

Prod 0817

BROTHERS

Libretto

Libretto: Kerstin Perski
Music: Daniel Bjarnason

2017-07-29

Characters:

Chorus

Michael

Sarah

Nadia (10 yrs old)

Jamie

The Father

The Mother

Anna

Peter

The Colonel

ACT I: Michael's death and resurrection.

Prologue

Scene 1. "Faces of grief"

Interlude. "Twilight" (Chorus)

Scene 2. "Sarah and Jamie "

ACT II: Michael's estrangement.

Scene 3. "Anna"

Scene 4. "Debriefing"

Scene 5. "Did you see me?"

Scene 6. "Lie down with me"

Scene 7. "Happy family"

Scene 8. "Michael and Jamie"

Interlude. "Nocturne" (Chorus)

Scene 9. "Nightmares"

Scene 10. "Normal feelings"

Scene 11. "The kiss"

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ACT III: Rondo to hell.

Scene 12. "Nadia's birthday party 1"

Scene 13. "The visit"

Scene 14. "Nadia's birthday party 2"

Scene 15. "The cellar"

Scene 16. "Nadia's birthday party 3"

Scene 17. "The killing"

Scene 18. "Light returns"

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ACT I

Prologue.

WOMEN'S CHORUS:

Man goes to war in a faraway place.
To fight for a cause soon forgotten.
To protect someone from someone else.
But who will protect Man from himself?

MEN'S CHORUS:

Protect yourself with forgetfulness.
For those who have seen
and those who have yet to see,
both the past and the future lie ahead.

WOMEN'S CHORUS:

Not yet left behind, the woman dreads the hours,
the empty rooms, the sudden sounds
and hopes the man will change his mind.

(Michael and Sarah step out from the chorus. Sarah watches Michael put on his uniform, handed to him by the chorus.)

MEN'S CHORUS:

The man's face is calm, his hands stable.
All is prepared, his thoughts in place,
not yet recoiling at the sight of red.

WOMEN'S CHORUS:

Today, red only reminds him of the woman's lips.
A red flower. A red fancy.
The innocent colour of a child's bleeding nose.
Or a dead bird, killed by mistake.

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(Sarah comes up behind Michael and puts her arms around him.)

SARAH:

You forgot to fix Nadia's swing.

MICHAEL:

I'll take care of it as soon as I get back.

SARAH:

Each time you leave I forget to tell you something.

MICHAEL:

You'll forget about it again as soon as we meet.

(He gives her a quick kiss)

I love you, Sarah.

(Michael finishes his last preparations.)

WOMEN'S CHORUS:

She wants to tell him about her fear of the dark.

Her dreams at night, alone in bed.

The sealed coffins. The smells. The dogs.

MEN'S CHORUS:

He is impatient to go, get it done.

The sounds and the smells are yet to come.

(Nadia, their daughter runs up to them. Michael bends down and gives her a hug.)

NADIA:

Promise to be back for my birthday.

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MICHAEL:

Promise to promise...

NADIA(*fills in*):

...to water our little tree.

MICHAEL AND NADIA (*rub noses*):

I promise.

(Five men step out from the chorus and put on the uniforms handed to them.

They are followed by five women who embrace their men. Among them is a young woman, Anna, with her baby who parts from her husband, Peter. The Colonel steps forward from the chorus. Michael and his men line up before him.)

THE COLONEL:

Enemies of freedom stand at our doorstep
threaten our openness with fear and despair.

We will never surrender to evil and hatred,
never give in to panic and doubt.

/You, our boys have got what it takes
/the heart, the guts, a spirit true as steel.

/

/CHORUS AND FAMILY MEMBERS:

/Enemies of freedom stand at our doorstep.

/We will never surrender, never give in.

(The men are off, handsome and impressive in their uniforms. As the men disappear from sight, the image of a flying helicopter cutting a blue skyline takes over. Suddenly it is shot down and crashes in a huge black cloud of smoke. Total silence.)

Scene 1. "Faces of grief".

CHORUS:

Time halted. Breath stopped.

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Faith shattered. Torn to shreds.

Once more - the ground gone. The skin - ripped off.

Robbed of loved ones, the bereaved remain.

Confused. Lost.

