

Act Two

SCENE ONE

A cell. Michal sitting on a wooden chair, tapping his thighs, listening to the intermittent screams of his brother, Katurian, being tortured a room away. A blanket on a thin mattress and a pillow lie a few yards away.

Michal 'Once upon a time . . . a long long way away . . .

Katurian screams again. Michal mimics them at length, till they fade away.

'Once upon a time, a long long way away, there was a little green pig. There was a little green pig. Who was green. Um . . .

Katurian screams again. Michal mimics till they fade, then gets up, idles around.

'Once upon a time, a long long way away, there was a little green pig . . . ' Or *was* it a long long way away? Where was it? (*Pause.*) Yes, it *was* a long long way away, and he was a little green pig . . .

Katurian screams. Michal mimics, irritated this time.

Oh shut up, Katurian! Making me forget the little green pig story now with your screaming all over the place! (*Pause.*) And what did the little green pig do next? He . . . he said to the man . . . He said to the man, 'Hello . . . Man . . . '

Katurian screams. Michal just listens.

Ah, I can't do stories like you do stories, anyway. I wish they'd hurry up and stop torturing ya. I'm bored. It's boring in here. I wish . . .

Sound of next-door room being unbolted. Michal listens. Michal's cell is unbolted and the bloody, breathless Katurian is thrown in by Ariel.

Ariel We'll be back to work on you in a minute. I'm getting my dinner.

Michal gives him the thumbs-up. Ariel bolts the door behind him. Michal looks over Katurian, who is shivering on the floor, goes to caress his head, can't quite do it, and sits on the chair.

Michal Hiya.

Katurian looks up at him, crawls over and hugs Michal's leg. Michal stares down at him, feeling awkward.

What are you doing?

Katurian I'm holding on to your leg.

Michal Oh. (Pause.) Why?

Katurian I don't know, I'm in pain! Aren't I allowed to hold on to my brother's leg when I'm in pain?

Michal Of course you are, Katurian. Just seems weird.

Katurian (pause) How are you doing, anyway?

Michal Great. Just a bit bored. Cor, you were making some racket. What were they doing, torturing ya?

Katurian Yeah.

Michal (tuts. Pause) Did it hurt?

Katurian lets go of Michal's leg.

Katurian If it didn't hurt, Michal, it wouldn't be torture, would it?

Michal No, I suppose.

Katurian Did yours hurt?

Michal Did my what hurt?

Katurian When they tortured you.

Michal They didn't torture me.

Katurian What?

Katurian looks him over for the first time, seeing there are no cuts or bruises.

Michal Oh, no, the man said he was going to torture me, but I thought, 'No way, boy, that'd hurt,' so I just told him whatever he wanted to hear, and he was fine then.

Katurian But I heard you scream.

Michal Yes. He asked me to scream. He said I did it really good.

Katurian So he just told you what to say and you agreed to it?

Michal Yeah.

Katurian *(pause)* Swear to me on your life that you didn't kill those three kids.

Michal I swear to you on my life that I didn't kill those three kids.

Katurian breathes a sigh of relief, hugging Michal's leg again.

Katurian Did you sign anything?

Michal Huh? You know I can't sign nothing.

Katurian Then maybe we can still get out of this.

Michal Get out of what?

Katurian Get out of being executed for killing three children, Michal.

Michal Oh, get out of being executed for killing three children. That'd be good. How?

Katurian The only thing they've got against us is what you've said, and the stuff they said they found in the house.

Michal What stuff?

Katurian They had this box full of toes. No, hang on. They *said* they were toes. They didn't look *that* much like toes. They could've been anything. Shit, man. (*Pause.*) And they said they'd tortured you too, his hands were all covered in blood. Are you saying he didn't touch you at all?

Michal No, he gave me a ham sandwich. Except I had to take the lettuce out. Yeah.

Katurian Let me think for a minute. Let me think for a minute . . .

Michal You like thinking, don't ya?

Katurian Why are we being so stupid? Why are we believing everything they're telling us?

Michal Why?

Katurian This is just like storytelling.

Michal I know.

Katurian A man comes into a room, says, 'Your mother's dead,' yeah?

Michal I know my mother's dead.

Katurian No, I know, but in a story. A man comes in to a room, says to another man, 'Your mother's dead.' What do we know? Do we know that the second man's mother is dead?

Michal Yes.

Katurian No, we don't.

Michal No, we don't.

Katurian All we know is that a man has come into a room and said to another man, 'Your mother is dead.' That is all we know. First rule of storytelling. 'Don't believe everything you read in the papers.'

Michal I don't read the papers.

Katurian Good. You'll always be one step ahead of everybody else.

Michal I think I'm pretty sure I don't know what you're going on about, Katurian. But you're funny, though.

Katurian A man comes into a room, says, 'Your brother's just confessed to the killing of three children and we found one of the kid's toes in a box in your house.' What do we know?

Michal Aha! I get it!

Katurian Do we know that the brother has killed three children?

Michal No.

Katurian No. Do we know that the brother has *confessed* to killing three children?

Michal No.

Katurian No. Do we know that they found a kid's toes in a box in their house? No. Do we . . . Oh my God . . .

Michal What?

Katurian We don't even know that there were any children killed at all.