

MY PALM TREE

By: Dorit Makleff

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Synopsis

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This play was written last year in the shadow of the Intifada and the general mood of despair in Israel. Numerous victims on both sides created a vicious circle of hate, fear and revenge. I felt it was crucial to promote the need to recreate hope which, in my mind, is an essential ingredient of human existence.



Rebeka Makleff Washingtonian palm tree
planting in front of The Makleff's House 1928



The palm tree 2004

Muslim researchers frequently compare the "Zionist kingdom" with the "Crusaders' kingdom" which survived only 200 years. I also believe that if we don't reach a peaceful coexistence with our Palestinian neighbours, Zionism will become a passing phenomena. That's why I chose to represent by the personal story of the characters and the "Psycho-theatre" of Jude – the heroine – the main

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conflict of our existence: "Death" and "Life" as two Sumo wrestlers, blind but resourceful.

4 actors (playing 7 characters) tell the story of a Jerusalem historian who "cracks up" when her boyfriend (a historian as well) "escapes" to England. His plans to research the tiny miracle of the ephemeral peace treaty signed by Saladin and Richard Lion-Heart in 1192 – allow him a break from the scorching heat and the atmosphere of despair in the land of his forefathers. These two historic figures – Richard Lion-Heart and Saladin are also the main characters in the inner drama of Jude. The personal aspect of life is thus teamed up with the collective aspect – Jude's destiny is interlocked with the destiny of our land of milk and blood. The romantic breakup generates a mental upheaval that "creates" a "Psycho-Theatre". The basis of this inner drama is the conflict between Tanathos and Eros, the force of Death and the force of Life which eventually pushes her towards choosing Life in spite of the temptation to give in to Death.

Jude – the historian, and Yuda – the neighbourhod greengrocer who has recently lost his wife extract themselves from the jaws of grief, mourning and orphanhood. Together they build a golden bridge to a new tomorrow.

The Jewish tradition maintains that "all is foreseen but freedom of choice is given". Within the "theatre of life" it's up to us to stage our happy-end.

In writing this play I was inspired by the palm tree that was planted by my late grandfather younger sister in 1928. Despite of everything that's happened since - the tree is still there, aspiring to the sky – reaching for heaven. My grandfather's sister planted it in the family's garden in Motsa, a year before she was murdered along with her parents, sister and another brother by their Arab neighbours from the village of Kolonia.

My grandfather's father, not wanting to disrupt the coexistence with their Arab neighbours, refused to take arms from the "Hagana" in spite of the warnings about an imminent attack. (*The Hagana was a Jewish self-defense organization established in Palestine against Arab attacks during the British Mandate). As the

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head of the family he took the crucial decision not to provoke his neighbours. On Saturday morning 24.8.1929 most of the family was brutally killed. My grandfather managed to save his younger brother and sister. His younger brother – Mordechai Makleff – later became the third chief of staff of the I.D.F and the general manager of the Dead Sea Works Ltd. In this capacity he saw the need to cooperate with the Jordanians over the water issue and to that end he put aside his own personal trauma and regarded his Arab neighbours as his partners.

Zeev Zaborinsky (a right wing Zionist leader 1880-1940) and his followers used my family's story to back their belief that it's impossible to trust the Arabs. In this play I claim that we should recreate the capacity to believe. We need to recreate "HOPE" and not only by singing our national anthem –"HATIKVA" - (which means **hope** in Hebrew). That's why – unlike Jabotinsky and others – I chose to use my family's story in order to bring forth the need to make life affirming choices – both on the personal and the national level. When we give in to our fears we're jailed by death. Those who choose "LIFE" can't allow past traumas to shape their future.

When I look at human history it seems to me that making war is almost instinctive while making peace is an art form. While working on the English version of this play, which was originally written in Hebrew, I was conscious of "missing out" on various aspects of it: the irony, the poetry, the cultural connotations. I was about to give it all up when it dawned on me that I'm serving a valuable cause and I need to be "heard" by people who are not intimately familiar with our life here.

I hope you'll find "**My Palm Tree**" revealing and consider producing it thereby allowing me to expose my world (my perception of it) to your audience.

The play takes place in four locations (in the outskirts of Jerusalem and in the city itself):

Jude's apartment in Jerusalem, Motsa's spring (near the synagogue) Mouche's country cottage in England and Juda's greengrocery in Jerusalem.

This is a play for two actresses and two actors.

Characters belonging to the "realistic level" of the play:

Jude – A 47 years old attractive historian, single, (a sportive look).

Mouche – A 50 years old historian, well groomed, (a sophisticated look).

Juda – A 53 years old greengrocer, manly and impressive.

Julie – A 24 years old British student. (Beautiful, thin, long legs...)

The three actors playing Mouche, Juda and Julie also portray the characters belonging to the "Psycho-Theatre" – the theatrical creation of Jude's soul = the "fantasy level" of the play.

The actor playing Mouche will also play Richard Lion-Heart.

The actor playing Juda will also play Saladin.

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The actress playing Julie will also play "The Dancing Girl" (Jude's inner self, her young version).

The fantasy world is valid for Jude only. She's the only one who sees these characters who appear only at Motsa's spring, wearing masks.

Scene 1

Afternoon, Jude's apartment (kitchen and living room). Jude, Mouche.

Bossa Nova music is heard. Jude in a worn out T-shirt is battling against a big stain on the floor caused by spilt cooked food. On the table there are newspapers full of pictures of casualties after the "incident" in Gaza. Young faces who will never grow old. Jude looks helplessly at the chaos around her. She changes the music to – Mike Brandt's "Laisse Moi T'aimer". She stops for a moment and let herself be carried away by the memories evoked by the song. The door bell is heard. Jude opens. Mouche is at the door. He is carrying a professional camera. She kisses him ardently. Her passion is partly caused by her deep distress.

Mouche – Mind the neighbours. (He pushes her gently away). Let me in. (They enter and he closes the door). You'll be the talk of the local grocery - a history professor by day and a harlot by night. (He puts the camera on the table). Why aren't you dressed?

Jude – You're early.

Mouche – You definitely exhibits symptoms of "bimboism". Can't you live without dancing music? Especially on a day like today. The whole country is in mourning.

Jude – It keeps me sane. **(Turns the music off. Mouche collapses on the armchair. She sits on the back of the armchair by him and caresses him).** My best childhood memory is of my parents dancing together, almost flying. Like two parts of the same body. **(Pause).** My father died when I was sixteen. I told you.

Mouche – **(Stands up and goes to the fridge).** I need a cold drink. **(Opens the fridge and takes out a bottle of mineral water and opens it. Jude hands him a glass).**

Jude – Did I tell you I almost became a professional dancer? I began taking lessons when I was five and danced till I was 17. Classic, Modern, Jazz.

Mouche – The scorching heat in this country is killing me. **(Sits down by the kitchen table and drinks).** Herzl, our beloved visionary, visited our burning country only once and hardly made it alive, but managed to gather us all here to roast under his Zionistic sun.

Jude – **(Picks up a pair of Jeans that is laid out on one of the chairs).** What are you complaining about? Tomorrow you'll be in Oxford. Rain, lovely low temperatures...

Mouche – **(Browses through the papers).** I can't stand the picture of the dead and the obituaries. An armoured troop vehicle is blown up in Gaza and we are all smithereens flying up in the air with it. **(Again, he is drawn to the paper and immediately discards it vehemently).** A colossal waste of paper! I'm officially declaring a "no more news" policy. Tomorrow is the first day of my "reality free" existence. The last years of the Intifada have been detrimental to my health.