The stage is set for a memorial service, Jamie stands with his mother. Sarah holds her arms around Nadia. The Colonel and another military man stand with Michael's father. Anna, Peter's widow stands alone on the side with her baby.

CHORUS:

Psalm

Help me trust, when none is to be found.

Help me hope, when hope is just a sound.

When confusion rules and darkness fills my day
show me the light that lights the way.

Life was never meant for us to keep,
a moment, dreamt, the rest eternal sleep.

(As the family members take turns to approach the arrangement of flowers and garlands which symbolize the 5 absent coffins, Sarah takes Nadia's hand.)

SARAH:

Our turn.

(Nadia, defiantly refuses to move.)

NADIA:

I don't want to!

SARAH:

Nadia, don't start a scene!

(The Mother makes an attempt to help Sarah, by taking Nadia's other hand. Jamie takes a step towards them.)

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JAMIE:

Leave her alone, for God's sake!

(Sarah looks at Jamie in bewilderment.)

THE MOTHER:

But the flowers.

I need to tend to the flowers.

JAMIE:

Mother...

THE MOTHER *(looks at the roses in her hands):*

Already withering.

(Jamie puts his arm around his mother.)

I have to get new ones before Michael gets back!

THE FATHER *(affected by The Mother's emotion):*

DUET

Michael, our boy. Our son.

THE MOTHER:

Roses are his favourites...

THE FATHER:

He was a success in everything...

THE MOTHER...

Ever since he was a child.

THE FATHER:

Awarded prizes every year.

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/THE MOTHER:

/He watered them all,
/gave names to each one.
/Reared and cared
/never hurt a living soul.

THE FATHER (*losing voice*):

Now I have no one left.
No one at all.
No one.
All gone.

(The Father, suddenly overcome with desperation, looks at Jamie.)

THE FATHER:

Why does God always take the best ones?

(Jamie stands as if paralyzed. Everyone looks at each other in embarrassment.)

Look at you!

/A loser thrown into jail!

/While Michael, my Michael...

/THE MOTHER (*in an attempt to stop him*):

/Henry! Don't!

(The father stops, choked by tears. Jamie, enraged, leaves. The Mother hurries after him together with Nadia.)

THE CHORUS:

The bitterness of grief turns pain into poison, fathers against sons.

(The military men escort The Father out, followed by the Chorus.

Sarah is left alone with Anna and the baby.

SARAH:

Where are you, Michael?

Your body, your voice...?

We both knew this could happen
and still, and still...

ANNA:

"No survivors. No remains."

Still I hear Peter's voice,

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feel his breath,
from deep within myself.

SARAH:

Deafening silence that never ends!

(Sarah, in tears, leaves. Anna follows her, with the baby.)

Interlude.

CHORUS:

In the twilight hour, the world stripped bare.

Abandoned planet. Fading glow.

Lonely shadows flicker through the night

watched over by indifferent stars.

The cold moon lights the way

as the driftless globe whirls through space.

Scene 2. "Sarah and Jamie"

(Night in Sarah's home. Jamie suddenly appears, drunk and bleeding after having been in a fight. Sarah receives him, woken from a deep sleep.)

SARAH:

Jamie! You look like a wreck!

JAMIE:

You don't look so hot yourself.

SARAH:

It is past two in the morning. What do you want?

JAMIE(*makes a gesture towards his injured nose*):

A plaster. Aspirin.

Don't worry. I won't make a night of it.

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SARAH:

Time to grow up, don't you think?

(Sarah leaves.)

JAMIE*(imitates Sarah)*:

"Time to grow up, don't you think."

And get myself killed just like him.

(Sarah returns with some equipment. She starts cleaning Jamie's wound.)

JAMIE:

Careful! That's my nose!

SARAH:

Keep still!

JAMIE:

A man's most significant part.

Too small- they treat you like a baby.

Too big- you look like the Colonel himself.

(Puts his hand on Sarah's arm.)

The Colonel's nose.

Wasn't it even bigger than our father's?

(Sarah laughs with Jamie, despite herself.)

SARAH:

Don't move, I said.

(Jamie suddenly breaks loose from her grip.)

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JAMIE:

Look at you!

Proud as a peacock for being married to Major Michael

with his big bag of medals!

