

This preview is an excerpt only.

All Scriptmore script previews can’t be used for performance or distributed in any way. No part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented. This script is fully protected under copyright law and all rights are retained by the author.

To read this script in its entirety, purchase a copy from scriptmore.com.

PREVIEW: HOTEL JERUSALEM

By

David J. Swanson

Licensed from scriptmore.com

Cast of Characters

FAYE:	(late 30's,f) New Yorker who is now owner and manager of this hotel in Jerusalem. Widow and mother to ISABEL.
ISABEL:	(17, f) Diligent and kind, yet hardened from the war. Daughter to Faye.
PETROS:	(peh'-tros) (28, m) Armenian Christian. Bartender at Hotel, friend to SUKENIK, suitor to Isabel.
ELIYAHU:	(El-ee-YAH-hoo) (70's, m) Hasidic rabbi, resident of Jerusalem.
YA'AKOV:	(YAH-kov) (70's, m) Jewish resident of Jerusalem. Lifelong friend to ELIYAHU.
CAPT HAWKINS:	(early 40's, m) British army captain dressed in regulation British army desert uniform.
NASR :	(NAH-ser) (early 20's, m) Arab conscript serving under Capt. Hawkins.
SUKENIK:	(SUH-ken-ik) (48, m) Famed Jewish archaeologist. Historical.
CROSS:	(late 50's, m) High Commissioner for Palestine, the highest government official in the land. Former General in the British Army.
TRADER:	(m) Arab trader. No speaking lines. Can be doubled.

Synopsis

An American war widow and her teenage daughter run a legendary hotel that serves as a neutral oasis in post-WWII Jerusalem. A tenuous peace on the eve of an important vote brings the archaeological discovery of the century, along with chaos and intrigue, to the lobby of their hotel.

Set

American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem

When

The morning of November 29th, 1947 at the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem

Note

SCENE DESCRIPTIONS:

ACT 1:

SCENE 1-4: The morning of November 29th, 1947 at the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem
SCENE 5-9: Early evening that same day

ACT II:

SCENE 1: A few minutes later
SCENE 2-6: Continuous

ACT III:

SCENE 1-3: Continuous

SET DESCRIPTIONS:

This is the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem on November 29th, 1947. It is a quaint yet stylish hotel in an old stone building.

Upstage left is the main entrance; a large glass double door framed by a semi-circle of glass. It leads to a foyer several steps above the main lobby. The foyer is a joined by a small curved desk far left. To the right of the main entrance is a flight of steps that leads off to the second floor.

Behind the desk a door leads to a small office that can be lit separately. The office has a window that opens onto the street.

Down the steps from the foyer, the main lobby occupies center stage. A full bar is nestled far upstage, serving several sitting areas and tables.

Far upstage right steps lead up to street level which may or may not be the same elevation as street level at the front door. Everywhere we look are curves, arches, and the multiple levels of a hotel built on uneven ground.

The large blocks of pale limestone as seen through the windows, the decorations, and the arches tell us that this is a hotel in the Middle East.

SPECIAL THANKS:

This play would not have been possible without the generous and thoughtful contributions from the following people:

Sheila Gyllenberg, Archaeologist and Professor at Bar-llan

University

Meghan Digneit, Dramaturg

Jerry L. Crawford, playwright and professor emeritus UNLV

Emily Christofferson, friend and critical responder

Michael Criss and the Readers Theater Committee at Wichita Community Theater for the first public reading
David Kaye and the University of New Hampshire theatre department for the second public reading, and Ellis Woodward for sponsoring the Woodward Cultural Stages international playwriting competition

Wesley Rice, Beckie Jenek, Heather and Andrew Johnson, Hunter Gromala, Clint McCorkle, Mark Schuster, PJ Johnson, Nimrah Khan, Christian James, Earl Martling, Rick Doty, Jedediah Riley, Toni Morris, Deb Kinghorn, Eleanor Langthorne, Lucas Leblanc, David Ramsey, Dan Raymond, Chandler Hoefler, Patrick Butler, Ryan Lemay, Andrew Knightfor bringing the script to life in private and public readings.

Jeannine Russel, director of the staged reading at Wichita Community Theatre

Aimee Blesing, director of the staged reading at the University of New Hampshire

Carrie Swanson, Wife and First Reader

and the list is ongoing.

Thank you to all of you for investing in this work and believing in this playwright.

1. Image not found or type unknown


2. Image not found or type unknown


3. Image not found or type unknown


Act 1

Scene 1

Brilliant morning sunlight streams in the windows. The hotel is empty except for a lone pot of coffee on the bar. Chairs rest inverted on the tables for sweeping.