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Jude – Are you hungry?

Mouche – **(Stands up, approaches her)**. I never come to you hungry. **(Stands behind her and hugs her)**. Not for sex, anyway.

Jude – **(Tastes the food in the pot)**. I did it! It's Victoria's recipe – the greengrocer's wife. **(Pause)**. May she rest in peace. **(Tastes it again)**. Are you sure I can't tempt you?

Mouche - I grabbed a bit on the way. Don't give me that look. It's you who taught me not to count on your cooking.

Jude – She had cancer – Victoria. Like my mother. Today is the last day of the "Shiva". I'd like to pop in for 10 minutes, 15 tops. Would you mind? I wasn't at her funeral and I feel crappy about it. **(Checks herself in the mirror and smooths her hair over)**.

Mouche – You and your greengrocer! Other women have a massagist, a personal trainer, a psychologist – you have a greengrocer. Do I need to remind you that it's our last evening together? **(Takes out the camera)**. Are you ready? I want us to be at the spring before sunset. I came early because I want to take pictures for the conference and I need daytime lighting. **(Checks the camera, Jude takes the pot off the stove and puts it in the fridge)**. It's you I have to thank for my escape to Oxford. It's you who took me to the spring in Motsa –

Jude - For shagging purposes.

Mouche – When you told me how Richard Lion-Heart was met there by Saladin troops – my time-out from our mad existence was born.

Jude – So it's my fault you're leaving.

Mouche – Just imagine those two great warriors – the valiant Christian and the Muslim who conquered Jerusalem – signing a peace treaty –

Jude – In the middle of war. And if they could maybe we should follow their example. The snag is that their peace survived only one year. 1192-1193.

Mouche – Because Saladin died a year after the treaty was signed and his successors managed to destroy everything he built. Still this episode bears a powerful significance. Two leaders enforcing peace over war. Think of our lives here. Not to mention the holy war declared by Al-Keida which is changing the world step by step.

No wonder my research was approved. **(Pause, hugs her)**. I owe it all to you. You and my mother.

Jude – **(Pulls away from him)** – Your mother?

Mouche – She introduced Richard to me. She loved knights in shining armor. Valiant, courageous and loyal to their mistress. The antithesis of my father. The first books she bought me when I learnt to read were "Ivenhoe" and "Robin Hood".

Jude – **(Picks a piece of paper from the table)**. Listen to what I found on Richard on the net last night.

Mouche – This is how you spend your nights? What a waste!

Jude – I couldn't sleep. **(Reads)**: "Richard Lion-Heart, the crusader king who arrived in the holy land to fight Saladin, is probably the most famous British king where bravery is concerned. **(Mouche smiles)**. In every movie about Robin

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Hood he is portrayed as the king whose return everybody awaits as if he were the Messiah who would save the country from the claws of the crooked brother John.

Mouche – Who was probably mentally ill.

Jude – Brace yourself for the punch line. "In reality Richard was one of the worst king England has ever known". **(Mouche is exhibiting discomfort)**. Having terminated his crusade with dubious success, he hasn't even bothered to return to England. Instead he embarked on a journey to Europe where he was captured which meant that England had to pay a huge ransom for his release. Having regained his freedom he was itching to fight again and found a worthy cause battling against a vassal who found a treasure on his lands. Richard demanded the treasure and died young in the process **–(she smiles while emphasizing the rest)-** luckily for the English. **(She hands the paper over to Mouche who folds it into a ball and throws it into the dustbin next to the computer).**

Mouche – For me he will always remain a hero. My hero. Are you ready to leave? We don't have much time.

Jude – You're sure we can't make a short stop at the greengrocer? Consoling the mourners is a Mitzvahh (*a good deed). It will be your good deed of the week.

Mouche – Have you gone pious on me? I don't understand what's happening with you. It's been two years since we met at the conference in Greece. And you've never passed over an opportunity for an outdoors orgasm.

Jude – We met on August before the Intifada.

Mouche – "A Historical Look at Heroism". I remember your paper on Judith and Holofernes. The beauty and the beheaded beast...**(Jude hugs him and he**

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"cooperates" but a minute later he "frees" himself from her embrace).

That's destiny for you. I almost didn't go to Greece. I'm not inclined to swap a July-August heat in the Holy Land with a July-August heat at the neighbours. But it was worth it. **(Jude smiles at him, thinking he's talking about her).**

Especially the meeting with the head of the dept. from Oxford. **(She's hurt but he is already busy with the camera).** This camera is too complicated for me. My neighbour is a professional photographer, he loaned it to me and made his best to explain everything but it hasn't really sunk in. **(Puts the camera in its bag and looks at his watch).** Let's go.

Jude – I have guilt feelings about the greengrocer. I didn't go to the funeral because since my mother died I have a problem with cemeteries. You know how it is – an only child with a matching set of Holocaust survivors for parents. When my mother died I ran out of family.

Mouche – Tell me about it.

Jude – After her death, when I moved to Jerusalem I felt like a stranger. The greengrocer and his wife made me feel at home. Almost like a family. Especially his wife, Victoria.

Mouche – **(Smiling)** Victoria after the queen? We'd better take a bottle of mineral water with us. **(Opens the door and waits for her. She takes a bottle out of the fridge and turns to the door).** Don't forget to turn off the air conditioning. **(He starts walking. She turns off the light goes out and closes the door. The rest is heard by VOICE OVER).**

Won't you be hot in this Jeans? Why don't you wear the white dress I bought you in Greece anymore?

Scene 2

Towards the evening, Motsa's spring. Mouche, Jude and The Dancing Girl – the leading lady of Jude's fantasy world.

The lighting indicates that the scene takes place during twilight and ends at nightfall.

Jude is sitting on a blanket by a tree. She is leaning against its trunk. Her legs are folded towards her stomach and she is hugging her knees. Mouche is walking briskly towards her. He collapses next to her, clutching the camera to his chest.

Mouche – Sorry it took so long. I wanted to have a good picture of the house of the Makleff Family and of the palm tree in their garden. It was difficult to find the right angle that would capture both the house and the tree because the palm tree is unusually tall.

Jude – Mordechai Makleff was our second Chief of Staff or our third one?

Mouche – The third.

Jude – I read somewhere that it was his sister who planted that palm tree.

Mouche – In 1928 - when she was seventeen. A year before the pogroms.

Jude – Why is it so important to you? This family's story doesn't really promote your peace agenda. If I remember correctly – even Jabotinsky (* Zeev Jabotinsky was a Zionist leader, orator and founder of the Jewish Legion in World War I) used their story to prove beyond any shadow of a doubt that "You can't trust the Arabs".

Mouche – I admit their story is indigestible. The head of the family refuses to take guns from the Hagana (*Jewish self-defence organization established in Palestine, especially against Arab attacks, during the British Mandate) although there are warnings about an imminent attack. He relies on the friendly relations with the Arab neighbours from the village of Kolonia and doesn't want to provoke them. Even the sister who planted the palm tree, Rebecca, finds it hard to believe that their good neighbours have become their assassins. On that bloody Saturday, the 24th of August, she goes out of the house to reason with them...

Jude – And the end is "A Chronicle of A Death Foretold". A story strewn with bodies. Rape and slaughter pogrom style.

