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SF PERUSALS

Another Time

A Drama in Two Acts

by Ronald Harwood

A Samuel French Acting Edition



New York Hollywood London Toronto
SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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Ralph Horwitz
(1926–1988)

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Another Time was first presented by Duncan C. Weldon and Jerome Minskoff for Triumph Theatre Productions Ltd. at the Theatre Royal, Bath, on 22nd August 1989, and subsequently at Wyndham's Theatre, London, on 25th September 1989 with the following cast:

ACT I
(Early 1950s)

IKE LANDS .....Albert Finney
LEONARD LANDS..... Christien Anholt
BELLE LANDS .....Janet Suzman
PROFESSOR ZADOK SALT ... David de Keyser
ROSE SALT ..... Sara Kestelman

ACT II
(Thirty-five years later)

LEONARD LANDS.....Albert Finney
JEREMY LANDS ..... Christien Anholt
BELLE LANDS .....Janet Suzman
PROFESSOR ZADOK SALT ... David de Keyser
ROSE SALT ..... Sara Kestelman

Directed by Elijah Moshinsky
Designed by Saul Radomsky
Lighting by Paul Pyant

Another Time was presented in April, 1991, by the Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, Illinois where Ronald Harwood directed the following cast (in order of appearance):

ACT I

IKE LANDS .....Albert Finney
LEONARD LANDS.....Andrew White
BELLE LANDS .....Rondi Reed
ROSE SALT .....Molly Regan
PROFESSOR ZADOK SALT .....Terry Kinney

ACT II

LEONARD LANDS.....Albert Finney
JEREMY LANDS .....Andrew White
ROSE SALT .....Molly Regan
PROFESSOR ZADOK SALT .....Terry Kinney
BELLE LANDS .....Rondi Reed
STUDIO PRODUCER.....Peggy Roeder
STUDIO TECHNICIAN..... James Irwin

Scenery and Lighting Design by Kevin Rigdon
Sound by Rob Milburn and Richard Woodbury
Costumes by Erin Quigley
Production Stage Manager: Robyn Karen Taylor

CHARACTERS

IKE LANDS, aged 61

LEONARD LANDS, aged 16 and 51

BELLE LANDS, aged 49 and 84

PROFESSOR ZADOK SALT, aged 54 and 89

ROSE SALT, aged 51 and 86

JEREMY LANDS, aged 18

TWO TECHNICIANS

Note: The actor who plays IKE in Act I plays LEONARD in Act II.
The actor who plays LEONARD in Act I plays JEREMY in Act II.

TIME AND PLACE

ACT I
(Early 1950s)

The small ground-floor flat belonging to Belle and Ike Lands in Sea Point, Cape Town.

Scene 1: The hall, 6.30 p.m. on a winter evening in June.

Scene 2: Belle's bedroom, at approximately the same time on the same evening.

Scene 3: The hall, a moment later.

Scene 4: Belle's bedroom, a week later.

ACT II
(Thirty-five years later)

A recording studio in Maida Vale, London.

Scene 1: The studio, shortly before 1 p.m.

Scene 2: The control booth, at approximately the same time on the same day.

Scene 3: The studio.

Scene 4: The control booth.

ACT I

Early 1950s.

The pentagonal hall of a small ground-floor flat.

The hall is used as a dining room but it is also a thoroughfare. There is a front door, which leads to a path that leads to the street; a door to Belle's bedroom; a short passage off which there are other doors (not necessarily visible) to Ike and Leonard's bedroom, the bathroom, living room and kitchen. There is a dining table in a polished dark wood with four matching chairs, and a modern desk-cum-bookcase.

Scene 1

The hall. 6:30 p.m.

IKE LANDS, aged 61, sits at the table reading a volume of an encyclopaedia. HE is a handsome man with a lame left hand on which HE wears a brown leather glove. HE turns the pages with the third finger of his right hand which HE first moistens on his tongue. HE occasionally reacts audibly to what he reads: a tuneless whistle or clucking his teeth. After he has turned a page or two, his son, LEONARD LANDS, aged 16, enters, carrying a music case and a satchel, HE is dressed in school uniform: a black blazer, white shirt and tie, and grey flannels.

IKE. Leonard!

LEONARD. Hello, Dad. *(LEONARD is about to go into his bedroom.)*

IKE. Don't I get a kiss?

(LEONARD kisses him on the cheek.)

IKE. And how's Arthur Rubenstein this evening?

LEONARD. Dad, I'm not Arthur Rubenstein.

IKE. Did you have a good lesson?

LEONARD. Fine. Mom and Aunty Rose were on the bus. I came back with them. They're outside talking to Miss Anna Katz.

IKE. A very cultured woman. You going to practice now?

LEONARD. No. I've some homework to do first—*(HE goes to the desk and starts to unpack his satchel.)*

(BELLE LANDS enters. SHE is 49 year's old, a once beautiful woman, but now tired and anxious.)

LEONARD. Where's Aunty Rose?

BELLE. Still talking to Anna Katz. I'm too tired to stand and listen. *(SHE crosses to her bedroom door.)* Leonard, ask your father if he's in for supper.

