

MISTER REFUGE

40-50s. Characters: Beck, cares for justice, educated and wise, fatherly and strong,

Roak, military officer, inquisitive and unrelenting, 40-50s.

Lika(Like-uh), an imaginative boy, longs for adventure, 8-9.

Guard #1, bulky, intimidating, 20s.

Guard #2, bulky, intimidating, 20s.

Setting: Wooden cabin living room. Couch, one table, two chairs, a stove, a pantry, two windows, two wooden doors, a hat rack, and a bookshelf.

Mister Refuge

(Through the bright light of the windows shines the sun. BECK and ROAK sit opposite each other at the table. The GUARDS, with their black armor and helmets, stand behind BECK. ROAK takes a small teacup from the table and sips.)

ROAK
It's good. Just right.

(A beat.)

ROAK
I like the house, Beck. Very homey. However, I'm surprised it's in the woods. It's not like you.
Not the Beck I knew.

(ROAK takes another sip of the tea.)

BECK
I get the tea leaves from outside.

ROAK
Yes.

BECK
Roak, would you like some more?

ROAK
No.

BECK
Surely you didn't come to talk. Last I remember we didn't leave on good terms.

ROAK
Well, some of us had a duty to our nation. I am here because of business.

BECK
Your business is injustice.

ROAK
My business is welfare, Beck. Recently, I've been investigating a rumor-

BECK
What rumor?

ROAK
One of blasphemy, of evil, and of importance.

Mister Refuge

BECK
And you're here?

ROAK
Not just here, but all over. A young couple had their child sent out here.

BECK
That's illegal?

ROAK
They were rebels.

BECK
Were?

ROAK
Were. They and their colleagues were found just recently actually.

BECK
What did you do to them?

ROAK
I followed the law.

BECK
I see. So you wish to kill the boy.

ROAK
Of course. No loose ends, Beck.

(ROAK grabs the teacup.)

ROAK
Anymore?

BECK
Unfortunately, no.

(ROAK stands. Before leaving he walks over to the pantry, stage right, the interior of which is visible to the audience, and opens it. Off of a shelf, ROAK grabs an orange and then heads to the stage left door. He stops beneath the doorway.)

ROAK
Remember Beck: If you do not take interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed.

Mister Refuge

(ROAK and the GUARDS leave the home. BECK stands and shuts the door behind them. He looks out the closest window. The sound of helicopter blades ring out, but soon grow quiet. The helicopter buzz is replaced with rustling tree branches and chirping birds.)

BECK

Then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools.

(BECK walks over to the pantry, the interior visible to us, and stands just outside the doorframe.)

BECK

You can come out Lika.

(A flour bag walks out of the pantry. BECK grabs the top of it and lifts it to reveal LIKA.)

LIKA

It's scratchy in there, Beck.

BECK

Unless you have got a better idea, we'll stick with it. Come now. It's time to eat.

(The light in the windows shifts to night and BECK and LIKA now both sit at the table. They eat their dinner while they both read books. BECK reads Homer's Illiad and LIKA reads Robin Hood.)

BECK

Enjoying the book?

LIKA

Yes. How about you?

BECK

It's a masterpiece.

LIKA

Do you think that next time, when you go to the town that-

BECK

Lika, no.

LIKA

Why can't I leave with you, Beck?

BECK

The world can be cruel. Right now, it's my job to protect you. You're much too young anyway, and besides, you have my books.

Mister Refuge

LIKA
It's still not real.

BECK
Not real?

(A beat.)

BECK
Wait here.

(BECK walks over to the pantry. He soon reenters with a small package wrapped in brown paper. He sits down at the table.)

BECK
Well. Open it.

(LIKA rips through the paper and holds up a small yellow radio.)

LIKA
Wow! What is it?

BECK
It's a radio. Very few like this one still exist. It was for your birthday, but you seem to need it now more than ever.

LIKA
What's it do?

BECK
Watch.

(BECK flips a switch on the radio and soft guitar music plays.)

BECK
This radio, Lika, shall be your ears to the outside. Your world can be more real.