Continuing her work, she now sings slowly and beautifully to herself. It is the song "Next Year in Jerusalem" sung as a soulful ballad in the style of Billie Holiday.

ISABEL

Le-Shanah Haba'ah B'Ye-ru-sha-la-yim

Le-Shanah Haba'ah B'Ye-ru-sha-la-yim

Le-Shanah Haba'ah B'Ye-ru-sha-la-yim

Le-Shanah Haba'ah B'Ye-ru-sha-la-yim

FAYE enters. Early 40's. Think Lauren Bacall. She is in a huff, moving twice as fast as ISABEL.

FAYE

(scowls) What is that?

ISABEL

What is that?

FAYE

-That song. What are you singing?

ISABEL

Just a song. A few customers were singing it last night.

FAYE

Do you know what it means?

ISABEL

No. I thought it was pretty.

FAYE

Well, stop it.

ISABEL

I like it. I think they sing it at Passover.

FAYE

(beat) They do. At the end of the Seder. But this is November. Passover is in the Spring, so they weren't-

ISABEL

-they were!

FAYE

Why would they- Are you certain that's what they were singing?

ISABEL

How should I know? You said I didn't have to learn Hebrew to live here.

FAYE

You don't. So don't. Or do. What do I care?

ISABEL

You certainly are cross this morning.

FAYE

I just don't think you should be singing religious songs when you don't know their meaning. Could mean anything.

ISABEL

You're afraid I'll turn Jewish, aren't you? Grandma would love that.

FAYE

You're being an imp.

ISABEL

If I asked someone what it means? Would you feel better?

FAYE

You're seventeen, Isabel. Do whatever you wish. God knows I have no power to stop you.

ISABEL

You *are* in a foul mood. What's got you-

FAYE

-Where's Petros? Is he in the storeroom?

ISABEL

I haven't seen him yet.

FAYE

That's not like him to be late. We'll have lunch customers in an hour.

ISABEL

Is it a holy day for him? I can never keep track of the Armenian holidays.

FAYE

No? You go to church with him, don't you?

ISABEL

I only went one time, Mother. Goodness.

FAYE

You've gone with him at least twice that I remember. What's next for you? A dalliance with the Orthodox? A rendezvous with Islam?

ISABEL is put out by the teasing.

FAYE

Where is he? We're running a skeleton crew as it is. If he doesn't turn up we'll be more bed and breakfast than hotel. Half the time I think people are religious just for the time off. Did you set out the glasses?

ISABEL

Of course, I-

FAYE

-Then sort out the reservations for next month. And not another word unless it's 'yes, mother'.

ISABEL

That's two words.

(Isabel has misjudged her mother.)

ISABEL

Yes, mother.

ISABEL grabs a book at the front desk. Faye goes to the bar to take inventory of the alcohol.

PETROS MIRZOYAN enters. He sports a thick mustache and a disheveled suit. Under his arm he carries a bundle wrapped in a blanket.

ISABEL

Petros!

PETROS

Mrs. Jordan. Miss Jordan. I got caught up. I ran into... trouble.

FAYE

You're half an hour late. What happened?

PETROS

The British have barricades set up everywhere. It's impossible to move through the city.

FAYE

It's the way of things, Petros. We're all dealing with it. Tomorrow leave your home an hour earlier.

PETROS

Yes, madam.

FAYE exits to the office behind the front desk.

ISABEL

Look at you. Go get washed up. I'll get you a clean shirt. Oh, you're a mess. Give me that.

PETROS

No!... I just mean, I- I'll take care of this.

ISABEL

Everyone is so damn crabby today.

ISABEL exits.

PETROS goes behind the bar. He looks around for place to hide bundle but doesn't find a suitable spot.

He takes a breath and makes a decision. He carries the bundle with him and knocks on the office door. FAYE answers.

FAYE

What is it?

PETROS

I hate to ask this of you. I am meeting with a friend here later today. Momentarily, to be honest. He is quite interested in looking at some antiques I have.

FAYE

You're still dealing? I thought you gave that up.

PETROS

Old habits, as they say.

FAYE

And I suppose you want me to hold this for you.

PETROS

I dare not keep it by the bar. It would just be for a little while... until my associate shows up.

FAYE

Who's your friend?

PETROS

His name is Doctor Eleazar Sukenik. He's a professor. Archaeologist, really. With the Hebrew University.

FAYE

Why are you meeting up with a Zionist like Sukenik?

PETROS

You know him?

FAYE

By reputation. He's coming here?