Bloody middle class bitch!

(Sarah puts the plaster and the aspirin in Michael's hands).

SARAH:

Now leave and let me get back to bed!

(Jamie makes an attempt to leave but sinks down into an armchair.)

JAMIE:

ARIA

Our father. It's all his fault.

Sent Michael to war instead of going himself.

(Imitates his father)

"Look at you! A loser, thrown into jail, while Michael...my Michael..."

(Stops himself)

Michael did everything right from the moment he was born.

I was born wrong, so I never tried.

(Suddenly infuriated)

Old idiot!

You should have taken responsibility

for your own dumb ideas!

(Sarah touches his arm.)

SARAH:

Michael is gone, Jamie.

Nothing we do can bring him back.

(Jamie and Sarah look at each other.)

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SARAH:

ARIA

Loving Michael was like coming home.

Now I have nowhere left to go.

No one to be whole with,

nowhere to rest.

Alone in bed I keep on waiting,

start at each sound

hunger for his caress.

Without his love I'm losing myself.

(Sarah looks at Jamie. Suddenly she pulls him into her arms. They embrace, holding on to each other like two drowning people.

Michael appears. They break loose and all three look at each other in silence.)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Scene 3. "Anna"

(Anna rocks the baby stroller back and forth, putting the baby to sleep.)

ANNA:

ARIA

Mary had a little lamb, litte lamb, little lamb
its fleece was white as snow.

Everywhere that Mary went...

(interrupts herself and leans over the baby)

Hush little baby, close your eyes,

Daddy's friend is back, safe and sound.

Sleep Sunday child and smile in your dreams

May your daddy smile back at you when you wake.

(Continues rocking the stroller)

Everywhere that Mary went, Mary went, Mary went
the lamb was sure to go.

(Stops rocking the stroller again, disturbed by a thought).

I heard Peter's voice from within myself.

Felt his breath like a calming caress.

Now I search for a sign, listen into the night.

All I hear is the beating of my own dreading heart.

Scene 4. "Debriefing"

(Michael appears at the Colonel's office.)

THE COLONEL:

Michael! Thank God!

Good to see you!

(The Colonel, visibly moved, gives Michael a big hug.)

Please, sit down!

MICHAEL:

Thank you, sir.

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(Michael sits down.)

THE COLONEL:

ARIOSO

In each of my men, a part of me is embedded.
The life of each man counts as my own.
When they fail to return, I mourn like a father.
No prize is too high to bring you back home.

MICHAEL:

Thank you, sir.

THE COLONEL:

When you were captured and imprisoned
in the deserted village,
did you see any of our men?

MICHAEL:

No, sir. Not in the village.

THE COLONEL:

You recognized no one?

MICHAEL(*shakes his head*):

No one.

THE COLONEL:

Go home to your family. Rest.
This is not the time to jog your memory.

MICHAEL:

Thank you, sir.

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(As Michael gets up from the chair, the Chorus gathers around him, breaking up the scene with the Colonel.)

Scene 5. "Did you see me?"

CHORUS:

Beyond time, moving through haze.

Mumbling voices. Strange faces.

(Michael moves into his private space and sits down on his and Sarah's bed.)

CHORUS:

The home he knew-an unknown place.

The light – stained. The colours- unclear.

He feels the softness of the pillow, the sheets

- unreal.

(One by one, four soldiers step out of the chorus and approach Michael.)

FIRST SOLDIER:

This face in the dark.

SECOND SOLDIER:

Did you see me sweating?

THIRD SOLDIER:

This voice in the void.

FOURTH SOLDIER:

Did you hear me screaming?

(Reluctantly looking at each one, Michael shakes his head. As the last one, Peter steps forward.)

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PETER:

The promise that you made me

- remember?

MICHAEL(*turns his face away*):

I remember...

...Nothing.

(Nadia comes rushing in and the chorus pulls back.)

Scene 6. "Lie down with me"

(Nadia hands Michael a drawing she has made.)

NADIA:

For you, daddy.

(points at the drawing):

You, Mummy and me.

(Michael puts the drawing aside.)

Daddy?

(Nadia stands confused, hesitating what to do. Sarah enters. She looks from Michael to Nadia.)

