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SF PERUSALS

ALI AND DAHLIA

by Tariq Jordan

SAMUEL FRENCH

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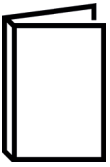
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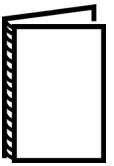
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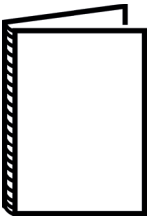
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tariq Jordan is an actor, teacher, and writer based in London. He trained at Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Arts and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, graduating in 2007. He has worked extensively as a performer on stage and screen.

His TV credits include: *White Girl* by Abi Morgan, *George Gently*, *Spooks*, *Lewis*, *Shameless*, and *Law and Order*.

Theatrical credits include: *Guantanamo* (Tricycle Theatre, New Ambassadors, West End, House of Congress, and House of Commons); *Wah! Wah! Girls* (Sadler's Wells / Kneehigh); *The Bomb* (Tricycle Theatre); Pip in *Great Expectations* (Watford Palace / English Touring Theatre); *This Flesh is Mine*, and *When Nobody Returns* (Border Crossings); *Fragile Land* (Hampstead Theatre).

As a qualified teacher, Tariq has worked extensively with young people in UK state schools and has also taught in the Middle East. His debut play *Ali and Dahlia* was inspired by his experiences working in Palestine as well as having Russian-Jewish and Iraqi-Muslim heritage.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The original production was performed in the round.

Projected footage was incorporated throughout the piece, and also during scene transitions, to immerse the audience into the locations and time-frames of the play.

The translations have been omitted to accommodate for future productions and castings. The original production contained Palestinian Arabic and Israeli Hebrew dialects.

SETTING

Palestine and Israel: Al-Jalame Prison, a secluded part of the West Bank wall, Qalandia Checkpoint, Jaffa beach, and Gaza's buffer zone.

The play spans from 2002, during the second Intifada and the construction of the West Bank wall, to May 2018 and the opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem.

NOTE ON TEXT

(/) Denotes an overlapping of dialogue.
(—) Denotes an interruption.
(...) Denotes an unspoken continuation of thought or action.

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CAST



WAJ ALI – ALI

Theatre includes: *LOVE* (NT on tour); *Occupational Hazards* (Hampstead Theatre); *Clothes Swap Theatre Party* (Forward Theatre Project); *The Rest of Your Life*, *Nahda* (Bush Theatre); *King Lear* (National Theatre).
Film includes: *90 Minutes*; *Good People*; *Red 2*.
Television includes: *Carnival Row* (Amazon); *Mister Winner*; *Witless*; *The Attack*; *Strike: The Silkworm* (BBC); *Stan Lee's Lucky Man* (Sky).



DELI SEGAL – DAHLIA

Deli read English at Robinson College, Cambridge and trained at East 15 Acting School. Theatre includes: *Just Like Real Life* (Latitude Festival); *Mary's Babies* (Vault Festival); *I Have A Mouth And I Will Scream* (Vault Festival/The Bunker); *The Lady And the Unicorn* (Yard Theatre); *Acorn* (Courtyard Theatre); *After Penelope* (The White Bear Theatre/RADA Festival/Rome International Festival); *It Felt Like A Kiss* (Punchdrunk/ MIF). Film: *A Drop of Ambition* (short), *The Outer Circle* (winner of the Pears short film fund 2017). Audio: *Doctor Who*.



KAI SPELLMAN – ASHER/ MOSHER/DAVID

Kai trained at Masters Performing Arts College where he achieved a degree in Musical Theatre. He has since become an accomplished actor and writer.
Theatre credits include: *Slaves of Solitude* (Hampstead Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* (Italy Tour); *Imogen* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Laurence After Arabia* (Hampstead Theatre); *West Side Story* and *The Wizard of Oz* (Spanish Tour); *To Paint the Earth* (Southwark Playhouse).
Television credits include: *Humans* (Series 2 – Channel 4).

CREATIVE LIST

MAYA ELLIS – PRODUCER

Maya is a theatre producer, administrator and programmer. Alongside producing she currently works for Summerhall in Edinburgh and Clean Break.

Producing credits include: *Whalebone* (Edinburgh Festival Fringe); *Moonfleece* (The Pleasance); *How The Vote Was Won* (The Bunker), *Byron: Angel and Outcast* (Cadogan Hall); and *Stop and Search* (Arcola).

