



Echoes of Blackness through Unbroken Lines

(A one-person show)

by

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
The Figure	speaks in a dimly-lit place	20 - 70	All
The Person	speaks in the grilling room		
The Monitored Citizen	speaks as a citizen before he was sent to the dimly-lit place		
The Speaker	speaks in the dimly-lit place		
The Prisoner	speaks in the low chamber		

Synopsis

Echoes of Blackness through Unbroken Lines is a one-person show that traces fragments of a political activist’s lived experience—from the formation of a non-conformist identity through surveillance, arrest, coercion, and enforced silence. The work does not present a complete biography, but a sequence of psychological and physical pressures that shape resistance under a totalitarian system.

Rooted in contemporary Iran, the play speaks through a singular voice while refusing to remain local. What unfolds is not a portrait of heroism but an anatomy of control enacted on a single body: how language is policed, how fear is administered, and how compliance is manufactured. The figure on stage is not offered as a symbol but as a site where power and refusal collide.

The play does not resolve into consolation or redemption. It ends with a rupture—an abrupt, repeated refusal that cuts off speech itself. Rather than promising survival or victory, Echoes of Blackness through Unbroken Lines argues against disappearance, insisting that resistance may persist even when hope does not.

Notes on form

Echoes of Blackness through Unbroken Lines is a one-person show composed of five sections, written in Final Draft format. The monologue may be performed either by a single actor throughout or by different adult actors of varying genders, ages, ethnicities, and social backgrounds, with one performer assigned to each section.

In each section, the character is identified by a different designation to mark a progression of agency shaped by the section’s conditions and thematic focus:

- **THE FIGURE**—Section One: A Dimly Lit Place

(Presence without orientation)

- **THE PERSON**—Section Two: Grilling Room

(Subjected, processed, destabilized)

- **THE MONITORED CITIZEN**—Section Three: Prior to the Dimly Lit Place

(Surveilled self-awareness)

- THE SPEAKER—Section Four: The Dimly Lit Place

(Ethical articulation and resistance)

- THE PRISONER—Section Five: The Low Chamber

(Embodied consequence)

* Line breaks, spacing, and blank lines in the manuscript are intentional dramaturgical tools, shaping pacing, tension, and silence.

SECTION ONE

A dimly lit place.

A bare stage. No furniture—except for a single wooden seat.

A single, low, unstable light.

Shadows dominate the space.

A SILENCE. THE FIGURE sits on a wooden seat.

THE FIGURE

(sighing, voice distant)

The blackness is amaranthine: No days, no nights, no hours, no minutes—only lost seconds. Always a dry, hard stick behind and a rotten, semi-edible carrot in front. They want you to speak, but you have a stick in your throat, whether they hit you with the stick or dangle the carrot. You know you're skating on thin ice by remaining silent; however, any talk in that situation seems to be a grim, morbid affair.

THE FIGURE stands up, turns the wooden seat, and sits straddling it, facing the back.

It may sound screwy. But to get the point, you should be in a catch-22 situation. Not the Hamletian—"to be or not to be"—but deciding not to be, and being damned... for the privilege of NOT BEING in the future. It's a no-win scenario. On the one hand, they expect you to provide them with a treasure trove of information. On the other, if you talk about things they may not like to hear, it costs you your life. They even carefully listen to your silence while you're being watched all the time. They sweat ceaselessly to decipher your breathing.

THE FIGURE rises, advances DOWNSTAGE with the wooden seat, and sits—this time in a normal posture, facing the audience.

The voice drops into a projected whisper, clearly audible to the entire house.

Here, silence teems with different thoughts and emotions. Here, silence holds infinite meaning for the fly on the wall. Here, silence means fear, wrath, desperation, nervous breakdown, and giving in. Here, silence is not silent; it's crowded, and sometimes your quiet cries are their surreptitious symphony.

Although this enforced quiescence often seems timeless, it's definitely not. The outward quietude is not natural or chosen; it's imposed. So, they break it when they decide to.

A PAUSE. A series of brittle, splintering cracks tears through the silence.

They break everything: your bones, your soul, your dignity, your humanity, your heart, your character, and your silence as well. You're here to be broken. Tenacity here seems to lose its semantic relevance; it's empty of any sense.

Shoulders hitch high, locking the neck into a rigid column, THE FIGURE presses heels into the floor with enough force to lift thighs an inch off the seat, as if trying to push through the back of the chair.

Rather, the schemata of powerlessness, obedience, and submission become the imposing, meaningful force. And then panic, hysteria, trepidation, and horror dance around you all the time. You're surrounded by the forces that make you go to pieces. For many, the heart and the mind fall far behind in feeling or experiencing fear, which provides the adrenaline to cope with the sinister situation. Indeed, there is no consanguinity between the body and the mind.

THE FIGURE grips the seat too tightly. The hands tremble.