PETROS

Yes ma'am. But, I can still tend bar. I just need to show him these when he arrives.

FAYE

What are they?

PETROS shifts uneasily.

FAYE

You're right. I don't want to know.

PETROS

It's best you don't.

FAYE

I can hold this for you. But get them out of here as soon as you can. I'm not about to go to jail because of your little hobby.

PETROS

Yes, boss. Thank you.

FAYE

And Petros? See that Isabel gets you a clean shirt.

PETROS moves to the bar, puts on his apron and cleans himself up.

FAYE looks around, thinking. She instead moves to a POTTED PLANT near the foyer. The pot is very deep. She lifts the plant up. It's much shallower than the pot owing to its false bottom. She places the bundle in the bottom of the planter and resets the plant.

Isabel reenters. Gives a clean shirt to Petros then returns to the front desk.

Scene 2

ELIYAHU and YA'AKOV enter the front door. They move slowly but act as if they live there. ELIYAHU wears traditional Hasidic Jewish bekishe (coat) and shtreimel (hat) of a rabbi. YA'AKOV wears a tweed suit and yarmulke. He is a religious Jew, just not Hasidic.

ELIYAHU

(to YA'AKOV) I'm telling you they do not have the power.

YA'AKOV

Perhaps they can negotiate for it.

ELIYAHU

A trade deal? Perhaps. But it is risky.

FAYE

Good morning, Eliyahu. Ya'akov. Politics again?

ELIYAHU

Baseball. He thinks your Yankees can win again next year. I say watch out for Cleveland.

YA'AKOV

Cleveland? They finished fourth. When do they play next?

They help themselves to a newspaper and coffee.

FAYE

Sorry, gentlemen. The season is over. The World Series is the end of it.

YA'AKOV

Over? For good?

FAYE

Until spring training.

YA'AKOV

And when is that?

FAYE

In the spring. How are you two?

ELIYAHU

(enthusiastically)

The sun is shining, we have our health and a pot of coffee. It is looking to be a great day, no?

YA'AKOV

You say this every day. Every day, you say it's going to be a great day.

ELIYAHU

Every day I believe it.

YA'AKOV

I don't believe it anymore. Mrs. Jordan, tell me you are not deceived by this.

FAYE

There are far too many cynics in this world, Ya'akov. It's nice to meet a Pollyanna.

YA'AKOV

Pollyanna? Who is this? Another one of your saints?

ELIYAHU

What are you saying? She's not Catholic.

YA'AKOV

What?

ELIYAHU

She's not Catholic. What do you mean 'her saints'?

YA'AKOV

Eh?

ELIYAHU

She's not Catholic!

YA'AKOV

Of course she's not Catholic!

ELIYAHU

Then why did you- eh, never you mind.

FAYE

(amused)

I'll check with the kitchen on your breakfast.

FAYE leaves out the door to the kitchen.

YA'AKOV checks to make sure FAYE is out of the room then hails ISABEL

YA'AKOV

Uh... little girl-

ELIYAHU

-She's not.

YA'AKOV

Eh?

ELIYAHU

She's not a little girl. Look at her. Almost a woman.

YA'AKOV

So?

ELIYAHU

So, call her Miss Jordan.

YA'AKOV

Oy, with the formalities. Sobeit. Miss Jordan, may I ask you something?

ISABEL

Sure. And call me whatever you like. Isabel, if it suits you.

YA'AKOV

Fine. Isabel. Your mother... Is she well?

ISABEL

What do you mean?

ELIYAHU

Yes. What do you mean, Ya'akov?

YA'AKOV

I just mean, she seems a bit....

ELIYAHU

Yes?

YA'AKOV

Worn out.

ELIYAHU

Oy! Sorry, young lady. He is an old Jew with no idea how to talk to women.

YA'AKOV

I know how.

(beat)

I just don't get to do it very often.

ELIYAHU

What this yutz is trying to say is that with running the hotel the way she does, busy here, rush over there...isn't she... going to plotz?

ISABEL

I don't know. Ever since father.... Well. A lot of things changed after the war.

ELIYAHU

Was it near the end of the war?

ISABEL

Forty-four. Seems like- I don't know... longer ago, I guess.

ELIYAHU

I'm sorry, child.

(he pats her hand)

We lost many fathers in the war. It doesn't make it any easier.

ISABEL

Thank you. It's... fine.

ELIYAHU

And being here... so far from home must make it harder yet.

ISABEL

Mother says home is where you find your purpose.

ELIYAHU

Your mother is wise. So this can be home, then. Yes?