KERRY KYRIACOS MICHAEL – DIRECTOR AND DESIGNER

Kerry, a second generation North London Cypriot, was Artistic Director & Chief Executive of Theatre Royal Stratford East from Sept 2004 to Sept 2017. For thirteen years, he forged the Theatre's commitment to developing new work and championing voices under-represented in the mainstream. In March 2018 Kerry won Artistic Director of The Year at the OFF WEST END Awards, in April he was awarded the Freedom of the City of London and awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 2018.

Kerry's recent theatre-directing highlights include: *Aladdin* at the New Wimbledon Theatre staring Paul Merton; a new production of *The Who's Tommy* – embedding creative British Sign Language, Captioning and Audio Description (Winner UK Theatre Awards Best Touring Production '17); Ray Davies' *Come Dancing* (Winner What's On Stage Best New Musical); *The Harder They Come* (transferred to the West End and tours of Canada and USA); Tanika Gupta's play *Love N Stuff* which he also designed; Cosh Omar's plays *The Battle of Green Lanes* and *The Great Extension*; John Adam's opera, *I Was Looking At The Ceiling and Then I Saw The Sky* (co-production with Barbican Centre).

YASMIN PAIGE – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Yasmin is an Actor and Assistant Director. She has six years of theatre experience, performing most notably at the Palace Theatre, Young Vic, and the Royal Court. She has also worked in film and television (*Submarine, Pramface*). She studied English Literature at Queen Mary University of London where she researched and studied the Palestine/Israeli conflict through the literature of prominent Israeli and Palestinian writers.

KIT HINCHCLIFFE – ASSOCIATE DESIGNER

Kit studied Performance Design and Practice at Central St Martins College of Art and Design. She is the Joint Artistic Director of Lidless Theatre for which her credit include: *The Wasteland*; *Pebbles*; *They Have Long Arms and They Can Find Me* and *Moonfleece*. She has also designed for companies including Jethro Compton, Robin Howard Dance Theatre, Exploding Whale, Anders Duckworth and Ciemulator Dance Theatre. She is also a key member of the team at the Architecture Social Club. More information on Lidless can be found here: www.lidlesstheatre.com

WILL MONKS – PROJECTION AND LIGHTING DESIGNER

Will trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.
Theatre includes: *Jericho's Rose* (Hope Theatre); *Trojan Horse* (Summerhall, Edinburgh; winner of Fringe First and Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Awards); *The Dark Room* (Theatre503; nominated for Best Lighting Designer: Offie Award); *The Boy, the Piano and the Beach*; *On the Outskirts of a Large Event*; *Who Cares*; *Dust*; *Bare Skin On Briny Waters*; *E15*; *I Am Joan, Tanja* (UK tours); *We Live By The Sea* (nominated for Best Ensemble and Best Production: Offie Awards); *This Is Where We Live* (international tours); *Dyl* (Old Red Lion); *The Benidorm Elvis Fiesta* (Benidorm Palace); *Chilcot* (The Lowry, Battersea Arts Centre); *Dangerous Or Otherwise*; *How To Survive The Blitz And Other Things, Time Passes. Listen.* (site specific); *The Secret Slowness Of Movement* (David Roberts Art Foundation).

MUNOTIDA CHINYANGA – SOUND DESIGNER

Munotida Chinyanga is a sound designer and director. She trained in Theatre Arts (BA and MA) at Middlesex University along with The Almeida Theatre and the Young Vic's Director Training Programme.

Credits for sound design include: *A Small Place* (The Gate Theatre); *Wings* (Oxford Northwall).

Directing credits include: *Gilgamesh* (The National Theatre of Rome), *Five Plays* (Young Vic); *unPlaying* (The Brookmill Gallery); *Catalyst* (Oxford Northwall).

DEVIKA RAMCHARAN – STAGE MANAGER

Devika Ramcharan trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes: for Theatre Royal Bath's Ustinov Studio as CSM; *Blue Door. A*s ASM; *The Whale; The Open House; The Mentor*. As SM; *Kettle of Fish (*The Yard). Additional ASM credits include; *Wake* (Birmingham Opera); *Pity* (The Royal Court); *Les Misérables* (Pimlico Opera); *Another World* (The National Theatre).