MICHAEL(*lies down on the bed*):

ARIOSO

Come here and lie down with me.

That's all I want, all I need.

No people, no sounds. Just my family.

Just lie here for a week with you next to me.

/NADIA:

/A week?

/

/MICHAEL:

/Just lie here with you and remember how to breathe.

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(Sarah takes Nadia's hand. Carefully, they climb on to the bed and lie down next to Michael).

NADIA:

I want to go out and play...

SARAH:

Later, Nadia...

(As Sarah snuggles up against Nadia to make her stay, the Chorus comes somewhat closer).

CHORUS(*whispering*):

Promise you'll get us out from here...

(Suddenly, Michael rises from the bed and exits without a word.)

SARAH(*lost in thoughts, strokes Nadia's cheek*):

We need to be patient.

Your father has been through difficult times.

NADIA:

He didn't even look at my drawing.

SARAH:

Just wait and see. Before we know it

we'll all be the we, we used to be.

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Scene 7. "Happy family"

(Nadia alone, tries to mend her broken swing. Jamie appears with new parts and tools.)

NADIA(*somewhat on guard*):

Daddy will fix it when he gets better.

JAMIE:

I bet he will before you get married.

Time to get into the swing of things.

(Jamie starts to repair the swing, while messing about with Nadia).

Nadia's swing is swinging and swaying,
swaying and swinging, high above town.
/Soon she'll be swinging up to the sky,
/flying through space, touching the clouds
/her dancing hair sweeping the stars.

ARIA

/

/NADIA(*happily*):

/Swinging and swaying

/swaying and swinging.

(Jamie helps Nadia on to the swing. Sarah enters. She watches Nadia and Jamie with a smile.)

NADIA(*swinging back and forth*):

Mummy, look!

SARAH:

Thanks for helping her out, Jamie.

Michael keeps sleeping all day long.

(Sarah and Jamie look at each other, realizing the awkwardness of her comment).

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DUET

SARAH:

That light in his eyes.
That shifting sea.
I search every moment
for the radiant blue
the shimmering green.

JAMIE:

The playful blink
the boyish spark.
As if painted
over with a dead grey.

Michael left, another returned.

Scene 8. "Michael and Jamie"

(Michael appears towards the end of Sarah's lines and comes to a standstill. Seeing the look in Michael's eyes, Sarah instinctively takes a step away from Jamie.)

MICHAEL:

Quality time, I see.

SARAH:

Nice of Jamie to help us out, don't you think?

MICHAEL:

Thanks little brother.
Thanks for quitting the drinking and the fighting.

JAMIE(*jokingly*):

Now don't jump to conclusions.

MICHAEL:

After all, I could have been dead.

(Jamie, confused, looks from Michael to Sarah.)

SARAH:

Michael...

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MICHAEL:

People like you are the real survivors.
Feeding on leftovers, sucking the remains.

JAMIE:

You surely got up on the wrong side of bed...

MICHAEL:

That woman you beat up.
That innocent woman who did you no wrong.
Have you been to visit her yet?
Her life is destroyed and here you are
- repairing swings!

*(Jamie looks dumbfoundedly at Michael. Suddenly he leaves.
Sarah looks reproachfully at Michael).*

MICHAEL(*defensively*):

He sneaks around here all the time.

SARAH (*avoids his eyes*):

Luckily for us, since you don't.

MICHAEL (*takes a step towards Nadia*):

That swing is not safe.

Get off!

(As Nadia ignores him and keeps swinging, Michael brusquely pulls her down. Overwhelmed by his own impulsiveness, Michael kneels down before Nadia and tries to hug her but she pulls back).

/ MICHAEL:

/ Don't be afraid of me!

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/

/ NADIA:

/ I don't like you anymore!

/

/ SARAH:

/ Leave her alone!

(Michael looks at Sarah and Nadia in desperation.)

MICHAEL:

Let's be the family we used to be!

Let's play hide-and-seek!

(Nadia rushes out. Sarah picks up Jamie's jacket and toolbox and leaves without a word. Michael makes an attempt to stop her.)

Sarah, wait!

I'll make it up to her.

I'll make it up to you both!

(Michael watches Sarah leaving, confused and lost.)