ISABEL

I’m sure mother would say so.

YA'AKOV

But what would you say?

ISABEL

I live in a hotel. If there's a better way to remind you that you are not at home, I'm sure I don't know what it is.

(beat)

May I ask you a question?

ELIYAHU

Do you mind cryptic answers?

ISABEL

Not anymore. Last night there were some customers singing

Le-Shanah Haba'ah B'Ye-ru-sha-la-yim. You know it?

ELIYAHU

Of course I know it.

ISABEL

What's it mean?

ELIYAHU

Ha. It's quite simple. It says "Next year in Jerusalem".

ISABEL

Is that all it means?

ELIYAHU

Oh no. That's what it says. What it means is much more significant. We sing it at the end of our Passover seder. We have sung it since the Romans cast us out of this land and destroyed our temple. We celebrate Passover, but we say "next year, we'll celebrate in Jerusalem."

ISABEL

But you're in Jerusalem.

ELIYAHU

Not all of us, child. And is it truly Jerusalem if there is no temple?

YA’AKOV stares wistfully out the window.

YA'AKOV

Now would you listen to that?

YA'AKOV rises and walks toward the door. He cocks his head and listens. It's quiet.

YA'AKOV

No fighting. No shouting of curses in the street. Perhaps it will be a quiet day today.

The PHONE on reception desk RINGS. ISABEL answers it. YA'AKOV returns to the table.

ISABEL

(on phone)

Front desk.

ISABEL carries on the conversation quietly.

FAYE enters carrying two plates of breakfast. Kosher, of course.

FAYE

Here you go. Ya'akov, your shakshouka and melon. Eliyahu, your lox and bagel.

ELIYAHU

You're a gift from God above. Thank you.

FAYE

I'm just a girl that can get you some breakfast.

YA'AKOV

You are many things, Mrs. Jordan. Not merely a busy innkeeper.

FAYE

(laughs)

Such as?

YA'AKOV

A daughter of God, for one.

FAYE

(deferring)

Oh.... Your version of God is a little different than mine.

YA'AKOV

In what way, I wonder.

FAYE

Yours exists, for one. But I guess we're all entitled to our faith.

ELIYAHU

Or lack of faith.

FAYE

I suppose I'm more interested in action than blind faith.

YA'AKOV

Who said faith is blind? It's love that is blind, no?

ELIYAHU

Oh, what do you know of love?

YA'AKOV

I know many things. I know that it makes young people say ridiculous things and I've been told it makes you feel all warm and squishy inside.

ELIYAHU

You've been told?

YA'AKOV

Yes. King Solomon says as much in the Song of Songs.

FAYE and ELIYAHU laugh mildly.

YA'AKOV

What?

FAYE

Gentlemen, please don't think me dull. I think it's great you have faith in something. It's sweet, really.

YA'AKOV

It's not the faith that matters. It's the God in whom you place your trust. Belief by itself is pointless if it's rooted in fiction.

FAYE

That's the trick, isn't it? Telling fact from fiction.

YA'AKOV

(praying) El Shaddai, show this woman your truth so that she may believe in you. Amen.

ISABEL hangs up the phone.

ISABEL

Mother, that was room fifteen. They're unhappy with their room service.

FAYE

Fantastic. Another comped meal. I run a hotel not a soup kitchen.

FAYE moves to exit.

ELIYAHU

Are we to understand-

FAYE

-Coffee is still free for you two.

FAYE exits.

ELIYAHU

(to Ya'akov) It's still free.

Scene 3

ISABEL picks up a broom and sweeps the entry way.

CAPT HAWKINS enters. He is dressed in full British Officer army desert uniform. He is proper and bespectacled with a thin mustache. He has a curious way of weaving his head when he talks.

CAPT HAWKINS

Good morning, Isabel.

ISABEL

Oh! Captain Hawkins. You startled me.

CAPT HAWKINS

Terribly sorry. I was just looking for your mother. Is she about?

ISABEL

She just went to deal with an unhappy guest. She'll be back in a minute.

CAPT HAWKINS

Very well. I can wait.

ISABEL

We usually don't see you until the evening, Captain. Is something amiss?

CAPT HAWKINS

This is Jerusalem. There's always something amiss.

ISABEL

I should warn you. Mother is in a mood.

CAPT HAWKINS

Ah. She's no doubt worried about the vote.

ISABEL

Vote?

CAPT HAWKINS

At the United Nations.

ISABEL

Oh that.

CAPT HAWKINS

Miss Jordan, *that* has the ability to change pretty much everything in Jerusalem. All of the civilized nations in the world are right now meeting in New York to decide the fate of this very territory.