LIZ HYDER – PR

Liz is an experienced workshop leader and writer. In early 2018, she won Moniack Mhor's Emerging Writer Award for her debut novel, *Bearmouth*, which will be published by Pushkin Press in hardback in the autumn of 2019. As a freelance-multi award-winning PR Consultant working in the arts (publishing, theatre, broadcast and festivals), she's worked with household name authors, broadcasters, performers and presenters over the past fifteen years.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ali and Dahlia has been touched by many people, to whom I would like to show my gratitude:

I would like to thank my director, Kerry Kyriacos Michael for bringing this story to the stage for me. Thank you Kerry for your infectious love of story-telling and characters, your determined approach to your work, and your friendship, mentorship and guidance towards me as a new writer.

Waj Ali, Deli Segal, and Kai Spellman: You are three beautiful and talented artists who brought life into these characters and transformed them beyond my own imagination. It was a joy observing you in rehearsals as you took ownership of this story.

Thank you to Nic Connaughton at the Pleasance Theatre for taking a leap of faith with this play and pushing for it to be staged. Your support was invaluable.

*Ali and Dahli*a had two public readings as part of the Arcola Theatre's PlayWROUGHT Festival and HighTide Festival. Thank you to both festivals for supporting new writing. And thank you to the wonderful artists and creatives who gave their time and talents to these important initial stages.

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Thank you to my sister, for her love and support for this story throughout.

And finally, thank you to my mother.

FIRST PERFORMANCE INFO

Ali and Dahlia was first performed at The Pleasance Theatre, London from 26th March until 14th April.

This production was kindly supported by the Arts Council England.



CHARACTERS

ALI: A Palestinian from Bir Nabala.
DAHLIA: An Israeli from Jerusalem.
MOSHE / ASHER / DAVID: An officer / Dahlia's brother / An IDF soldier.

ALI and **DAHLIA** age from 14 to 30 years old.
ASHER ages from 13–21 years old.
(Asher does not appear in the present.)

All ages are played by the same actors.

Scene One

Projected footage: Video footage spanning from the late 1800's to present day. Including but not limited to: Ottoman rule; British Mandate Palestine; 1948 declaration of the State of Israel; the Six-Day War; the First Intifada; the Oslo Accords; the Second Intifada; suicide bombings in Israel; the bombardment of Gaza; and finally news footage of the US embassy relocated to Jerusalem.

May 2018. Al-Jalame Prison. A dimly lit interrogation room. **ALI**, *thirty, is hooded, and stands centre stage. Two chairs sit upstage.* **ALI** *holds a stress pose: his arms outstretched wide with his knees bent and heels raised. An officer,* **MOSHE**, *thirty four, is also in the room.*

MOSHE Take it off.

ALI, *exhausted, takes his hood off. He looks disheveled. He retreats back, covering his eyes due to the bright light.*

Lower your hands. I want to see your face.

ALI *lowers his hands.*

What is your name?

ALI Omar Nasser.

MOSHE How old are you, Omar?

ALI Thirty.

MOSHE Do you know why you are here?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE Tell me why.

ALI I entered Jerusalem.

MOSHE And... *(Pause)* I'm waiting.

ALI I entered Jerusalem...

MOSHE *Illegally*. 'I entered Jerusalem illegally.' There! Say it.

ALI I entered Jerusalem illegally.

MOSHE Good. Why did you enter Jerusalem *illegally*?

ALI The American Embassy.

MOSHE Yes? The American Embassy, what about it?

ALI I went there to protest the / illegality of the—

MOSHE No! No! No! This is not what we fucking rehearsed! Don't give me this UN bullshit. You went there to throw rocks. Say it with me. *I threw rocks*

ALI I threw rocks.

MOSHE Bravo! I threw rocks with the *intention*—say that little word for me. *Intention.*

ALI Intention.

MOSHE I threw rocks with the *intention* of harming Israeli citizens. Say it!

ALI *spits aggressively towards* **MOSHE.**

MOSHE Clean it up! I said clean up your mess!

ALI *starts to wipe the floor with his hands.*

MOSHE When I arrive home, the first thing my daughters do is run and jump up into my arms. Sometimes, they have not seen their father for three days straight. I can't even call them to tell them when their *aba* will be home because people like you are unpredictable. And you know the first thing my girls say to me when they are in my arms? 'Aba, your shirt is wet. It's soaking, aba. Eurgh, it's disgusting, Aba.' (*Beat*) No more!

ALI I threw rocks with the intention to harm Israeli citiziens. Now, let me go!

MOSHE *(laughing)* Sure, whatever you want. You want me to order you an Uber? I have to make sure you are not a threat to Israel, Omar.

