was afraid at that moment, later I asked them to bring me back. They wouldn't.

TINY: Why did they let you now.

FATHER: I don't know. They just did.

FLORIAN: You're lying! Why did you have to come back here?

FATHER: I came to...I came to take off my cross because I can't carry it anymore.

FLORIAN: What cross, what cross!? Stop using those words, you carry no cross on yourself.

ABEL: As if we crave for you, for Christ's sake.

FLORIAN: Did you hear, they don't crave for you.

FATHER: I know.

TINY: Then why did you take the trouble?

FATHER: I want to cleanse myself.

ABEL: You couldn't find a better place to get clean.

FLORIAN: You don't have anything to clean in front of us. You won't find in here water for that kind of cleaning.

ABEL: We can only piss over you, if you want.

FATHER: I want to be cleansed for my own sake.

TINY: Are you afraid of going out?

FATHER: Yes. I'm afraid.

TINY: Why? Maybe they'll hunt you down. Maybe not. You hide for a while and that's it. You wait for me. And maybe the two of us can come to an understanding.

FATHER: I'm not afraid of that.

TINY: Then what are you afraid of?

FATHER: I'm afraid of myself. That it doesn't come back.

TINY: But God's with you.

FATHER: God is with me but I know I'm not strong in the head. I'm afraid of being caught by that weakness again.

FLORIAN: That a baby doesn't give you a hard on again.

TINY: You mean, you don't want to go out?

FATHER: I won't go out of here tomorrow

ABEL: Christ!

TINY: What do you mean you won't go out of here?

FATHER: Florian has a knife.

TINY: Florian has a knife?

FATHER: Yes.

FLORIAN: Where did you get the idea that I have a knife.

FATHER: I know you do. You stole it from the kitchen. And I know where you keep it.

TINY: I'm sure you know. What do you have?

FATHER: Florian has a knife.

TINY: I know that Florian has a knife!

FATHER: You'll give it to me.

ABEL: Christ.

TINY: What makes you think he'll give it to you?

FATHER: Because I am begging you to.

ABEL: He's not that fucking crazy to give it to you. We can search him, just in case.

TINY: Hands against the wall.

Father puts his hands against the wall.

TINY: Watch what you do, if you move, I'll kill you.

Tiny searches him.

FATHER: If I had anything, I wouldn't have come here.

TINY: You came in here for the knife?

FATHER: Yes.

ABEL: Fucking crazy, he thought we would give him the knife.

TINY: There's three of us. You have no chance.

FATHER: No, no I don't want to attack you.

TINY: Who are you going to attack, then?

FATHER: Myself.

TINY: Yourself.

FATHER: I'll kill myself.

TINY: You'll kill yourself?

FATHER: I'll kill myself.

TINY: With Florian's knife?

FATHER: Yes.

Tiny laughs.

FLORIAN: You're lying.

FATHER: I'm not. Why would I?

ABEL: Christ, he's fucking mad.

TINY: You'll kill yourself so your soul goes to Hell.

FATHER: For that also.

ABEL: Like what you already did wasn't enough.

Tiny laughs.

FATHER: I considered it for a long time, then I decided. At first I wanted to hang myself, but how would I get a rope in solitary. Then I wanted to drive my head into the wall. But how can a man kill himself that way? That can only throw you unconscious. Then I remembered that Flo had a knife. Then I thought you'd give to me. If you don't give it to me, I don't know.... how to do it...

ABEL: We don't give a shit how you do it, just leave us alone.

FATHER: They think they'll be waiting for me at the exit tomorrow. They organized a demonstration to sign a petition to prolong sentences for guys like me. TV and the papers will be there. They want to bring the father and mother of that kid and my daughter.

FLORIAN: And you want to kill yourself here so tomorrow you don't have to face them.

FATHER: Yes.

TINY: They could easily kill you in front of the cameras.

ABEL: Why don't they take him through the back exit.

FATHER: They want to take me in front of them.

FLORIAN: I don't believe anything you say. If there was an ounce of humanity or goodness in you, you never would have done it. You're trying to confuse us with those believes of yours. Why are you killing yourself if you believe in God? If he has forgiven you, what do you have to cleanse yourself of? But you don't believe in God, you hear me, you don't.

FATHER: "Which one of you, who is a father, if he's son would ask for bread would hand him a stone or if he would ask him for fish, instead of fish he would hand him a snake or if he would ask him for an egg, instead of an egg he would hand him a scorpion, so if you, who are evil can give your children good offering..." I'm more evil than evil itself. I've given my children a stone and a snake and a scorpion, so what mercy have I earned.