LEONARD. *(As a matter of course.)* Dad, Mom wants to know if you're in for supper.

IKE. Tell her of course I'm in for supper, when am I out?

LEONARD. Yes, he's in for supper.

BELLE. I'm going to make a cup of tea for Rose and me. Ask your father if he wants tea or coffee.

LEONARD. Dad, do you want tea or coffee?

IKE. *(A shrug.)* Anything.

(BELLE goes into the kitchen.)

IKE. Leonard, before you start on your homework, will you do me a favor?

LEONARD. What?

IKE. Don't say what like that. I'm not going to ask you to climb Table Mountain.

LEONARD. I'm sorry, what's the favor?

IKE. Will you cut my fingernails for me?

LEONARD. *(After a slight hesitation)* Yes, of course.

(IKE removes his glove from his lame hand. LEONARD finds a pair of nail scissors, sits by his father and starts to cut his fingernails.)

IKE. People think I should be able to cut the nails of my bad hand myself. But I can't. I don't know why. I can't.

(ROSE SALT enters. SHE is 51, a spinster, energetic and intelligent. LEONARD continues to cut his father's nails.)

ROSE. Good evening, Ike—

IKE. Hello, Rose, how goes it?

ROSE. I'm fine. Is Belle in her room?

LEONARD. No, she's making tea.

IKE. So, Rose, I've been meaning to ask you, what do you hear about this new book?

ROSE. What new book?

IKE. This American *Naked and the Dead* business by this fellow, what's-his-name?

ROSE. Mailer, Norman Mailer. Ike, it's filth. Have nothing to do with it. Don't have it in the house.

(BELLE returns with a tray with a pot of tea, two cups and a glass of water. SHE puts the glass of water in front of Ike.)

IKE. Ask your mother what's this.

LEONARD. What's this, Mom?

BELLE. I asked him if he wants tea or coffee and he said anything, so I brought him a glass of water.

ROSE. *(Laughing.)* Belle, you're a cow—

IKE. *(Under his breath.)* God Almighty—

BELLE. *(Also laughing.)* Well, he said anything—

IKE. *(Louder; dangerous.)* God Almighty—

BELLE. Tell him to keep his shirt on. Get a cup from the kitchen—

ROSE. I'll go—*(SHE exits into the kitchen.)*

BELLE. *(To Leonard.)* Leonard, you need a haircut.

LEONARD. Mom, I have to talk to you—

BELLE. So, come and talk.

LEONARD. I want to look at some maths first.

(ROSE returns with a cup and saucer. SHE pours Ike a cup of tea.)

BELLE. Leonard, why don't you work in the lounge or the bedroom, what d'you want to work in here for?

LEONARD. I prefer it here—

BELLE. You prefer it here, it's like a railway station and you prefer it here. I don't know how you can concentrate—

ROSE. Milk and sugar, Ike?

IKE. Sugar, no milk, thank you.

(BELLE goes to her bedroom door and opens it. ROSE gives IKE his tea and then follows her.)

BELLE. I'll be in my room—

LEONARD. I won't be a moment—

ROSE. Belle, you'll never guess what Ike just asked me—

BELLE. That's true—

(THEY go, closing the door.)

IKE. What did I just ask her? I asked her about a book. What's the fuss? Do they think I don't know what goes on in this world?

(LEONARD continues to cut Ike's nails. IKE sips his tea.)

LEONARD. Dad, if you don't keep still I'll cut you.

IKE. Worse things can happen.

(LEONARD cuts. IKE reads. From Belle's room, laughter.)

IKE. Thick as thieves, those two sisters, thick as thieves. The whole Salt family was very close-knit. Like an island. Very independent. Well, look at your mother and

Rose. Your Uncle Zadok's the best of the bunch. Their father, old Leopold Salt, Leonard, was a Freethinker. Enough said. Your other grandfather, my father, was a wonderful whistler. I often think that's where you get your musical talent. Don't tell your mother.

(HE reads. LEONARD cuts.)

IKE. The stuff they put in these books. Listen to this, d'you know what procaine hydrochloride is?

LEONARD. No.

IKE. An anaesthetic introduced in 1905 under the trade name Novocaine.

(Belle's door opens a crack. Neither IKE nor LEONARD notice.)

IKE. Things like that are interesting. You should read these, Sir John Hammerton's Book of Knowledge, Leonard, I bought them for you—

BELLE. *I* bought them for him.

(IKE and LEONARD look round and BELLE closes the door. Silence.)

IKE. What a bad hand I was dealt.

LEONARD. You mean this hand, your paralysed hand?

IKE. No, I mean a hand of cards, the shuffle of life, the deal, the deal, the cards you get, the hand you're given to play in the game of life. You, you've been dealt a Royal Flush, thank God, unbeatable, a great musical talent, you play the piano like Franz Liszt and you're not seventeen

yet, a genius, what a hand you've got, but me, I got a hand with fours high. You know why I say this? Because I think by nature I could have been a scholar. I love books, Leonard, like your mother and your Aunty Rose. I love learning. But what chance did I have? What chance did any of my generation have? We were refugees, immigrants, if we had talents or gifts or inclinations no one knew, no one cared. We had only one obligation. To make a living. To survive. We were never allowed to be what we really were. That's an accident of history, a rotten shuffle, a hand fours high. No, no, no. I love learning. *(Silence. Lowering his voice.)* Leonard, are you smoking cigarettes?