ALI I'm not a threat!

MOSHE Really? All that Arab blood like a hotbed of hate inside of you. You're angry, you're filled with rage. And you can't control this rage, so you strap a bomb to your body, get on a crowded bus in Jerusalem and... Boom. I would feel a great sense of guilt if this were to happen. (*Beat*) Now, let's continue. After entering Israel, illegally, you were arrested in the vicinity of Jerusalem's Old City, correct?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE You tried to make your way to the American Embassy, correct?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE You were seized by IDF soldiers. You resisted arrest didn't you? Say it for me.

ALI I resisted arrest.

MOSHE Good. The judge will ask you the following. Did you climb an eight-metre-high concrete wall?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE Stretching seven-hunded and eight kilometres across?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE With razor wire, checkpoints, gun towers and an electronic monitoring system?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE So you could see with your own eyes it was forbidden?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE Did you have a permit to enter Israel?

ALI No.

MOSHE Therefore, you broke the rules, correct?

ALI Yes.

MOSHE One more time, Omar. Tell the judge, you broke the rules. Did you break the rules, Omar?

ALI Yes. Yes. YES! I broke the rules. I broke the rules. I climbed over that like I was fucking Spiderman!

MOSHE *shoves* **ALI** *to the floor.*

MOSHE Get up! Get up! Get up. *(***ALI** *staggers up)* Now bend your knees. Bend those knees *(In Arabic)* One day you will respect me, Omar. One day. *(In English)* Let's start again, from the beginning. What is your name? I said, what is your name?

Beat.

ALI Omar Nasser.

Scene Two

A few days later. The same room. **DAHLIA**, *thirty, smartly dressed, is waiting. The door opens and* **ALI** *is pushed inside. The door closes.* **ALI** *is hooded and wearing standard prison provided clothes.* **ALI** *senses someone is in the room with him.*

DAHLIA Omar Nasser, correct?

ALI *nods his head.*

Remove the hood for me, please. I'll dim the lights to help your eyes adjust.

DAHLIA *goes behind* **ALI** *and dims the lights.* **ALI** *slowly removes his hood. He sees* **DAHLIA** *and recognises her. He rushes towards the door.*

Hey! Hey! Stop there! I'm a lawyer. I'm here to help you.

ALI *slowly turns around to face* **DAHLIA**.

Ali? *(Beat)* What are you doing here?

ALI I threw rocks with the intention to harm Israeli citizens, so I've been told.

Beat.

DAHLIA Why did you lie about your name?

Beat.

ALI You did well for yourself!

DAHLIA Excuse me?

ALI A lawyer, yes? Mabrouk. *[Arabic – Congratulations]*. Your family must be proud of you.

DAHLIA Thank you.

ALI Are you nervous?

DAHLIA Do I look nervous?

ALI Yes. That's why I'm asking.

ALI *takes a step towards* **DAHLIA**. *Suddenly* **DAHLIA** *rushes towards the door.* **ALI** *gets there first and blocks her exit.*

Where are you going?

DAHLIA Step away from the door.

ALI Tell me where you are going.

DAHLIA Get out of my way, Ali.

ALI Promise me—promise me, you won't--

DAHLIA Step away from the fucking door! Now!

ALI *holds his hands in the air and moves away from the door towards the centre of the room.*

ALI Twenty years!

That is what they told me. Twenty years is what I could be imprisoned for. Is this true?

DAHLIA Inciting violence and stone-throwing with intent to harm can carry a sentence of up to twenty years. It's rare / but—

ALI *(***ALI** *starts clapping. Proclaiming)* Well done, Israel!

DAHLIA I would take this seriously. You're going to be tried in a military court next week.

ALI A *military* court?

DAHLIA Israel runs two separate legal systems here. An Israeli settler in the West Bank is tried in the civil courts and a Palestinian in a military court.

ALI You would have thought I was a member of Hamas.

DAHLIA Are you?

ALI What?

DAHLIA Are you a member of Hamas?

ALI You think I am some militant running around shooting rockets into Israel in retaliation for—

DAHLIA Hey, hey, I'd watch your language from now on. *Retaliation.* Is that what you think it is?

ALI Oh, I'm sorry. Why don't you pick a more fitting word, Dahlia.

Beat.

DAHLIA I don't think I'm the right person for your case, Ali.

ALI You change your mind quickly. Do you do this with all your clients?

