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My Broken Doll

Adapted by
ERNIE NOLAN

Based on the book by
BEATRICE KARP and
DEBORAH PAPPENHEIMER

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Based upon the book by
BEATRICE KARP and DEBORAH PAPPENHEIMER

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(MY BROKEN DOLL)

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Gurman Agency LLC
14 Penn Plaza, Suite 1703
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My Broken Doll

CHARACTERS

BEATE: A 15-year-old girl.

AUNT MARY

ROSA STERN

SUSIE

UNCLE SIEGFREID

MORITZ STERN

PETER

NAZI SOLDIER

SETTING

There are several locations represented: Beate's bedroom, the Stern family home, the family apartment in Karlsruhe, on the street, a train, the Gurs camp and the Rivesaltes camp.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The entire play takes place in Beate's bedroom. After a reveal, objects fill shelves. Each item on the memory shelf is symbolic to her past. There are those mentioned in the script, but obviously more should fill the walls and the room.. The setting is kept symbolic in order to flow in and out of the past and present.

CASTING NOTES

To cast the show using three actors (1m., 2w.), the following roles may be doubled:

ACTOR #1: Beate

ACTOR #2: Aunt Mary, Rosa, Susie

ACTOR #3: Uncle Siegfried, Moritz, Peter, Nazi Soldier

PREFACE

In 2007, I was hired by a community theatre in Iowa to direct and produce a play about Anne Frank. The community was a small town of about 200 people. However, the theatre and the community at large had a strong interest in ensuring that young people understood the events that led up to and occurred during the Holocaust.

This was my first experience directing a production on this subject, and I wanted to do my homework. As I was researching, I learned about the work of the Institute for Holocaust Education (IHE), an organization in Omaha, Neb., with the sole mission of teaching about the Holocaust and preserving Holocaust survivor stories. It was through the IHE that I met Beatrice Karp, who had been interred in a French concentration camp as a child and lived through the ordeal with help from the French resistance. Bea took an interest in my work and took the time to talk with me, my cast and the audience after each and every performance.

Bea and I continued to stay in touch over the years. As time went on, I continued to learn more about her extraordinary life, and I knew if the opportunity presented itself, I wanted to make her story into a play. In 2016, after my appointment as artistic director of Circle Theatre in Omaha, I approached the IHE, Bea and her daughter, Deborah, about turning Bea and Deborah's recently published autobiography into a play.

After a year of collaboration, *My Broken Doll* opened on Aug. 18, 2016. My sincere gratitude to the late Beatrice Karp, her daughters, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren for allowing us to tell this important story. A special thank you to Liz Feldstern, then director of the IHE, her associate Donna Walter, and Angela Dashner for collaborating with

Circle Theatre on this important play. A special shout out to Ernie Nolan, who listened to stories from Bea and her family, wrote, rewrote, listened again and created a moving play that will allow this important story to be told for many generations to come. I couldn't have asked for a more giving collaborator.

When producing *My Broken Doll*, it's important to keep in mind that all of the events in this play are true. Unlike so many stories from this period that are historical fiction, all of the scenes in this play occurred and are depicted to the best of Bea's recollections. The theatrical device of the memory wall has been created to weave these events together in order to make sense to the audience. The story takes place when Bea is between the ages of 8 and 16. Actors are encouraged to research Bea's complete story, which can be found at:

<http://www.jewishomaha.org/jewish-press/2019/03/remembering-bea-karp/>

<http://wap.lib.unomaha.edu/index.php/women/bea-karp/>

<https://www.blurb.com/b/6089248-my-broken-doll>

<http://www.ihene.org/bea-karp>

Directors are encouraged to use a photo and recording of Bea's voice during the production. The photo and recording are available for download from the publisher's website.

This play was created to ensure the story of Beatrice Karp is never forgotten. Thank you for telling Bea's story.