They're not synchronized because the endogenous and exogenous rhythms are not identical. At certain times, you may have to tango with death, but it doesn't take two to tango. The dance floor is covered with a sort of numb hopelessness, which causes you to lose your footing. The partner usually comes slyly from other dark confinements, though it can be in different places at the same time.

SECTION TWO

Grilling room.

The air is thick with smoke. The overhead fluorescent lamps struggle to cut through the haze. THE PERSON (the actor) is standing CENTER STAGE, rigid, with hands loosely at the sides

THE PERSON looks around, has a deliberate scan of the space, as if testing the waters. Then he moves DOWNSTAGE, looking at the audience, and holds eye contact for two beats before speaking.

THE PERSON

Sometimes they take you to another room.

The warmth, if there has been at all, drains completely from the room, leaving the stage in a dim grey wash. A single step back.

Appearance-wise, it's one of those nondescript rooms: nothing attractive to the eye. It's naked and cold—the grey walls, a chair usually turned around, and a guy who straddles it, facing the back of his chair and yours. But content-wise—

A BEAT, a slight tilt of the head.

or what happens there—

A HALF BEAT.

it's usually referred to as the grilling room, though variously called 'the back room,' 'the mind setting room,' 'the discipline room,' and—

A humorless smile flickers, then vanishes.

'the nursery room!' Your mere presence in this room bears witness to your offense.

Tone hardens. Chin lifts slightly.

At first, you have no idea what might happen in this specific room. But over time, you may hope that you can steel yourself against the harsh reality of this dreadful situation. Unfortunately, hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper. Here, they give you the third degree and breach the citadel of your self-defense.

On "breach," he takes one step back—as if invaded.

The hideous space carries a grim connotation. That is, you should probably be prepared for the upcoming punishment. Why probably?

Directly to the audience. Lean in slightly.

Because that moment might be the time for the carrot and not the stick.

A faint, bitter chuckle—immediately suppressed.

Usually, the guy responsible for offering the carrot adopts an avuncular attitude and tone. If you're wise enough to take his offer and eagerly tuck into the semi-rotten carrot instead of refusing it, then the stick might be postponed.

Speed up slightly here—seductive rhythm.

However—

ABRUPT STOP.

If it's the stick's time or if you consider the carrot as inedible, then you get your unjust desserts; it's on the house. After being grilled for several hours, you're quite ready to drop.

Shoulders sag for the first time.

Then, in an instant, all your mental and emotional bonds with your very self are lost. There's nothing to serve as a safety valve. Even your memories cannot be used as a kind of crutch or a coping mechanism to help you overcome your strayed, lost sense of SELF.

Emphasizing "SELF," he has a brief,
involuntary touch to his chest.

You give not a damn to your integrity nor a hoot to your social status. The only thing you care about is the way you're going to get what they call your just desserts. And then every abusive utterance or caustic comment accompanying your maltreatment would rub salt into the wound. They know how to synchronize phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases—entire sentences—with the level of chastisement.

A PAUSE. Complete stillness. Lights subtly
dim. Suddenly, indistinct chatter or
muttering voices are heard offstage. The
voices fade out gradually. THE PERSON
continues talking.

Any utterance goes hand in hand with punishment. Sometimes the pain caused by utterances is more severe than physical abuse. In this goddamn room, you are theirs, not yours.

One more step backward.

None of them has a shred of sympathy for the entity they've made of you since they see you as an object devoid of feelings—or even a soul. Your subjectivity is totally irrelevant. You look like a bird that is supposed to waver on any wire, while the tendon-locking mechanism in its feet is not working.

Hands briefly curl, as if trying to
grasp—then fall.

You feel like you're in a vacuum.

STILLNESS.

There has been no felonious intent for which someone must be interrogated and then supposedly convicted. No.

A BEAT.

By no means.

A BEAT.

There's been no killing for which the coroner has held an inquest into the deaths.

A BEAT.

No. Not at all.

A BEAT.

There's been no fraud, no swindling, no imposture, no hoax of any sort.

A BEAT.

No. Under no circumstances.

Final, heavier BEAT. Letting silence work.

And you know that you're as clean as a whistle, but still, you're guilty of being wrong. To set the record straight, here you've been wrong from the moment your umbilical cord was severed—

Gesture downward, finality.

because from that very moment, you were not one of the chosen ones. They can't find any satisfactory congruence between you and those chosen ones. No similarity in thoughts, emotions, likes, and dislikes. No affiliation of any kind. No mutual interests. No shared values. No affinity between your language and theirs—

THE PERSON touches his mouth briefly.

and between what you may want to say and what they want to make you say. You belong to the earthly world; they belong to a far-fetched metaphysical universe.

Gesture outward, then upward.

And the problem—

A PAUSE. THE PERSON paces in a small, tight, controlled circle, a repetitive, almost meditative rhythm.

What was I saying?

THE PERSON starts to widen the path, moving in a slightly larger, faster circle, approaching the edge of the immediate space.