DAHLIA You don't get it do you? I can't defend you in court. I can't defend someone...

ALI Someone, what? Someone who you—fucked?

DAHLIA I'm so happy you find all of this amusing.

ALI You have to agree, this is beautiful. You couldn't make this up if you tried. It's Hollywood, Dahlia! *Two former lovers forced together in Israeli detention.* You will be played by Gal Gadot, and I will be played by Chris Pine.

DAHLIA Chris Pine's not Arab.

ALI This is my movie and I want Chris Pine to play me! If Jake Gyllenhaal can play the Prince of Persia, Chris Pine can play an Arab.

DAHLIA Ali—

ALI I wish I would have had some warning of your arrival. If I knew you were coming I would have cleaned myself up.

DAHLIA I'm not here to judge you.

ALI I hope not, because you are my lawyer. Do you have a cigarette?

DAHLIA It's not allowed.

ALI You think I care what is allowed or not? I could end up in here for twenty years. Do you have a cigarette or not?

DAHLIA *goes in her bag and takes out a pack of cigarettes. She gives one to* **ALI** *and lights it for him.*

Thank you. I would ask you to join me but I don't want to get you into trouble, lawyer.

DAHLIA *lights one for herself. They smoke in silence.*

DAHLIA How have you been?

ALI Incarcerated.

DAHLIA I mean *in general.*

ALI In general?

DAHLIA I don't know—I don't know what to say, here.

ALI In general, I am wonderful as you can see. How are you, *in general?*

DAHLIA I'm fine.

ALI Good. We've both concluded that the two of us are, *in general,* fine. *(Pause)* Are you any good at this?

DAHLIA Good at what?

ALI Your job. Can you get me free?

DAHLIA I would first need to ascertain the circumstances around your arrest. What was your motivation—

ALI Donald Trump.

DAHLIA Excuse me?

ALI Donald Trump. You wanted a motivation. You have one. A sociopathic cunt!

DAHLIA What?

ALI Do you disagree with me?

DAHLIA No... No. I just wouldn't go that far.

ALI Of course you wouldn't.

DAHLIA At least a cunt has warmth and depth.

ALI Fuck, that is *good!* Can I keep that? I'll tell the guys in the cells opposite me.

DAHLIA Why did you go to Jerusalem? You knew there would be trouble that day. What did you think you would achieve by trying to get to the embassy?

ALI Revenge.

DAHLIA You can't use words like *revenge* in court.

ALI Of course, I'm sorry, I forgot. *An eye for an eye.* How's that for the judge?

DAHLIA Will you stop fucking around. You can't justify revenge to a judge.

ALI 'Your honour, my client sought revenge for the civilians slaughtered along the Gaza border, including the medical personnel shot in the neck while trying to rescue the injured, following the opening of the US embassy.' It's not just a building, Dahlia. It's what it stands for. 14th May 1948, the State of Israel was declared—

DAHLIA I wasn't aware of that. Thank you.

ALI I'm not finished. 14th May 2018, and America announces to the world that it officially recognises Jerusalem as Israel's capital! Seventy years to the day! They did it to taunt us. They know what that day means to us. /The Naqba!

DAHLIA The Naqba, yes.

Beat.

ALI Who put you up to this?

DAHLIA What are you talking about?

ALI You're not a lawyer. Don't play with me.

DAHLIA You've gone mad!

ALI Don't lie to me, Dahlia. You never talked about *law*. You never talked about all of this. They brought you in here to break me down, didn't they?

DAHLIA What? Don't be ridiculous.

ALI They know all about us. I know how they work, I'm not stupid! What have you told them about me? / How much have they paid you?

DAHLIA Told them? You're crazy. / I didn't even know I would see you today.

ALI Don't lie to me, Dahlia! / Tell me what you've said to them!

DAHLIA Enough! Enough of this! They know nothing about us and we're going to keep it that way! Do you understand? Now sit down. Sit down, I said!

ALI *takes a moment and then sits.*

Thank you.

Pause.

Have you eaten anything?

ALI Yes! They hired Yotam Ottolenghi to devise the special menu for the prisoners. It was fucking mouth-watering.

DAHLIA *goes into her bag and takes out a wrapped-up homemade sandwich which she throws to* **ALI.**

What's this?

DAHLIA It's my lunch.

ALI *unwraps it and inspects the sandwich by pulling it apart; meticulously scanning its contents.*

What do you think you're doing?

ALI Inspecting it.