—Fran Sillau
Executive Artistic Director
Circle Theatre
Oct. 15, 2019

A NOTE ABOUT HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

As a watershed historical event, with impact and implications that reverberate right until this very day—teaching about the Holocaust should be approached with thoughtful intention. Particularly when shared with young people, the traumatic aspect of these events—and the trauma it can create when shared—should not be underestimated. As educators, we have an obligation to help young people navigate through this painful history safely. This means, in part, being intentional about how we share this true story and to what audiences. *My Broken Doll* was written for audiences over the age of 12. Parents and teachers should use this as a guideline, but also consider each individual child’s emotional maturity and sensitivities to determine if the play’s educational value will outweigh its potential traumatic impact.

You are encouraged to consider the best practices of Holocaust education in guiding audiences “safely in and safely out” of this history.

Further guidelines and pedagogy:

*[https://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/
general-teaching-guidelines](https://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/general-teaching-guidelines)*

<https://echoesandreflections.org/pedagogical-principles/>

My Broken Doll

(London, England. A teenage girl's bedroom in UNCLE SIEGFRIED and AUNT MARY's home. 1947.

The door to the room flies open. BEATE hurriedly enters and slams the door behind her. She runs to her bed, through tears she mutters.)

BEATE. No ... no ... I won't ... not again ... I won't!

(She collapses on her bed. Her face in the pillow. A moment or two later, a gentle knock is heard at the door.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(behind the door)*. Beate? Beate, are you there?

(There is no response.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(cont'd)*. Aunt Mary said you hardly touched your breakfast. Are you ill?

(There continues to be no response.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(cont'd)*. Will you be ready to leave soon? I hope you finished packing. It would be a pity to rush and forget something special.

(BEATE sits up in the bed.)

BEATE. Forget? How can I ever forget?

(She shuts her eyes tightly. Transition to memory. A sound is heard. When BEATE opens her eyes, she sees two figures, ROSA STERN and MORITZ STERN. The three of them take in the sight of each other for a moment, and then the two figures reveal a wall full of objects representing memories from BEATE's past. BEATE takes in the sight of the memory wall, listing objects associated with memories.

BEATE (*cont'd*). Papa keeping the books. Mama doing the laundry. Susie laughing while I push her carriage. The four of us visiting the synagogue. The whole family, aunts and uncles, together in the backyard. Joy. Laughter. Love. So much love. And then one day our lives changed forever.

(If possible, another transitional sound cue. ROSA grabs BEATE's hand. BEATE enters a memory. She is now 6 years old. It is 1938. ROSA walks BEATE away from the wall as MORITZ takes a traveling bag down off the shelves of the wall.)

ROSA. Beate, come here. There's something that Mama and Papa must talk to you about.

BEATE. Am I in trouble?

ROSA. No.

BEATE. Am I getting a new doll?

ROSA. No.

BEATE. Am I getting a new sister?

ROSA (*surprised by the question*). No!

MORITZ. Beateleh, just listen. Mama is trying to tell you something.

BEATE. Is it about that bag?

ROSA. Yes. It's about that bag.

BEATE. Is Papa going somewhere?

MORITZ. We all are.

BEATE. Susie too?

ROSA. Yes. Susie too. The whole family.

BEATE. Why?

ROSA. Because we have to.

BEATE. Why?

ROSA. Because we don't have a home anymore.

BEATE. Why?

ROSA. Because the Nazis have taken it.

BEATE. Why?

MORITZ. Beateleh, again with the questions.

BEATE. But Lauterbach is our home. Why do we have to leave our home?

MORITZ. Because we are Jews and the Nazis say that Jews can't own property. So they are taking away our store and our house.

BEATE. How can they do that?

ROSA. Now that's a question I'd like an answer to.

MORITZ. Rosa ...

(MORITZ reaches his hand out to calm ROSA. She takes a moment and then proceeds.)

ROSA. The Nazis have also made your papa and I register with an office. They've given us new middle names.

(ROSA reveals an identity card.)

ROSA (*cont'd*). I'm now Rosa "Sarah" Stern, and your papa is Moritz "Israel" Stern. Everyone like us now has these middle names.

(BEATE looks closely at the card.)

BEATE. What does that big “J” stamped on it mean?

