

Marta Rebzda

Broken

CHARACTERS:

HIM

HER

AGNIESZKA

MOTHER

MAN 1

MAN 2

Documentary recordings of:

Agnieszka

Daria

Marcelina

Magda

VO

Polish Radio Theatre.

(eerie music)

VO

Marta Rebzda. "Broken"

FEMALE VO

Broken...

(drill for teenage girls, training for perfect wives, self-help book for women)

MOTHER

Sit up.

MAN 1

Tits up!

MOTHER

Get rid of this tummy.

MAN 2

Look natural.

MOTHER

Be yourself.

MAN 1

You're trying too hard.

MOTHER

Men don't like women who try too hard.

MAN 2

Be sensual. *Be sensual.*

MOTHER

Be a cool girl, *be yourself*, not like all the others.

(wings flapping)

(inside an ambulance, driving with the signal on)

HER

Slow down. Turn right.

HIM

Into the woods?

HER

Yes, it should be close. Her phone had been pinging from somewhere here... A bit further on.

Stop the car! We have to find her.

(they get out of the car, Ext.: woods. They walk on)

HIM

I think I can see her! Underneath that tree...

(they run)

HER

Is she conscious?

HIM

We shall see.

(they reach Agnieszka and lean over her as she lies down)

HER

She's breathing. That's good.

HIM

She has a loop on her neck. The branch must have broken.

HER

She was lucky.

(Agnieszka's frail groaning in the background)

HIM (*to Agnieszka*)

Look at me, madam! One more time! Keep looking at me!

(*to Her*)

Her pupils are visibly dilated.

HER

Come on now. You're alright. She told her therapist that she had taken all the antidepressants which she had at home and washed them down with alcohol.

That's her fifth attempt.

HIM

How do you know?

HER

I know her.

AGNIESZKA (*whispering*)

I can't do this anymore... Please, just leave me. I can't go on living. I really can't.

HER

Yes, you can. Calm down.

HIM (*to Her*)

She has to vomit like right now.

HER

Okay.

HIM

Hold her... I'll try a pen.

(*to Agnieszka*)

Please open your mouth. Right. I will put it in now...

(*Agnieszka retches*)

Excellent! Atta girl!

(*Agnieszka coughing*)

HER

Bring the stretchers. I'll wait with her here. Go on, quick! *(to Agnieszka)* You're fine now.

AGNIESZKA *(recorded)*

My dad was a gambler but he could be quite sweet sometimes. I had siblings, a lot of friends and acquaintances. I would spend a lot of time outside because home wasn't always safe. My parents divorced when I was seven, I think. Yet we couldn't afford to move out so we stayed on. My parents quarrelled a lot. Then my stepfather came into the picture and he got a place to live through his work so finally we moved out. I found it very difficult when my parents made me choose whom I wanted to stay with. It was obvious for me that I'd leave with my mom but because of that my father said that he'd have nothing to do with me anymore.

(Ext: woods. Him and Her lay Agnieszka on stretchers)

HER

Slowly, slowly.

HIM

This must have hurt.

HER

This was the first time she felt rejected.

AGNIESZKA *(introspection)*

Our stepfather didn't accept me or my brother. He treated his own children completely differently from us. He gave us constant drills, as though for military training. Hours of cleaning and washing up after a lunch for a family of seven. Sometimes I stood at the sink until supper which I also had to prepare myself. And then wash up again. I would finish at 10 p.m. and then he would come to check if I had put the forks in the right order or whether I have dedusted the shelves that he knew I was unable to reach. So I'd have to start all over again.

(drill for teenage girls, training for perfect wives, self-help book for women)

MAN 2

Drama queen!

MAN 1

Children can be seen not heard.

MOTHER

Nobody wants you. Don't speak without being asked. If you have your own opinion...

MAN 1

Children can be seen not heard.

MOTHER

... no one will ever want you.

MAN 2

Why are you crying? Drama queen!

MOTHER

Smile! Respect! Girls should smile.