FLORIAN: If you don't believe in forgiveness, then you don't believe in God.

FATHER: I believe. I believe in forgiveness. I know that God is trying me, but I can't pass this test. I carried my cross this far, I can't go any further, and I can't show myself in front of her eyes tomorrow.

ABEL: Don't you look at her when you're passing by her, turn your head the other way.

FATHER: I can't, I can't turn my head away from her, I'll know she's watching me, I can't hide.

TINY: You see, Father, we all think you're shitting us and that if we give you that knife it'll end up in one of our chests.

FATHER: What do I get from killing one of you.

TINY: You kill one of us and you stay in jail. They'll isolate you, you'll live through some nice years, you'll mind the loneliness a little, but who cares, you're alive.

FATHER: Why would I stay in the can when they want to kill me here?

TINY: Whoever is paying to have you killed in the can will pay to have you killed outside and outside you've no protection. Here you're still considered a wolf, they fear you. Just think how many times you could've been killed by those like Florian if they didn't fear you. Outside you are a lamb. They pay a kid who carries a gun in one hand a cigarette in the other one, when he blasts you he'll blow the smoke away, turning around in his heels not giving a fuck who you are.

FATHER: I only fear the one who can destroy body and soul in Hell.

FLORIAN: Swear on your kids and we'll believe you.

TINY: You have to accept that it's a good idea. And if you think a little more maybe you'll decide for it. But I think you've already decided. This thing about suicide is pure genius. You were sure that we hated you so much that we'd gladly hand you the knife right away.

FATHER: I can prove it to you. See I have here a letter where I wrote everything.

Hands Tiny the letter.

TINY (*Reading*): I declare that I've taken my own life and that no prisoner is involved. I stole the knife from the kitchen ten months ago.

FLORIAN: That's exactly when I stole the knife.

FATHER: I wrote that letter some days ago when I decided to kill myself. First I wrote it just to see how it looked in writing, then I decided.

TINY: What do you two think?

ABEL: I don't fucking know. Maybe it's all a lie but then again...I don't know. I'm not clear.

FLORIAN: We know that Abel. I think that letter doesn't mean a thing. What's with it?

It could all be part of the plan. He wrote the letter so we would fall for it.

FATHER: You see Father, I don't how we're going to believe you. If you had somehow convinced us, there wouldn't be any problem. We wouldn't want you to blush in front of your daughter.

FATHER: But there's three of you. How can I kill you?

TINY: You don't have much of a chance, but a man with a knife is a man with a knife. With skilled hands anything can happen.

FATHER: I don't have...I could have by surprise but now you know, how can I?

TINY: I'm not afraid of you, Father. These two are afraid. I might even believe you. Maybe a chemical explosion in your head shook your brain and in a matter of seconds you became a great man. You want to endure the sacrifice. You're not worthy of living.

FATHER: I know that what I did is horrible and that these twelve years in jail have been a reward for me. I know that I disgust everybody. No one looks me in the eye when they talk to me because in my eyes they see a trunk and not a thorn.

FLORIAN: You have no idea how horrible. If they left you alone with some girl in a room your mouth would start watering again.

TINY: Father, I think Flo is right.

FLORIAN: Man, you went to mourn with your neighbors after you had raped and killed their daughter and even cried with them.

FATHER: It's true, I mourned and I know what I was. That's why I want to kill myself, I won't take the risk. And to be cleansed. Maybe God will let me into Heaven because of my believes, because He's all-merciful, but by killing my body I want to kill my soul.

ABEL: God'll let him into Heaven, Christ!

FLORIAN: Tell Him you did it because you didn't like living in an island, you didn't like fish, you didn't understand what people said and no problem.

FATHER: I said that I drank because of the island, just that. I don't want to be saved. I want to fall until the end.

FLORIAN: Yeah, it wouldn't be nice to meet some of your children in Heaven.

TINY: In that case, Hell for your is a reward.

FATHER: I don't know. I've decided to kill myself and let God do with me what He wants. Also, I want to kill myself because of my daughter.

ABEL: She'll piss on your grave just the same.

FATHER: I don't think she'll forgive me but it would be a relief, and maybe she'll forgive me, it isn't good to live in hate.

ABEL: You think she's offering the ten grand?

FATHER: I don't know. But I'm thinking it might be her.

ABEL: Her or the girl's father, can't be anybody else.

FLORIAN: Maybe it's your wife.

FATHER: She's not that smart.