ROSA. Second-class citizen.

(MORITZ comforts the upset ROSA once again.)

MORITZ. It means Jew, Beate. It’s so the Nazis can keep track of us. They want to know our whereabouts at all times.

ROSA. This is not a good sign of things to come, Moritz.

MORITZ. What can we do, Rosa? The Nazis are the men in power. They make the laws and, in order to keep us all safe, we need to do what they say and leave.

BEATE. But where are we going?

MORITZ. To your uncle’s in Karlsruhe.

BEATE. But Papa ...

MORITZ. That’s it for questions for now. We need to leave soon. I should wake Susie up from her nap and get her things together. Be a good girl for Mama, Beateleh, and help her pack your things.

(MORITZ exits.)

ROSA. I can’t believe it. It’s finally my turn to ask questions. What would you like to take to your uncle’s, Beate dear?

BEATE. Karlina.

ROSA. Your doll. And ... ?

BEATE. That’s it.

ROSA. Oh, I think you’ll need more than her.

BEATE. No. As long as I have her, I’ll be fine.

ROSA. Well, let’s pack a few more things other than your doll just to be safe.

(ROSA starts to prepare the bag and walks around collecting things to pack.)

BEATE. Mama ...

ROSA. Yes, sweetheart.

BEATE. Can I ask one more question?

ROSA *(teasingly)*. You just did?

(BEATE recognizes that she did. The two chuckle. There is a pause.)

ROSA *(cont'd)*. All right, yes. One more question.

BEATE. I don't understand. Why are the Nazis doing this to us?

(ROSA stops what she's doing, slightly startled by the question.)

ROSA. I don't understand it myself, Beate. I wish I did, but I have no idea how it's gotten to this. *(Changing the subject.)* You know, I think we should pack some sweaters for you. You'll need warm clothes.

(ROSA exits. There's a knock at the bedroom door. BEATE closes her eyes again. Transition sound. The memory is over. BEATE is back in the present. Another knock at the door.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(behind the door)*. Beate, can I help you carry your bag?

BEATE. No, Uncle Siegfried. I ...

(UNCLE SIEGFREID enters. He quickly looks for BEATE's bag, sees it and walks toward it.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID. I'm sure it must be heavy with all the ... *(He looks inside the bag.)* Beate, this is hardly packed. How can this be? You and your sister have known that you were leaving today. What have you been doing for weeks?

BEATE. Nothing.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. I think that's obvious.

BEATE. Well, actually, thinking.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Thinking about what?

BEATE. About not leaving and staying with you and Aunt Mary here in London.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Beate ...

BEATE. Just hear me out, Uncle Siegfried. I know that I left school, but I earn my keep. You even said what a good job I do delivering handbags from the store.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. That's true, but ...

BEATE. And I also look after your son, my little cousin.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Yes, you do.

BEATE. Uncle Siegfried, Susie and I have had to live in so many places over the years. Once we left hiding, we could have gone anywhere, but we chose to come to London because we wanted to be with you and Aunt Mary. For two wonderful years this has been our home. Now, all of a sudden, we're expected to just pick up and move off to another strange place. It's not fair.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Beate, New York is not a strange place.

BEATE. It is to me. It's full of strangers.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Your mother's sisters are not strangers.

BEATE. I know nothing about them. I've written them and they haven't answered any of my questions. Do you know if they are religious?

UNCLE SIEGFREID. They might not be as devout as we are, but ...

BEATE. See. I knew it. I heard that people aren't religious in the United States. I don't want to live in a home that isn't kept kosher.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Your aunts have told us that they will.

BEATE. How do I know that? How do I know they won't fool us?

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Beate, so many excuses.

BEATE. These aren't excuses, Uncle Siegfried. Papa taught Susie and I to be proud of our faith and beliefs. We've had so many other things taken away from us. I won't have those too.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. They won't be, Beate. But what's done is done. Your Aunt Bertha and Aunt Flora in New York have a letter from your father saying that if anything should happen to him and your mother, they are the ones chosen to raise their children.