Oh, yeah, the problem—

THE PERSON attempts one final, massive, sweeping circle that is too large for the stage space.

The movement becomes awkward, requiring quick adjustments to the path to avoid collision with a metal bar or wall.

An abrupt stop at the edge of the space.

Heavy breathing—the attempt at a harmonious orbit violently interrupted by the physical limits of chaotic reality.

The problem is that your worlds are not even in an epicyclic state—

THE PERSON uses a broad, sweeping gesture with both arms, pushing outward from the chest, as if casting something away or indicating an expansive, outward force.

Worse, they are centrifugal—

The hands lie on the chest and remain there for a moment.

rather than centripetal.

A PAUSE. THE PERSON brings hands to head, perhaps gripping hair or temples, and sways or spins slightly in place, conveying dizziness, unsteadiness, and internalized chaos or a ‘vertigo’ pulling inward.

Yours is a vertigo of despair; theirs, a frenzy of favor.

SECTION THREE

Prior to the dimly lit place.

Light shifts from focused gloom to a wash of streetlight.

Urban noise rises—indistinct, fleeting—then fades.

Shedding the previous posture, standing tall, The MONITORED CITIZEN is composed but watchful.

THE MONITORED CITIZEN

No matter how much your lifestyle may resemble others', you believe you have a life of your own—your own path in society.

A BEAT.

This sounds like an axiom until the protectors of the chosen ones—those trained to sense something in the wind—begin to snoop into the lives of innocent citizens.

THE MONITORED CITIZEN looks
outward, as if sensing an unseen presence.

Then, at any moment, they may catch you off guard.

A PAUSE—breath tightens.

And you realize by some curious coincidence...

THE MONITORED CITIZEN turns back,
frightened,

... that these seemingly smart alecks can be with you everywhere, at any time. What happens next?

Rising tempo, sharper tone.

First, they try to knead and shape you to their image. Then homogenize—until you're one of the chosen ones or at least very similar to them.

Draws in breath.

But if you resist, the story will have a different narrator, and it might not be narrative by any means.

Stepping forward, half-whispered.

It's reported. As if fact. You might hear your story from top news outlets, each scooping the other, their headlines competing like vultures circling the same corpse.

Turns, bitter.

Even social media becomes a bush telegram—flashing fake news, doctored images, misleading videos, on tap. Shared. Spread.

Slower, deliberate.

Sometimes, for example, you have five different garbled versions of the same story.

Leans forward.

Of whom? Apparently, the very YOU!

The urban hum returns briefly, layered with faint, unintelligible voices—as if gossiping, judging. Then fades again.

Your mind begins to swarm. Thoughts—tangled, toxic—gnaw at your sanity.

Paced, unraveling.

You examine what you've done. What you've said. What you haven't—every hush. Every muteness. You think about all the things that have made you distinctly different from the chosen ones.

A faint tremor of light mimics the flicker of early morning.

Suffering from nyctophobia during the night, you wake at dawn, eyes invaded by squiggly lines—as if vision itself has become wavy and unreliable. And then the worst part begins.

Voice rising slightly, dry.

You feel them. Or their stool pigeons. Following. Listening. Even in elevators. Even in the bathroom.

Gritted teeth.

You're never alone.

A sudden, sharp echo of a footstep. THE MONITORED CITIZEN flinches visibly.

In the crowd?

Short laugh, empty.

Ochlophobia. You begin to fear your own shadow.

Physically reenacting subtly—angled posture, tension in the shoulders.

You inch crabwise out of places—hoping no one notices. You turn around reflexively. Scan. Again. When someone approaches, your pulse slams into your chest.

Heartbeat in the voice.

They pass—and still you tremble.

From the void, a shadow of a human shape emerges. THE MONITORED CITIZEN leans close to the invisible figure.

If a stranger incidentally asks you a question, you might think he's one of them.

A PAUSE, conflicted.

And when you answer his not-quite-understood question, there is no congruence—between what you think, what you say, what you even profess—or irrelevantly... confess. He's baffled. So are you.

A BEAT.

Even the deli guy—

Points into the dark, as if seeing the invisible figure again.

asking whether you're looking for something particular—might be one of them. You feel it. Frightened, you drop the item in your trolley. Smile ugly, voice shaky, you thank him and leave.

Light cools briefly. Paranoia sets in—stillness thickens.

Little by little, you realize—

A serious expression settles on THE MONITORED CITIZEN's face.

in every place one or more Mutants are present. They play gooseberry, no matter if you are in the company of your beloved or alone.

WHISPERS.

Sometimes... it's worse. Your friend, or perhaps, your ex-wife,

SLOW BREATH.

the mother of your children. Or... the children themselves...

HOLDS THE SILENCE.

... might be double-crossers.

The shadow of human figure appears again. THE MONITORED CITIZEN freezes, eyes fixed on the invisible figure, then quickly turns away, forcing a casual smile. The shadow disappears.

