

Fractures

by  
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Henry	Average	25-50	M
Martin	Average	25-50	M

SCENE ONE

Late Evening.

A bench sits center stage with MARTIN laying down on it.

(The lights slowly fade up.)

(HENRY enters and crosses to the bench.)

HENRY

Ahem.

MARTIN

Oh. I - I'm sorry... I didn't see you there. I wasn't expecting company today.

(Martin sits up. Henry promptly sits next to him.)

HENRY

Company knocks at all hours. You should expect to answer.

MARTIN

It was unusual, I mean. Things are so certain most days. Wake up. Roll call. Breakfast. Bunk check. Lunch. Et Cetera. It's interesting when something unexpected happens. Anyway... My name is Martin.

HENRY

Martin. It's such a smart name isn't it. Martin.

MARTIN

I don't know about that.

HENRY

It is nothing but statistics. I'm merely saying that I've never known an unintelligent man to be named Martin. Who are you to question my observations about Martins.

MARTIN

I'm sorry. I feel like we started off on the wrong foot. If we're going to be cell mates, I'd rather we were friends.

(Martin extends his hand to Henry. Henry shakes it.)

HENRY

My name is Henry. It is good to meet you.

MARTIN

Likewise.

HENRY

I haven't seen you around before. Are you new.

MARTIN

To here or the process?

HENRY

Either/Or.

MARTIN

To here.

HENRY

But not the process.

MARTIN

...Not new to similar processes.

HENRY

But this experience is wholly unknown to you.

MARTIN

I never said that.

HENRY

I felt an edge of hesitation in your voice.

MARTIN

No, I... I just needed time to think. I have been in similar circumstances such as this. I was sent away to a boys school when I was younger. I was in the army.

HENRY

Ah! The Army! The Great Equalizer!

MARTIN

I think you may have that backwards. I think *education* was called the great equalizer.

HENRY

My good sir, there is one thing that I have in rather short supply here and that is patience for a man so sure of himself that he is unwilling to move.

MARTIN

I can move! Sometimes, though, I've been accused of being a little stubborn.

HENRY

Stubborn is one thing but the inability to think outside of one's boundaries is another.

MARTIN

Boundaries are important. They define our world.

HENRY

They constrict our world. They mold our thoughts and desires into myopic definitions of *Acceptable* and *Civilized*. This rationality instilled in us by boy's schools and drill sergeants is misdirection.

MARTIN

Social conditioning.

HENRY

Smoke and mirrors. Illusions built to downplay the insight of our dreams. Tell me - What did you dream of your first night here?

MARTIN

What did I dream of?

HENRY

I can tell you what terrible actions sent me here or you can find out first hand. I don't like repetition.

MARTIN

I'm sorry. I... I don't remember what I dreamt of my first night here.

HENRY

That's nonsense. You say that you're new to here and the process but fail to remember what you dreamt of the first night. You were comfortable.

MARTIN

Comfortable? God no. I was ready to shit my pants at the drop of a hat.

HENRY

And that triggered no nightmares.

MARTIN

That's... No... Not that I remember.

HENRY

Bullshit! Fairy tales. Your past is Grimm but you peddle Dr. Seuss. This place is not for your lies or your misrememberings. You say you don't dream yet you spin tales. How does that come to pass if you do not dream.

MARTIN

I never said I didn't dream. I just don't remember dreaming that night.

HENRY

More tales.

MARTIN

What did you dream of, huh? Can you even remember?

HENRY

It has been eons and I remember.

MARTIN

Then explain.

HENRY

I dreamt only of what I was losing. My girls. My precious girls. They were twins. Just babies when I left. I told their mother to leave with them. Never to bring them here. Too painful. But instead leave with no notice and to change their names with no hint of how I could find them if I ever were to get out. And I was left alone here with my thoughts and my sentence and a desire to never sleep again if only so that I never found out what my mind thinks of when it is allowed to *truly* run wild. I was foolish to wish for such a paradise. Lights out brought me to my knees and my eye lids buckled under the darkness. I gave in and awoke outside of these walls. In a garden where my children were playing. There was no laughter or crying or wind. It was like an early Lumiere film of normal people going about there lives. Silent. Maddening. Within the madness I found my girls had grown. Seven years. Unmistakably mine though I could not see their faces. They were dancing among the willow trees. I tried to scream for them but I couldn't. I could just lay there. Until sunrise. Dreaming of girls prancing quietly.

(Something inside of Martin  
quakes.)

#### SCENE TWO

Night.

(The lights change to a subtle,  
blue hue.)

MARTIN

I'm... I'm sorry about your girls. That's not right that you don't get to grow among them.

HENRY

Not right.

MARTIN

I'm sorry?

HENRY

Sorry.

MARTIN

I don't understand you.

HENRY

You would consider yourself a moral person.

MARTIN

What?

HENRY

The question comes as a shock.

MARTIN

No, I'm just. I mean... I'm here for a reason.

HENRY

We're all here for a reason.

MARTIN

In this cell.

HENRY

In this prison.

MARTIN

On this Earth.

HENRY

Ah. On this Earth. Some notion of morality must exist inside of you to justify how we all co-habitate this planet.

MARTIN

Well... Logical morality. I guess.

HENRY

There is a logical morality you say. An understanding of morality that we as humans have come to generally agree upon as thresholds of good or bad.

MARTIN

Yes. I suppose.

HENRY

What about universal morality.

MARTIN

What do you mean?

(Henry stands and paces around  
the cell like a lawyer.)

HENRY

Not saying that there is a God or benevolent force overseeing  
our lives.

MARTIN

Then what is it?