MAN 1

Don't sit like that.

MOTHER

Girls!

MAN 1

Don't stand like that. *Don't sit like that.*

MOTHER

Look at yourself!

Always forgive!

Comb your hair.

MAN 2

Clean after yourself. *Clean after yourself.*

MOTHER

Be modest. Control your hair.

Always forgive! Love!

MAN 1

Don't stand like that.

MOTHER

Respect.

(Ext.: woods. Him and Her slide the stretchers with Agnieszka into the ambulance, Agnieszka keeps groaning)

HIM

I wonder what her tormentors were taught.

AGNIESZKA *(introspection)*

When I was ten, my fourteen-year-old cousin moved in with us. Mariusz had always been alienated, troublesome, mean and jealous. Something was definitely wrong with him. His mother – my mother's sister – had died of cancer. Before her death, she made my mom promise that she'd take care of her son. From the very beginning, I felt that his appearance in our life is no good news.

HER

Tell us about the first time he hurt you.

AGNIESZKA

That evening he was watching a film about cancer-sufferers with my parents. He was scared to go to sleep alone. My mother didn't think twice to propose that he get in bed with me. This is when it started. First he would only touch me but then the rapes started. *(crying)* When he did, he would put a knife against my throat and cover my mouth with his hand. He would threaten me with visions of being sent back to my father or to an orphanage. I was terrified of him.

HIM

I don't get. Why didn't you scream?

HER

What don't you get?

The "playing dead" mechanism is known to almost all victims of violence and rape.

HIM

And your mother?

HER

She insisted she never heard a thing.

AGNIESZKA

Impossible! There was only a thin wall between my mother and stepfather's room and my bedroom!

HER

She saw the bloodied sheets and clothes, and the bruises, but she never asked when they came from. And Agnieszka kept silent.

AGNIESZKA

My mother was a very lost person. Her family home had been marred by violence and alcohol. My grandpa drank himself to death. My mom left her home very early. She found it difficult to take care of us because she was trying to save herself.

HIM

Children often protect their parent.

Calm down, please.

(stretchers being slid into the ambulance, door slamming)

MAGDA (recorded)

I was sixteen. He was an intern in the 24-hour therapeutic centre where I was a patient. I first thought that it was the best thing that could have happened to me. I suddenly had someone's attention and love, somebody who was serious about

me and my problems, who saw me and heard me. Which was exceptional because otherwise I had no one in this world. He rented out a flat close to my father's flat and he expected unconditional obedience from me. I was to be at his beck and call. Obviously, I found it difficult to satisfy his demands because I was stuck between one abusive man, i.e. my father, and another one, i.e. him. One day he said that I should stand up to my father. That I'm sixteen already and I should show that I am almost an adult. And he asked me to stay the night. Later we had intercourse, to which I have agreed. Then another one and another one until I finally said "no".

DOROTA

I went to a dance club with my friend. We're hardly party animals, so around 1.30 a.m. we decided to go back home as we had things planned for the next day. I went to catch the underground, which seemed like the most reliable and safest option, beyond any doubt. I was dressed almost from head to toe as it was February. Suddenly I felt someone grabbing my arm – in a very decided manner. I turned and practically instantly I felt this man's hand here, on my breast. I could also feel he was trying to drag me somewhere secluded. I already had a hunch about what was about to happen.

MARCELINA

It happened two years in a place that I have known all my life, where I live. I went to the pub close to where I work right now. I was only planning to get one beer but I was never able to leave. They must have put something in my drink. This man was already there, with his friends. He was trying to chat me up. I told his friends to keep him away from me but I quickly started feeling very sick. I couldn't understand why so I went into the toilet to splash my face, look into the mirror, maybe try to wake myself up a bit. Unfortunately, he followed me inside, as though he had perfectly timed it all. He started putting his hands in my trousers, lick my face and neck, but at this point I was still able to push him away and just leave.