Their constant existence makes you feel you're a revenant—a remnant of a half-forgotten world. A world that existed before these odd organisms appeared as the new species. These pesky believers are on the scene of your existence to ensure you absorb only what is morally edifying.

Whip crack is heard offstage, followed by some screaming. They fade away.

If, for example, you let your carnal desires run wild, Mutants are—to tame them. If your thoughts are going to cross the already established red lines, these prying busybodies feel responsible for rerouting them. If you consciously or unconsciously try to change other people's minds about the defined unerring principles, they will find you more likely to bring havoc to their lives.

A PAUSE. Quite Downstage.

What should be done from your side? Nothing but obedience.

Smiling bitterly.

How about their side? Performing the unenviable task of cleaning the Augean stable of your mind to protect others... from you. They call it “uplift.” They call it “ratification.” Why? Because you're off the track—a failed version of Homo Sapiens. Unquestionably, you're branded—a social leper not fit to be in the company of the others. Yes,

A LONG PAUSE. THE MONITORED
CITIZEN breathes.

they're always there to make everything right by foul or foe—not fair. It's in fact a ceaseless, habitual manhunt or preferably man ...

A PAUSE. Stillness, softer, more personal.

... hunt

SECTION FOUR

The dimly lit space. The same as SECTION ONE.

THE SPEAKER stands DOWNSTAGE.

THE SPEAKER

In this darkness, it feels as though they have broken your entire self and left behind only an outline—a silhouette of what once had weight. Then you may think how you can connect with the space you're in.

THE SPEAKER studies his own hands.

They do not reassure him.

You try to name the space, because naming is the last surviving habit of the mind.

Unilluminated.

Sunless.

Dim.

Shadowed.

Indistinct.

Murky.
Pitch-black.

A PAUSE.

Evil.
Sinister.
Vile.

ANOTHER PAUSE.

Damnably.

OR ... BLACKNESS.

However, it gathers itself inside you; none of the names carries the same anatomy as BLACKNESS does. This blackness has features. Teratoid features. Malformed. Alive. And it does not observe time. Days and nights arrive without distinction. Seconds stretch. Years collapse.

A faint ironic smile.

From the blackness's point of view, your condition can be remodeled in two shakes of a lamb's tail. Your stability ebbs and flows—not according to logic, but according to the decisions made by people you never see.

THE SPEAKER leans slightly forward.

At any moment, during interrogation, during sleep, while eating, while dreaming—dreaming perhaps too generous a word—you may be taken without notice to a court that is unconstitutional or merely ornamental. A kangaroo court.

A SHORT PAUSE.

You can appeal to the judge for clemency by no means—not because the appeal lacks reason, but because clemency does not belong to him. It belongs to Mutants. For a moment, you imagine telling him—quietly, reasonably—that you know he is one of them, or else their puppet. Misjudge the judge and it turns into lese-majesty. That offense has its own punishment. Worse, you can't even hold your tongue. The judge and the Mutants expect you to talk—

Touching the ears

to say what they want to hear. The more they ask you to come clean, the more you understand that your life is in their hands. You possess nothing of what they demand you to confess.

A BEAT.

Silence, however, is also unacceptable. Silence provokes their methods—uncommon, memorable, merciless. They scourge you until language leaks out of your body like blood.

THE SPEAKER exhales sharply.

They take satisfaction in watching you writhe. These blinkered guardians of alleged virtue administer pain with ritual precision—physical, verbal, moral. Eventually, you reach the worst state: the moment you feel yourself tilting—becoming lopsided, parasitic, gnathonic. Unwillingly—or worse, unconsciously—you find yourself a dyed-in-the-wool, true-blue advocate.

THE SPEAKER straightens.

Then... they give you some paper and a pen to write. They instruct you to be solicitous with words. They naturally expect you not to hold out.

A BITTER LAUGH.

They muzzle you—
they police your words before they exist—
before you dare to articulate them, before you venture to write them down. No matter how skilled you are at writing, you're balled up inside their guarded style. When desperation peaks, they help. They weave a tissue of lies and ask you to believe them—and then to write them down. Why? Because from their standpoint, you should be repentant of your hypothetical lies. About what? About those lies they want you to repeat and believe and probably the things you said against the Leviathan and all its bloody, brutal believers. Those who imagine your naked body on the floor of their temple and do whatever they like with what they regard as hellish, fiendish flesh and blood of yours.

THE SPEAKER looks away.

Not knowing anything about time and being off your feed— asking yourself whether it's lunch time or dinnertime—they bring you something they call a meal. Something that looks like anything but what would once have counted as daily sustenance. That tells you what it means. It's edible—
not eatable.