ISABEL

I don't understand how politicians in New York can have a vote and divide up Palestine. Aren't the British in command here?

YA'AKOV

Oy! Of course they are. They were mandated.

CAPT HAWKINS

Yes. He's right. A mandate from the League of Nations.

ISABEL

The same League of Nations that couldn't go twenty years without another knockabout war?

CAPT HAWKINS

Ah, yes. The same. So you've heard of the Ottomans, yes? Turkish hooligans. Lost the Great War?

These pages have been removed
for the preview.

To read this script in its entirety,
purchase a copy from
scriptmore.com.

CROSS

It would appear that your friend has left you to die, Mrs. Jordan. Come away from the door. Nasr!

NASR closes the front door and locks it. He removes the key. He takes up a sentry position, weapon drawn, facing inwards.

Act 3

Scene 1

FAYE

What are you doing?

CROSS

Until I get what I came for, no one may leave this establishment.

FAYE

Just a minute. This is my-

CROSS

-There is no doubt that someone in this hotel is holding what I seek. Your bartender was willing to go to his death with his secret. His sacrifice will prove to be a foolish one as I will recover the scrolls without his help.

FAYE

I will not be a prisoner in my own hotel.

CROSS

You will be a prisoner or you will be a corpse. Now, I've searched the top floor, rooms, and back garden. What's left is your office and this lobby. Will you kindly escort me, Mrs. Jordan? Perhaps you'll be more cooperative in there.

ISABEL

Mother!

FAYE

You're wasting your time.

CROSS

I'm sure you'd like me to think so. Your office. Now.

FAYE

(to ISABEL)

We'll just be a moment.

CROSS and FAYE enter the OFFICE. Cross rummages through the desk.

YA'AKOV

(to SUKENIK)

What do you think, Doctor Sukenik? Did you ever think you'd live to see the day that Israel once again became a nation?

SUKENIK

We have yet to truly become a nation. And to see it, we must first survive the night.

YA'AKOV

But still, even in all its promise it is remarkable.

SUKENIK

Yes, Rabbi. It is incredible.

ELIYAHU

(to NASR)

Well, young man. I have a synagogue to return to.

NASR

Were you not listening? No one in, no one out!

ELIYAHU

Are you going to shoot me?

BANG. NASR shoots just behind him.

CROSS enters from the office.

CROSS

What happened? Who fired?

NASR

Nothing, sir. The old Jew needed to be reminded to sit.

ELIYAHU sits timidly.

CROSS

Ah. I suggest you stay put. He is the worst of both worlds. An itchy trigger finger and terrible aim.

The room erupts in gasps and more or less simultaneous shocked reactions.

FAYE

So you've looked through my office, you found nothing. You've searched the entire hotel so why don't you-

CROSS strikes FAYE in the face with a vicious backhand that catches her completely off guard. She staggers and falls to her knees. The impact is more like a punch.

YA'AKOV

How dare you!

ISABEL

(running to FAYE)

Mother! Mother, are you hurt?

SUKENIK rushes toward CROSS but stops short when NASR levels his rifle at him. CROSS draws his gun but only holds it at his side. He holds up one finger.

CROSS

The sooner you all realize that this is not a game, the sooner we will all understand one another.

FAYE gingerly gets to her feet, wobbly and groggy. She shoves Isabel off her arm and glares at CROSS. She retreats to her office.

CROSS

(cont'd)

Get back here. Are you deaf? I said...

FAYE ignores him and enters the office closing the door behind her.

During the following exchange she retrieves a case from under her desk and sets it open on her desk. From a secret compartment in her office she retrieves the scrolls. She places them in the case and closes it. She reaches over and unlocks the window, pulling it open a bit. She sets the case on the desk in easy reach, but out of view, from the window.

YA'AKOV

Let her go, son. Let her go.

CROSS

I'm not going to start taking orders from old Jews.

YA'AKOV

Is that how the British treat women, High Commissioner? As punching bags?

CROSS

Just the insubordinate ones.

CROSS holsters his weapon.

ELIYAHU

Foolish move. You've lost whatever goodwill you had with her.

SUKENIK

I am not a fighting man, but if you ever-

CROSS

-Silence! All of you. I am not interested in your opinions. What is she doing in there?

CROSS opens the door just as FAYE is retrieving a small pistol from her desk. She is startled by the door opening and, almost as a reflex, finds herself pointing it at CROSS. He stops, sees the pistol and laughs.

CROSS

(cont'd)

Oh, my dear. Was this your plan? Rummage up a lady's derringer and what... shoot me?