DAHLIA Inspecting it for what?

ALI Anthrax.

DAHLIA You're actually insane!

ALI How do I know you are not a spy / sent to coerce me into making a false confession?

DAHLIA Do I look like a spy?

ALI Well, that's the point! If I know you're a spy then you're not a very good spy, are you?

DAHLIA Just eat the damn sandwich, Ali.

ALI No. I'm not hungry.

DAHLIA For God's sake, just eat the fucking sandwich!

Beat. **ALI** *starts eating.*

ALI Thank you. *(mocking)* For God's sake, just eat the fucking sandwich. *(Beat)* I seem to have a love-hate relationship with God at the moment. I figured if I play hard to get and *ghost* him for a while then maybe he will pay me some much needed attention.

Beat.

DAHLIA Ali, I could lose my job for not informing them. You do know this, don't you?

ALI And I could end up in prison for twenty years. I think we both have a fair amount at stake here.

(Pause)

DAHLIA Okay.

ALI Thank you.

DAHLIA I need you to be on my side and trust me. This won't work otherwise.

DAHLIA *goes to her bag and takes out her phone.*

I'll need to take some pictures of you for my records.

ALI Shall I smile in resistance or look pained by the occupation?

DAHLIA Just be normal.

ALI I'm a Palestinian, Dahlia. I'm not well-versed in normality.

DAHLIA Just look at the bloody camera.

DAHLIA *takes pictures of* **ALI.**

ALI So who do you work for?

DAHLIA A legal team that defends Palestinians in Israeli detention.

ALI Are you part of Amnesty?

DAHLIA No.

ALI The UN?

DAHLIA No.

ALI The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights?

DAHLIA Ali!

Beat.

ALI The ICHR?

DAHLIA Enough!

ALI So you're rather small in the grand scheme of things.

Beat.

DAHLIA Stand up.

DAHLIA *takes one last photo of Ali, standing.*

Can I fire you if we don't see eye to eye? You know, if I don't feel you are working for me.

DAHLIA I wouldn't advise you to do that.

ALI Why? Are you getting attached, already?

DAHLIA Clearly.

ALI I have a way with the women; so I have been told.

DAHLIA Let's start on the day of your arrest. On the 14th May, you were seized in Jerusalem. Correct?

ALI Yes. Correct.

DAHLIA You entered Jerusalem by climbing over the West Bank barrier. Yes?

ALI Yes.

DAHLIA Did you apply for a permit to cross?

ALI No. I broke the rules! I'm sorry.

DAHLIA *writes on his paperwork.*

DAHLIA Tell me what happened that day. *(Beat)* Talk or I can leave. It's up to you.

Beat.

ALI The West Bank was alive with protests. Thousands of us took to the streets and headed towards Qalandia checkpoint. It was like the Intifada all over again.

DAHLIA Describe the events at the checkpoint.

ALI It was chaos. The soldiers were shooting at us. Tear gas and rubber bullets were flying everywhere. When you get hit by one, you go down. We threw whatever we could. We set fire to bins, to tyres—

DAHLIA Why?

ALI You don't get it, do you? This was war. That embassy was an act of war against us. I saw news footage on my phone of the massacre happening along the Gaza border and the world did nothing. Where is the UN when you need them? Why don't they send an army to protect us from Israel?

DAHLIA How did it make you feel? *(Beat)* I have to ask these questions.

ALI Angry. Powerless. Because we were losing.

DAHLIA So what did you do?

ALI There is a secluded spot where the wall is clear of watchtowers and snipers. About thirty of us climbed over with rope ladders and headed towards Jerusalem. I have never seen so many soldiers before. Thousands, lining the streets to protect that building. And what did we do while Gazans were being slaughtered? We threw rocks.

Beat.

DAHLIA An IDF soldier went missing that day.

ALI *begins to laugh.*

Why do you find that funny?

ALI I apologise if my sympathy does not extend as far as yours, but it's difficult to feel it when you are looking down the barrel of their guns.

Beat.

DAHLIA I think we're finished for today.

DAHLIA *packs her bag.*

ALI Hey! I thought we had to be truthful in here! *(Beat)* I was beaten, Dahlia! You want to see the marks? I was beaten by soldiers in the street like I was a rabid dog.

DAHLIA I'm sorry. I'm sorry to hear that.

ALI I don't believe you.

DAHLIA Then don't.

DAHLIA *goes to leave.*

ALI Promise me you'll come back.