ABEL: Tiny knows but won't tell.
TINY: What makes you think I know.
ABEL: Just guessing, what do I know.
TINY: You see Father, that offer doesn't have to be real.
FLORIAN: Maybe the offer is not real, but it's possible that someone will take it seriously, like Abel for example.
FATHER: I'm not afraid of anyone. I told you why I want to kill myself.
TINY: OK Father, let's say that's the way it is. I appreciate your decision and if I had a knife maybe I'd give it to you. But you see Florian has the knife. If you convince Florian, I agree, no problem.

Climbs to his cot.

ABEL: I don't agree.
FATHER: I know Florian, that I have done you harm and I don't ask for your forgiveness. Just that you give me the knife.
ABEL: If you call him Sister and curse him for five minutes like you did before, maybe he'll give you the knife.
TINY: Abel that's an original thought.
FLORIAN: You're going to bleed one day, you stupid hick.
FATHER: Do you believe in God Florian?
FLORIAN: No, but I fear Him.

Tiny laughs.

ABEL: Listen to him, now he doesn't believe in God.
TINY: So Father? A couple of rough words to Sister and you won't need a knife. See how he's all worked up, he'll tear your throat with his teeth.
FATHER: Don't make fun of me! I have strength! God gave me the strength. Give me the knife.

Goes toward Florian, Florian retreats.

TINY: C-c-c-c-c easy.
FATHER: Give me the knife.

FLORIAN: I don't have it.

Tiny jumps off his cot.

FATHER: Give me the knife, I can't go out tomorrow and face her, did you hear me, I can't go out tomorrow...

TINY: He doesn't have the knife, didn't you hear!?

FLORIAN: I don't have the knife.

Father stops and stares at Tiny.

TINY: Just don't get upset. How can we give you the knife if you're upset?

FATHER: I'm not upset, you want to provoke me but I've learned not to get upset, I'm not upset.

TINY: You're not upset.

FATHER: I'm not upset, I'm calmed.

TINY: That's all we need now. Now we'll slowly take out the knife. *(Takes out the knife)* Here it is, Father. It's not much of a knife but... if a guy knows how...might do anything with it. Grab it. Take it, I'm giving it to you.

Florian and Abel looking by turns at Father and Tiny.

TINY: You want the knife? You think I'm teasing you?

Father goes towards Tiny.

FLORIAN: Tiny.

TINY (Father): What, are you afraid?

FATHER: You're playing with me. I can see in your eyes that you're playing with me.

TINY: Maybe I'm playing with you. If I'm not then either I'll kill you or I'll give you the knife. It's all the same to you.

FLORIAN: Tiny, what are you doing?

TINY: Shut up Florian. So, Father, let's see if you're bluffing or if you're really thinking of stabbing yourself? I'll hold the knife, throw yourself at it, just run.

FATHER: I want to do it myself.

TINY: Then come and get it. Here it is. Come on!

Father slowly approaches Tiny.

TINY: Are you afraid?

FLORIAN: Tiny, what are you doing?

Father stands still.

TINY: Florian, if I hear one more word out of you, just one more word...(Father).
Go. Come on. Come on!

Father comes closer. Tiny holds the knife up to his eyes.

TINY: Are you afraid? You're eyes grew like a lamb's.

FATHER: I don't want to die by your hands.

TINY: Don't get upset again. Easy. Look at those crazy, watery eyes. What's between those eyes. Like they're connected to something else other than the human brain. Are you bluffing? *(Grabs Father by his chest and threatens him with the knife under his chin)*. You're fucking with me? Are you fucking with me?

TINY: Let him go.

TINY: Are you fucking with me or do you really want to kill yourself? You're a little nervous, maybe it's better that I do it for you, you get yours and we'll be safe. Three or four on my account won't make a difference.

Father motions towards the knife.

TINY: Where's that hand going?

Father stops.

TINY: Drop the hand.

Father drops his hand.

TINY: You don't feel like dying, huh?

FATHER: I must do it myself. Alone.

TINY: For your soul, so your soul can go to Hell. *(Laughs)* Idiot. *(Pushes Father away. Throws the knife on the floor.)* Hold it. Take it! That's it.

Florian goes towards the knife. Tiny stops him.

ABEL: We're not fucking letting him get the knife?!

FLORIAN: Tiny.

TINY: Quiet.

FLORIAN: If you give him the knife, I'll call the guards.

TINY: You're not calling anyone or I'll stick you head down your faggot's ass.

ABEL: Tiny don't, please.

TINY: Nothing to fear. If he tries anything I'll break his back.