Her eyes... as if I were a criminal.

"Disconnected" ARIA

An outsider. A threat from afar.

Detached. Untouched.

Her. You. Me.

Disconnected islands.

Strangers in a strange place.

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Interlude. Chorus. "Nocturne"

CHORUS:

Another day sucked up by darkness.
Longing souls seek their mates
like moths are drawn to light.
Burned by sudden fright – repel
- and lose each other in the night.

Scene 9. "Nightmares".

*(Night. Michael, sleepless, with a bottle of whisky, keeps emptying and refilling his glass. He looks at Sarah, asleep in their bed.
Startled out of her sleep, Sarah discovers Michael, staring at her.)*

SARAH:

Michael?

(Michael averts his eyes and takes a big sip from his glass. Sarah sits up and looks around.)

It's the dead of night.

(Michael stares into space.)

Come and get some sleep.

(Michael doesn't react. Sarah hesitates. She gets out of bed and slowly approaches him. She puts her hands on his shoulders. Michael lets out a groan of pain.)

SARAH:

Hard as brick.

Let go of the bad things and come to bed.

(Sarah tries to get closer to him. Michael's hands remain limp. She kisses him).

MICHAEL:

I killed him.

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SARAH (*with a start*):

Who?

MICHAEL:

Jamie.

I beat him to death.

SARAH:

Another nightmare.

MICHAEL:

Out there!

They put the cane in my hand and made me do it!

SARAH (*puts her arms around Michael*):

Jamie is alive and well, sleeping in his bed.

(Michael breaks loose from her. During the following Duet, Michael becomes more and more aggressive.)

DUET "Phantom of the mind"

/ MICHAEL:

/ I can see it in your eyes, smell it on your skin...

/

/ SARAH:

/ A phantom of the mind haunts you at night.

/

/ MICHAEL:

/ With every day it grows and swells.

/

/ SARAH:

/ Let me put it away, lock the door...

/

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/ MICHAEL:
/ A crime like that cannot be hidden.
/
/ SARAH:
/ Let me calm you down, make you forget...
/
/ MICHAEL:
/ A sin that big reveals itself.
/
/ SARAH:
/ Open it and see!
/ There's no one there.

*(Suddenly, Michael takes a grip around Sarah's throat.
She pants for breath. Scared of himself, Michael lets go of Sarah and rushes out.)*

SARAH:
You are insane, Michael!
Insane!

(Sarah collapses on the bed.)

Scene 10. "Normal feelings"

(Early morning. Michael turns up at the Colonel's office.)

THE COLONEL:
Up with the lark, like every good soldier.
What's on your mind, Michael?

MICHAEL:
Our man, Peter.
We were taken captive and put in the cell together.

(The Colonel gives a start.)

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THE COLONEL:

I thought you said you were alone in that village.

MICHAEL:

In the end I was.

All alone.

(The Colonel and Michael remain speechless for a moment. Michael makes an attempt to continue.)

MICHAEL:

There's something else, sir...

THE COLONEL:

Michael, listen...

"COMPETING" DUET

MICHAEL:

Whispering, moaning,
begging, groaning
it scratches from within
craves to be told,
aches under my skin
makes my mind explode!

THE COLONEL:

Sentiment and feeling
is the privilege of civilians.
A soldier resists
a soldier endures.
He avoids cracking his brains
and holds on to the facts!

THE COLONEL*(puts his hand on Michael's shoulder):*

You did what you had to do.
Time to get on with your life.

MICHAEL:

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

(Hesitates)

My daughter. My wife.

/All the time in that hell I tried to endure.

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/Being with them now is all I want.

/Be loving and caring is all I need.

/

/THE COLONEL:

/The family is the soldier's harbour.

/The family is where all wounds heal.

/In the arms of our loved ones, memories fade

/No victory is completed without our next of kin.

/

/ CHORUS:

/The air charged with smothered cries.

/The silence pregnant with howls held back.

Scene 11. "The kiss"

(Michael, The Colonel and The Chorus continue to sing, As a storm approaches, Sarah, visibly stressed and freezing, turns up at Jamie's place with his forgotten jacket at another part of the stage.)

SARAH:

I miss you at home, Jamie.

