



IRONBOUND

BY MARTYNA MAJOK



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



IRONBOUND
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IRONBOUND was originally produced at Round House Theatre Company (Ryan Rilette, Producing Artistic Director) in Bethesda, Maryland, as part of the Women's Voices Theater Festival, on September 9, 2015. It was directed by Daniella Topol, the scenic designer was James Kronzer, the costume designer was Kathleen C. Geldard, the lighting designers were Brian MacDevitt and Andrew R. Cissna, the sound designer was Eric Shimelonis, and the dramaturg was Jessica Pearson. The cast was as follows:

DARJA Alexandra Hendrikson
TOMMY Jefferson A. Russell
MAKS Josiah Bania
VIC William Vaughan

The New York premiere of IRONBOUND was produced in March 2016 by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater (David Van Asselt, Artistic Director) and Women's Project Theater (Lisa McNulty, Producing Artistic Director; Maureen Moynihan, Managing Director). It was directed by Daniella Topol, the scenic and lighting designs were by Justin Townsend, the costume designer was Kaye Voyce, and the sound designer was Jane Shaw. The cast was as follows:

DARJA Marin Ireland
TOMMY Morgan Spector
MAKS Josiah Bania
VIC Shiloh Fernandez

IRONBOUND was developed by Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Martha Lavey, Artistic Director, David Hawkanson, Executive Director), through its New Play Initiative and was presented as part of its First Look Repertory of New Work at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL. The play was the winner of the 2014 David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize at Marin Theatre Company (Jason Minadakis, Artistic Director; Michael Barker, Managing Director), Mill Valley, CA.

IRONBOUND was commissioned by a grant from the National New Play Network, with funding from the Smith Prize for New Plays.

PEOPLE

Darja.
[*DAR-ya*]

Tommy.

Maks.

Vic.

Darja and Tommy can be late 30s/early 40s.

Maks can be 30s.

Vic should appear teenage/early 20s.

The play spans 22 years. In 2006, Darja is 34.

PLACE

A bus stop at night, a quarter-mile from a factory in Elizabeth, NJ.
Or where there used to be a factory, depending on the year.

DIALOGISTICS

Slashes (//) indicate overlap.

Ellipses (...) are active silences.

Polish language is italicized. [Phonetics and translations can be found at the back of the book.]

A note on staging.

The play should be performed without an intermission.

Darja does not leave the stage until the very end of the play.

A note on performance.

It can be tempting to play the circumstances of these characters' lives and end up missing the comedy. It is my hope for an audience to laugh and understand.

A note on New Jersey:

The Jersey I know is gravel and cattails. Empty quarter drinks and Buds litter parking lots. A marsh, a highway, bridges. Almost everyone is from somewhere else. And, yes, there's a reason they're not living in New York.

*There is an old story about a worker suspected of stealing:
every evening, as he leaves the factory,
the wheelbarrow he rolls in front of him is carefully inspected.
The guards can find nothing. It is always empty.
Finally, the penny drops:
what the worker is stealing are the wheelbarrows themselves.*

—Slavoj Žižek, *Violence*

*Now near the end of the middle stretch of road
What have I learned? Some earthly wiles. An art.
That often I cannot tell good fortune from bad,
That once had seemed so easy to tell apart.*

—Robert Pinsky, “Jersey Rain”

IRONBOUND

Scene 1 2014. Winter.

A streetlight zaps on.

*Night. An environment of black.
Stars exist beyond smog; we don't see them.
A bus stop. Perhaps a faded sign. But probably not.
This world is one of constant less.*

The chill of winter is just starting to set in.

Two people fight. Darja in sweats, a scarf, and a hoodie—the clothes of a cleaning lady. She carries a large tote bag with her. Slavic accent. Tommy wears a Jersey Devils jacket over his postal worker's uniform. Shorts. A tribal calf tat.

DARJA. What you don't understand is how so much you // hurt me.

TOMMY. I'm sorry!

DARJA. And I suppose to do with this what? What I suppose to do with this?