Mouche – Think of the seven years old boy – Mordechai Makleff, whose older brother Chaim saved him and his little sister Hanna from the slaughter-house.

Jude – This boy grew up to be our Chief of Staff - a professional killer.

Mouche – Soldiers are not necessarily killers.

Jude – O.K. They're professionals whose business is war.

Mouche – Anyway, later on he developed the Dead Sea Works and yesterday I found out something interesting. When I explained to my neighbour that I needed the camera to take a picture of the Motsa's spring –

Jude – The birth place of Richard Lion-Heart and Saladin's peace treaty –

Mouche – He told me that he worked with Makleff at the Dead Sea Ltd. And apparently, Makleff who experienced Arab violence as young boy and as an adult was the one who drafted IDF's fighting doctrine – cooperated with the Jordanians over the water issue when he was general manager of the Dead Sea Works. He understood and I quote: "No water for them means no water for us".

Jude – And this is important because -

Mouche – No peace in this region means Zionism is in danger of becoming a passing episode. Are you familiar with the equation: the Crusaders' Kingdom = the Zionist Kingdom? This equation fortifies Islamic researchers' hearts while they are counting the days till we imitate the grand exit of the Crusaders' Kingdom from the history stage. The Crusaders' Kingdom survived only 200 years. Incessant battles finished them off. I believe we too won't survive here without peace. That's why it's important to me to try and make out the portrait of a leader who can initiate peace treaties, who can embrace practical thinking and be in tune with reality like Makleff was.

Jude – Saladin made peace because his army was exhausted from fighting Richard at the coast line. And Richard made peace because he was sick – maybe only sick and/or tired leaders are prone to peace making.

Mouche – The relevance of Richard's illness to his peace making is worth looking into. But no matter which way you look at it we're talking about making a choice. Richard could have chosen to try and conquer Jerusalem, which after all was the point of this whole journey. But he chose to peace over war. An uncharacteristic choice for a man who is a warrior by nature. **(Mouche becomes pensive. Jude begins undressing him, he pushes her away gently).** I'm shattered from all the running around all day. I don't know if I can –

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Jude – Don't worry. **(Unzips his pants and starts "working")**.

Mouche – **(Gasping)** Your gift of waking my dead will be sorely missed.

Jude – **(Stops for a moment)** So don't go. **(Gently he "encourages" her to go on)**. Music is heard. Only Jude reacts to: Mike Brandt singing- "Laisse Moi T'aimer". She freezes).

Mouche – What's wrong with you?

(A young woman dressed in a mini skirt and made up 70th style immerges from behind the tree, and whispers in Jude's ear) –

The Dancing Girl – So history repeats itself. They shag you and leave you. When will you choose someone who will love you and not your gymnastics in the sack.

Jude - Do you hear?

Mouche – **(Zipping up his pants)**. What's to hear? Fish singing in the water? **(Gets up)**.

Jude – Didn't you hear the music? Didn't you see anything? **(Gets up slowly as if she's in a dream)**.

Mouche – What is there to see? Saladin and Richard tap dancing? **(Folds the blanket)**. Where is the bottle of water?

Jude – I think we left it in the car. We were in a hurry to –

Mouche – I guess that train has left the station. I hope my pictures will come out right, at least.

Jude – **(Sits on a rock and watches the water running in the spring)**. I don't know what's happening to me.

Mouche – I'm dying of thirst. Let's go.

Jude – Just a few more minutes. It's a pity to miss the sunset.

Mouche – I have to drink. Guard the camera. I'll bring the bottle from the car.
(Leaves. The Mike Brandt hit song is heard again. Jude's lips are saying the words of the song as if she is singing inwardly – her voice is not heard. The dancer turns up and dances behind her as her shadow. Like a haunting memory that can't be escaped. The lighting changes – it's beginning to get dark. When Mouche returns with the water the girl disappears and the music "disappears" with her).

Mouche – Hi.

Jude – Hi. **(Tries to smile at him)**.

Mouche – **(Hands her the bottle)**. Have a drink. You're pale. **(She drinks)**. I hope you're not developing some sort of summer flue. It doesn't suit me to arrive in England with Zionist germs. I feel faint just thinking about unpacking my shipment of books.

Jude – I'm not sick. **(Sits on the rock again – next to the spring)**.

Mouche – So what's wrong? Unlike cooking, sex is something I got used to rely on in our relationship. **(Caresses her neck)**. Where is the camera?

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Jude – On the blanket.

Mouche – I told you it's not mine. Why didn't you take it with you?

Jude – What's going to happen to it? There is no living soul here. **(She gets up and looks around her as if to make sure they're alone and that the fantasy dancer has disappeared).**

Mouche – **(Walks towards the blanket).** I hope it's not broken. It's so much easier for me to figure out a puzzle of an historic figure than to figure out the lenses of a camera. When I'm getting acquainted with an historic figure, trying to retrieve all the missing pieces and put them together makes me feel like a knight embarking on journey. Much like Richard on the eve of the third crusade. It's so easy for me to identify with him.

Jude – **(Appears to be herself again).** Doesn't it seem odd to you – his silly death at the end?

Mouche – I can picture him there – in Aquitaine-France, riding his horse, bare chest, no armour, smiling and greeting with a gallant gesture the soldier up in the fortress – the one who is aiming the death arrow at him. This picture is breaking my heart.

Jude – He refused treatment after he was shot. It's like choosing death. **(The music is heard again and The Dancing Girl appears among the trees).**

Dancing girl – **(To Jude)** Talk to him. Tell him how you feel. This is not a history lesson.

Mouche – What's up with you?

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The Dancing Girl – Talk to him. **(She vanishes)**.

Mouche – You look like you've seen a ghost.

Jude – I saw myself at 17. **(Looks towards the spring, her back turned to him)**. "You danced like a whore so I used you like a whore".

Mouche – **(Turns her to him)** What are you talking about?

Jude – It's what the school stud, the young prince who brought me here on our annual school trip said to me after his body danced with mine all night. I thought it was love. But the next morning he returned to his princess and I became –

Mouche – **(Smiles)** "The slut". **(Hugs her shoulders)**. I can't see the tragedy.

Jude – At seventeen I stopped dancing.

Mouche – And you became a "hot" book worm. I don't see the problem. Would you prefer a lap dancing career? I can easily picture you sitting on my – **(tries to pull her to him and she refuses)**.

Jude – Our meeting in Greece felt like a miracle to me. When death took my mother it almost snapped me as well. She was sick for years but we had our survival routine. After the "Shiva" (*seven days of mourning) I had no more energy left. At the last minute I decided to go to the conference in order to avoid drowning in the sea of my orphanhood and I met you. **(Pause)** you're leaving for a year. A year is a long time.

Mouche – I hope they will extend my grant to two years. If they offer me a teaching post I won't be in a hurry to come back. Zionism will survive without me.

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Jude – I won't.

Mouche – There will be conferences. You'll come to visit, we will travel together.

Jude – Parting is difficult for me.

Mouche – This is not how I perceived you.

Jude – How?

Mouche – Clingy. A 47 years old woman. Quite good looking. No husband, no kids, You've made no effort to invest in crutches in your life. **(Jude's eyes are filled with tears and she's embarrassed by it)**. I thought you're a lone ranger like me. **(Pause)** Come to the conference on the weekend. We can recreate our Greek celebration of two years ago.

Jude – I told you. I don't have a paper to present. I don't even have a glimpse of an idea. **(Tears stream down her cheeks)**.