JAMIE:

I miss you too.

(They start to approach each other as if drawn by an invisible force).

/SARAH:

/I wait for you during the day.

/

/JAMIE:

/ I keep seeing your smile.

/

/SARAH:

/I think of no one but you.

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/JAMIE:

/ I wake up with your name.

/

/SARAH:

/I long for you at night.

/JAMIE:

/I imagine how your mouth tastes.

/

/SARAH:

/This is insane!

/

/JAMIE:

/This can't go on!

/

/THE CHORUS:

/The storm holds its breath

/sways, gives way

/and reaches the point of no return.

(Silence. Sarah and Jamie start to kiss passionately.)

END OF ACT II

ACT III

Scene 12. "Nadia's birthday party 1"

(The Chorus brings in a huge table.)

CHORUS:

/The safe haven of a joyful home.

/Light colours. Bright faces.

/A cake of affection made by the mother.

/ Ten lit candles for a loved child.

*/As the Chorus sets the situation, Nadia, happy, receives birthday presents and hugs from her
/grandparents and Jamie. As Michael enters, the atmosphere becomes more subdued. Sarah
/brings in the birthday cake and they all sit down around the table. As Nadia blows out the
/candles, everybody claps their hands.)*

THE MOTHER:

Well done, Nadia!

THE FATHER:

Big girl!

SARAH(to Nadia):

Now make a wish!

(Nadia closes her eyes)

Ready?

NADIA:

I want only cake for dinner for a year!

(Laughter. Sarah makes an attempt to cut the cake but is stopped by Michael.)

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MICHAEL:

Dinner first.

SARAH:

It's her birthday.

MICHAEL:

Afterwards, I said.

THE FATHER:

Come on, Michael!

We're not in the army here.

MOTHER, FATHER, JAMIE AND SARAH:

Come on, Michael!

It's Nadia's birthday!

MICHAEL(*stands up*):

Enough!

I'm still the father in this family!

(Awkward silence. Michael sits down again. The Mother tries to come up with something to break the silence.)

THE MOTHER(*to Michael*):

Have you been to see that poor woman?

MICHAEL:

What woman?

THE MOTHER:

That beautiful young woman with her baby boy.

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THE FATHER:

Peter's widow. Anna is her name.

THE MOTHER:

When I think about that fatherless child...

You should talk to her, Michael.

SARAH:

(Sarah looks nervously at Michael who seems strangely detached.)

Are you all right, darling?

MICHAEL(*rises from the table*):

Just need to get some air.

(As Michael rises from the table, the Chorus approaches him from the sides and the situation at the table "freezes".)

CHORUS(*urgingly*):

Promise you'll get us out from here!

Promise...

(The Chorus hands Michael his uniform and military boots. Michael hesitates, then puts on his uniform.)

MICHAEL(*as if addressing someone in his memory*):

I promise you, Peter.

We'll get out from here together.

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Scene 13. "The visit"

(Anna appears in a spotlight, playing with the baby in her lap.)

ANNA:

Mary had a little lamb, litte lamb, little lamb

its fleece was white as snow.

Everywhere that Mary went, Mary went, Mary went

the lamb was sure to go.

(With a sudden jump, Anna notices Michael standing there, impeccably dressed in his uniform and with his medals shining.)

For a moment I thought...

MICHAEL:

I scared you. Sorry.

I came to tell you about Peter.

ANNA(*startled*):

Peter. What about him?

MICHAEL:

They took us captive. Together.

We were imprisoned in the same cellar.

ANNA:

In the same cellar.

But then... where is he now?

MICHAEL:

He was taken.

Yes.

He was taken to another village.

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ANNA:

Then he is alive!

MICHAEL:

He told me about you.

About little David.

How you sang to him

before he was born.

ANNA:

Darling, Peter! Tell me more!

MICHAEL:

His love for you kept him alive.

ANNA:

Please stay! I'll put David to sleep.

(Anna disappears into an adjoining room. Michael makes a move as if to leave, but remains standing, hesitant.)

ANNA(*singing to the baby, in the adjoining room*):

Mary had a little lamb, litte lamb, little lamb

/its fleece was white as snow.

/

/MICHAEL (*horrified, as if seeing something*):

/Little Peter. White as snow.