(The music slowly shifts to a more somber tone. LIKA falls asleep at the table. BECK grabs a blanket from the couch and covers LIKA with it. BECK exits the living room through the stage center door. The lights in the window shift to day. It is now morning and LIKA is awake. LIKA plays with the knobs on the radio, switching from channel to channel. BECK enters dressed for chillier weather from the stage right door.)

BECK
Good morning, Lika. Having fun with the radio?

Mister Refuge

LIKA

Yes! Are you going out?

BECK

I'm going to town for some groceries. I'll be back soon. Remember: don't open the door for anyone.

LIKA

Yes sir. Do you think while you're out you can get me a new book?

BECK

I'll see if they have anything new.

(The buzz of a helicopter grows, and then stops. There is a sudden knock at the stage left door. BECK goes to the table and shuts off the radio and ushers LIKA inside the pantry. BECK walks to the door and opens it. ROAK and the two GUARDS enter the house.)

ROAK

Good morning Beck.

BECK

Captain Roak.

ROAK

It's major now. I have a present for you. Is this a new radio?

BECK

No.

ROAK

There's no seal of approval on it. Shame. It's nice.

(ROAK begins to place the radio in his coat, but BECK grabs it from him. ROAK hands BECK a slip of paper.)

BECK

What? An eviction notice.

ROAK

The regent has declared this land under the Imperium's control.

BECK

This is my home. What could you need my land for?

ROAK

Picture this: a brand-new correctional facility.

Mister Refuge

BECK
A prison.

ROAK
That's an oversimplification. The number of insurrectionist and anti-regime organizations grow everyday, Beck. How much longer, do you think, they'll be able to contain themselves? When they attack, and they will attack, they will need places to relearn the ways how to be a true model citizen.

(BECK sits down at the table.)

BECK
Leave my house.

ROAK
Very well. You have two days to pack. I'll be here to oversee it all.

BECK
No. You won't.

ROAK
I... I beg your pardon.

BECK
How much longer, Roak? How much longer will you be the sword of evil? You go around preaching ideas that aren't your own. You follow your orders blindly. Killing those you are told to kill. Suppressing those you are told to suppress. And for what? I'm doing what I should have done a long time ago. I'm taking my stand here. I will stay at my home. Try, if you want, to get me to leave, but I promise you this: it will be the hardest thing you will ever do.

(A beat.)

BECK
Get out. Now.

ROAK
You are?

BECK
Yes.

ROAK
You... you. You will pay for this blasphemy! How dare you insult me! An act you shall regret!

(ROAK regains his composure. He sits down across from BECK.)

Mister Refuge

ROAK

Enough with this. We both know what this is really about. The boy. Where is he? I know you can tell me where he is. If you give up his location, I promise I won't harm his protector.

BECK

Get out of my house.

ROAK

If you wish it.

(ROAK and the GUARDS exit the house. BECK shuts the door behind them and looks through the window. He opens the pantry door and LIKA enters the living room.)

LIKA

What was that about?

BECK

Lika. There are bad people in this world. He's one of them and he wants to find you.

LIKA

Why?

BECK

I wish I could tell you. This place is no longer safe for you. You're leaving.

LIKA

Now?

BECK

No. They're still here.

LIKA

You'll think of something.

BECK

I have.

(BECK enters the stage center door and then soon reenters the living room holding a hunting rifle. The time shifts to late at night. Owls hoot and wolves howl. BECK sits in a chair facing the entry door and LIKA lies on the couch. Both of them are still awake.)

LIKA

Hey, Beck.

BECK

Mister Refuge

Yes, Lika?

LIKA
What happens when he finds me?

BECK
He won't.

LIKA
But what if he does?

BECK
Then it'll be the last thing he ever does.

LIKA
Hey, Beck.

BECK
Yes, Lika?

LIKA
Did you know my parents?

BECK
I did.

LIKA
How?

BECK
We were old friends.

LIKA
Hey, Beck.

BECK
Yes, Lika?

LIKA
I can't sleep.