(inside the ambulance, driving with the signal on)

HER

The cousin would abuse Agnieszka with increased frequency. He became even more brutal over time.

MAN 1 *(whispering)*

I'll kill you if you breathe a word. And anyway, nobody will believe you.

HIM

The girl's intimate parts have been repeatedly torn.

AGNIESZKA

I couldn't walk. I even found it difficult to sit down. Then I would ask my mother to excuse me from P.E. classes. She would just sit down and write out the slip.

HER

She never asked why.

HIM

Agnieszka was fourteen when her cousin went into the army.

AGNIESZKA

I remember that when he was to come home on leave, I was so terrified that I decided to tell her.

HER

She didn't believe but she wrote a letter to him. A reply came soon enough.

MAN 1

Auntie, I admit that this has taken place but not as frequently as Agnieszka says. But I warn you that I will sue you all for defamation, should you try to do anything about this.

HIM

Despite her cousin admitting his guilt, Agnieszka's mother never informed the Police.

AGNIESZKA

She was terrified. Actually, she had always been scared of him. Perhaps that's why she chose him over me. Out of fear. This is how I try to rationalise this. I so wanted for her to be there for me. I missed her. A lot. I miss her until this very day.

HER

As it turned out later, Agnieszka's mother kept the letter.

HIM

After falling from grace for a short while, the perpetrator re-joined the family.

HER

And he would continue to rape the girl.

AGNIESZKA

This is when I decided that perhaps if were skinny, he wouldn't like me anymore. I started starving myself and became anorexic. I would spend a lot of time in hospitals and the worst part of it was that I actually enjoyed these stays.

(drill for teenage girls, training for perfect wives, self-help book for women)

MAN 2

Skeleton.

MOTHER

Eat something.

MAN 1

Watch what you eat. *Baby!*

MOTHER

Don't eat this much...

Flesh.

MAN 2

You look like a skeleton.

MOTHER

Eat something.

You're not ill, are you?

MAN 1

Be feminine... Be curvy, tiny and feminine.

Curvy...

MOTHER

Men like a bit of flesh.

MAN 2

Skeleton...

AGNIESZKA

I weighed 38 kilogrammes at 170 cm in height.

(inside the ambulance, driving with the signal on)

HIM

Why didn't she tell anyone at the hospital about the rapes?

HER

She did. She complained to her doctor, scared to go back home. The doctor called her mother, telling her how her daughter was making stuff up and advised to "sort this out" at home.

AGNIESZKA

I confessed to a priest. As part of penance, he told me to pray more... so I'd be pure... And when I was back from the hospital, I got such a beating for telling the doctor, that I just stopped believing that anyone would ever be able to help me.

HIM

She decided to run away from home.

HER

She thought about going into a convent. This would mean redemption, perhaps?

AGNIESZKA

But a week before I joined, my cousin raped me again and this was when I stopped believing in God.

HER

She would run anywhere.

HIM

Ending up nowhere.

(Agnieszka struggles on the stretchers, trying to strangle herself with a drain)

HER

What are you doing, girl?!

AGNIESZKA

Leave me. I beg you...

HER

Come on now...

HIM *(from behind the wheel)*

What's up?

HER

She grabbed the oxygen tube and tried to strangle herself.

HIM

Hasn't she had enough? Check her pulse.

HER

Dropping.

AGNIESZKA *(recorded)*

This is when Waldek came into the picture. He was eight years older and seemed so mature and patient. I knew him eight months and after that rape I just ran away from home to him. Mother was furious. She said that I'd come back on my knees, begging them to take me back. But I knew that I wouldn't be back – not even if I were to live under the bridge. I only felt really bad about my siblings. I couldn't take them with me and they stayed home, with my cousin.

(inside the ambulance, driving with the signal on)

HER

She would have done anything to deserve to stay there.

HIM

She was an easy target.

HER

She caved in and became completely dependent on him.

HIM

She put what she had learnt as a child into practice.