Mouche – I can't stand tears. **(Steps aside)**. My mother's tears will last me a lifetime.

Jude – **(Comes around and tries to touch him. She caresses him, he flinches but slowly cooperates)**. Shall we go home to my loving bed?

Mouche – I thought you had a meeting with the head of the department tonight. An important meeting. You said there was talk of downsizing. **(Although she managed to arouse him he removes himself from her)**. And besides, I need to get up early tomorrow. With all the preparations I didn't have time to visit my mother's grave. I want to do it tomorrow before the flight. She deserves it. My

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mother is responsible for my academic success. She made me leave the Kibbutz and go to university. I am who I am because of her.

Jude – Did you say goodbye to your father?

Mouche – My father doesn't interest me. As far as I'm concerned, his mistresses who enjoyed him when he was young should repay the favor now. Let's go.

(Starts walking).

Jude – Richard Lion-Heart also had a complex relationship with his father.

Mouche – Are you coming? **(Looks at her. She comes closer and returns his look).** It's a pity you're not wearing the white dress I bought you in Greece. I wanted to take a picture of you at the spring. As a memento. **(They stop for a moment, he turns around and she follows him. They look at the spring. She takes his hand).** Do you remember the picture of my mother that I showed you? Her last summer in Vienna. A pretty girl in a white dress, her face clear as a summer sky, no sign of the pain to come. A minute before the great wind blew her over to our land of milk and honey, our man-eater land. I guess "she" finished Richard off as well, our promised land.

Jude – You're talking about his illness?

Mouche – Yes. And about my so called complex relations with my father – I know for sure that my father, the "primordial farmer", the symbol of Zionism – built this country and destroyed my mother in the process. **(Jude starts walking, he stops her).** Wait a minute. On the way to Jerusalem, I scribbled the opening of my lecture. I want to read it to you. **(Looks in his pockets).** Where did I put it? **(Pause. Remembers).** Wait here. I'll be right back. **(Rushes to the car. Jude looks at his back. The music is heard again. Jude turns around and faces the girl who is dancing to the music).**

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Dancing girl –You want him to forget his mother? You should dance with him instead of doodling with war and peace. Dead mothers don't dance. I can assure you. Cast your tears into the spring. You know what you want from him. Make it happen!

(Mouche comes running clutching a folded piece of paper. As he approaches The Dancing Girl disappears among the trees while pushing Jude lightly towards him).

Mouche – Come, let's do it by the spring. **(The Dancing Girl winks at her, emitting "orgasm music". Mouche leads Jude by the hand to the spring. The Dancing Girl signals "good luck" and vanishes. Mouche is excited. Jude begins caressing him, trying to turn him on).** Not now! **(Opens the paper).** This is how my lecture begins:

It's 1192. Lion-Heart is at Beit-Nuba. Several of Saladin's troops are in the area. The Crusaders' King sends patrols and contact is made. **(The stage is dark. While he is talking the scenery changes and the rest is heard by voice over).** Saladin's soldiers are discovered near Motsa's spring. Our spring. During the battle Richard kills most of them. A few are captured and those who try to escape to Jerusalem are tailed after.

Scene 3

The same evening. Jude is by the spring and Mouche is in a diner at "Shaar Hgai" gas station.

{*SHAAR HAGAI – the main road to Jerusalem, the beginning of the "Jerusalem Corridor").

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Mouche is sitting at a table on which there's a cup of coffee. He's talking on his cell phone with Jude who is standing near the tree (their usual "make-out" place). In one hand she is holding her mobile and in the other – Mouche's note, the opening of his lecture).

Jude – Where are you?

Mouche – I'm at the gas station at "Shaar Hagai". I had to stop to pee and "get myself together" after you, milady, messed with my private parts to no avail.

Jude – You forgot the opening of your lecture. (A short pause). Wait for me. I can be there in a few moments. (She's in tears).

Mouche – I don't need it. (Jude clears her throat to hide her crying). Are you crying?

Jude – No. Why? (Tries to overcome her emotional turmoil).

Mouche – I remember every word in that note. (Pause – waiting for her response). I have a phenomenal memory. (A short pause, waiting for her reaction again. She blows her nose and tries to swallow her tears). I can quote whole paragraphs from my "Boys' Book of Knowledge". (No response on her part). You want me to prove it to you? "Saladin was a Kurd by birth. He was born in Tikrit: Iraq of our times. Back then the Muslims were divided and separated". May I have your permission to skip? (Doesn't wait for her response this time). "In 1175 he became the sultan of both Syria and Egypt. He was a capable ruler and did a lot to develop the countries he reigned over. In his days the Arabic Literature flourished. He allocated large sums of money to religious institutions and financed cultural activities. Towards Jews and Christians alike he advocated tolerance". Are you convinced? (A small pause. Jude tries to take

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deep breaths). Not yet? "In 1187 he defeated the Crusaders in Karnei Hittin, conquered Jerusalem and took over the bulk of the Crusaders' kingdom. His triumph pushed the European Christian kings to embark on the "Third Crusade". Full stop. This lecture finished off my battery.

Jude – I think I **(takes a deep breath)** love you.

Mouche – What? I can't hear you. A Lorry with a bomber exhaust just pulled in. We'll continue our conversation tomorrow evening when I get to Oxford. **(Pause)** Hello? Do you hear me? You need to go over to the head of your department and convince him he should fight for you.

Jude – It's not so important to me anymore.

Mouche – Hello? It's no use. I'm hanging up, Jude. Good Luck! **(Hangs up, gets up and leaves while Jude is still talking).**
(The Dancing Girl appears in front of Jude. At the same time the sound of cymbals is heard. As if the girl is trying to "wake up" Jude).

The Dancing Girl - So that's how it is, eh? It's not really important to you to get to the meeting with the head of the dept.? Soldiers are looking for body parts of their mates in Gaza's sands, parents are burying their children and you go to pieces over a man?

Jude – This man is the joy of my life. What are you telling me? That because the country is choking on bereavement I'm not allowed to have my own private pain?

The Dancing Girl – Put it in perspective, dear. So what if he's going off on his adventure with you. After all, you – unlike those morose maidens who were abandoned in their castles by their knights locked in their chastity belts, you have your own kingdom. A spiritual kingdom you've worked hard to conquer and which

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you should be trying to protect. Instead of weddings and kids you worked on your P.H.D and you're willing to sell this birth right for a mess of lentils? **(Pause. She looks at Jude who is sinking rapidly into her grief. Jude opens Mouche's note and starts caressing the letters on the page).**

Jude – He has such a beautiful hand-writing. **(The girl tries to listen to Jude's heart).**

The Dancing Girl – Diagnosis: regular heart-beats. It hurts but it's not broken. So, you have no choice, dear. Mount your horse and gallop to the battlefield!

(Music is heard – the "Bonanza"- music {Wild West music} and sounds of horses galloping. Saladin and Richard Lion-Heart enter the scene riding imaginary horses. They wear masks. Richard wears an armour and Saladin in a "fancy" traditional Bedouin dress. Jude is flabbergasted and steps back).

Jude – What is this?

The Dancing Girl – It's your fault, dear. You caressed his handwritten letters to life. **(Richard and Saladin are in a middle of a battle of swords).**

Jude – I'm losing it. It's scary.