DAHLIA Goodbye, Ali.

DAHLIA *leaves. The lights start to flicker. We hear the faint sounds of bombs exploding in the distance as* **ALI** *remembers something. Blackout.*

Scene Three

Sixteen years earlier. 2002. Video footage plays of the Second Intifada.

We are now at a secluded part of the West Bank wall still under construction. The distant sounds of mortar shells and gunfire. Fourteen-year-old **ALI** *scrambles on stage and runs behind some concrete.*

DAHLIA *fourteen-years-old, wearing her school uniform, runs on stage, she drags her brother,* **ASHER**, *thirteen-years-old, also in uniform. She is breathless and clearly lost.* **ASHER** *is scared.* **ALI** *sees her from under the rubble and watches intently.*

ASHER *(Hebrew)* Dahlia, I want to go home. It's not safe here.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Stay close to me. Everything is going to be fine.

ASHER *(Hebrew)* We should have waited for aba to arrive. I told you to stay inside school when the firing started.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Shut up, Asher! I am trying to find out where we are.

DAHLIA *and* **ASHER** *wander. A sudden flurry of gunshots are heard.* **DAHLIA** *grabs* **ASHER** *and runs behind the same concrete block as* **ALI**. *All three jump out from the hiding place.* **ALI** *pulls out a slingshot from his pocket.* **DAHLIA** *and* **ASHER** *hold their hands up encircling* **ALI**.

ALI *(Arabic)* Get back. Get back. / Don't come any closer.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Wait. Wait. / Don't shoot—

ALI *(Arabic)* Get away before / I shoot—

ASHER *(Hebrew)* Dahlia, Dahlia, / do something.

ALI *(Arabic)* Get away from here!

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Run behind the wall, Asher! / Quickly. Run!

ASHER *and* **DAHLIA** *run behind the incomplete wall.* **ALI** *aims his slingshot and fires but misses.* **ALI** *sets up position downstage, ready to shoot on sight. He waits.* **DAHLIA** *slowly pokes her head from behind the wall.* **ALI** *shoots.* **DAHLIA** *ducks behind the wall again.*

(Hebrew) Hey! Hey! Stop shooting at us and we can talk you idiot.

ASHER *pokes his head out. Another shot from* **ALI.** **ASHER** *retreats.*

ASHER *(Hebrew)* Dahlia, do something! He is crazy!

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Shut up, Asher! Shut up!

ALI *(Arabic)* I'll shoot you if you come out from there. I mean it. / Get out of here!

ASHER *(Hebrew)* Dahlia. Speak to him in English.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Shut up, Asher! *(English, slowly at first)* Hello? Hello? I don't understand what you are saying! / Do you speak—

ALI *(Arabic)* Go away! I'm warning you!

ASHER *(Hebrew)* Speak again, Dahlia. Speak again.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Keep quiet, Asher! *(English)* Hello? Listen to me! Just listen. I—can't—understand—you! Do you speak—/ English?

ALI *(English)* English!

DAHLIA Yes! Yes. English.

ALI I will shoot you! I will shoot you unless you leave here.

DAHLIA Okay! Okay! Hear me out for a moment.

DAHLIA *and* **ASHER** *reveal themselves.*

Now, I don't think you are much good at this shooting business. So why don't we—

ASHER *tries to run.* **ALI** *trips him up.*

ALI Hey! Hey!

DAHLIA Asher!

ASHER *runs back to* **DAHLIA***'s side.*

DAHLIA (*To Asher*) Idiot!

ASHER He hit me!

Beat.

DAHLIA We're going to leave you alone now, do you understand?

ALI Go back the way you came!

DAHLIA We will be going very soon, won't we, Asher? *(***ASHER** *nods in agreement)* We ran from school when the firing started and ended up here. Our father will be looking for us. He will arrive here any moment now. If I can give you some advice? I would be quick and run away if I were you, because if he finds you, it will be very bad news—

ALI *(Arabic)* Shut up! You're lying! *(English)* No one is here but us.

DAHLIA Suit yourself. But we did warn you, didn't we, Asher?

ASHER We did warn you. When he finds you, you'll regret all of this. The soldiers could be with him.

ALI *lowers his slingshot. He walks towards* **DAHLIA**.

DAHLIA We don't want you to get hurt. You should go, quickly.

ALI *(fearful)* Okay. Okay. I will go. Thank you.

