



A BREAK
BY
MAX PORTER

A SMITH SCRIPT

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A BREAK

A Short Play by Max Porter

CHARACTERS

JOE - 19yo – A Geek

JOSH – 24yo – Big muscular build. Very short hair.

A bench in a park overlooking a town. Secluded.

It is early evening. Spring.

JOE enters slightly furtively. Checking behind him. He has a small rucksack over his shoulder. He is 19 and wears glasses. He is small in height and slight of frame. He is a nerd; a geek. He sits on the bench and takes a thick book out of the rucksack and starts to read it.

After a short while JOSH appears. He is about 24. His head is shaved and he is tall and muscular. He is intimidating. He has a cigarette in his mouth and is slightly out of breath. JOSH stares at JOE for a short time as he smokes and then turns to look at the view. JOE is aware of his presence, but tries to ignore him as he continues to read his book.

JOSH I suppose you think it's funny.

JOE looks up from his book, but does not answer.

JOSH Giving me the slip.

While I was taking a piss.

Thought that was funny did you?

Fucking splashed me trainers.

Thought you would get away from me?

Well....one thing you can be sure of....I ain't fucking thick.

Might not have your brains, but that doesn't make me stupid you know.

I've a mind to give you a going over.

That what you want?

Yeah?

It's what you fucking deserve I'm telling you.

So don't try and disrespect me like that again. Alright?

You hearing me or what?

JOE ***(without looking up)*** I heard you.

JOSH slowly goes and sits next to JOE

JOSH But you see, I don't think you are listening.

JOE I am. Please leave me alone.

JOSH What you reading?

JOE A book.

JOSH Trying to be funny?

JOE No. It's a book. About the Russian Revolution

JOSH Fascinating.

JOE It is actually.

JOSH Oh, actually! Is it? Actually. Actually it is fascinating! Fuck off. Put it away.

JOE I'm trying to study.

JOSH Then why do you keep annoying me?

JOE I didn't know that I was.

JOSH Always there. In my eye. Fucking getting in my view.

JOE I live near you.

JOSH Don't I know it. Spying on me are yer?

JOE No.

JOSH Then why are you always there? Always. Copping a look?

JOE No. I'm not.

JOSH Then how do you explain it?

JOE Coincidence?

JOSH Bollocks.

JOE Please don't sit so close. You're making me nervous.

JOSH Don't tell me what to do. I'll sit on top of you if I want. What do you come up here for anyway?

JOE It's usually quiet and I like the view.

JOSH Long way to come for a view.

JOE It's only up the hill.

A pause

JOSH What you got in your bag?

JOE Just some books.

JOSH Let me see.

JOE pushes his bag towards JOSH who takes a look.

JOSH Aye aye. Look what we've got here.

JOE grabs the bag back

JOE Some sweets too.

JOSH Don't mind if I do. Here.

Reluctantly, JOE hands over the pack of Haribo sweets.

JOE I was leaving them till later.

JOSH Well, it's later now. Fuckin' love Haribo.

JOSH takes the bag and opens it. He takes a handful of the sweets and eats them. As he does so he gets up and walks forwards from the bench.

JOE closes his book and carefully puts it back into his rucksack and then gets up as if he is going to leave.

JOSH senses the movement, but doesn't turn round.

JOSH Where you off to?

JOE I was going to go to the library.

JOSH moves back to JOE

JOSH **(laughing)** I told you. I am not stupid. There is no library. It closed. It's a Starbucks. The van with the books only comes by once a month on Eastern Avenue. And if you hadn't noticed, it's nearly 7. So, the library would be closed anyway, if there was actually one there. So don't try and bullshit me, Mr.

JOE Well I've got to go anyway.

JOSH Why've you got to go when you only just got here?

JOE I don't feel comfortable.

JOSH **(threateningly)** What do you think I'm gonna do eh? No one about. All in their comfy little homes having tea! So, no one to disturb! What you think I'm gonna do?

JOE I don't know. That's why I feel uncomfortable.

JOSH Think I might beat you up?

JOE Maybe. I don't know. I hope not.