LEONARD. No, Dad—

IKE. Tell me the truth, Leonard—

LEONARD. No, Dad—

IKE. I'm not going to get cross—

LEONARD. I m not smoking, Dad—

IKE. I'm desperate for a cigarette, Len. *(Pause.)* I just want one of your cigarettes.

(Pause. LEONARD makes a packet of ten cigarettes from his music case and gives Ike one.)

IKE. *(Noting the packet.)* Sir Seymour, eh?

LEONARD. *(An urgent whisper.)* Don't tell Mummy.

IKE. (*Lights up and puffs deeply.*) I wonder how much they paid him.

LEONARD. Who?

IKE. Sir Seymour, Sir Seymour Hicks.

LEONARD. You should know, you sold the cigarettes—

IKE. They never told me. People like me don't get told things like that. That kind of information is all Head Office. They never tell the commercial travellers anything. And anyway, it was never a good line. People like the old brands. New brands are difficult. But they must have paid him something. I mean, a famous actor gives his name to cigarettes, he's got to be paid a few bob. *(Looks at the packet.)* Can't be a bad deal. You give your name, they put your photograph on the packet and he's not even in Sir John Hammerton's Book of Knowledge. He was dealt a good hand, that's all, and he never looked much of an actor to me. Now, Ronald Colman, that's a different story. Perhaps they would have liked to have named a cigarette after Ronald Colman, but there's already the mustard, so you're in trouble. Still, I bet Sir Seymour was well paid. And du Maurier. And that singer fellow, De Reszke. One day, please God, you'll have a cigarette named after you. No, no, Leonard, plastic hangers is the coming thing. I'm telling you, there's a fortune in plastic hangers. If I could just bring off this one deal, get the agency for these plastic hangers, we'd never have to worry again. *(Puffs deeply.)* I was dying for a cigarette. *(Pause.)* Len, you haven't got a couple of bob on you, have you?

LEONARD. No, I spent all I had on the cigarettes, I'm sorry. *(Pause.)* Dad—

IKE. What?

LEONARD. I've got something to tell you.

IKE. Bad news?

LEONARD. I had my lesson with Professor Kinski this afternoon—

IKE. And?

LEONARD. He thinks I ought to go overseas to study. To Vienna. *(Silence.)* You think there's any chance?

(Silence.)

IKE. *(A sigh.)* Money, money, money, money.

LEONARD. Yes, I know, never mind, Dad—

IKE. Len, it's like I always say, it's not what you know, it's who you know—

(Silence.)

LEONARD. I better talk to Mummy about Vienna.

(Silence.)

IKE. You know where I'd like to go?

LEONARD. Where?

IKE. Pompeii. Pompeii and Herculaneum. I was reading about them this afternoon. According to Sir John Hammerton you can see the ruins of both cities on the same day. What a trip that would be, eh? Destroyed by a volcano. Just imagine it, Len, you're sitting there having your breakfast or reading a book or practicing the piano, and suddenly no warning, whooosh! Gone. And it's all preserved for you to see. That's history for you. That's being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I sometimes feel—

(Silence.)

LEONARD. I must do my homework. *(HE goes to the desk and starts to unpack his satchel.)*

BELLE. *(Off.)* Leonard, come and talk to us, your maths can wait—

(LEONARD rises. As HE crosses to Belle's door the front doorbell rings.)

LEONARD. (*Putting his head into Belle's room.*) There's someone at the door—

BELLE. *(Off.)* It'll be Uncle Zadok, your father can let him in.

(LEONARD hesitates for a moment but goes to the front door and opens it to PROFESSOR ZADOK SALT, aged 54.)

ZADOK. Maestro! *(HE squeezes Leonard's cheeks with grunts of pleasure. LEONARD hates this.)* Ike, good evening.

IKE. Hello, Zadok, I'm pleased to see you. Your sisters are in there.

ZADOK. But it's you I've come to visit.

IKE. Me?

BELLE. (*Off.*) Leonard, is Uncle Zadok there?

LEONARD. *(Calling)* Yes, he's here—

ZADOK. I'm not staying long—*(HE crosses to Belle's door, knocks and opens it.)* Sisters mine, it's your brudder.

BELLE. (*Off.*) Hello, Zadok—

ROSE. (*Off.*) Hello, Zadok—

BELLE.(*Off.*) Tell Leonard to come and see me—

ZADOK. *(Shutting the door.)* Maestro, your mother wants to see you—

LEONARD. Coming, Mom—

ZADOK. Ike, I'm starving—

IKE. So, go into the kitchen, open the fridge and find something. It's the maid's night off.

(ZADOK goes into the kitchen.
LEONARD considers for a moment, then goes to his music case, takes out the packet of cigarettes and slips two of them to Ike. IKE shudders, controlling tears.)