(drill for teenage girls, training for perfect wives, self-help book for women)

MAN 2

Don't be sad.

MOTHER

Be well-behaved and nice.

MAN 2

Make him happy.

MAN 1

Don't curse. Don't be mouthy!

MOTHER

About him.

MAN 1

Don't complain!

MOTHER

Anger makes you ugly.

MAN 1

Don't be mouthy.

MAN 2

Don't be sad.

MAN 1

Be brave. *Don't complain!*

MOTHER

Take care of him.

MAN 2

Make him happy. This is a wife's task.

MOTHER

Be well-behaved and nice.

(inside the ambulance, driving with the signal on)

AGNIESZKA

It soon came out that he was a gambler, like my father. He kept losing his job. He would cheat people. They would visit us repeatedly to complain. And I was forbidden from contacting my family and friends. I was only allowed to see his mom, whom I actually grew to like, in his presence.

HER

He started humiliating Agnieszka.

HIM

He would say the words that her cousin had directed at her in the past.

MAN 2

You were lucky to have met me. All I can do you is use you. You're good for nothing. You're a piece of trash. You're used up! Do you hear me? Used-up!

HER

This was also the first time he hit her.

AGNIESZKA

I thought it would pass. After all, not so long ago he was the only person being nice to me.

HER

And despite all that, she found it in herself to notify the prosecutor's office about the rapes committed by her cousin.

AGNIESZKA

My cousin had the right to use a public defender due to his difficult financial situation. I had no such right. Me, the victim. And I was working in a neonatal ICU as a nurse. The head of the ward helped me. Her husband was an attorney and she offered me his help. His fee wasn't very high and my friends lent me the money. They agreed to me paying it off from my wages.

HER

His defender was exceptionally devoted.

HIM

"She wanted this! – he would shout – Girls this age can be very provocative!".

AGNIESZKA

Believe me, this was unbearable...

HER

Agnieszka applied for the parties to the proceedings to testify separately but the female judge dismissed her motion.

HIM

The rapist and his victim would meet in the court room and in the court halls.

HER

She was paralysed with fear. She would faint if he as much as grunted.

AGNIESZKA

During the proceedings, I was asked repeatedly if by any chance I didn't want the "intercourse" with my cousin... They expected me to know what he was wearing, what underwear he had on, whether it was day or night, what the date was and what I was wearing. How was I supposed to remember all that? I was a child.

HIM

They asked if she resisted.

HER

What she would say.

HIM

Was it loud enough?

AGNIESZKA

They suggested that I was just jealous of my mom devoting more attention to my cousin than to me. They interrogated me for hours. I had a feeling it would never end.

HER

Meanwhile, the defendant refused to admit his guilt. What's more, he refused to testify.

HIM

And he actually accused Agnieszka of lying.

AGNIESZKA

At the time, in spite of everything, I was trying to get pregnant. I had this massive need of love and being loved. I truly believed that my life would have sense again.

It wasn't easy because back home I would be so terrified of my cousin getting me pregnant, that I was completely blocked. And my intimate parts had been so torn inside that I had many adhesions from what my cousin had done to me. Yet I managed to get pregnant.

HIM

Her husband wasn't at all happy.

HER

He just commented shortly:

MAN 2

Cool.

AGNIESZKA (*recorded*)

He never went with me to the doctor's and he actually started travelling a lot, supposedly for work. I couldn't care less because I didn't feel alone any more. I was also completing my education at the time and applying for a student loan. I needed this to be able to afford school but also to pay off his debts, which he owed to practically everybody at this point. I was four months pregnant when they called me from the bank to say that I've been granted the loan. I was walking there to sign the documents when I met my cousin. He kicked me repeatedly in the park and I lost the baby. It would have been a boy. I wanted to call him Szymon or Maksymilian.

(inside the ambulance, driving with the signal on)

HIM

Here we are.

(they pull the stretchers out of the ambulance and run)

AGNIESZKA *(crying)*

Leave me. Please.