JOSH Quiet here. As I said. No one to hear us. Could get away with anything. Couldn't I?

JOE **(flinching away as JOSH leans into him)** Please don't.

JOSH *(laughing)* Yeah, I could get away with anything here. No eyes. No cameras. Nothing. Alone. At my mercy.

JOE Look, what do you want from me?

JOSH Isn't it more the other way round? You're the one who spends all his time stalking me. Always there. Spying on me.

JOE I don't stalk you. I don't spy. You're imagining it.

JOSH Oh am I? Imagining it? Those twitching curtains? Curtain twitcher. That's what you are. A little curtain twitcher.

JOE I'm not.

(A pause)

JOSH What else you got to eat? I'm starving.

JOE Nothing. That's it. Just the sweets.

JOSH Useless aren't you?

JOE Probably.

JOSH Fuck.

JOSH takes out his cigarettes and lights another.

JOSH Have to get some chips on the way home then. You can buy them for me to say sorry.

JOE I can't afford that.

JOSH Bet you fucking can. One lousy bag of sweets isn't enough. Chips!

JOE I haven't got the money. Sorry.

JOSH No fucking use apologising is it? What you gonna do about it? Go to the bank. Get the money. Eh? That's what you're gonna do isn't it? Eh?

JOE is silent

JOSH I said, isn't it?

JOE I can't.

JOSH Can't or won't?

JOE I would if I could, but I can't. I left my wallet at home. I haven't got it with me.

JOSH Show us.

JOE What?

JOSH Show me that your pockets are all empty.

JOE I'm going home.

JOE moves to go, but JOSH gets in his way.

JOSH Do it.

JOE turns out his pockets and empties his rucksack.

JOE Ok?

JOSH S'pose I'll have to buy them myself then. Wasting my time with you aren't I?

JOE I don't know.

JOSH Should be at home watching the footie with chips and beer.

JOE starts packing his stuff away.

JOSH What was wrong with your book?

JOE What?

JOSH You stopped reading.

JOE You put me off and anyway the light is beginning to go. I'll read it when I get home.

JOSH Back to Mummy and Daddy?

A silence

JOE Just Daddy.

JOSH Well, whatever.

JOSH walks away a little as JOE continues sorting his things.

JOSH Never been up here before. You can see my house. Can see yours too.

JOE I know.

A pause

JOSH What happened to your Mum?

JOE She died.

JOSH I saw her last week.

JOE She died at the weekend.

JOSH Fuck.

JOE She had a heart attack at work. And died.

JOSH Fuck.

A pause

JOSH Fuck.

A pause

JOSH Get fed up with you? Did she?

JOE ***(getting to his feet)*** I'm going home.

JOSH Nah. Wait.

JOE I'm going.

JOSH Hang on a moment or I'll have to make you.

JOE Leave me alone.

(JOE stands still as tears well up in his eyes and start rolling down his cheeks)

JOSH Oh, fuck.

Look....

JOE Just leave me.

You've got no idea.

No idea what it's like.

You have no..... nothing....I could do nothing.

One minuteshe is happy at home..... then off to work....and now....

....now she is nothing.

Gone.

She feels nothing.

She thinks nothing.

And on Monday we have to go to her funeral.

We stick her body. My lovely Mum....we stick her body in a box.

And we burn her.

My Mum.

My Mummy.

And you, you have no idea.

I can't bear it. I can't.

I came here to get away from things.

To get away from Dad.

Who hates me.

And now, you.

Just give me a break.

You.... just leave me, please.

Leave me alone.

Please just leave me.

JOE cries uncontrollably. JOSH looks at him. He throws away his cigarette and sits down beside JOE who has his head in his hands, shaking in grief.

Gently, JOSH takes JOE's hands from his face and then takes JOE's head in his own hands and turns it to him.

The tears subside a little as they look directly at each other. Deep into each other's eyes.

JOSH I'm not leaving you.

A pause

JOSH Because I fucking love you.

Their heads move together as they enjoy a long, deep, passionate kiss – both JOE and JOSH fully engaging with each other. They break and there follows the most tender embrace.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

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