LEONARD. For God's sake, don't cry, Dad—

IKE. *(Crying.)* You've got such a good heart—I'm sorry—I'm sorry—God Almighty, what a life—*(Recovering.)* Go and see your mother. Don't put her in a worse mood than she's in already.

(LEONARD goes into Belle's room as ZADOK returns, eating a chicken leg. HE puts his head into Belle's bedroom.)

ZADOK. I've stolen a chicken leg. *(HE closes the door.)* So, Ike, how are you?

IKE. So-so. I get these pains in my stomach.

ZADOK. Take a laxative.

IKE. I take but nothing happens. So, what d'you want to see me about?

ZADOK. I want to talk to you.

IKE. It's not my birthday, you know.

ZADOK. *(Sits.)* Ike, how's the hand?

IKE. It gets cold in this weather.

ZADOK. And the leg?

IKE. The same.

ZADOK. Listen, Ike, just listen to what I've got to say. As you well know, I'm a dry, dusty, unemotional man, so I'm going to put this in a dry, dusty and unemotional way.

IKE. I'm listening—

ZADOK. I happened to meet David Figg the other day, he's the best G.P. in town, the top man, and we had a chat about you. He said to me, "With Ike Lands, it's mind over matter."

IKE. What's mind over matter?

ZADOK. Your hand.

IKE. My hand's mind over matter?

ZADOK. According to Dr. Figg, if you wanted to use it, you'd use it.

IKE. (*Showing him the gloved hand.*) I want to use it, Zadok.

ZADOK. I'm only quoting Dr. David Figg. What's your own doctor say?

IKE. Simons? Nathan Simons, round the corner? What does Dr. Simons say about my hand? He says, "I've never seen a hand like this", that's what he says. That man Simons, I'd like to see his certificate, I don't think he ever qualified. Simons, what does he know? He knows "take two aspirin" and "come and see me when your temperature's down." Simons, I'd be better off with a vet.

ZADOK. David Figg says your hand is mind over matter. And he says the same is probably true of your bad leg. Consider the facts, Ike. Your mother dies, you have a—a crisis—

IKE. It was a breakdown, call a spade a spade. I'm not, ashamed, it was a nervous breakdown. I grieved until my heart broke—*(HE shudders with tears.)*

ZADOK. Now that was before the war—

IKE. 1935, just after Leonard was born, 7 January 1935, that's the anniversary of her death, fifteen years ago, God rest her soul. They were difficult times. But then the war came and I liked it in the army—

ZADOK. Ike, I never understood how you got into the army. What did the army doctor say when you showed him your hand?

IKE. I didn't show it to him. He didn't ask so I didn't show. Army doctors, doctors. *(Waves them away.)* No, but I liked the army. The pay was regular. They sent Belle some money each month. Back pay, they called it. She was happy then. Happier. And then, with my luck, I'm demobbed a year and I have to go and get knocked down by a car.

ZADOK. And your leg goes lame. Now, what David Figg is saying is that there may be a psychological cause. You get these terrible shocks, your mother's death, the accident, and they manifest themselves physically. That's what he means by mind over matter.

IKE. Is that what you came specially to tell me, mind over matter?

ZADOK. Look, Ike, we've been friends since before you became my brother-in-law. David Figg says the best man to have a look at you is Norman Hurwitz, this man is the top psychiatrist in the country, he's a professor—

IKE. A psychiatrist—?

ZADOK. A professor of psychiatry—

IKE. You think I should see a psychiatrist?

ZADOK. Why not? It's not shameful, a paralysed hand isn't the plague, it's not catching, it's not syphilis—

IKE. Please, Zadok—

ZADOK. Go and see him, what can you lose?

IKE. *(After a moment.)* What can I lose? Only a paralysed hand, I suppose.

ZADOK. And a gammy leg.

IKE. Is that what you wanted to see me about?

ZADOK. Should I arrange an appointment with Professor Hurwitz?

IKE. You know him?

ZADOK. Certainly.

IKE. You know everybody, eh, Zadok?

ZADOK. As you've always said, Ike, "It's not what you know—"

IKE. (*Joining in.*)—"It's who you know."

(THEY laugh quietly.)

IKE. I'm glad you came tonight, Zadok.

ZADOK. Ike, it's always a pleasure to see you.

IKE. You've got a moment?

ZADOK. A moment.

IKE. You can't stay for supper?

ZADOK. No, I've got to give a lecture tomorrow, I have to prepare—

IKE. I don't see a lot of people these days. So, tell me, you like being a professor?

ZADOK. Too much administration, not enough teaching. I'm a better teacher than administrator but, yes, I like it.

IKE. Such a wonderful title.

ZADOK. What?

IKE. Professor of Moral Philosophy.

ZADOK. I'm glad you're impressed.