BECK
What would help?

LIKA
Could... could you tell me a story.

Mister Refuge

BECK

Sure, kid. Once, not long ago, there were four warriors, destined to change the world. They had a dream. A dream to fight for what they knew was right, but one of them had a greater desire for power and control than peace. He loved one of the warriors, but she didn't love him back. Angry at her he tricked one of the warriors into doing vile deeds alongside him and they hunted the other two warriors to the day they died. But hope was not lost. The man dragged in darkness had a chance at redemption and he took it. He saved a life and was dedicated to protecting it. He was happy. For however short of a time it was, he was happy for the first time in...

LIKA

Hey, Beck.

BECK

Yes, Lika?

LIKA

One day, I want to tell stories just like yours.

BECK

I have no doubt you will, kid.

(The time shifts again. It is morning and a bright light shines through the window. LIKA is fast asleep but BECK remains steadfast. There is the creaking of wood outside the entry door. BECK goes over to the couch and wakes up LIKA.)

BECK

Good morning.

LIKA

What is it?

BECK

I need you to go back into the pantry for a second, okay?

LIKA

Why?

BECK

Just do it, okay?

LIKA

Okay.

(LIKA stands and goes for the pantry. BECK shuts the door behind him and LIKA sits on the floor. Suddenly there is a pounding on the entry door.)

Mister Refuge

BECK

I know you're out there, ROAK. You want the boy so bad? Then come and get him!

(BECK hides behind the couch. The door falls. ROAK and his GUARDS, holding dystopian pistols of some kind, enter the home. BECK turns and fires, knocking GUARD #1 down. He grabs a chair and flings GUARD #2 who catches it and drops his weapon. BECK smacks GUARD #2 in the head with the stock of the rifle. ROAK draws his weapon, but BECK zig zags to him and uses his shoulder to drive ROAK down to one knee. ROAK quickly regains his senses and fires at BECK but misses. BECK knocks the gun out of ROAK'S hand and grabs him by the collar and throws him to the ground BECK points the rifle at ROAK. ROAK lunges for his weapon and shoots BECK in one of his legs and arms. Slowly, Beck reloads the rifle, but is too beaten to aim propely.)

ROAK

It's good to see that you haven't lost that raging fire in your heart!

BECK

Unfortunately, no.

(BECK takes a step, but falls to a knee and uses the rifle as a crutch.)

ROAK

We live in a new world. One where old relics like you and I are a dying breed. Unlike you however, I intend to survive. Now, bring me the boy.

BECK

No.

ROAK

Defiant, still. Why protect the child? He isn't even your own.

BECK

He's a boy. A sweet boy. Alone. He never should've been robbed of his family, and I never should have pulled the trigger that night. He has no people. I must protect him. He deserves to grow old, and to live a life he can be proud of. To do the things I wish I had been able to do. If that means taking up the mantle as his protector, then I will go through the fires of Hades to see it done.

ROAK

You talk of what he deserves? According to law he deserves to die. What he deserves is for you to look him in the eye, and tell him he'll be alright. The same way I did to his parents.

BECK

Never.

Mister Refuge

ROAK

I'll burn down this whole forest if I have to! I will find him, and when I do, I will know you have failed and that his blood was on your hands! At last, I will have bested you! What do you say to that?

BECK

You will never find him. Shoot.

(There is a shot. The second GUARD that had been defeated stands, holding his pistol, and removes his helmet to reveal a young man, horrified.)

BECK

Thank you.

(The GAURD drops his weapon, and almost in a daze, leaves the cabin. BECK goes over to the pantry and opens it to find LIKA huddled and covering his ears. BECK kneels and hugs LIKA close. He then carries the boy out of the pantry and covers LIKA's eyes as he makes his way to the bookshelf where he takes the copies of Robin Hood and The Illiad. BECK sets LIKA down.)

BECK

Keep your eyes closed.

(LIKA covers his eyes. BECK holds LIKA's hand and guides him across the room and avoiding the dead bodies. They leave and lights fade in the windows to the cool colors of the sunset. The End.)