The Dancing Girl – **(Points at Richard and Saladin as if she's presenting actors to their audience before the show).** Please meet the representatives of your inner conflict. **(Approaches Richard who almost stabs Saladin) – Thanatos (points at Saladin who manages to get away from Richard) – and Eros. The force of Death and the force of Life. It's the theatre of your soul, my dear. It's high time you got acquainted with it. (Jude tries to run away and the girl stops her. They stay behind a bush but the girl, from time to time,**

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moves a few branches and forces Jude to watch. Saladin attacks Richard and surprises him).

Saladin – You stand no chance against me. Forgotten Karnei Hittin, have you?

Richard – Shut up and go on fighting. **(Richard dismounts, they wrestle. He knocks Saladin to the ground and steps on his dress. Saladin tries to get loose. Richard steps on his ankle and lays his sword on Saladin's neck. Instinctively, Jude wants to leap to Saladin's rescue and the girl stops her. Later the girl vanishes and Jude, mesmerized, watches from a safety distance).**

Saladin – You're a beast. That's what you are.

Richard – Surrender! You forgot who conquered Acre? Who won in Arsuf? **(Saladin tries to knock him down and fails. Richard steps on Saladin's neck and laughs).** Your instincts are nothing to write home about. War is no business for gaffers. **(Saladin has trouble breathing).**

Saladin – (Has trouble speaking). What are you proud of? Leaving the world at 32? I didn't say: stop the bus I want to get off and let the angel of death give me a lift to heaven. **(Saladin bites Richard's leg. Richard jumps and Saladin frees himself. Saladin takes out a knife out of his belt. Richard, quickly, mounts his imaginary horse).**

Richard – (Tries to pull the reins of his horse). Dio! Dio!

Saladin – I was merely airing my Shebaria. (*knife – in Arabic). What's all the fuss about? Have pity on your horse. It's tired. Just like us. We're too "ancient". All this gymnastics is not for us. Let's decide on a stalemate. **(Richard listens unwillingly but doesn't relinquish the battle).**

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Richard – If we are the representatives of the inner conflict of this flaky Jew - a stalemate won't help us get out of her head. Conflicts are like battles. They end only when there's a winner.

Saladin – Listen, mate, this Crusading is getting you nowhere. **(Saladin's horse roars)**. Hallas! (*enough – in Arabic). Enough is enough! Take a break. Have a sip of water. **(Offers him his skin-bottle. Richard drinks)**. I actually like this place. The earth smells of life. Rays of sun playing hide and seek with the spring's water. **(Richard returns Saladin's skin-bottle)**. Breathe deeply. Enjoy. We should be thankful to the Jewish historian for fishing us from the depth of the sea of human memory. **(Richard takes a deep breath starts sneezing. Saladin steps back to avoid the sneezing shower)**.

Richard – Sorry. The climate here doesn't suit me.

Saladin – Dear me. Allergic to the holy land, are we? What would your pope say? The one who sent you and all your bandits to harass me for the price of a ready-made absolution for past and future sins. **(Tries to drive away an invisible fly. Richard is coughing and has difficulty breathing)**. You're overdressed. Look at me - I'm naked under this dress. **(Pulls the dress up. Jude averts her eyes slightly but steals a peek. Richard is mesmerized by the view)**. You like my package? I'm quite proud of it actually. And I've put it to good use. Yours, on the other hand, **(approaches Richard)** - seems to be hibernating. **(Richard's blood starts boiling)**. Haram (*a pity – in Arabic), kiddo. Love is life's designer drug. **(Richard's aggression level is rising with every word)**. You need to abuse it. **(Richard pushes Saladin away and backs him to Jude and Mouche's make-out tree. He starts raping him. They are covered by a "shower" of bright lights. Jude closes her eyes and when she opens them Saladin and Richard disappear. The Dancing Girl appears in front of her)**.

Jude – I can't stand it anymore. I'm losing it. My soul is a battlefield. (Jude looks for her cell phone).

The Dancing Girl – This is what happens when the force of death pounces on the force of life and rapes it. 20 years ago you stopped dancing. You let death be the winner. If you give in to it now you're lost. (Jude finds the cell phone). Are you listening to me? (Jude starts dialing). What are you doing? He won't save you. (Jude stops dialing). Don't wait for miracles or your temple will be destroyed. (70th dancing music is heard. The girl begins dancing). Go fight for your career! (Hesitatively, Jude starts dancing, the girl watches her smiling, then she shoves her lightly in the direction of the car park and disappears. Only her voice is heard). You know all the steps! Start dancing the dance of life! (The music is louder. Jude leaves. The dancing music is replaced by the sound of drums imitating the rhythm of Jude's heart in the next scene).

Scene 4

Towards evening, the greengrocery, Jude and Yuda (the greengrocer).

The greengrocer is arranging boxes of fruits and vegetables and is unaware of Jude who stumbles on one of the boxes at the entrance to the shop. Apples roll on the ground. Reacting to the sound of the commotion Yuda turns and rushes to help her up.

Jude – I'm sorry.

Yuda – What for? For a few apples on the ground? **(Picks them up)**.

Jude – I don't know what's happening to me.

Yuda – **(Business-like)** Did you want anything? I've just opened. I haven't any fresh produce.

Jude – No. No. I **(Pause)** came because of Victoria.

Yuda – **(Doesn't look at her)**. Many came. To the funeral. To the "Shiva". A house full of strangers and all I wanted was to be alone with my son. Victoria loved people. She loved talking to them, getting to know them. For me – our little family was the whole world and its creatures. I didn't need anybody else. But they came for her so I couldn't send them away.

Jude – How will you manage now?

Yuda – I don't know. My son wants me to close the shop and go to him to Australia. I have a 5 years old grandson there.

Jude – Victoria told me about him.

Yuda – **(Doesn't look at her)** I can't leave her here alone. **(Resumes his work. Jude is dizzy)**.

Jude – I have to sit for a minute. **(Yuda brings her a glass of water)**.

Yuda – Tap water. It's all I can offer you.

Jude – **(Drinks)**. I think I'm coming down with the flu.

Yuda – (Picks some vegetables, puts them in a bag and hands it to her).
Here, I put in some squashes, carrots, cabbage, onions and some potatoes.
Take it, make some soup. **(Jude takes the bag).** I'm sorry. I have a lot to do.

Jude – (Gets up, takes her wallet out of her bag and puts it on the chair).
How much is it?

Yuda – I'll note it down. You have an account with us, don't you?

Jude – I'm really sorry. **(Starts leaving slowly, forgets her purse).**

Yuda – (Goes on working and avoids looking at her). Feel Better.

Scene 5

Late that evening, Jude's apartment in Jerusalem and Mouche's apartment in England.

Jude, Yuda, Mouche and Julie.

Jude is crouching on an armchair, staring at the phone on the coffee table. She picks up the phone, hesitates for a moment, then dials. Mouche's apartment is at the end of the stage. There are book shelves, an antique chair by a "matching" desk and a small ladder. Julie is on the ladder browsing over the books while arranging them. When the phone on the table rings she waits for Mouche to answer. After a few Rings she decides to go down and answer.

Julie – Hello.

(Jude immediately hangs up. Gets up. Dials again. Julie who hung up as well begins stepping up the ladder when Jude redials).

Julie – Hello? **(Jude doesn't answer).** Who's calling please?

Jude – **(Hardly breathing)** Is Mouche, Professor Barkan, there?

Julie – It's for you! **(Pause)** Some woman.

Mouche – **(Comes in holding a folder in his hand. Takes the call).** I knew it was you. Everything's fine. Can I call you later? We're in the middle of unpacking.