TOMMY. What you need to realize is it was from a different time. A Different Time.

DARJA. It was four month ago.

TOMMY. And I'm different now. Get in the car.

DARJA. Four month you keep from me and how many times we, since you, how many?

TOMMY. Can you please fuckin please get in the fuckin car please?

DARJA. This was not the week. This was not good week to do this.

TOMMY. I didn't do it this week. This week's the week you chose to find out about it.

Just get in the car. Yer not ridin that bus.

DARJA. I rode the other bus here.

TOMMY. And I tailed you in my—and that bus was not *this* bus, was not *this* neighborhood, waitin in *this*.

DARJA. I was riding that bus whole the time. Since that factory open, I ride.

TOMMY. O wow *that's* the factory you used to work at—?

DARJA. We are not having nice conversation now. The past. Memories. No.

TOMMY. (*Trying.*) What happened to it // again?

DARJA. No.

...

TOMMY. Okay. Y'know what, Darja? What you gotta understand, man, is that people fuck up. It's planned that way. Yer Catholic. You know. It's planned this way for people to fuck up cuz if we were all perfect, fuck, who'd need to be Catholic. It's a cycle a system listen: We're not in control of these things, okay? Okay? We are Outta Control. And if you wanna crossify me for one little, man, after *everything* we've, everything *I've* done, for you, how many years?, if you wanna do that, Darja, then... I don't know, man. I just don't think you should do that, Darja.

(*Longer than it should take:*)

I'm sorry.

DARJA. Me too.

Also you have no idea what you talking about, also.

TOMMY. The bus won't come. It's too late.

DARJA. And with rich lady, hey. Congratulation to you.

TOMMY. Did you hear me?

DARJA. It will come.

TOMMY. Fine, it comes, then what? You get off at Market and, what, walk? Yer gonna walk through Newark now? A woman like you?

DARJA. I do this many year before you, Tommy. A woman like what.

TOMMY. Get in the car.

DARJA. No.

TOMMY. DARJA GET IN THE FUCKIN CAR.

...

DARJA. You are not the one what gets to curse.

TOMMY. We're goin to the same place.

DARJA. And I pack when I get there.

TOMMY. Yer not gonna—

DARJA. No. You pack.

TOMMY. I'm not goin—

DARJA. No. Me. I am going.

TOMMY. Yeah? With what car?

DARJA. HEY! I had car.

TOMMY. Well you don't now, do you.

...

DARJA. I will find someone. I will find someone else.

TOMMY. Where?

DARJA. I found *you*. I was not blind person. I was not stupid. I know exactly what was I doing so I was not stupid. I weighed you on scale and I say mm Okay.

TOMMY. "Okay"?

DARJA. I am forty-two years old, married-twice-already woman: I have no time for stupid. So I weigh you on scale. Okay? So tell me, Tommy. How many times you—

TOMMY. What good's that kinda information?

DARJA. How many?

TOMMY. Why?

DARJA. Five? Four? One time every month?

TOMMY. Why do you need to know?

DARJA. Is some numbers I can handle. And some I probably cannot.

...

TOMMY. If you leave, I don't know what's gonna happen to me.

DARJA. Five?

TOMMY. I'm not good alone, you know that.

DARJA. Five?

...

TOMMY. Five.

DARJA. Not nine?

...

TOMMY. Nine.

DARJA. Not twelve?

TOMMY. No.

DARJA. Not twelve?

TOMMY. No.

DARJA. Not fourteen?

...

TOMMY. No.

DARJA. You look in my face and you lie. Why you lie my face when I find out things so good?

TOMMY. You never made a mistake?

DARJA. Fourteen times it's not // mistake—

TOMMY. —A very // big mistake—

DARJA. —Fourteen times it's career.

Just answer me one thing. You want me I stay?

TOMMY. Yes. Yes, of course I, yes.

DARJA. Why.

TOMMY. I love you.

DARJA. NO. WE ARE NOT HAVING NICE CONVERSATION.