HIM *(shouting as he runs into the ER)*

We have a suicide attempt! This woman needs to be detoxified ASAP!

(hospital corridor, EMTs' steps and the sound of the moving hospital bed, lift)

HER

Agnieszka, Agnieszka, I'm here with you. Do you recognise me? It's me. It's me. *(Agnieszka groaning in confirmation)* Do you remember this song? Do you remember that we used to sing it together? We sang it a lot.

(she sings to Agnieszka, who tries to join Her)

We're playing the happy game, we're not dying yet.

And every single morning we're as good as we can get.

Spring will come one day, waking the spring soul,

The winter trash will burn, that is our best goal.

We're playing the happy game, come on,....our eyes are still shining.

One day we'll get a bow from people who have been criticising.

We can face trouble, forever and ever,

But we say a definite "no" to despair.

(Music, wings flapping)

(hospital room, beeping)

HER

She ended up in a psychiatric hospital. Nobody noticed her bag with a woven strap that she had brought in. She used the strap at night to try and hang herself on the door frame. She was saved by another patient, who was going to the toilet.

HIM

Once she left the hospital, she was all alone...

HER

Waldek was abroad at the time. Working but losing all the money gambling anyway.

HIM

... to deal with the ordeal of interrogations,

HER

... medical and psychological tests.

HIM

It was only once the letter to her mother, in which her cousin had admitted to having raped her, was revealed, that the verdict in the court case was decided.

AGNIESZKA

Mom was furious that she had to testify. I didn't go to that hearing. I just couldn't. I later read the minutes. When asked why she never reacted, she answered: "I don't know".

MOTHER

I don't know. I just don't know...

HIM

Following a court case that stretched over three years, Mariusz was sentenced to two years and ten months of jail without the possibility of parole.

HER

Two years and ten months for eight years of rape?

HIM

He appealed against the sentence and threatened Agnieszka. He came uninvited to her place. Exactly one day before the appeal hearing, he died during a brawl when, drunk, he was trying to grab some woman's bag.

AGNIESZKA (*recorded*)

When he died, I felt really free because although the verdict gave me a lot of strength, I still wondered what would happen in almost three years' time once he would be out. The thing is I was already an adult and theoretically I could defend myself but I was simply unable to. My mind wouldn't cooperate with my body. But I still believed that everything will finally be alright, that I would leave all this behind, having gone over this at therapy. I was hoping to stop having problems with sex and stop being scared but once we got married, I became Waldek's property, as it often happens.

(drill for teenage girls, training for perfect wives, self-help book for women)

MOTHER

So much flesh...

MAN 2

Your skirt's too short. Sexy...

MOTHER

Don't show off so much flesh.

MAN 2

Cover yourself up. Cover yourself up.

MOTHER

Wear black.

MAN 2

Too short...

MOTHER

Wear heels.

MAN 2

Look sexy.

MOTHER

You're too dressed up.

MAN 2

Cover yourself up. You had it coming.

DOROTA (*recorded*)

He dragged me into a gate, and what was to happen happened. I was raped. What's even worse, he kept a knife against my throat all the time, so I knew I couldn't shout or fight back because it would mean death. And I wanted to go on living, without a scar on my neck or my face, reminding me daily in the mirror of what had happened. So I just pretended to not be there for the duration.

MARCELINA

Later I woke up already in his flat, not fully aware of where I was. I still tried to defend myself but my drugged moves changed nothing. I was terribly slowed-down. It all happened as if in slow-motion, with me falling in and out of consciousness. He did it many times. And he used a lot of violence. I was completely covered in bruises or practically haematomas in some places. It took over a dozen hours because I was unable to leave. At one point, I tried to jump

out of the window, hoping to either kill myself, break all my bones or finally be free. But he grabbed me and dragged me back in.

MAGDA

Initially he pretended not to hear and later he said that he had assumed that I protested as part of some sexual convention, with me screaming and trying to run away, with him hitting me and then me hitting him back. He apparently thought that was the plan. After that night I simply asked him if I could go back home. He said “okay”. I was free to go, so I left. The Police were waiting for me at home. My father had filed a missing person’s report. I told the officers that I was just out, walking.