FAYE

FAYE

(her body is ahead of her mind)

I.... I don't know.

CROSS

Have you thought this through at all?

(over his shoulder)

Nasr! If the woman fires her gun, kill her daughter. Then the Jews. Sukenik only if you need to.

(to FAYE in soothing melodious tones)

He'll do it too. Loves instructions like that. He couldn't wait to pull the trigger on your bartender. I had only to say the word "fire".

(beat)

You really haven't thought this through.

FAYE

I... I...

CROSS

Give me the gun.

FAYE is paralyzed. She doesn't move as he reaches out and takes the gun from her hand. Of course, she's playing him, hoping he doesn't notice the case on the desk.

FAYE

(softly)

It's a single shot. I don't know what I was thinking. I couldn't kill both of you.

CROSS

You don't strike me as the killing kind. Come now, outside with the rest of them.

FAYE exits the office and joins the others in the lobby.

CROSS pockets the derringer.

Another EXPLOSION. Closer. Screams in the distance.

CROSS

(cont'd)

Our time is running out. This part of the city will soon be under siege. You have the scrolls.

FAYE

Yes.

CROSS

(taken aback)

You do? Of course, you do.

FAYE

That's what I said.

CROSS

So, you've come to your senses. That's a good girl.

FAYE

I've come to the realization that you're a monster, if that's what you mean.

CROSS

So, hand them over. Time is short.

FAYE

Calm down. I have your precious artifacts. Petros left them with me. I would have traded them for his life, but you killed him, you petulant imbecile.

CROSS

He tried to escape.

FAYE

With a prison guard like you, can you blame him?

CROSS

You wish to bargain?

FAYE

You're slow, but you figured it out. I want everyone in this hotel out of here.

CROSS

They're no safer on the street.

FAYE

They can go wherever they'd like. But I want them out of the hotel before I give you a scrap of scroll.

CROSS

Very well. I think that can be arranged.

FAYE

Everyone. Staff too.

ISABEL

Mother, no.

FAYE

You're going, kid. I'm not turning these things over until you're out of here.

CROSS

I'm afraid I can't allow that. The girl stays here.

FAYE

That's not the deal.

CROSS

It's going to be the deal. I've been patient with you. Too patient. I might remind you that I'm the only one possessing any power here.

FAYE

Power comes in all forms.

CROSS

Mine comes in gunpowder form. You and your daughter stay. Everyone else can go. That's the deal.

FAYE

But-

CROSS

-I think you'll find that we've been more than fair. Besides, as soon as you hand over the texts, you and your daughter will be free to go. You can invite everyone back in, or you can close up for good. I really don't care. We'll be on our way.

FAYE thinks a bit.

FAYE

Fine. But get these people out of here.

SUKENIK

Faye...

FAYE

I'm sorry, Doctor Sukenik.

SUKENIK

I don't trust him.

FAYE

I have to... I have to.

SUKENIK

...I wish I understood.

FAYE

Forgive me.

(turning attention to rest of the hotel)

Ya'akov. Eliyahu. Let's go. No dillying or dallying.

SUKENIK, ELIYAHU, and YA'AKOV rise and gather their things.

NASR

Can we trust her?

CROSS

Do we have a choice?

ELIYAHU

We should tell the authorities about this.

NASR unlocks the door.

YA'AKOV

It's the authorities who are the issue.

ELIYAHU

I'm starting to see the problem.

YA'AKOV

I'm starting to see a pattern. Out to the street, to the ghetto once again, rabbi.

ELIYAHU

After you.

YA'AKOV

No, after you.

YA'AKOV and ELIYAHU exit together.

SUKENIK

(to FAYE)

You're certain?

FAYE

We'll put that God of yours to the test, eh? See if he comes through?

SUKENIK

I pray He does.

SUKENIK exits out the front door, closing it behind him. Through the window of the office we see SUKENIK on the other side. He stops, remembering her note. He pulls it out and reads it. He looks around and then tentatively pushes open the window. Blindly he reaches inside and lays his hand on the bag (unseen from his angle). He quickly withdraws it and opens it, seeing the scrolls. His face lights up and then concern washes over him. He slinks away with the bag under his arm.

Scene 2

The sound of explosions in the distance is getting louder. The lights flicker a bit with another EXPLOSION.

CROSS

Time is up. I must return to the Governor's House where I am surely needed. Give me the scrolls and you can-

FAYE

-I can what? Continue to wait here until your Arab conscripts storm the lobby?

CROSS

I have no doubt they will be here in due course.