Jude – **(Short pause)** Yes. Sure.

Mouche – Bye. **(Puts the phone down. Smiles at Julie who is again on the ladder. His eyes glance over her long legs and Julie smiles back. At the same time Jude sinks into the armchair. She's shivering. From now on Jude's apartment is in the focus. Her doorbell is heard. She walks slowly to the door. Opens it).**

Yuda – Your wallet. **(Hands it to her).** You forgot it in the shop.

Jude – **(Looks at him, bursts into tears, doesn't take the wallet).** I'm sorry. **(She flees to the bathroom. Yuda steps in hesitatingly. Closes the door behind him. He glances over the kitchen counter and sees the vegetables. He puts the wallet on the kitchen counter and is about to leave when Jude returns after washing her face).**

Jude – Don't go. I – it's my boyfriend. This morning he left for England, for two years. And tonight I was told that next year I'm only teaching one course. They're downsizing. And when I called him a young girl answered. I'm sure of it. Although, lately I'm seeing things that don't actually exist. **(Sinks into the armchair).**

Yuda – Victoria would have known what to say to you. **(Pause)** Your wallet is on the kitchen counter.

Jude – Thank you. I'm sorry I troubled you. Would you like something to drink? Coffee? Tea? Cold water?

Yuda – No. No. It's late. I have to go.

Jude – **(Stands up)** I wanted to go to her funeral. **(Pause)** I simply can't make myself go into a cemetery. You go in and death grabs you from every corner. Grabs and doesn't let go.

Yuda – You're a history professor. I'm sure you know all about Queen Victoria. Prince Albert died young. She didn't leave the house for 20 years. She mourned him – not like a great queen – but like a woman whose heart had been ripped off. **(Approaches the door).** It was as if she died with him.

Jude – I'm afraid to be alone.

Yuda – I have to get up early tomorrow morning. **(Stops, goes over to the counter).** It's a pity to waste good vegetables. **(Takes a pot and fills it with water, cuts the vegetables and put them in. Jude adds salt and pepper).** Cook it for half an hour. It will make you feel better. **(Goes to the door).**

Jude – I'm sorry I detained you.

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Yuda – (By the door). Nobody is waiting for me. **(The phone rings. Jude's feelings are all over the place. He studies her).**

Jude – Thank you! **(Rushes to the phone, takes a deep breath before answering).** Hello.

Mouche – (Cell phone in hand, he enters the "stage zone" defined as his apartment. He wears a sweat suit and looks like he just had a shower). Hi.

Yuda – Good Night. **(Exits).**

Mouche – Finally, everything is in place. **(Pause, Jude doesn't respond).** I feel like I've landed into an impressionist painting. Everything is so beautiful here. Not Yellowish and dying like August back home. **(Pause).** You can actually smell the rain.

Jude – They're cutting down my tutorials. Since I don't have seniority there's not much he can do.

Mouche – You need to start thinking about alternatives.

Jude – I feel like a rag doll. When you left you took my coping skills with you.

Mouche – Come to the conference. It's the best way to meet people, start asking around, creating new options. Besides I need a favor from you. I need good pictures of the spring for my presentation.

Jude – What about the ones you took?

Mouche – Total loss. I told you I can't, for my life, operate heavy machinery.
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Jude – Last night, when I couldn't sleep again, I read about your Richard's mother. Quite a lady she was. Apparently, Eleanor of Aquitaine was the richest woman in the 12th century, owned too much land and was famous for her "killer beauty".

Mouche - Do you seriously think you're telling me something I don't already know? Eleanor was much like you. She was very fond of orgasms in the bosom of nature and/or wherever she could get them. When her husband, the king of France, couldn't deliver she joined him on his Crusade in the pursuit of good loving holy land style. In Palestine, she quickly found a lover who supplied the goods and when they returned to Europe she exchanged the useless French king with an altogether upgraded model – Henry – Richard's father who became the king of England.

Jude – You forgot to mention that Henry was younger than her and that even with him she had quite a tempestuous relationship during which he locked her up for a good number of years. And his affair with Alice – the gracious sister of Philip of France, Richard's intended, that lasted how long?

Mouche - 18 years.

Jude – This affair saved Richard from marrying her.

Mouche – Where are you going with this History Lesson?

Jude – In mother Eleanor's court many of King Arthur's tales were born and probably the concept of romantic love which, apparently, was implemented by this lovely creature herself. "Hot stuff"- don't you think?

Mouche – The concept of romantic love is a questionable human invention that brought quite a lot of misery to many unsuspecting souls. And its hand is still outstretched... I see no reason to admire it.

Jude – Who answered the phone earlier?

Mouche – Julie, my assistant. She came to pick me up from the airport and also helped me get settled. She is quite nice and very efficient. **(Jude pulls a face)**. You know how useless I am in that department. She actually saved me.

Jude – Hold on a second, I need to take the pot off the stove or I'll have no more soup.

(Puts down the cell phone for a minute and kind of assimilates the Julie business as well). That's it. So where were we?

Mouche – Soup in August? You've become quite a kitchen queen at you old age.

Jude – How old is Julie?

Mouche – 24, 25. I didn't ask her for an I.D. card. Are you coming to the conference? Can I count on you?

Jude – Do you really want me there?

Mouche – Come on, Jude. Don't be a baby. I'm knackered. It's been a long day. **(Short Pause)** Shall we retire, my dear?

Jude – I'm not sure I'll be able to fall asleep. May I offer you some phone sex?

Mouche – I called you on my cell phone.

Jude – If you want to save on communication costs find me a job in England.

Mouche - You know how it works. The main thing is finding a marketable research. We'll talk in Greece. And don't forget to bring the pictures with you. I need them to create the right atmosphere. The majority of the participants of the conference see Israel as the militaristic thorn stuck in the peace loving butt of the western world. I want to try and turn them around with the magic of our Motsa. The place where it all begun – the creation of peace in times of war.

Jude – I'm in no mood for chatting up strangers.

Mouche – Julie offered to come with me, as my assistant. If you're coming I don't need her. **(Pause)** So, what's the verdict? I have to catch some hours of sleep. I have an important meeting at the faculty tomorrow morning.

Jude – You can count on me for the pictures. **(Mouche smiles)**. Go to sleep.

Mouche – Will the sex phone proposal still be on the table tomorrow?

Jude – **(Smiles)** Good night!

They both put down the phone with a smile on their faces. Mouche takes a book from the library. Jude takes out "the white dress" from her wardrobe. While he opens the book and looks for a certain paragraph, Jude looks at the dress, then puts it on. He finds the right page, puts there a book-mark closes the book and exits. Jude in the white dress studies herself in the mirror. She puts on Bosa Nova music and tries, unsuccessfully, to conquer her depression by dancing. She changes the music to Mike Brandt's "Laisse Moi T'aimer" and sinks like a rag doll into the armchair.

Scene 6

Afternoon, The Motsa Spring. Jude, Yuda, The Dancing Girl, Saladin and Richard Lion-Heart.

Jude and Yuda approach the spring. Jude takes out a camera from her bag.

Jude – Thanks for the lift. You saved me. I felt so useless when I couldn't start the car.

Yuda – I was looking for a reason to escape. **(Jude tries to find the right angle for taking the picture)**. The shop is empty. People don't come in. Maybe because of Victoria.

Jude – It's my first car. The mechanics are still a mystery to me. **(Takes a picture)**.