(hospital room, beeping)

HER

Agnieszka did all she could to have a normal life.

HIM

How did she picture it?

HER

She tried to get pregnant again. Hoping that her husband would change once the baby was born. She was working multiple jobs at the time. With extra hours at the ER, as a nurse at summer scout camps, as a cleaner at the clinic. She babysat for her neighbour, ironed and cleaned windows for people, and helped families of cancer sufferers to care for them on a daily basis. Anything just to get her dream procedure: IVF.

HIM

But he started beating her up again. And when she’d beg him to stop, he would say: “You’re free to go any moment”.

MAN 2

You’re free to go anywhere you wish. I won’t stop you.

HER

Sometimes he would beat her up so badly she was unable to get up. She would then miss a few days at work.

HIM

Serves her right. She should have known it would come to this.

HER

How can you say that?

HIM

The files contain about forty pictures of her massive bruises. And this is just a small portion of her injuries.

HER

Waldek would beat her up and then take pictures. He had a special folder on his computer, which he called “scratch cards”. It contained the collection of his beaten-up wife.

HIM

Why didn't she run?

HER

She never imagined she could start all over again. With whom and with what money? And, most importantly, WHO WOULD BELIEVE HER?!

AGNIESZKA

When someone keeps telling you for fifteen years that you're good for nothing, a used-up rag, then you finally start believing this.

HER

He would take all her money. Every single penny.

AGNIESZKA

I kept thinking that he had saved me from my cousin, that he had been so good to me. He took me in when I needed this. I accepted his beating. I just assumed that it had to be like this. Everything in life comes at a price. Sometimes he would apologise. And be nice for the next few days.

HIM

Define “nice”.

AGNIESZKA

He would give me food...

MAN 2

Here’s some pate and bread... It should last you a week. You and the dog.

(hospital room. The “Her” character enters)

HER

Right, I can see you’re doing better today.

AGNIESZKA

Mm-hm.

HER

I have something for you.

AGNIESZKA

What?

HER

A roly-poly toy. It’s just like you. Look. If you hit it, it will rock but she never falls. She always gets up. See for yourself.

(she rocks the toy on the side-table)

AGNIESZKA

I will never get up again...

HER

You will. You’re stronger than you think.

AGNIESZKA

You’re just saying this.

HER

No, I know it.

AGNIESZKA

You’re an angel.

HER

Shush, don't exaggerate.

(wings flapping)

(music)

AGNIESZKA

All I could think of was the baby. This was all I cared for. The only way was to adopt an embryo. Numerous attempts have failed. When I was on my way to Ostrava, I told myself it would be the last one... And this time it worked.

HIM

She was happy.

AGNIESZKA

I had so much strength.

HER

She looked radiant. A pleasure to look at.

AGNIESZKA

One day I came back home from a night shift. He was out, as usual. I was never allowed to ask where he was or what he was doing. But it got late and I started to worry.

HIM

Suddenly the Police burst into the flat. He was with them, cuffed.

HER

They caught him growing marihuana in one of the warehouses with cleaning products that he was also selling. They searched the entire flat.

AGNIESZKA

They asked if we had any other warehouses. I told the truth. He tried to convince the officers that he only started growing weed because he had been so desperate for a child. They believed him and he later got a reduced sentence. Two years with four years' suspension and a fine.

HER

They took him in. He texted her when he got out after forty eight hours.

MAN 2

“You betrayed me. We’ll all get sentences now. I’m on my way to meet the guys and I intend to have a lot of fun”.

HER

He came back three days later.