FLORIAN: It's my knife and I don't give it.

TINY: Father, knife is on the floor.

FATHER: Slide it with your foot.

ABEL: You want me to take the knife. Here, I'll take the knife.

TINY: Abel, don't mess with me.

ABEL: But you saw him a while ago, for Christ sake.

FLORIAN: Tiny, look at him, he's not himself, can't you see he's not himself?

TINY: I see, of course I see, that's why I'm going to give him the knife.

FLORIAN: Are you fucking crazy, did you go fucking crazy!?

TINY: If we don't give Father the knife, we won't know what's hidden in his head. And I want to know what's hidden behind those crazy eyes.

ABEL: I don't give a fuck about his eyes, man.

TINY: You see, I think Father's not lying and that he really wants to kill himself. I just saw in his eyes that he speaks the truth.

FLORIAN: He's a furious animal, man, you don't have to look at his eyes.

TINY: Lamb or beast? What are you? Are you a beast, huh!?

FLORIAN: Are you fucking around?

ABEL: He's not fucking around.

FLORIAN: Tiny, something else is in your head, tell me that you have something else in your head.

TINY: I'll give it to him just to see how you shit in your pants.

FLORIAN: That's not right. I stole the knife from the kitchen, it's my knife.

ABEL: You're right Flo.

TINY: You stole that knife from the kitchen and you gave it to me, so it's not your knife anymore because you had no balls for that knife. You're afraid, you're always afraid, afraid of what you don't believe in and that's why I'll give him the knife.

I'll give it to him because you disgust me more than him. Look. He made the decision. One or the other is already in his head. Are you ready?

FATHER: You don't have to be afraid.

TINY: If you don't have the balls to kill yourself, turn on me. Let the faggots watch how the animals fight.

FATHER: I don't want to turn on anyone.

TINY: Boys are you ready?

ABEL: Wait, for Christ sake.

Climbs to his cot.

TINY: Abel, from now on we'll call you Sister.

ABEL: Call me what you want, just don't let him near me.

TINY: Flo?

FLORIAN: Don't ask me anything, don't ask anything more.

Tiny slides Father the knife. Father bends and picks up the knife.

TINY: There you are Father, it's over now, what'll be will be.

Long pause. Tiny sits in his cot. Florian climbs to Abel's.

ABEL: Where are you going, for Christ sake?

They both kneel on the bed. Father takes the knife in his hands.

TINY: How are you thinking of doing it?
FATHER: I'll stab myself in the heart.
TINY: Why not in the stomach?
FATHER: That might take longer. I wouldn't want it to take long. I can't take the pain.
TINY: I think Father this knife won't go through your ribs.
FATHER: I'll lay in the floor and hit hard.
TINY: OK.

Father kneels.

FATHER: Abel, I think you should make peace with your father. He's not to blame.
ABEL: Why don't you make peace with your daughter. Go to her and say – "I'm sorry I fucked you, it was a mistake, I won't do it again."
FLORIAN: Shut up you prick.
FATHER: I just wanted to tell you. There. I just wanted to tell you...

Long silence, no one moves. Father lies on the floor.

TINY: Last question Father. Why did you become a believer?
FATHER: Because of Christ. I learned to love Him.
TINY: OK.

After a few quiet moments Father raises the knife.

TINY: What if there's not Christ, if the only real God is let's say, Allah? You now stab yourself and before you stands Allah, mad at you because you became a catholic.
ABEL: Then you're fucked.
TINY: Well that still stands. You could earn Hell, muslim or catholic, it's all the same. But you see, I know there's no Heaven or Hell, no way, and that after life there's nothing. The flesh rots and stinks. From the dark we

come, to the dark we go back, and that's good. And people made up Heaven and Hell because they're afraid to die like animals, honorably, without these pathetic ideas of God and the soul. Just think of how many gods they've come up with: Yahweh, Allah, Krishna, Zeus, Ra, Marduk, Thor, Perun, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, stupid like a holy cow.

ABEL: Maybe the main God is the Manitou from indian's stories.

TINY: Shut up, Abel. When you stab yourself, in the floor will lie a cadaver no better than a dog's. And death for you won't be a punishment because there's no such thing as a soul, nothing to suffer. (*Lights go off in the cell*). Nothing will leave that body except stench...

ABEL: Tiny, light, for Christ sake!

FLORIAN: Where is he?

ABEL: Is he on the floor? Tiny! Tiny! Don't let him fucking come here.

FLORIAN: Abel don't push me.

Tiny laughs.