Yuda – Batteries die – like people. I want to go over to the Synagogue. We had our son's wedding ceremony here. **(Starts walking)**.

Jude – See you later.

A sensual Tango music is heard. Jude is petrified but realizes that Yuda doesn't turn around, doesn't react to the Music. The girl arrives dancing.

The Dancing Girl – Come out of the coma, dear. I'm dancing to your heart's tune. You caught yourself a drop dead gorgeous fish.

Jude – I didn't catch him and I don't intend to.

The Dancing Girl – Don't you? It seems to me that lately you're quite the damsel in distress - forgetting wallets, killing batteries. I admire your courage to be so helpless in a world devoid of knights in shining armour - **(Saladin enters limping, his ankle swollen)** – live ones, anyway. **(While Saladin is sitting down on the ground, Richard enters dressed in white fencing gear. His clothes are torn and smeared with drops of blood)**. Dead knights we have in abundance.

Jude – Max and Moritz. I need them like the plague.

The Dancing Girl – You probably do. Until you make up your mind what's your fancy – DEATH or LIFE – "Let the young men arise and play before us!" as they say in the Bible. **(She turns to them and curtseys)**. The stage is yours, gentlemen! **(She exits. Jude's eyes follow her. She is desperate. She sits down, tries to avoid looking at them but is drawn to the "show". Saladin tries to touch his ankle)**.

Saladin – **(Cries)** Ai!

Richard – What's wrong with you? **(Tries to approach him)**.

Saladin – Don't come near me! Did you enjoy stepping on my ankle?

Richard – Let me help you.

Saladin – All of a sudden you're Florence Nightingale?

Richard – (Takes another step forward) Give me your Shebaria! *(knife – in Arabic)

Saladin – So that you could slit my throat?

Richard – If you press the knife where it hurts you can get rid of the swelling.

Saladin – You think I'll let you touch me? Look at the hickey on my neck! Disgusting! My whole body is black and blue because of you. Why on earth did you choose to exercise your libido on me of all people?

Richard – I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me.

Saladin - I can guess. Richard Lion-Heart. All you famous courage is merely enraged Libido aching to be expressed and turning into pure cruelty. Had you dared to love a man properly, mesh your flesh with his, let your soul flow into his – the course of history would have been altered.

Richard – And you think I would have had the Pope's blessing for this barren manly bliss?

Saladin – Don't ask me to speak for you Pope, Ayouni (*my dear – in Arabic). In my book of laws - loving a man doesn't make you a sinner, no loving does.

Richard – How can love be so good for you if it has totally destroyed the Jewish lady's mind. Take a good look at both of us – her fantasy creatures. She's so out of it her soul picked you – the ultimate Muslim – to represent the force of life.

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(An imaginary bee's buzz is heard. Richard who's using his sword to drive it away almost hurts Saladin who recoils and protects his head until Richard quits using his sword. While this is going on Jude also instinctively protects her head).

Richard – Finally gone.

Saladin – You're sick.

Richard – That bee almost stung you.

Saladin – And your "love" almost killed me. **(Gets up slowly)**. Take a hike. You're detrimental to my health. **(Richard doesn't react, his eyes are "studying" the ground)**. It's either me or you. We can't coexist.

Richard – **(Shyly, stands in front of Saladin, dosen't dare to look at him)**. I want us to talk.

Saladin – Do I look like Zigmund Freud? **(Hopping he approaches Richard who doesn't budge)**.

Richard – It's all my mother's fault. **(Jude is intrigued and approaches them)**.

Saladin – I gather you've no intention of leaving. **(Richard signals "no" with his head)**. And I'm incapable of moving since you destroyed my ankle. So the only solution I can offer to this standstill you shoved us both into – is a game of chess.

Richard – I'm with the whites.

Saladin – Sure, sure – the world of Light facing the world of Darkness. Just remember, old chum, that this noble game was a gift from us - barbaric Muslims to your enlightened civilization. I need to pee. **(Starts walking away slowly, dragging his aching leg. Richard follows him)**. Are you following me? Go pee at you end. **(Disappears. Richard hesitates for a moment and follows in his footsteps. He disappears as well)**.

Jude – Good riddance. **(The Dancing Girl appears on scene)**.

The Dancing Girl - Not so fast.

Jude – I've had enough of the spectacle you produced for me. Richard, the raging bull behaves like a Siamese cat. What am I supposed to learn from all that? **(Jude begins walking and the Dancing Girl follows her like her shadow and imitates her so that a comic effect is created)**. What do you want from me? **(Jude tries, unsuccessfully, to get away from her "shadow". She wrestles with her)**. Go away already!

The Dancing Girl – I can't. I'm part of you.

Jude - I wish I could leave you all here and go home.

The Dancing Girl – Is it my fault you can't start a car? **(Yuda approaches holding a willow-branch)**. Lucky you! Your ride is here. **(Starts walking away)**. Chao Bella! **(Waves goodbye and exits)**.

Jude – I'm glad you're back. Let's get out of here.

Yuda - This is for you. **(hands her the willow-branch)**. Willow-branches like this one were part of the rituals performed by the priests in the temple while they were praying for rain, **(Jude takes the branch looks at it)**. I met the Gabbai (* in

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Hebrew and Yiddish - the honorary officer) in the synagogue and he reminded me the paragraph from the Talmud: "How do we perform the Willow's Mitzvah? We go down from Jerusalem to Motsa, pick up some willow-branches and put them in the temple on each side of the altar".

Jude – (She has been listening with interest and begins to see him in a different light). How come you're so familiar with the Talmud?

Yuda – I grew up in a Moslem orphanage in Morocco. When I had to have my Bar-Mitzvah they brought me to our town's yeshiva and I stayed there till I was sent to Israel.

I didn't much care for all the Mitzvot (* in Hebrew and Yiddish - the commandments). But anything to do with The Land of Israel and the Bible felt like mother-tongue to me. The dream of Eretz-Israel was for me a dream about a home, a family.

Jude – (Puts the willow-branch on one of the rocks and picks up the camera which fell to the ground earlier). I hope it's not broken. Mouche will kill me if I fail to bring the pictures to the conference. **(She picks up on Yuda's expression).** I'm exaggerating, obviously, but it means a lot to him.

Yuda – More than you? **(Checks the camera).** I think it's o.k.

Jude – Thanks.

Yuda – What for? **(Pause)** I wanted to ask you. Maybe it's too personal.

Jude – Too personal? You have already seen me naked – so to speak. **(Pause).** Please, ask away.

Yuda – Why aren't you using your real name – Yehudit? I got my name from the Gentiles, the Muslims who found me. I guess the only thing they knew about my origins was that my mother was Jewish. Therefore – Yehuda. Yuda in short. For me a name is important. It's who you are.

Jude – Maybe that's why it was too "heavy" for me – the legacy of Judith who chose to save Jerusalem instead of herself. Try to imagine her -she was a beautiful, young, a rich widow and all she had to look forward to was a life of loneliness.

Yuda – Or maybe a second wedding.

Jude – Who would have her? An old broken widower? **(Pause – she's embarrassed by the implied correlation to his situation)**. But that's not it. From the moment I read her story I knew that if I were in her dancing shoes I would have spent the night with Holofarness and made love to him till dawn. And beheading a man who has pleased you all night long is virtually "mission impossible" in my book.