IKE. I'd have given anything to be a Professor of Moral Philosophy. Tell you what, I'd have given anything just to have gone to a university. I'm not cut out for commerce, Zadok. Tell you the truth, I would never say this to Belle, I'm not a businessman—

ZADOK. Things will turn the corner, Ike—

IKE. Yes, turn the corner, I'll turn the corner and what'll I find? Another cul-de-sac. Like the fish shop. What bad luck we had there. Everybody before and since has made a fortune out of that fish shop, but not me. I don't know, somehow, I just can't seem to—to—

ZADOK. Everything's going to come out right, mark my words.

IKE. From your mouth into God's ear.

ZADOK. You've got something going?

IKE. I might get an agency for plastic hangers.

ZADOK. Sounds good. *(Silence.)* And that son of yours, that Leonard, I could eat him—

IKE. You honestly think he's the real thing, Zadok?

ZADOK. I know it. I've talked to people, people who understand music, expert people, everyone's agreed that Leonard has genius.

IKE. Genius, really?

ZADOK. People who've heard him play and, incidentally, I don't know how much he tells you, but you know Miss Anna Katz, she went to his recital and she says he plays like Rachmaninoff.

IKE. Kinski, you know his teacher, Otto Kinski, he's also a professor, Viennese, a refugee from Hitler—

ZADOK. I know him—

IKE. He thinks Leonard should go overseas to study.

ZADOK. I'm not surprised.

(Laughter from Belle's room.
IKE suddenly heaves with suppressed crying.)

ZADOK. Ike, what's the trouble—what's the matter—?

IKE. I don't want to let that boy down—

ZADOK. What are you talking about, why should you let him down?

IKE. How can I afford to send him to Vienna? I can't afford a packet of cigarettes—

(IKE cries. ZADOK is horribly embarrassed.)

IKE. God Almighty, what a life—

ZADOK. We'll find a way, we'll all club together.

(Silence.)

IKE. It's cruel, Zadok, it's cruel—

ZADOK. What is?

IKE. Life, history, it's cruel—

ZADOK. You know what, Ike? You would have made a good Professor of Moral Philosophy.

IKE. Don't I know? My head is full of knowledge and no way to use it. Did you know, for example, that procaine hydrochloride is an anaesthetic introduced in 1905 under the trade name Novocaine?

ZADOK. No, I didn't know that—

IKE. You see what I mean? Take this hand of mine—*(Holds up his gloved hand)*—I understand this to be a symbol of my life, I understand things like that—

ZADOK. Don't be a bloody fool, Ike, symbols of life aren't that easy to come by—

(The sound of BELLE laughing.)

IKE. She's happy tonight. But listen to me, Zadok, I've got this useless hand, useless, I can't move it, not a finger, it's like my life, a bum hand, you can't win the game with a bum hand of cards, you can't have a life—

ZADOK. We're all dealt bum hands, Ike—

IKE. Nonsense, that's nonsense—

ZADOK. Ike, we all have our tragedies, our hardships. You think I asked for my wife to die three months after we were married?

IKE. That's different, death's entirely different, I'm talking about struggle. I've had to struggle like no one else I know—I've had such bad luck—the world's been against me, Zadok—

ZADOK. Ike, I'm going to talk to you straight, the world's against you. "The fault, dear Brutus—"

(LEONARD returns, closing Belle's door, goes to the desk and takes books out of his satchel.)

ZADOK. *(Without interruption.)* "—is not in our stars, but in ourselves", ourselves, Ike, the fault is in us, in me, in you—

IKE. I'm responsible for my bad hand?

ZADOK. Listen to me, Leonard, you listen to me, too. I've got something important to say. There is no justice in this life. Remember that. There is no justice.

(LEONARD exits.)
Silence.)

IKE. Failure. Yes. It's a terrible thing to be a failure. That's what Belle holds against me.

ZADOK. Nonsense. You know what's a terrible thing? Self-pity, that's a terrible thing. Giving in, that's a terrible thing. Doing nothing, that's a terrible thing. Thinking the world's against you, that's a terrible thing. Not knowing that only you yourself is against you is a terrible thing.

IKE. You think that ending up here at the bottom of the world, a refugee, an immigrant, you think that was my doing?

ZADOK. It's irrelevant, Ike. It's not where you are it's *who* you are. Who you really are. You've been dealt a hand and all you're obliged to do is play the best game you can. That's all you can do, that's all any of us can do.

IKE. You mean to say, Zadok, a clever man like you, you mean to say that history, events not of our making, persecutions, wars, they don't make a mess of our lives?

ZADOK. Only if we let them.

IKE. You mean the Jews in Europe let the Nazis put them to death? You mean my grandfather allowed the Cossacks to behead him?

ZADOK. But you're not dead, Ike. You're alive and you had better live as though you're alive. And I speak as a dry, dusty, unemotional man.

IKE. I can't help feeling what I feel, Zadok—

ZADOK. *(Exploding.)* You can, you can help feeling what you feel, that's the whole point. We're not blighted, we're not cursed, we're not immobile, we have this ability to take our lives into our own hands, we can move or we can stand still, we can accept or we can reject, and we can *change*!