BEATE. But we could still find out that Mama and Papa are alive.

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Their names haven't been on any of the lists of survivors, Beate. While we wait to discover what happened to them, all we have is your papa's written wishes and your aunt Mary and I can't fight those. You and Susie must leave for the United States. *(He checks his watch.)* Very soon in fact.

(UNCLE SIEGFREID crosses to the luggage in order to prepare it for packing.)

BEATE. But don't you care that we are leaving? Aren't you upset?

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Of course I am, Beate. Your aunt Mary and I are so sad to see you go, but perhaps this is what's best.

BEATE. I'm not a child. I'm fifteen years old. Don't I have some say in what might be best for me?

UNCLE SIEGFREID. Unfortunately, no.

(BEATE throws herself down on the bed and face first in the pillow.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(cont'd)*. Come now, Beate. There isn't time to sulk. Nothing's packed. *(He crosses to the memory wall.)* Let's get your things in order. You don't want to leave anything behind, do you? *(He surveys the memory wall and then sets his sight on a glass bottle.)* Like this bottle of perfume Aunt Mary and I bought you last Chanukah. You'll want this ...

(UNCLE SIEGFREID goes to get the bottle but stumbles and it falls from the shelf and breaks on the floor. At the sound of the broken glass, BEATE sits up surprised on the bed.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(cont'd)*. Oh dear. I'm so sorry. I'm such a klutz. This is what comes from rushing. Let me go get the dust pan. The bottle shattered into pieces.

(UNCLE SIEGFREID crosses to the door and opens it, but as he's about to leave, he turns back to BEATE.)

UNCLE SIEGFREID *(cont'd)*. Beate, I know you're upset now, but you'll see. Time will pass, and this will all be over soon.

(He exits and closes the door.)

BEATE. This will all be over soon, huh?

(BEATE shuts her eyes tightly at the shutting of the door. Transition to memory. A sound is heard. When BEATE opens her eyes, sounds of chaos [flames, glass shattering, shouting, screams] come from outside the bedroom window. It is 1938. BEATE is 6 years old again. She slowly takes her time crossing to the window to see what the commotion is outside. We see a look of shock and awe register as she takes in what she sees. MORITZ frantically enters.)

MORITZ. Beateleh ...

BEATE. What's happening?

(He sees BEATE by the window and stops in his tracks.)

MORITZ. Be careful. Get away from the window. It isn't safe.

(He crosses to the window and closes the blinds.)

BEATE. There are people running and screaming in the streets. I'm frightened, Papa.

(BEATE runs and hugs on to her father.)

BEATE *(cont'd)*. Is it those people again? The Nazis?

MORITZ. Yes. They've shattered shop windows and are attacking anyone they think is Jewish.

BEATE. Oh, Papa.

(ROSA enters.)

ROSA. Mortiz, hurry. The synagogue is on fire. They need your help.

BEATE. I'll go with him.

ROSA. Oh no, young lady.

BEATE. But Mama ...

MORITZ. It's too dangerous out there for a little girl, Beateleh.

ROSA. Besides, if you go who will protect me?

MORITZ. See, Mama needs you to look after her and Susie while I'm gone. You'll be safer here at home.

BEATE. How do you know?

MORITZ. Because the Lord keeps watch between you and me whenever we are apart.

(MORITZ kisses BEATE on the head. He approaches ROSA.)

ROSA. Be safe.

MORITZ. Don't worry.

(MORTIZ kisses ROSA farewell, crosses to the door and turns.)

MORITZ *(cont'd)*. This night of broken glass will be over soon.

(MORITZ exits. The sounds outside grow louder.)

BEATE. Mama, we have to do something.

ROSA. There's nothing we can do but wait.

(BEATE begins to pray.)

BEATE. *Ribono shel olam*, watch over my papa tonight.

(The sound of a ticking clock is heard. A few hours go by. As time passes, ROSA paces and walks to a new location in the room. BEATE also walks to a new place. The ticking stops, ROSA and BEATE stop pacing, and BEATE prays.)