In this damp place, you feel cold inside and outside. It's as if griseous clouds hang heavily over and pogonip curls around the edge of this geographical isolation, obscuring what is going on inside. When the rain falls pitapat on the roof, a numbing sensation settles in—physical, then mental. Coldness tears into your whole existence. The sun belongs elsewhere. Mutants' regulations proscribe any contact with it. According to them, traitors should not have any chance to see the sun on a sunny day. This blackness, rather than darkness, and the terrible coldness make you hear and see things that may or may not exist.

You can't decide whether a flock of pigeons taking flight holus-bolus or it's your imagination—

The sound arrives magnified, unbearable.

SOUND: A sudden, vast flutter of wings—loud and startling—as if a flock of pigeons all at once takes flight. THE SPEAKER scrambles backward, landing at CENTER STAGE.

You are startled—not by the noise, but by your own breathing. You become afraid of it.

This is what you call day.

Night? If it is night—
nightmares: you see yourself in the witness box. You confess. Your death is already waiting. You're scared stiff. You know your death is imminent.

A LEADEN SILENCE

And a lawyer—if you still believe in such things—is of no consequence. Why? Because nothing functions here the way it claims to. No evidence survives this room, no disturbance of mind counts, no explanation mitigates anything. So you wait.

You hold your horses—not for justice, but for the verdict. For the sentence.

What they want you to do is to take a vow of chastity and to swear an oath of loyalty to the Leviathan, or their Supreme Leader. This vow is a commitment to avoid what they regard as blasphemy—anything that comes perilously close to desecration or a sort of sacrilegious act.

THE SPEAKER freezes. A wary glance into the darkness beyond the light. A slow, searching look toward the ceiling.

Like the decay of tissue, the death of ratiocination provides a suitable medium for the growth of the gangrene of bigotry in the mind. These Mutants cannot survive without the nourishment they obtain from their ideology and from whatever the Leviathan tells them.

THE SPEAKER runs DOWNSTAGE, addressing the audience directly in a projected whisper.

But the problem is that they want to instill this sort of mentality into the people's minds, those who have not yet transmuted into Mutants. They are, in fact, in favor of a state where individuality has no bearing on what they consider an impregnable uniformity. The scaffold of their state is on the foundation impregnated with the death of choice.

A PAUSE. THE SPEAKER steps backward slightly, as though the space itself has shifted.

Another thing you learn—slowly, unwillingly—is how your so-called wrongdoings are recorded. Or rather: manufactured. Fake documentation is their specialty. Their craft. Based on these documents, you are required to answer questions you do not recognize—questions that refer to events you never took part in, conversations you never had, intentions you never formed. When you cannot answer, they supply the answers themselves. They ask you to repeat them. And then—to be precise—to discover a convincing cause for your crimes by reasoning backward from answers they have already given you. Why? Because, according to them, cooperation—however coerced—counts as repentance. And repentance, in whatever form it takes, may entitle you to a reduction of punishment.

Moreover, the coercive nature of the interaction leaves almost no room for resistance. Your tongue becomes a liability—a ball and chain you drag behind every word. You begin to wish you were mute, because speaking about anything other than what they want would be a mindless risk.

What's wrong with it?

Nothing, except the fact that you feel the scythe of the Grim Reaper on your neck.

A faint scream is heard. THE SPEAKER
does not react, as if the sound is as common
as a ticking clock.

When they make someone scream or shriek nearby, you know they have something to tell you. They warn you that this is the voice of someone who tried to upset the apple cart—and failed to cooperate. You try to appear cool-headed. You keep your face composed. But you know, somewhere deeper than reason, that there is a point in what they are saying.

THE SPEAKER moves toward
DOWNSTAGE, talking.

What's the point?

THE SPEAKER whirls around, stumbling
back a step.

The crux of the matter is: you have to smoke out the guilty parties—anyone they consider hostile to the Leviathan and his followers. You must name them. Fail to do so, and you become suspect yourself—one of those accused of upsetting the apple cart.

THE SPEAKER's hands press against eyes
and face, then draw back the ears.

Will they forgive you for that? Not on your life. You'll be condemned forever.

THE SPEAKER fetches his chair and brings
it DOWNSTAGE and sits.

What you should try to instill in your mind—no matter if it's not true—is that you were involved in some suspicious, insidious machination with accomplices already known to them, though not to you.

This must be clear. You must confess—directly. No equivocation. No evasion.

You are the already guilty. That is settled. If you fly off on a tangent—if you hesitate, qualify, or attempt explanation—you will be punished.

If they ask you—with an edge of paranoia—whether your works are marked by what they call theological heterodoxy,

THE SPEAKER rises, pulls the chair
slightly back, and begins to pace around it,
mid-sentence.

your answer must satisfy them, not make sense. You cannot say that your ideas are at variance with the prevailing understanding. Such a statement would count as evasion. You are expected to recant every opinion that, in one way or another, conflicts with what the Leviathan proclaims and the Mutants shout from the rooftops.

THE SPEAKER spins his chair, then
straddles it facing the back.