IKE. Zadok, give me a chance to explain. I can't help feeling that history spat me out here, that's what I feel—

ZADOK. All right, so it spat you out. History spits out people all the time. And some die, yes, and the world is cruel and relentless and savage. As I always say, there's no justice. But for those who live there's one obligation and that's life itself, Ike. Do me this favor, don't give into misfortune. At least do something about it. Let me make an appointment for you to see Norman Hurwitz—

IKE. I'll think about it

ZADOK. Please, I beg you, Ike, go and see him, and who knows? Your life could be transformed.

IKE. So, what else is new?

ZADOK. Things could be worse, Ike.

IKE. That's always true. But what about tomorrow, Zadok, do you worry about the future?

ZADOK. I have my qualms. We've got a government here, they behave like Nazis, they *are* Nazis. Of course, I worry about the future—

IKE. You know what I say when I read about the government? I say thank God it isn't us they're picking on. It makes a nice change. Yes, the future, God help us.

ZADOK. Let me tell you something, Ike. You're blessed. And you know why? Because you have Leonard and Leonard is the future—

IKE. From your mouth into God's ear. *(Silence.)* Sometimes I feel I could do with procaine hydrochloride, an anaesthetic called Novocaine in 1905. One favor, Zadok, don't mention that psychiatrist to Belle—

ZADOK. If you'd rather I didn't—*(Goes to Belle's door and opens it. Into the room.)* I have to be going—

ROSE. *(Off.)* From *Pippa Passes*, by Robert Browning.

ZADOK. Make it snappy.

ROSE.*(Off.)*

"From without is heard the voice of Pippa singing—
The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn.
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!"

ZADOK. Touch wood. I'm off—

ROSE. *(Off.)* What time is it?

ZADOK. Quarter past.

ROSE. *(Off.)* I'm off, too—

BELLE. (*Off.*) Must you?

ROSE. *(Off.)* Yes, I must.

(ZADOK withdraws, closing Belle's door.)

ZADOK. So, Ike, you'll keep your promise?

IKE. What promise?

ZADOK. If I make an appointment for you to see Norman Hurwitz, you'll see him?

IKE. I made no promise. I'll think about it, that's what I promised. And that's what I'll do. I'll think about it. And Zadok, you can call in to see me without having a purpose, you take my meaning?

ZADOK. I take your meaning—

IKE. Because for me, talking to you is better than listening to poetry.

(ROSE comes out of Belle's room.)

BELLE. (*Off, calling.*) Len, here a moment—

ROSE. Where's Leonard?

ZADOK. (*Bellowing.*) Leonard!

ROSE. So, Ike, did you have a nice chat with Zadok?

IKE. We had a chat.

ROSE. That's nice.

(LEONARD enters from the living room.)

ZADOK. Leonard, your mother wants you. We're just off.

(LEONARD tries to skirt past him.)

ZADOK. Where you going? Don't I get a kiss?

(LEONARD, reluctantly, goes to him. ZADOK stares at him for some seconds and smiles in a sickly way. Then, suddenly, HE grabs Leonard's cheeks and squeezes them, making grunts of pleasure.)

ZADOK. I love this boy.

BELLE. Leonard, where are you?

ZADOK. Goodnight, I'm off.

ROSE. (*Kisses Leonard.*) Goodnight, Len, Ike. See you soon. (*Calling.*) Goodnight, Belle—

ZADOK. Goodnight, Belle—

BELLE. (*Off.*) Goodnight—

(ZADOK and ROSE exit.
LEONARD goes into Belle's room. IKE returns to his encyclopedia.)

BELLE. (*Off.*) Ask your father if he wants cold chicken or eggs for supper.

LEONARD. (*Returns.*) Dad, do you want cold chicken or eggs for supper?

IKE. Eggs.

LEONARD. *(To Belle in her room.)* Eggs. I'll have eggs, too. *(HE comes back into the hall, closing the door.)*

IKE. Len?

LEONARD. Yes?

IKE. Did you talk to your mother about what Professor Kinski said? About Vienna?

LEONARD. Yes.

IKE. What did she say?

LEONARD. She said she'd think about it.

(IKE nods. LEONARD goes to his satchel and searches for a book. IKE stands for the first time. He drags his left leg and moves slowly across to Belle's door. LEONARD watches him. IKE knocks on the door.)

BELLE. *(Off.)* Who is it?

IKE. Me.

(Silence.
IKE opens the door, goes into Belle's room and closes the door.
LEONARD stands perfectly still, waiting, in dread.
After a moment, IKE storms back into the hall.)

IKE. God Almighty, God Almighty—*(HE sits at the table, angry, tormented. Shouting at Belle's room.)* Why do you treat me like this? What have I done that's so terrible?

(Silence.
LEONARD busies himself with his homework.
Lights fade to BLACKOUT.)

Scene 2

Belle's bedroom, just after 6:30 p.m., approximately the same time as the previous scene.
The room is furnished with little taste. There is a single bed, a dressing table, an armchair, a built-in wardrobe and Degas prints of ballet dancers on the wall. The window has bars. The door opens.

