

by Don Zolidis

MAX, 24, a Jewish refugee

About the play: In 1939, the S.S. St. Louis set sail from Hamburg with 937 Jewish refugees aboard, heading for Cuba. When they arrive, they discover that the Cubans will not allow them to land, and they are forced to return to Germany.

About the Scene: Max is accusing the captain of the ship of collaborating with the Nazis.

Time: 1939.

MAX

I didn't tell you to speak! You have done nothing but lie to us from the moment we got on board this ship - Shut up! You knew we wouldn't be allowed to leave! You have made promises and promises and promises and now you are taking us home to die! I AM NOT GOING BACK! I have been there, you understand me you son-of-a-bitch?! They pulled me from my home, they shaved my head, they took my wife, they took my children, they killed my boys, they killed my boys – I had one photo of them, one photo that I held against my heart –

They took my picture and pissed on it in front of me.

Before breakfast the hangings begin. They line us up to watch. I see our necks yanked by the ropes, arms and legs dangling like marionettes. Any way to kill they can find. Old men drowned in vats – a woman crucified. A man castrated with a bayonet. Like they're children pulling the wings off a fly. In the afternoon we dig the pits we're to be buried in. And then we tumble the bodies of our friends and our families into the graves. The children like broken playthings for them.

So much like my own boys. My own boys dead like that somewhere else. Eyes open. Mouths open. A fistful of lye to keep down the smell. My boys.

And they say we're animals. *We're the animals?!*

Tell your pilot. Turn the ship to Florida.

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