It may come into your mind that you are intelligent enough to resist—that you can use your brain, manipulate the situation, outthink their attempts to make you speak. But before you apply that intelligence, they make you understand that you are not the sharpest tool in the shed. They tell you that others—people fully in control of their minds—gave up easily. You may still trust your own capacities. But they prove that, as long as they hold you as their guinea pig, nothing you possess is under your control.

THE SPEAKER swings around to face
forward in the chair.

It may take only a few hours to learn that you cannot outclass the other Non-mutants in refusing the status quo. What you look for resistance reveals itself as failure—failure to learn obedience. Then they bring in examples—powerful Non-mutants who once disobeyed and now comply. These Non-mutants sit with you. They pray with you. They make absolute submission visible.

THE SPEAKER's spine snaps into a rigid
uprightness—precise, instructional. His gaze
locks forward, unblinking, a fraction too
fixed to be at ease. The face remains neutral,
practiced mask of authority; the absolute
stillness suggests strain rather than calm.

The afterclap of this modeling and change is that you will also get drafted to tutor other Non-mutants—those who may still feel the temptation to resist blind obedience. How? By escalating the process of transmutation. By turning them into slaves like yourself.

At the end, you are expected to make these poor people believe that they are in Mutants' debt for their lives.

Your inability to transform them will incense the Mutants and put you through the wringer. It will be taken as evidence that you were never fully changed—or that failed in your duty to change others. In either case, your failure is interpreted as breach of trust. Sovereignty demands a visible, unyielding steadfastness. Any deviation—no matter how minute—is a liability.

A nod begins. Stops. The expression freezes,
as if awaiting punishment that does not
arrive.

You intend to nod, but instead a different reaction occurs: a harrumph or an involuntary sigh. To them, it is

A BEAT. Leaning in, THE SPEAKER
lowers the voice.

Nothing but leakage.
Evidence of misalignment.
An annoyance on your part.

That is intolerable.

Do you have the right to be annoyed by anything while you're in their presence? Definitely not. And you were already told what you should expect for this leakage. It takes time not merely to understand but to feel that these Mutants are utterly devoid of what ordinary people call common sense. They possess no practical judgment, no appreciation of the proportion between what you do and what they do to you. Their hostility toward Non-mutants is not a lap or a mood; it is ingrained. Structural. And because of that, there is no wangle you can pull, no maneuver, no appeal that loosens the pressure they put on you.

A PAUSE. A hand reaches out from the pitch-black darkness, offering a white mug of tea.
THE SPEAKER stares at the pale ceramic—the only visible object from the dark area—before reaching out to accept it.
The hand disappears immediately.

Of course, if they give you a cup of tea while they put the screws on you to confess, that would be your heyday. You may wonder why one wouldn't end one's life in such a situation. Touché, but that is precisely what Mutants prefer—suicide does their work for them. They no longer have to justify to the public or the-still-passive Non-mutants why they killed you.

Even then, there were some Non-mutants who put on a front of confidence and claimed they can resist. After a time, they ended their lives and handed the Mutants the advantage of their ritual self-destruction.

THE SPEAKER retrieves a small, worn
stack of pictures from the pocket, examining
them while speaking.

Some of those people—people you knew—leave an indelible imprint on your soul, but their suicide does not alter the condition of the imprisoned, nor the course of Homo Sapiens' life in general. Although everyone has an inviolable right to decide whether to end their life, you may still ask what would happen if one of the people who committed suicide said it out loud—directly—to a Mutant, “shut your trap?” The answer is simple.

That Mutant would kill them.

That, too, ends a life. But only one of the ways makes the cost speak—listen:
Suicide removes one quietly.
Speech forces Mutants to act.
One disappears.
The other exposes the machine.

You may say this is still a way of ending it all. You're right, but this does something suicide does not. It forces others to look at the condition of the Non-mutants still trapped inside this order. It marks the dead not as fragile, not as a nuisance swept aside, but as someone who refused the Mutants' morality—old anachronistic.

And no—nothing here becomes just.

However, compared with suicide, this kind of death carries meaning; it strikes those already resisting, those trying—

Lowering the voice, THE SPEAKER leans
in closer.

quietly—to be heard.

THE SPEAKER straightens and steps back
into the light.

In dying this way, you refuse the obedience wrung from you by coercion. You are not remembered as a disturbance, not as someone who vanished inward. You are remembered as defiance—or whatever word survives once they finish naming it—not erased by confusion, but ended by refusal. Under such circumstances, in the heavy silence of the room, a person begins to feel like staring death in the face: something cold settles deep in the body.

A tremor passes through THE SPEAKER. It is suppressed. The body stills again, rigid, as if choosing not to fall.

Chills.

Shudders.

Spasms.

Bodily betrayals.

A trembling that has no name.

Often, this is where the thought of ending it enters, born of despair—as the last retreat—not courage. “Sometimes even to live is an act of courage,”

A BEAT.

No matter how short.