ALI *walks past* **DAHLIA**. **DAHLIA** *suddenly punches him in the stomach, sending him to the ground.* **DAHLIA** *grabs his slingshot as* **ALI** *tries to run. She grabs a stone from the ground and aims the slingshot at* **ALI**.

DAHLIA Get up! Put your hands up! Good. Now, turn around and face me. Asher, check his pockets.

ASHER *goes up to* **ALI** *and frisks him, rather awkwardly.*

ASHER Nothing. He has nothing.

ALI *(noticing blood from a cut on his elbow)* I'm bleeding. You made me bleed.

DAHLIA Not so confident now, are we? There's no-one to blame but yourself.

ASHER We told you to stop. We told you / you would regret it!

DAHLIA Asher, enough!

ASHER Okay...

DAHLIA If you are going to pretend you have the guts to try and attack us, then you had better follow through with it. Come closer to me.

ASHER Dahlia, let's go now. Aba will be worried.

DAHLIA Not until this *thing* appologises for what he did.

ALI *(Arabic)* Fuck off!

ASHER Aba said they kidnap Israelis.

DAHLIA He doesn't look dangerous to me! *(To* **ALI***)* You should find out if I am a friend or enemy before shooting, don't you think? It's called manners.

ALI *(protesting)* I am manners!

ASHER *(laughs)* I *am* manners! He said 'I *am* manners!'

DAHLIA It's 'I *have* manners'. *Have*. Tell me where you are from!

ALI No!

DAHLIA Tell me or I will call the soldiers and they will lock you up. Only last week, some Arabs threw rocks at our car as my father was driving. I bet that was you, wasn't it?

ASHER They smashed the back window. The rock landed on my lap. I was lucky not to be killed!

DAHLIA Was that you? Was it?

ALI *shakes his head.*

Good. I asked you, where you are from!

ALI Jaffa.

ASHER He's lying, Dahlia. He's lying to us. He's not from Jaffa.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* Shut up, Asher! Shut up. *(English)* You're not from Jaffa. Jaffa's in Israel.

ASHER He's an Arab, Dahlia, they want to destroy Israel, aba says. They want drown us in the sea.

DAHLIA Is that what you want? To drown us in the sea?

ALI *shakes his head.*

Are you sure about that?

ALI *nods his head.*

DAHLIA I'll just ask the soldiers to find out where you live. Bye!

ALI No, wait, don't! Don't go! *(Beat)* I'm from Bir Nabala.

DAHLIA That wasn't so hard was it?

ASHER Dahlia, I want to go find aba now. *(Hebrew)* He looks scared enough.

DAHLIA *(Hebrew)* We will soon. Not yet. *(English)* Asher, walk up to him. Walk up to him, I said.

ASHER *nervously does what he is told. The two boys face each other in silence.*

Apologise for attacking at my brother.

ALI No.

DAHLIA Alright then. Asher, do what he did to you.

ASHER *(Hebrew)* Dahlia, stop this now!

DAHLIA He needs to learn to never do that again to us.

ASHER *(Hebrew)* No. I can't do it.

DAHLIA Then spit at him. Do something, Asher. Don't let him think you are not a man!

ASHER *(Hebrew)* No! Dahlia, enough!

DAHLIA You're so weak! Punish him, Asher!

Pause. **ASHER**, *in a panic, pushes* **ALI** *and then runs off.*

ASHER *(Hebrew)* I'm going to tell aba. I'm going to tell him what you are doing here.

ASHER *runs off.*

DAHLIA Asher! Asher! Come back now! *(Hebrew)* It's not safe! Asher! *(Beat) (English)* He's so embarrassing.

ALI *laughs to himself.*

Don't laugh.

Pause.

(pointing) I live there. In Ramot. I was staying near the Park Hotel when the suicide bomber attacked it. He killed thirty people. He was dressed as a woman, you know. He did it during the Passover seder. Why would he do that? I also saw the Megiddo Junction bus bombing. I watched it on the news with my mother. You know, when I'm eighteen, I will start my military service and protect Israel from all the terrorists. My friend's brother, Ilan, is stationed near Ashkelon. He was sent to Jenin. She told me he visited home last week and said, Hamas and the PLO are losing. So I'd change sides if I were you.

ALI No.

DAHLIA No? You don't look like you could fight in any army to me.

ALI I can fight! I can fight!

DAHLIA You tried to shoot me just now but you aren't very skilled at it. You're not even good at lying. I've been to Jaffa

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