/Peter, white as snow.

(Suddenly little children appear around Michael like eerie demons, joining in with Anna's song.)

ANNA AND CHILDREN'S CHORUS:

Michael had a little lad, little lad, little lad.

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his eyes were white with fear.

Everywhere that Michael fled, Michael fled, Michael fled
the lad was sure to scream.

(Michael leaves in panic.)

Scene 14. "Nadia's birthday party 2"

(As if only gone to get some air, Michael comes back to the table where the family is still seated.)

THE FATHER:

There he is!

THE MOTHER *(to Michael)*:

The air put the roses back in your cheeks!

(Michael notices a silent figure at the head of the table and comes to a standstill - it is Peter.)

MICHAEL *(to Sarah)*:

You didn't tell me we expected a guest.

(Everybody looks dumfoundedly at Michael.)

SARAH:

What guest?

THE MOTHER *(hurries to offer Michael a plate)*:

You need something to eat.

MICHAEL *(to Sarah)*:

Won't you introduce us?

SARAH:

Michael...

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CHORUS(*whispering*):

Promise, Michael...promise...

MICHAEL:

As usual I have to do everything myself.

(He takes a step towards Peter.)

Would you be so kind and leave my home.

(Peter doesn't move.)

At once!

(Peter still doesn't react)

Get out of my life, I said!

(Michael makes a sudden move at Peter who stands up, without any change of expression. Nadia, frightened, moves closer to Sarah. Sarah looks at Jamie.)

JAMIE(*to Michael*):

Stop talking to yourself like an idiot!

Sit down and eat your dinner!

(Michael watches Peter leave.)

THE MOTHER:

Should we call a doctor?

THE FATHER:

What kind of doctor?

MICHAEL:

I'm fine and dandy but you all look a sorry sight!

Let's eat cake and celebrate!

It's Nadia's birthday!

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(Michael makes an attempt to go back to his place but is hindered by the Chorus who creates a wall between him and the table. The birthday party freezes behind them.)

CHORUS:

He is still there.

There.

In the cellar.

(Peter appears, out of the Chorus.)

Go back to the cellar!

Go back there and finish it once and for all!

Scene 15. "The cellar"

(Michael hesitates. Suddenly, he and Peter are crouching, as if in a cellar. The Chorus draws back.)

PETER(*terrified*):

What will they do to us now, Michael?

MICHAEL:

Stop sobbing!

You're only losing liquid in this blazing heat.

PETER:

They shot the other one.

MICHAEL:

Try to focus on something else!

PETER:

They will drag us out in the street and shoot us like dogs!

MICHAEL:

Think about your wife, your little son.

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DUET "Can you see their faces?"

PETER(*tries to control his fear*):

Anna. David.

David. Anna.

MICHAEL:

Their voices. Their smiles.

PETER:

I'm afraid, Michael!

MICHAEL:

She thinks about you.

Tells him about you.

PETER:

I don't want to die!

MICHAEL:

Go on!

Anna. David.

Can you see their faces?

PETER:

There is so much

I want to tell her...

MICHAEL:

Tell her now! Here!

PETER:

You and me, Anna.

You and me and David...

MICHAEL:

That's more like it...

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PETER:

The three of us.

It's all that matters.

MICHAEL:

Go on! You give me strength.

PETER(*closes his eyes*):

Your eyes, your laughter...

MICHAEL:

You give me hope.

PETER:

I see your face-and I know that I'll live.

MICHAEL(*losing himself*):

I feel your love -

like a warm stone in the palm of my hand.

PETER(*clings to Michael*):

Promise you'll get us out from here, Michael!

/Promise!

/

/MICHAEL:

/I promise!

/We won't die here, not you and me.

/We'll get out from here together.

(Michael tries to break loose from Peter, but he keeps clinging to Michael like a child. The Chorus glides back in, surrounding Michael and Peter.)

CHORUS(*whispering*):

Do it now! Do it!

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PETER:

Michael!

MICHAEL:

I won't do it...

CHORUS:

They told you!

To get back home, you have to do it!

MICHAEL:

Not again. I won't do it!

CHORUS:

Peter is of no use!

/PETER:

/ Michael!

/

/MICHAEL:

/No!