FAYE

I told you-

CROSS

-I'm not interested in what you have to say Mrs. Jordan. I'm only interested in what you do. It's just you, your daughter and us. You have no plays left.

FAYE

You're not really going to destroy them.

CROSS

Aren't I?

FAYE

To what? Preserve the mystery of the faith? I don't get it.

CROSS

Oh, I couldn't care less about faith. People of faith will do what they will, believe what they will. But faith is faith. It should be kept out of scientific studies and out of politics.

FAYE

You're not a Christian at all.

CROSS

I don't have the luxury of religion. I'm the High Commissioner of a land in conflict. The Arabs and the Jews are two spoiled, murderous children. Do you know what you do when two children are quarreling? You take away whatever it is they both want. I would rather keep the peace than lend more fuel to this fire. Those scrolls must be destroyed.

FAYE

I see who you are now. I can't believe it's taken me this long to see it. You're afraid. You're frightened that once people of faith start claiming history and science that they'll be insufferable. You want church people to stay in the church and mosque people to stay in the mosque and the synagogue folks to stay out of your way.

CROSS

I think I've heard enough from you. It's incredible how much I've come to loathe you in such a short time.

FAYE

I'm right, aren't I?

CROSS draws back his arm to hit her again, but FAYE stands aggressively, presenting her cheek in defiance.

FAYE

(cont'd)

Does it make you feel powerful, General?

CROSS

Nasr!

CROSS

(cont'd)

You wish for this to be a personal matter. Very well. We're getting those scrolls...or your daughter won't see another morning. I don't care what a harpy from America has to say. The deal was the scrolls. Now give them to me.

CROSS relents, then looks to ISABEL.

NASR grabs ISABEL by the arm. She tries to twist out of his grasp but he's too strong for her.

FAYE

(realizing the horror)

You'll kill Isabel?

CROSS

Aren't you glad you have the scrolls so closely at hand?

FAYE realizes her plan is failing.

FAYE

(Shaken)

Wait.

CROSS

No.

FAYE

Wait! I have them. I left them.... They might still be-

FAYE rushes to the office door and throws it open. She sees that the window is open and the bag is gone. She slumps crestfallen.

FAYE

No. They're gone.

CROSS

(following in behind her)

What do you mean gone?

FAYE

(to herself)

I thought God would act. I thought...

CROSS looks at the open window and figures out what has happened. He flies into a rage knocking everything from the desk.

CROSS

No. No! No! Nasr! Slit her throat.

ISABEL screams. FAYE returns to the lobby. CROSS grabs her and holds her back.

FAYE

NO! Please-

CROSS

Now, Nasr! She's crossed us!

ISABEL

Momma!

CROSS

Do it!

NASR hesitates.

NASR

But-

FAYE

I know who has them. I can get them back-

CROSS

Now, corporal!

NASR

It's just...

CROSS

Oh, you weak-minded imbecile. I'll do it myself.

CROSS throws FAYE to the ground and draws his pistol. He levels it at ISABEL. She flinches trying to get away. NASR ducks away.

CROSS

(cont'd)

(to FAYE)

Where is this God of yours? You prayed, did you? You asked God to intercede? Perhaps you forgot “Thou shalt not steal” when you took that which was not yours. Today, I am the angel of the death...here to take your firstborn. You ask for help from a God you do not know. Did you really believe he would come to your rescue? A river of lava would pour out of the Mount of Olives? Maybe the earth would open up and swallow us whole? An army of angels? Is that what you thought? Where is this God of yours? Where-

SFX: The sound of an APPROACHING TRUCK interrupts him. It rumbles to a stop and a couple DOORS SLAM.

CROSS

(cont'd)

See who that is.

CROSS motions to NASR who goes to the front door, leaving ISABEL a heap of nerves on the floor.

NASR

(Shouting off)

Hey! What are you doing?

Muffled VOICES speaking ARABIC can be heard shouting offstage.

NASR

(panicked)

No! Not here! It's the wrong building! Wrong building! Where are you going? Come ba-

BLACKOUT

SFX: A THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION is heard along with an immediate BLACKOUT.

SFX: Wailing, sirens in the distance, the rumble of explosions and gunfire. The stage is reset in the blackout under the SFX.

The lights come up showing the scene of destruction.

Dust hangs in the air. Bricks and glass scattered around. NASR, CROSS, and FAYE lie prostrate and still. ISABEL is unseen. A hole has been blown in the brick wall behind the bar. The remains of a truck, mostly a steel frame can be seen beyond the hole. The front door is off its hinges, blocking the way out.

