

DO THE STANISLAVSKY BOP

Written by

J. Phillip Wilkins

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

A half dozen people in 1800s peasant clothing watch PTOR VARICK (20s) lie in his best death position on a rickety stage.

A wooden sword is obviously lodged between his arm and side.

PTOR VARICK

I am slain! Oh, gods, why have you been so cruel to me? Does my face give you pity for a soul so low as mine to be not wanton but kind to a wretch and his daughter? Oh Gods... gods... You have lost one of your own.

A last breath and Ptor's head falls to the floorboards.

A few lazy claps as the crowd exits.

BACKSTAGE

Stagehand BILLY (8) pulls on a rope that slowly closes the stage curtains. A cigarette dangles from his bottom lip.

Ptor can't get up yet, shoots the Boy a look that says "Hurry up!"

The curtains finally come to a close, Ptor stands, smiles at the Boy.

PTOR VARICK

Another perfect performance, wouldn't you agree?

Billy shrugs, takes a drag from his cigarette, walks away.

GREGOR PETROVICH (50s) runs up and embraces Ptor in a bear hug.

GREGOR PETROVICH

Wonderful show, Ptor. You are the greatest actor in all Romania.

PTOR VARICK

Oh really, Gregor? Then why is it that I am only being paid half what my rivals receive?

GREGOR PETROVICH

Because, Ptor, you have no arms. Less pay for less of a man.

They look down at Ptor's arms, for the first time we see they are clearly sheep's wool stuffed into the long sleeves with painted, wooden hands at the ends.

PTOR VARICK

So what? They still come to see me
because I am the greatest actor in-

GREGOR PETROVICH

In all Romania', yes, Ptor, I know.
I wrote that for you.

Ptor lifts up an arm, lets it fall by his side.

PTOR VARICK

They only come because they want to
see a freak. When they were
laughing at me, I thought I was
really doing well, but then I
remembered I was performing a
serious drama of rape, incest and
murder.

GREGOR PETROVICH

But they still love you, Ptor.

PTOR VARICK

NO! They only pity me!

GREGOR PETROVICH

Ptor, please. You have another show
coming up. Don't get upset.

Gregor goes for another hug, Ptor pulls away.

PTOR VARICK

Don't touch me you... you...
Peddler of freaks! You are no
better than that pimp of mutants
Todd Norman!

GREGOR PETROVICH

I wish.

PTOR VARICK

I will not do another show! Do you
hear me? Not another show!

GREGOR PETROVICH

But you have a contract with me,
Ptor. You have to go on.

PTOR VARICK
Never, again!

GREGOR PETROVICH
Okay, have it your way.

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

Gregor addresses a crowd of carnival goers.

GREGOR PETROVICH
Come one, come all. Just follow the
arrows for some of the most
amazing, fantastic, and grotesque
sights you'll ever see!

IVAN RILLOVICH (10) moves to enter the tent through a weather-beaten flap.

GREGOR PETROVICH
Wait just a minute, young man. How
old are you?

Ivan looks up at Gregor with dirty wet eyes.

IVAN
Old enough.

Gregor smiles, pats him on the back as the boy disappears into the tent.

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - NIGHT

Ivan squeezes his way through the gawkers until he gets to the front of the stage.

Everyone waits for the curtains to open.

BACKSTAGE

Billy takes a drag from his cigarette, gets a nod from Gregor, pulls on the rope to open the curtains.

Someone or something HISSES like a cartoon snake nearby.

TENT

As the curtains open,

We can't see what is one stage, only their reactions as the crowd GASPS. Women turn away, some faint, others vomit onto the straw-covered floorboards. A few exit the tent.

Ivan's eyes go wide, jaw drops.

PTOR VARICK (O.S.)
Hssssssssssssssss. Come closer
little boy so I can eat your soft
tongue!

Ivan runs screaming from the tent while simultaneously wetting his pants.

The curtains close.

BACKSTAGE

Gregor shakes his head.

GREGOR PETROVICH
What are you doing, Ptor?

PTOR VARICK
Nothing. I'm just lying here. Isn't
that what you want?

GREGOR PETROVICH
Don't scare anymore people, Ptor.
Just hiss, like I told you. It's
not my fault you don't want to act
anymore.

PTOR VARICK
Oh, shut-up.

THE END