(With a violent gesture, Michael manages to push Peter away. The Chorus is scattered, together with Peter.)

Scene 16. "Nadia's birthday party 3"

(Michael returns to the table where the family is about to break up. Michael bangs his fist in the table.)

MICHAEL:

The party isn't over! Sit down!

(Shocked, everybody, except Nadia, sits down.)

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NADIA(*with a look at Sarah*):

I want to go out and play!

MICHAEL:

It's your birthday!

Eat your cake and be happy like everyone else!

NADIA:

I hate you!

SARAH:

Nadia...

NADIA(*to Sarah*):

It's all your fault!

He's mean to me because you and Jamie kiss all the time!

(Shocked silence. Michael keeps eating. Nadia runs away.)

THE FATHER:

What's going on in this house?

THE MOTHER(*looking at Jamie*):

Jamie would never...

SARAH:

She is angry, that's all.

JAMIE(*to Michael*):

You don't believe us.

MICHAEL(*to Jamie*):

Just get out from here.

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(Jamie leaves without a word.)

THE FATHER(*to Michael*):

You treat your brother like a criminal.

MICHAEL:

You are criminals, all of you!

(Choked at Michael's sudden outburst, The Father and The Mother leave.)

SCENE 17. "The killing"

(Alone with Michael, Sarah watches him, emptying and refilling his glass.)

SARAH:

You've had enough to drink.

(Michael demonstratively empties his glass in one gulp.)

Michael...

You have to tell me what happened out there!

(Michael silent, fills his glass again.)

MICHAEL(*without looking at Sarah*):

Those tender eyes,
that milk white skin...

SARAH:

I circle around you, search for a crack.

I reach out for you and touch dead air.

(Michael turns around and stares at Sarah)

Don't look at me like that! You frighten me!

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MICHAEL:

Do you even know what I had to do to get back to you?

(Michael grabs an empty bottle.)

I'll get rid of you! Both you and Jamie!

SARAH:

No!

(Michael makes a move to attack Sarah with the bottle. Sarah manages to escape. As Michael attempts to run after her, the Chorus pushes Peter towards Michael, with his hands tied behind his back. The Chorus surround Michael and Peter as if in a boxing ring. Michael stands swaying with the lifted bottle in his hand.)

CHORUS:

/Do it, Michael!

/They told you, you have to do it!

/To get back home you have to do it!

/

/PETER:

/ Michael, don't!

/I want to go home!

/

/MICHAEL:

/No!

/I'm taking him home!

(Suddenly, the moment freezes in uncertainty. Peter crouches on the ground, trying to protect his head.)

MICHAEL(*strangely dogged, as if trying to control a terrible pain*):

His eyes, gone out.

ARIA: "The killing"

His nose crushed.

His mouth. His skin.

A purple pulp.

2017-07-29

His skull split open.

His teeth on the ground.

(Gradually Michael gets more and more obsessed by the images in his head)

His bones cracking, one by one.

His brain splashing into my eyes.

His blood on my hands, my chest, my cheeks.

But still he moves.

Still he screams.

Blow after blow

I strike at what's left

He doesn't shut up, doesn't die.

(Michael takes a deep breath and lets out a scream from the bottom of his guts.)

/Die you bastard!

/Die, I said!

/Die and leave me alone, once and for all!

/

/PETER:

/Michael!

/Don't!

/I want to go home!

/Don't!

/

/CHORUS:

/Do it, Michael!

/Do it again!

/Once again and you'll be done with it all!

(Michael hits Peter with the bottle, in slow motion, giving him the final blows. The Chorus suddenly becomes silent. Peter has stopped moving. Michael pukes and sinks down beside Peter's body. Shivering, he remains sitting, staring in front of him with a dead gaze.)

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Scene 18. "Light returns"

(Sarah, Nadia, Jamie, the Mother and the Father stand motionless around Michael, disgusted and horrified. Sara moves towards Michael. She looks at him and hesitates a moment. Then she sits down next to him.)

CHORUS:

Wake of dawn. Flutter of wings.

Light returns to dreamless earth.

Born anew a bird cries out

calling all waifs back to life.

Soothed by the grace of day

the burning stars blink and fade.

END OF OPERA