The lights begin to fade, implying a finality, when-

Scene 3

SUKENIK

(OFF)

Faye?

(pause)

Isabel?

SUKENIK appears in the hole behind the bar. He still carries the scrolls.

Lights fade up as he enters.

SUKENIK

Mrs. Jordan?

He sees FAYE lying on the ground and quickly hops down into the bar and goes to her.

SUKENIK

(cont'd)

Oh, dear God...

He runs his hand over her face, then strokes her hair. She stirs, moans, and moves.

SUKENIK

(cont'd)

You're alive. Are you hurt?

She looks at him confused, then shakes her head.

FAYE

I CAN'T HEAR... I CAN'T...

SUKENIK

Ssssh. It's okay. It's the concussion from the blast. You'll surely recover in matter of-

FAYE

-STOP! I. CAN'T. HEAR YOU!

She turns and looks for Isabel.

FAYE

(cont'd)

IZZY?

SUKENIK

Sshh. Don't strain yourself.

FAYE

WHERE IS SHE?

SUKENIK searches through the rubble.

SUKENIK

It's too dark. Was she in the room when...?

FAYE

ISABEL!

He doesn't find her.

SUKENIK

We must go, Faye. They'll be coming through here soon.

FAYE struggles to her feet and points to NASR and CROSS.

FAYE

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

SUKENIK leaves FAYE and checks the two bodies, feeling for a pulse. He shakes his head.

SUKENIK

It appears that they got the worst of it.

FAYE

ISABEL!

SUKENIK

We must go.

FAYE

(heart-rending)

ISABEL! IZZY!

Silence. FAYE begins to weep.

A noise. A movement behind the desk. SUKENIK pulls the toppled front desk off of ISABEL.

ISABEL

MAMMA?

ISABEL is also deaf and concussed. FAYE crawls to her and hugs her daughter. It's a tender moment if not exactly picture perfect.

FAYE

(a torrent of words)

Oh, it's okay, baby. It's okay. I'm sorry, honey. I'm so sorry. I'm so, so sorry-

They clutch each other.

SUKENIK

We must go.

The front door is blocked. He points to the hole in the back wall.

SUKENIK helps ISABEL to her feet and the three stagger towards the hole in the wall.

FAYE stops and looks at the bodies of CROSS and NASR.

ISABEL

ARE THEY...?

FAYE

YES.

(beat)

HEY. I HEARD YOU!

SUKENIK

You're both shouting terribly.

FAYE

(looking upstage at the wreckage)

A truck bomb? Is that one of His mysterious ways? I was expecting something...

FAYE collapses, her knees jelly. Sukenik rushes to help her.

SUKENIK

Easy.

(beat)

Why did you send the scrolls with me?

FAYE

We have enough bullies in the world, don't you think?

SUKENIK

So that was your plan? Deny him the scrolls and ask God to save you?

FAYE

It's all I had left. It was my only hope.

SUKENIK

We need to get you somewhere safe. You need to rest. My house is not far.

FAYE

Okay, okay. Just...

FAYE turns around to look at her bar one last time, then to ISABEL.

FAYE

Izzy...

ISABEL

Keep moving, mother.

FAYE

I'm sorry. Izzy, I'm sorry. For everything. For Petros. For your father.... I love you, kiddo. You know that, right?

ISABEL

We need a new hotel. One not in a war zone.

FAYE

Did you hear me, Izzy? I love you.

ISABEL

Morrocco, maybe? Back to Europe?

FAYE

(to SUKENIK)

Where are you taking these scrolls?

SUKENIK

Washington, DC, probably.

(thinks)

Yes, you could come there.

FAYE

Washington, you say? What do you think, Iz? Back home for a spell?

ISABEL smiles and nods.

ISABEL

Home? Yes.... Home.

Another EXPLOSION. Not so distant.

SUKENIK

Come, now. Hurry. The war plays on.

SUKENIK, FAYE, and ISABEL exit through the hole in the wall. As they leave, the radio CRACKLES.

The radio CRACKLES again, and then comes to life playing to the empty room.

RADIO

...latest report-

(static)

-Fierce fighting being reported in Palestine today-

(static)

-coordinated assault. Residents are being urged to remain in their homes.

LIGHTS begin to slowly fade.

RADIO (cont'd)

Wherever you are right now, just stay put. Stay off the street. Wait until the conflict passes. Whatever you do, do not leave what you know. Wait until we know something for certain. Wait until we know.

BLACKOUT

Radio crackles then flickers off.

END



Like what you read?

To buy this script in its entirety or check out other scripts, visit scriptmore.com.