TOMMY. Well, you wanna know why, that's why.

DARJA. You love me, okay, but you consider leaving. You, so obvious, you consider this—

TOMMY. I didn't *plan* // like— Things Happen.

DARJA. I TALK NOW.

Must be something what scares you more than leaving and so you stay. People imagine things. Things what can happen them, alone. In nights, they make pictures this thing in their heads. What you imagine? For me, is when I am cleaning her house and—

TOMMY. Does she know you know? About—that you know?

DARJA. What good would be if she know? I need job. And she have—*you* know—very dirty house.

No. She don't know.

You have broke me to one hundred pieces.

TOMMY. I'm sorry. How much you want me to apologize? I apologized. So much. It's in the past.

DARJA. What you imagine?

...

TOMMY. It's the nights. At the apartment. When yer workin late and no one's home. Yer always workin. And late.

There's no sound.

And thoughts come.

I'm not good alone. You know that.

DARJA. And what happens if you can't fill apartment with someone?

TOMMY. I could find someone. But it's not about findin *someone*.

DARJA. Yes this is.

TOMMY. No. No, it's not. It's about *you* not leavin.

DARJA. Where? Where you would find someone? In *post office*? Go to someone's house? Slip to them *letter*? Slide in their mail slot your letter? "Meet me tonight."

TOMMY. I never slipped her a letter.

DARJA. Did I say you did?

TOMMY. That's not even my route. Montclair. Not my postal route.

...

If you think about it... I'm the best you ever had.

...

DARJA. This stupid bus. I am walking.

TOMMY. I'll just tail you, you start walkin. HEY!—

(She has set out. He grabs her arm, stops her.)

Don't be fuckin crazy.

Okay?

Get in the car.

DARJA. Or you will just hold me like this until what?

(A moment.

He lets go.

A breath.)

What if I did to you what you did to me? What if?

TOMMY. I'd stay with you. And forgive you. And love you so very very much.

DARJA. You would stay with me, yes sure. Yes sure, because I make easy your life. For you, I cook, I clean, I lay there for you. I make sounds. Easy life. And you can whatever you want because I will lay there. Of course you would stay with me.

TOMMY. That's what you think?

DARJA. I weigh you on scale.

TOMMY. Well that's not what I think.

And, actually, you lay there very loudly.

Yer welcome.

DARJA. No, you are welcome.

Everything can change. You come home one day and maybe it's no one there.

Everything it's already changed.

So what you will give me now?

TOMMY. What?

DARJA. What you will *give* me. For me to stay. Because you love me. So very very much.

You think you can whatever you want with whoever you want for one night. One hour. Ten minutes (I know you). But everyone goes their homes after.

TOMMY. What is this "everyone" shit? It was One Person.

IRONBOUND

by Martyna Majok

1W, 3M

At a bus stop in a run-down New Jersey town, Darja, a Polish immigrant cleaning lady, is done talking about feelings; it's time to talk money. Over the course of 20 years, and three relationships, Darja negotiates for her future with men who can offer her love or security, but never both. Award-winning playwright Martyna Majok's *IRONBOUND* is a darkly funny, heartbreaking portrait of a woman for whom love is a luxury—and a liability—as she fights to survive in America.

"[A] quietly gripping play... Ms. Majok's perceptive drama, with its bone-dry humor and vivid characters, illustrates how vulnerable people like Darja are hostages to the vagaries of chance, unless they can manage to climb out of poverty."
—**The New York Times**

"[An] intriguing work... The play, like life, isn't about easy answers."
—**New York Daily News**

"Majok's unsentimental IRONBOUND... [is a] topical and insightful drama... a tough, moving portrait of a woman stuck in place."
—**Time Out (New York)**

"You seldom see plays that are both harsh and wonderful, but that is the balance that Polish-born playwright Martyna Majok strikes... she writes with such energy and charisma that the play's four characters feel vivid and real. ... The play never sugarcoats, yet it steers clear of bleakness because Majok's language is so entertainingly alive."
—**The Washington Post**

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