BELLE. *(Off.)* I'll be in my room—
LEONARD. (*Off.*) I won't be a moment—
ROSE. (*Off.*) Belle, you'll never guess what Ike just asked me—

BELLE. (*Off.*) That's true—

(BELLE and ROSE enter. BELLE carries a tray with teapot and cups.)

BELLE. I wonder what Leonard wants to talk about. I'm always filled with such terrible foreboding—

ROSE. (*Sits.*) Listen to me, Belle, I think Ike's an amazing man—

BELLE. Yes, amazing.

ROSE. No, he is. I mean, he always knows what's going on. You know what he just asked me? About *The Naked and the Dead*—

BELLE. That American novel?

ROSE. Yes, filthy, you've no idea—

BELLE. Have you read it?

ROSE. Certainly. It's filth. Mind you, Belle, I laughed, there's one thing there, the soldier, when he hates someone, he puts them on what he calls his "shit list."

(THEY laugh.)

ROSE. Such words in a book—

BELLE. Has Ike read it?

ROSE. No, I told him not to. He's such an innocent, he wouldn't sleep for a week.

BELLE. He'd sleep. Ike sleeps through anything. Worse, he'd snore.

ROSE. How does Leonard cope with the snoring?

BELLE. He's like his father, he'll sleep through anything too. And when you're young—

ROSE. Sometimes I don't think it's right, a son shouldn't share a bedroom with his father.

BELLE. What d'you want me to do in a two-bedroom flat, you want me to sleep in the same room as Ike, you want me to be kept awake all night?

ROSE. Keep your hair on, Belle, I only said I wondered—

BELLE. I heard what you said. *(Sits on the bed.)* God, I'm tired. I'm tired of working.

ROSE. I brought something nice to read to you tonight.

BELLE. What?

ROSE. Robert Browning.

BELLE. Oh, my favorite. *(SHE rises and goes to the door.)* What do they talk about, Leonard and his father? *(SHE opens the door a crack.)*

IKE. *(Off.)*—things like that are interesting. You should read these, Sir John Hammerton's Book of Knowledge, Leonard, I bought them for you—

BELLE. *I* bought them for him. *(SHE closes the door.)* He bought them for him, he bought them for him—

(Silence.)

ROSE. Belle, I want to talk to you.

BELLE. Talk. *(SHE sits down.)*

ROSE. About Ike.

BELLE. I don't want to talk about Ike, Rose.

(Silence.)

ROSE. Zadok's going to be popping in this evening.

BELLE. Zadok, what for?

ROSE. He wants to have a word with Ike.

BELLE. I never understand our brother, Zadok. He's a highly intelligent man, Oxford-educated, what's he want to talk to Ike for?

ROSE. Ike's no fool. They were friends long before you married.

BELLE. Don't tell me, it was Zadok introduced us. So what's he want to talk to Ike about?

ROSE. I'm not going to make a secret of this, Belle. Zadok and I, we worry about you. And we worry about Ike.

BELLE. I worry about Ike, too.

ROSE. He's a decent man, Belle—

BELLE. Yes, decent—

ROSE. And he's not well, I mean the hand, the leg, his general health—

BELLE. Rose, I don't want to talk about it, really I don't.

(Silence.)

ROSE. Zadok ran into David Figg the other day, you remember David Figg, the doctor?

BELLE. Remember him? I knew him before he was born.

ROSE. People speak very highly of him. He's thought to be a top man.

BELLE. So?

ROSE. Well, he and Zadok met, they got to talking, one thing led to another, and they discussed Ike. David feels that Ike's problems are psychological—

BELLE. I could have told him that twenty years ago—

ROSE. He feels he should see a psychiatrist—

BELLE. From his mouth into God's ear.

ROSE. Listen, Belle, this is serious—

BELLE. I'm serious. I've always known my husband wasn't normal. At the age of forty-six his mother dies and he has a nervous breakdown, that's normal? I'll tell you one thing for certain, Rose, when I die he won't have a nervous breakdown.

ROSE. Zadok's going to talk to Ike tonight. He's going to suggest that Ike should see Norman Hurwitz.

BELLE. Who's he when he's at home?

ROSE. Norman Hurwitz? He's Professor of Psychiatry, the top man in the country, Belle.

(Silence.)

BELLE. How's the library?

ROSE. Can't complain. People are reading books. You'll encourage Ike to see Norman Hurwitz, won't you, Belle?

BELLE. When's Zadok coming?

ROSE. Any time now.

(Silence.)

BELLE. I often wonder, Rose how Ike and I ever produced someone like Leonard.

ROSE. You're not asking me, a spinster, to tell you about the facts of life, are you?

BELLE. (*Smiling.*) Shut up. I mean, when you think about it, Ike's such a peculiar man.

ROSE. Belle, these are the mysteries.

(Silence.)

BELLE. When I met Ike, I thought he was the handsomest man I'd ever seen.

ROSE. And so he was, he was a wonderful looking man.

BELLE. And he was doing so well then. (*Silence.*) I should have had Leonard earlier. (*Silence.*) Where does talent come from?

(Silence.)

ROSE. It's a shame he's an only child.

(Silence.)