AGNIESZKA (*recorded*)

(crying) When he started hitting me, I just begged him not to hit the belly. I had no idea he would want to do that to me. I kept saying that he knew what had happened in my past and that he had promised, he swore that he would never do this to me. He simply beat me up and raped me repeatedly, saying that he had a right to do it as I was his wife. He just wouldn't stop despite me bleeding so heavily. (sobbing) And trying to defend myself. I now weigh eighty five kilos but back then I weighed forty and he was a hundred and twenty kilos, if not more.

HER

She lied in a pool of blood.

HIM

You were there with her. With your wings all covered in blood.

HER

I was trying to protect her...

HIM

And I was trying to get help. Agnieszka’s friend came in the morning and took her to hospital.

HER

She lost the baby. It was the third month – just the beginning.

AGNIESZKA

The next two months are a blur.

DOROTA (*recorded*)

After a few dozen minutes I got up and started thinking what to do now. It felt natural to go to the Police and report this. After all, something happened against my will and it was a crime. So I wanted to notify the Police. And I did. I was being interrogated solely by men. They made comments that I found undignified, about the length of my skirt and, most importantly, suggestions that I had been asking for it. Yes, I was wearing a short skirt but it was woollen and matched with thick tights and high winter boots. And even if I had something else on, this should have never happened to me and they had no right to comment.

MARCELINA

I called 112 while running out from there. The whole Police action and the medical examinations took around eleven hours. The following day I was called in for what can only be described as an interrogation. The female prosecutor asked the worst possible questions, i.e. if I was sure I didn't provoke the attack or if I had ever been treated for a mental illness, etc. Finally they decided to take him in and he was temporarily arrested, for two months. They held the first in-house trial during that period, during which he claimed that this was not a crime and that he had always been popular with women.

MAGDA

I just wanted everybody to leave me alone so I waited with reporting this for nine years. At the time I had no one to turn to and when I think about the girl I was back then, I know that she still needs to be hugged, even now, and I know this is very important, especially given that he's still working as a therapist with people, including women.

(Agnieszka's flat)

HIM

When she left the hospital, she came back to him...

AGNIESZKA

And where was I supposed to go? I lost my job and any means of supporting myself. My therapist offered me a flat that had been paid for by the Help Centre for Victims of Abuse. My husband didn't let me take anything from our shared home.

So I slept on the floor there for a few months. I had no light. I just kept crying. I lost twenty two kilos.

HER

She decided to divorce him.

HIM

Finally!

HER

When he heard about this, her husband went mad.

HIM

First he threatened suicide, then "the people he knew" and finally he said he'd destroy her.

HER

Someone had cut the brake cable and then the clutch cable in her car.

HIM

Agnieszka went to the Police.

HER

She met a nice and inquisitive Policewoman.

AGNIESZKA

And I told her everything. She immediately filed an *ex officio* report and applied for an arrest warrant. She questioned all the witnesses in just three months. He was arrested but they released him when he had a baby with his new partner.

(music. Court room)

AGNIESZKA

All I kept hearing in court was that I am just jealous and that I want extort money from him.

HER

They asked her what she felt when she found out that her ex-husband is about to have a baby.

HIM

How many hours did the alleged rape last?

HER

Had she tested her husband toxicologically?

HIM

Then how did she know he was intoxicated?

HER

How come she can't remember the two months following the alleged rape?

AGNIESZKA

As though I were the defendant. This was when mom came back into my life. And this time she wanted to testify.

MOTHER

We lost contact for a long time. Later it was very limited. I would often invite them for Christmas or coffee on Sunday but they never came. If she ever visited, she always came alone and never stayed long. She came hungry. I'd give her money for food. One time, me and my husband even did some shopping and took it to her place. I thought she would invite us in but she said she couldn't because she had had no time to clean the house. Neither me nor my husband have ever been inside her place.

Then her strange visits started. Once she had a scratched cheek. Next time a wounded forehead. When she visited next, her arm had all been bruised, from

wrist to elbow. When I'd ask what had happened, she would say she had tripped but I knew it wasn't the truth because she'd have tears in her eyes.

(music. Inside Agnieszka's flat)

HER

After three years of legal battle, in November 2019, Agnieszka's ex-husband was found not guilty.