But it isn't the courage the crowd praises. It isn't loud. It isn't rewarded. It is knowing that integrity may cost your life—and still choosing not to betray it, even when silence would save you.

A PAUSE.

Sometimes, it is easier to confess to what you never did than resist inwardly and force the Mutants' hand.

It feels like relief when you do the seemingly impossible right things, even knowing no one will thank you. Most people won't. They are busy living, busy surviving, busy forgetting. Those who were killed do not interrupt ordinary routines, and those who resist are remembered—if at all—as belonging to a world this order has already buried.

THE SPEAKER begins to move slowly along a fixed path—measured, deliberate, almost procedural. Each sentence advances the body a step. The movement stops only when the paragraph ends.

When the Mutants can no longer manage resistance one by one—when dark rooms, isolation, and private punishment fail—they turn outward. What they cannot enforce in hidden places, they impose in the streets.

Weapons when they can.

Hands when they must.

Not on the detained, but on the visible—those still among others.

They kill—to keep those held inside silent.

This is why some Non-mutants keep fighting anyway, even knowing the mass may never understand. For them, the Mutants' ideological and political beliefs have already reached the ultimate apogee of absurdity, and they take it as their duty to take the lid off it—to show what the system does when secrecy fails and to make the cost of obedience visible.

Each death is renamed accordingly: among Non-mutants, “a measure of courage;” among Mutants, “a file marked “Desperate Traitor” or “Notorious Scaremonger.” The targets change, but the method does not.

Anyhow, fighting against these Mutants who demonize anyone unwilling to accept their ruling ideology should never be stopped.

These sphinx-like oppressors are among the most dangerous and cruel of the anthropoid. If disappointment sets in, you may as well abandon the idea that there was ever a primate called Homo Sapiens. The moment you are accused of stirring anti-Mutant sentiment—or violence by implication—your destiny is molded through their flagrant methods of suppression.

THE SPEAKER sits cross-legged on the
floor staring at the audience as if words
could burn right through the whole house.

From then on, you are no longer the master of your own fate. Why then should you not fight them with everything you have? Let us be among those who constitute the epicenter of the shockwave that may one day ripple through the entire Mutant order. What is required are clairvoyant souls who refuse solace in anything short of ending the Mutants’ dominion over a planet that belongs to humans. There’s no doubt—no reservation—that Non-mutants condemn these creatures born from what passes, in their world, for defective ‘genes’—not inherited, but imposed. Only those who stand against their will and ideology can restore the unpolluted force to the original inhabitants of the planet Earth.

THE SPEAKER falters mid-thought. A hand
rises to the temple, as searching for
something that should be there. The
movement stalls. The hand lowers.

The bitter fact is that the Non-mutants’ golden age lies behind them, not ahead. Once upon a time, there was a society rich in bright minds and generous hearts—but that radiant era, that prosperity has slipped below the horizon of memory. Tradition, culture, even what was once called religion are now out of joint. One of the duties of the Mutants in the Security Division is to make you forget your past. Sometimes you are taken to the infirmary, where laboratory-made substances are tested on your brain, on the very schemata of memory. You may lie comatose for hours while they work on your brain and body.

A LONG PAUSE. The body remains seated,
unmoving—for a while.

Then, very slowly, THE SPEAKER stands
up. The stare holds, but something in it loses
focus—like a signal briefly failing.

When you regain consciousness, you may feel nothing out of the ordinary for a while. But gradually, something begins to feel wrong—without you knowing what it is. Your temper turns volatile. At times, you lash out at those close to you and feel shame too late. At other times, you feel like unable to camouflage your intentions; certain thoughts escape without your consent. These reactions—sudden, unwanted—are no longer under the control of your brain or your nervous system. And because they bear no resemblance to anything you experienced before, you cannot trace cause. Frustrated by this fracture, you move in and out of what appears to be a normal mental state, with no sense of how long it will persist.

No one can deny that people endure differently, and that some reach a point where resistance begins to fail. That is precisely why others must continue to fight—for those who cannot, for those teetering on the brink of collapse. If they do not, who will hold hope for those already breaking? The responsibility falls to those still standing to safeguard dignity—not only their own, but also that of the Non-mutants who can no longer withstand the pressure.

Among the arrested Non-mutants are those labeled as spies—predictably the first to endure the worst tortures before execution. Many would insist that there is no justification, not even the slightest, for spying on one's own country. However, it seems that these people should not always be told off or treated as traitors. On the contrary, they should be taken as heroes and heroines. Why?

THE SPEAKER moves—slowly at first,
then with growing insistence.

Because such men and women, torn by divided loyalty, choose to fight Mutants by helping the states that the Mutants have already declared hostile. Indeed, some believe these heroes—disguised as spies—move heaven and earth to carry out a single purpose: the elimination of the Mutants. Their actions are labeled as treachery, but the label collapses under scrutiny: they act on a political truth forged under pressure—survival draws allegiance; the enemy of one's enemy is one's friend. To risk everything in order to pass information—through back doors, through silence, through fear—is to show one's true character.