ABEL: What's happening! What's happening! You see him?!

FLORIAN: He's here.

ABEL: Where?

FLORIAN: Laying down.

ABEL: Is he moving?

FLORIAN: He's not moving.

ABEL: Is he dead?

FLORIAN: I don't know.

ABEL: Maybe he's dead. Tiny!

TINY: What?

ABEL: Do you see him?

TINY: Hardly.

ABEL: Is he dead?

TINY: I don't know. Maybe he is, maybe he isn't.

ABEL: I didn't hear anything. Did you hear anything? Go, shake him a little.

FLORIAN: You go shake him.

TINY: What are we going to do?

TINY: We wait.

ABEL: What's there to wait, Christ.
TINY: Morning.
FLORIAN: You always have to fuck around?
TINY: I'm not kidding. You go see if he's dead.
ABEL: We're not calling anyone, is that clear? Sit and shut up.
ABEL: But we're not going to stay like this all fucking night.

Moaning.

ABEL: Did you hear?
FLORIAN: What?
ABEL: Like he's moaning.

Long pause. Moaning.

FLORIAN: Again.
ABEL: He's alive Florian, alive.
FLORIAN: Father.

Tiny jumps off his cot.

ABEL: Christ, where are you going?

TINY goes towards Father.

FLORIAN: Careful Tiny.
ABEL: Is he moving?
FLORIAN: Is he alive?
ABEL: Get away from him! Get away from him!
TINY: He's dead
FLORIAN: Do you see the knife?
ABEL: Did you hear him moaning? Dead man can't moan, for Christ sake.
FLORIAN: Maybe we just heard rattle.

TINY: He's dead.

FLORIAN: Where are his hands? Is he holding the knife?

Moaning.

ABEL: Did you hear? Again.

They all freeze.

TINY: He's dead.

He goes back to his cot.

ABEL: Are you sure?

TINY: Dead and crying

ABEL: Crying?

TINY: Crying like a faggot.

ABEL: He's alive Florian, he's alive for Christ sake.

FLORIAN: Move away from me!

ABEL: Why are you fucking crying, you've no right to cry.

Father gets up. Tiny sits in the cot.

ABEL: He's getting up. Guys, he's fucking getting up. Guards! Guards!

TINY: Stop yelling, I'll smash your head!

ABEL: He has the knife! Guys, he has the knife!

Lights come back. Father's standing in the middle of the cell with the knife in his hand, wipes away his tears.

FATHER: You shouldn't have said that...

We hear the guards' voices.

FATHER: You shouldn't have said that there's no Heaven or Hell.

Tiny jumps from the cot. Goes towards Father.

FLORIAN: Get away from him, the guards are coming, get away.

ABEL: Christ, he'll stab you.

FLORIAN: Move away Tiny, he's mad.

FATHER: You shouldn't have said that there's no Heaven or Hell.

TINY: You don't have the balls to find out.

Guards' voices.

FATHER: There is God in this body. When I raised the knife against myself, I raised it against Him. I laid in the dark and in my head I heard what was being said and sadness came over me, because I saw a man without hope, a dead man, and saw myself with a knife in my hand that same dead man and I knew then I wasn't doing the right thing. I felt God was with me, that He was lifting me and I knew He was my hope, I'm not afraid of myself anymore because my God gives me the hope to endure what I must. Florian here's your knife.

TINY: Give me the knife.

FATHER: What for?

TINY: Give it to me. I'll stab you.

Reaches for the knife. Father hides it behind his back. Tiny grabs his arm.

FLORIAN: Tiny, let go of him.

TINY: I will send you to Heaven.

FLORIAN: Tiny, the guards are coming, let go of him.

Tiny and Father fight for the knife.

TINY: I'll send you to Heaven and you won't have to face her tomorrow. Everything will be the way you wanted.

FATHER: No, let me go!

ABEL: Separate them, for Christ sake, separate them!

TINY slowly overpowers Father. When he's about to take the knife away from him, Father pushes him away with all his might. Tiny's back hits the bed, his hands give away under the pressure from Father and the knife enters his stomach.

ABEL: For Christ sake, guys! He killed him! Guys!

Father slowly separates from Tiny. Tiny looks at the blood in his hands, he laughs. Voices from the guards are heard.

FATHER: He shouldn't have said that there's no Heaven or Hell. He shouldn't have said, shouldn't have...

Tiny falls on the floor. Florian and Abel stay frozen on the cot.

ABEL: Fuck, he killed him, fuck.

Voices.

Dark.

THE END