HENRY

A structure embedded into the very fabric of existence. An  
understanding of the nature of not good or bad but righteous  
and evil. A knowledge that can be seen as clearly as the sun  
yet hide from conscious minds like fractals in a garden.

MARTIN

Fractures.

(Henry stops in his tracks and  
makes a fist.)

(Beat.)

No. I don't believe in a universal morality. The universe is  
chaos. Born out of chaos and birthing worlds the same way. I  
can't accept that there would be some type of moral code that  
all creatures obey due to perceived patterns in the universe.

HENRY

It is hard to accept. I have found that most of the time the  
things that are hard to accept contain the most truths.

MARTIN

But not the whole truth?

HENRY

If there even is such a thing.

MARTIN

What?

HENRY

Tell me about your dream.

MARTIN

(Beat.)

Why?



HENRY

You still refuse.

MARTIN

I don't refuse. I just don't remember.

HENRY

You refuse because there is some truth to it.

MARTIN

But not the whole truth.

HENRY

THERE IS NO SUCH THING!

(The air is sucked out of the  
room.)

MARTIN

There is no such thing.

HENRY

Every truth shatters into a million pieces the minute it  
comes to pass. What time of day it was.

MARTIN

Ten. Or Ten-fifteen.

HENRY

The temperature outside.

MARTIN

Hot. Scorching.

HENRY

What color shoes they were wearing.

MARTIN

A, a, light blue. Maybe lacy. Formal.

HENRY

The smell of the air.

MARTIN

Lavender.

HENRY

And.

MARTIN

(Beat.)

Willows.

HENRY

What did you dream of your first night in here.

(Martin stands up and crosses  
his arms defensively.)

MARTIN

It was seven years ago.

HENRY

Like yesterday.

MARTIN

I dreamt.

(He fights back tears.)

I needed to catch a bus out of town, so I thought I'd cut across the city and save some time. I walked until I came to a church. A church... with a beautiful garden. It was silent. There were no parishioners or cars or even God damned wind! I thought I was safe... I walked under a large willow tree and that's when I saw them. Two young girls. Dancing to the music in their heads. I wasn't supposed to feel that way. I was on hallowed ground! But, I could feel the knife in my pocket start to burn through its sheath and sear my skin. The pain sank deep, until I could feel the urge pulling on every one of my teeth. I put my hand on my knife.

HENRY

Then what did you do.

MARTIN

I looked to God.

HENRY

To God.

MARTIN

Not to God. Not in that sense. Not that I think God exists. But I looked toward the church. For some sign or deus ex machina or anything.

HENRY

And what did you see?

(Henry moves toward Martin.)

MARTIN

You... Watching me. I was going to kill your girls, Henry.

HENRY

But you didn't.

MARTIN

I didn't. But, I was going to. That is the truth. I wanted to end them in order to preserve how pure they were. Before the world could devour them whole. And I have no idea why I felt that way... Or why I still do. I'm sorry, Henry. I felt like I was splintered into a thousand pieces that day. Like, there existed a parallel universe where you weren't there to stop me. In another life I went on to destroy entire worlds. I knew that this could not be allowed to come to pass. I knew what I had to do.

HENRY

Metaphysical heartbreak loses freedom. Offset by willows.

MARTIN

I killed a man in a bar. Someone I thought few people would miss. I joylessly stuck my knife in his belly in front of a dozen or so witnesses. It was the coward's way out.

SCENE THREE

Late Night.

(Martin sits back down.)

HENRY

You believe yourself to be a coward.

MARTIN

I believe myself to be a lot of things.

HENRY

A violent man.

MARTIN

Yes.

HENRY

A haunted man.

MARTIN

Yes.

HENRY

A faithful man.

MARTIN

...

HENRY

You disagree.

MARTIN

I disagree in the idea of a god who has created me for a purpose.

HENRY

You disagree of creation by benevolent God. You have given no thought to the idea of a malevolent God.

MARTIN

Oh Christ. You're not really the devil are you?

HENRY

Perhaps. I am open to the possibility that we can be either God and Devil in someone else's story.

MARTIN

Or both in the same story? The cliché angel and devil on one's shoulder.

HENRY

Perhaps.

MARTIN

You're a puzzle. I keep thinking to myself, why tonight?

HENRY

Tonight.

MARTIN

Of all nights. Why were you put in my cell?

HENRY

Because tonight it all ends.

MARTIN

Tonight what all ends?

HENRY

That's really up to you.

(Swirling red lights come on.)

GUARD (V.O.)

ALERT! RIOT IN THE MESS HALL! POWER FAILING! CELLS OPEN IN C AND D BLOCK!

MARTIN

No! It can't be!

HENRY

Small prison. Chance of escape is decent.

MARTIN

You can't make me go.

(Martin pulls out a knife  
hidden on the underside of the  
bench.)

Stay back!

HENRY

You move on your own accord. As do we all.

MARTIN

I can't. I can't God Damn it! I'll kill again. And this time I  
won't be able to stop myself! I still dream of them. I still  
dream.

HENRY

Of the church.

MARTIN

Of the garden.

HENRY

Of the girls.

MARTIN

Of the willows.

(Henry gestures for Martin to  
leave the cell.)

HENRY

Of fractals.

(Martin looks toward the open  
door, then to the knife. He  
turns the knife on himself and  
plunges it into his stomach.)

MARTIN

Of fractures.

(Martin crouches in the corner  
like a wounded animal. He  
holds the knife in his gut.)

Were you ever really here.

HENRY

Are any of us ever really here?

(Henry stops at the door and  
watches as inmates run by.)

(He turns around to look at  
Martin, but Martin is already  
dead.)

Defilers exited the circus tent careened into oblivion.

(Lights fade down slowly.)