A PAUSE.

And they pay the price. They are the ill-starred victims of Non-mutants' misjudgments and Mutants' atrocities alike. What they do is deliberate—it is the last remaining window through which freedom might still be glimpsed. If such actions are condemned, those willing to risk their lives for freedom may lay down their fight. And when that happens, hope itself is quietly thrown overboard. You cannot wish to have freedom and in the same breath, reprove your frontline soldiers. So, what should be done?

THE SPEAKER stops moving, faces the
audience fully again. The voice
steadies—not louder but firmer.

Nothing—except to change the way these daredevils are seen: not as traitors, but as the last defenders of a collapsing world. If those falsely called betrayers are recognized for what they are—death-defying adversaries of Mutants—then slander loses its force.

Unfair accusations fall away.

Courage becomes harder to isolate.

And the Mutants' hope to break or erase these people entirely collapses under the weight of collective support.

THE SPEAKER slows, eyes drifting as if
searching for words.

This shift matters most among the intellectuals—the so-called eggheads—who know, with bitter clarity, that their previous efforts achieved nothing. Instead of denouncing those brave Non-mutants as traitors, they must denounce the injustice, oppression, torture, and the calculated use of violence against those who resist in any way possible. The fact that the Mutants brand such actions of these Non-mutants as subversive is reason enough to stand with them. What matters now is not judging motives, but knowing what is actually happening. Not sorting people into the brave, the so-called traitors, and the weak, but recognizing how resistance works under pressure. Those falsely called betrayers fight the Mutants by exposure and risk annihilation. Others are crushed by the same machinery but cannot afford that risk. The difference exists. Treating it as treason is the error. Once resistance is misnamed, the Mutants no longer need to act. The damage is already done.

SECTION FIVE

The low chamber.

A dark oppressive space.

The stage is bare, defined only by shadow and a sense of crushing weight.

THE PRISONER is alone in the dark, held
in a tight, labored crouch with neck craned
forward as if resisting a heavy, invisible
weight.

A distant GONG strikes.

A sharp flinch.

No shift from the spot.

THE PRISONER

Sometimes you're quartered in a place with other protesters—pigeonholed as the most incorrigible, mutinous ones. The room is very low.

THE PRISONER ducks his head.

So low you have to bow your head to stand. Every time a new body is forced into the dark, a gong is struck.

THE SOUND lingers.

Why do you think they put you together?

To make you talk.

Every one of you shares experiences—torture, humiliation, starvation, deprivation. Some, in fractured voices, speak of rape. Of sexual assault. Until fear has a voice.

This is why they force you into one sealed space. The Mutants make you trade horror until it becomes communal, contagious.

Here, suffering is not the end.

It's the method.

This way of treating human beings cannot be found among other creatures; it is the Mutants' signature. It's the visible mark of their ideology—parts and parcel of their fundamentalism.

THE PRISONER lifts the head slightly—not
in defiance, but in refusal to sink further.

When Non-mutants are forced together in such a disheartening place, those who are still quick-witted, still fiery, must not let the space fill with relentless recounting of dread.

Repeating dread feeds it.

The reverse starves it.

Instead, the Non-mutants must rely on the few who can still speak without breaking. The bold—the pluckiest among them—must talk of resistance: of riots, of belligerence, of moments when cruelty was met with refusal. In a place like this, such utterances force their way. Even the silent listeners—the most frightened ones—are stirred by them.

THE PRISONER holds the posture. A
deliberate stillness. The gaze begins to
move—from one face in the audience to
another.

Here, anger is not a weakness; it is fuel. Words must sharpen it, not exhaust it. Each voice should push the others toward action against Mutants—the man-eaters—who will never relent. As long as they persist, the wrath of Non-mutants must not dim. That requires vigilance replacing despair—guarding their souls, and the space pressing in on them.

A BEAT.

The gains may not offset the losses. But the more Non-mutants toe the line, the more Mutants threaten to take over their lives. The Mutants must not become the absolute, uncontested winners of this war of attrition. Yes, it is frightening to see your torturer, spattered by blood, enter your cell. So is the image of the noose tightening around your neck. But such images, scenes, and sensations only weaken Non-mutants. The more vulnerable they become, the more lives are lost.

THE PRISONER steps very close to the audience.

All lights fade—except a single, harsh light on the actor.

Despite what you heard so far, there is no way to avoid hearing that she was hanged, he was hanged, they were all executed. Yes, life here matters not.

That's enough.

That's enough.

That's enough.

Lights off. Curtain please.

Lights go off. Curtain falls. Then a voice is heard over the loudspeaker.

The Echoes of Blackness through Unbroken Lines are only fragments of what one experiences as an Iranian political activist—in life or in confinement—though they echo the fate of libertarian voices persecuted by tyrannical regimes worldwide.

FADE TO BLACK.