HIM

Despite Agnieszka's attorney presenting witnesses' statements, psychological and expert opinions and medical files, the court decided that there was no evidence that would support a "guilty" verdict.

HER

The female judge claimed Agnieszka's words were the only evidence and apparently they raised doubts.

HIM

Meanwhile, she believed the defendant's current partner, who maintained that "the defendant is a quiet, practically phlegmatic and introvert person".

HER

In the substantiation of the verdict, the female judge wrote that "the victim had only reported the case once the perpetrator had started a new, happy relationship".

HIM

Adding that "the neighbours had also heard nothing through the wall".

HER

An appeal, filed by Agnieszka's attorney, was also found groundless by the court on 26 June 2020.

HIM

Three days earlier the girl made a fifth attempt on her life.

(hospital room. Mother enters)

MOTHER

Can I come in, Aggie?

AGNIESZKA

Mom?

MOTHER

How are you feeling?

AGNIESZKA

Normal.

MOTHER

I worry about you. Don't leave me, baby girl.

AGNIESZKA

And what about earlier? Where were you then? ... when I needed you so badly.

MOTHER

I can't explain this to you. I didn't know how to act differently. Forgive me, please. I'd be devastated if something ever happened to you... I never stopped loving you, Aggie. I'd like for us to be close again. Let me.

(angel wings flapping. The female character is singing)

We're playing the happy game, our last word has not been spoken,
 We keep on picking our wings, even though they have been broken.
 Even Icarus, who knows what it's like to fall,
 Would still try it again, despite the toll.
 We're playing the happy game, though life's no easy task,
 We all have a role to play, left alone with no one to ask,
 We perform in our daily dramas but despite the pains we share,
 We say a definite "no" to despair!

MARCELINA *(recorded)*

I almost bulldozed through this whole experience. I went back to work almost

immediately. I am a teacher. I didn't allow myself to sit around and wallow about this. To be honest, I'm still shutting it out today. I decided that this person doesn't deserve my attention and I've been feeling massive contempt towards them.

MAGDA

The first rape resulted in many others. It's not like it happens once and then you know what to do to avoid similar situations. On the contrary, I feel that if it happens once and there is nobody there to show us that it was unacceptable or that we never deserved it, the experience will happen repeatedly. I know that it works like that.

DOROTA

My dad is very emotional and my mom is very cold and reserved in her opinions. So my father of course reacted with tears, saying that nothing would have happened if I hadn't been so pretty. And my mother just told me not to tell anyone ever, especially my future boyfriends because they'll think that I'm broken. And the word "broken" resounded inside me for a long time. I work at the University at a faculty that is popular mostly among female students. So when they doubt themselves, I try to show them that they are actually very precious, good and valuable. And that whenever we have any doubts about that, we should always remember that strength is female.

HIM

Slouch!

HER

Don't be polite!

HIM

Don't make an effort!

HER

It's your body – do whatever you wish with it!

HIM

When you're hungry, eat as much as you want!

HER

When it hurts, cry!

HIM

When they harm you, scream!

HER

Grow to like yourself!

HIM

Be yourself!

HER

Don't be afraid of anything!

HIM

You're strong!

MARTA REBZDA

Live, Agnieszka!

(closing musical theme)

You have just listened to Marta Rebzda's radio drama under the title of "Broken".

Cast: Lidia Sadowa, Katarzyna Dąbrowska, Maria Pakulnis, Piotr Bajtlik, Marcin Bosak, Michał Piela

Documentary recordings of: Agnieszka, Daria, Marcelina and Magda

The broadcast contains fragments of the song under the title of "Jeszcze w zielone gramy [We're playing the happy game]" authored by Wojciech Młynarski and Jerzy "Duduś" Matuszkiewicz

Music: Jarek Gawlik

Sound production: Maciej Kubera

Assistant director: Kamil Banasiak

Director: Waldemar Modestowicz