BELLE. (*Calling.*) Leonard, come and talk to us, your maths can wait—

(The front DOORBELL rings.)

LEONARD. (*Calling.*) There's someone at the door—

BELLE. (*Calling.*) It'll be Uncle Zadok, your father can let him in.

(Silence.)

BELLE. (*Calling.*) Leonard, is Uncle Zadok there?

LEONARD. (*Off.*) Yes, he's here—

(A KNOCK on the door.

ZADOK puts his head in.)

ZADOK. Sisters mine, it's your brudder.

BELLE. Hello, Zadok.

ROSE. Hello, Zadok.

BELLE. Tell Leonard to come and see me.

ZADOK. (*Shutting the door.*) Maestro, your mother wants to see you.

LEONARD. (*Off.*) Coming Mom—

ROSE. That's good. Let Leonard be in here while Zadok talks to Ike.

(LEONARD comes into the room.)

BELLE. Have you finished your homework?

LEONARD. Nowhere near—

(ZADOK puts his head round the door. HE has a chicken leg in his hand.)

ZADOK. I've stolen a chicken leg. *(HE disappears, closing the door.)*

BELLE. Sweetheart, come and sit, what did you want to tell me?

LEONARD. It can wait, Mom.

BELLE. No, it can't. I want to hear—

ROSE. You can tell her in front of me, Leonard, I'm family, remember?

LEONARD. All right, I'll tell you—

BELLE. Don't do us any favors.

LEONARD. I'll tell you. You asked me to tell you, I'll tell you.

BELLE. Leonard, you're not too old to be put across my knee and given a damn good hiding. Don't get short with me, get short with your father but not with me.

ROSE. All right, choose your weapons, seconds out, now let's behave like civilized human beings.

LEONARD. At my lesson today—

BELLE. Yes?

ROSE. With Professor Kinski?

LEONARD. *(Irritated.)* Yes—

BELLE. Leonard, relax, I can see you're tense, relax.

LEONARD. I'm trying to tell the story, you keep interrupting—

ROSE. Gong! Round two. Break clean, keep your punches above the belt, and come out talking.

BELLE. Rose, please. Go on, sweetheart—

LEONARD. He says, Professor Kinski says, he thinks I ought to go overseas to study. To Vienna, he says.

ROSE. Vienna, what's he talking about, Vienna, what's wrong with London?

BELLE. Rose, wait a moment. Tell me exactly what he said.

LEONARD. He said there was nothing more he could teach me.

ROSE. He said that?

LEONARD. Yes. He said—*(Hesitates.)*

ROSE. Tell us, don't be modest.

LEONARD. He said he'd never reached such a point with a pupil before. He said, he was so gentle today, he even wants to take me out to lunch in the holidays, he said he felt helpless. And Mom, I've been feeling for weeks now, he's got nothing more to teach me.

BELLE. You should have said, those lessons are costing me a fortune—

LEONARD. I know, I know, but what was I to do? Anyway, today he brought it up. He said I really need master classes and the only place I would find them is in Vienna, he said.

ROSE. The man's mad, who goes to Vienna nowadays? Only Graham Greene. And what would you learn in Vienna, the zither? You'll go to London—

BELLE. Rose, wait a moment. Leonard, look, I have to think—

LEONARD. Mom, I know, you don't have to explain—

BELLE. It's a big decision, a big trip, the cost, my God—

LEONARD. Look, I know, I mentioned it to Dad—

BELLE. You mentioned it to Dad, that'll be a great help—

ROSE. Can I ask a question? Everything's taken for granted in this household. I'd like to ask a basic question.

BELLE. Ask.

ROSE. Leonard, do you want to go overseas? *(Silence.)* Do you?

LEONARD. More than anything in the world.

(BELLE rises and pours herself another cup of tea.)

ROSE. Do you want to go to Vienna?

LEONARD. I don't know where I want to go, I'd just like to go and study somewhere where I'd learn what I have to learn.

ROSE. That's settled, then.

BELLE. Rose, not so quick, it's not as simple as that.

ROSE. I'm not saying he's going tomorrow, Belle, I'm just establishing the young maestro's wishes in the matter.

LEONARD. I thought I might make some enquiries about New York—

ROSE. New York? What d'you mean, New York? You're another madman—

LEONARD. Aunty Rose, New York's a musical capital—

ROSE. Yes, like my left foot. What's wrong with London?

LEONARD. Nothing's wrong with London—

ROSE. Your Uncle Zadok, your mother and I were all born in London.

LEONARD. Aunty Rose, I know that, but it doesn't make London the musical capital of the world.

ROSE. What have got against London?

LEONARD. I've got nothing against London—

ROSE. Then what's all the talk about New York? And as for Vienna, I've never heard anything so ridiculous—

BELLE. Rose, Rose, wait a moment. Leonard, I have to think about this—

LEONARD. Of course.

BELLE. At this moment, I'm not so concerned about where you go—

ROSE. Belle, how can you say something like that? If he's going to go anywhere he's got to go to London—

BELLE. Rose, for God's sake, I've had a long day and now this to think about.

ROSE. Pardon me for breathing.

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