Yuda - (Smiles) But Jude- Judith is an American or English name. It's foreign. You know my son – in Australia calls himself David. (*in Hebrew the pronunciation is different). Vicotria and I named him after the king of Israel and now we have a king in Exile.

Jude – My mother was a Holocaust child. She grew up as a Christian in a monastery. On her death bed she told me that all those sinister years the dream that kept her alive was that one day she would have a daughter who would be a proud Jew, who won't have to hide her identity.

Yuda – When David was a kid, maybe five years old, I brought him here to Motsa. I told him about the battle of David and Goliath which took place here. According to the legend.

Jude – Historically, this story has no legs to stand on.

Yuda – History is made of stories – don't you think? Maybe I was wrong to enforce such a legacy on my son. As your mother did to you. Maybe, that's why he had to escape to Australia. The burden was too heavy.

Jude – They all travel after the army. They go through too much during their 3 years of military service. They need to see the world to remind themselves that life can still be beautiful. That death is not the ruling presence in their existence.

Yuda – Victoria understood. After his best mate was killed in Gaza it wasn't difficult for her to persuade me to let David go to study in Australia. Being a vet was always his dream. Just like our David from the Bible who was first and foremost a shepherd, my David followed in his footsteps and is herding sheep in Australia. **(Pause)**. An only child. It's difficult. Very difficult. But that was our destiny. We had love for a minyan (*ten adult male Jews, the minimum for congregational prayer) and God gave us just one. I made my peace with God but Victoria was angry. With herself, her womb, with God. **(Pause)** Sometimes I think all this anger brought on the cancer. The anger and missing her only son. **(Pause)**. Maybe you were right to change your name. Names can be unbearable, like destiny. Victoria was my queen. She longed to embrace her son and grandson. It killed her. When Yonathan was born, our grandchild, she wanted us to close the shop and emigrate to Australia. I refused. I told her that one day David will be back. That if we go to live there it will be the end. No more hope of him returning to Israel. I killed my wife. I killed her with my dream of the Return to Zion. **(He covers his face with his hands. She wants to touch him, her hand**

is halfway there and she hesitates. **The Dancing Girl appears among the trees).**

The Dancing Girl – What are you waiting for? Embrace him.

Jude – **(Devastated)** I can't. I just can't.

Yuda – **("Wakes up" from his grief and reacts to her).** What did you say?

(Tango music is heard. Among the trees the girl is seen dancing).

Jude – Go away! You lunatic!

The Dancing Girl – I am a lunatic? You're the one who's giving birth to this surge of visions. **(The girl disappears along with the music).**

Yuda – What's wrong? **(Jude is shivering. He tries to hold her, to soothe her, she pushes him away).**

Jude – Don't touch me!

Yuda – I'm sorry.

Jude – I need to develop the pictures. Let's leave. **(She starts walking. He stares at her back and then follows her).**

Scene 7

Evening, Jude's apartment, Mouche apartment. Jude, Yuda and Mouche.

Jude and Yuda are sitting in the kitchen finishing their meal.

Jude – Thank you for agreeing to eat with me. I hate eating alone.

Yuda – I enjoyed it.

Jude – Victoria's recipe. My boyfriend wouldn't even taste it. I'm no big cook. My mother never let me into the kitchen. She wanted me to study since she couldn't because of the war. **(She clears the table, he get us in order to help her)**. Sit down. There's no need. **(With her back turned to him)**. Aren't you angry with me?

Yuda – **(Gets up and brings her the glasses from the table)**. Why?

Jude – **(Turns to him)** Before, when you tried to comfort me. And yesterday when you returned my wallet – crying my eyes out. I've never let my guard down like that with anyone else.

Yuda - Why should I be angry with you for being yourself?

Jude – Mouche can't stand tears. And now – the visions I told you about – he would strap me to an express train to the "Cuckoo House". Don't you find it strange that it happens only there – at Motsa's spring?

Yuda – It makes sense to me because Motsa is a kind of cursed paradise.

Jude – What do you mean?

Yuda – Are you up to listening to a story?

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Jude – I'd love to.

Yuda – When I arrived in the country they sent me to "Noam" Yeshiva in Pardess- Hanna. Because of the language barriers and the different mentality I found myself feeling like a stranger and more of an orphan in the land of my dreams. I was mad at everybody and mainly at the silver spoon boys who belonged to the elite families, for taking everything for granted – everything I've never had. Since I couldn't make something of myself at school – I majored in being the "Mazik"(*in Yiddish) - the trouble-maker of the Yeshiva.

Jude – And nobody realized how unhappy you were?

Yuda – I thought they didn't. When the head of the Yeshiva summoned me to his room I was certain he was going to punish me, severely. I was surprised when all he wanted to know was what I loved about Eretz-Israel. I told him I loved the trees. I love watching things grow. In the orphanage in Morocco I had my own little vegetable garden. At the end of the conversation he sent me to help Chaim Makleff in his orchard.

Jude – The older brother of the Chief of Staff, the one who survived the pogrom?

Yuda – Yes. After the pogroms, they sold the house and the land in Motsa and moved to Pardess-Hanna. In Chaim Makleff's orchard I found all kinds of special trees. The other students thought I had been punished but I knew I was sent to heaven. Chaim liked to experiment and in his orchard there were fruits that didn't exist elsewhere. He was a difficult, taciturn man. Only the trees and their fruits made him happy.

Jude – It's hard, being a survivor. Death is always there, lurking in the corner, insisting to steal your life away.

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Yuda – Sometimes it feels like it's crushing my neck and I can't breathe. But this is not what I wanted to tell you about. I was happy there. In the Orchard. Unlike the Yeshiva kids who didn't want my company, in Makleff's orchard I found friends. I listened to the trees and they spoke to me. That's why, one day, when Chaim went to Zichron's spring to bring water, the trees told me they were sick. When Chaim came back, together we found what was causing the problem and saved them. It was the first time he said to me more than a word or two. "You saved my paradise from the worm" he told me. "This worm is a curse and I know what it feels like to have your paradise cursed". And that's how I first learnt about Motsa and the pogroms. I realized then that I wasn't the only one for whom this country was not just milk and honey and that I had to be strong and discover my own paradise.

Jude – And did you find it?

Yuda – The day I was released from the army I couldn't decide where to go or what to do. Although, I made friends during my service and my unit felt like a family, I was feeling like an orphan again. Maybe I was looking for friends when I wandered and found myself facing the palm tree in the garden that used to belong to the Makleff family in Motsa.

Jude – The palm tree that Chaim's younger sister planted a year before the pogroms.

Yuda – I watched the palm tree striving to touch the sky. I knew that if I talked to it I'll get an answer. And then I remembered what Chaim told me. He told me the legend of David and Goliath meeting right here – in Motsa's spring. When I told him how hard my life at the yeshiva was, he said – the secret is to try and feel like David even if life sometimes seems like Goliath. I left and took the bus to the Jerusalem. On the bus I sat down next to a lovely young woman, Victoria. She was waiting for me. Motsa and Makleff's palm tree gave me the opportunity to

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create my own paradise with her. **(Jude is very moved and tries to touch him but he recoils)**. I have to go.

Jude – Why?

Yuda - Victoria's cousin is waiting for me at the synagogue for "Kaddish". (*- prayer for the dead). **(He starts walking, stops at the door)**. Don't fret about those visions at the spring. Human powers of imagination are like medicine to the soul. Throughout my childhood, my imagination conjured me up a land of milk and honey and kept saving me every night from falling down the pit of orphanhood. **(Opens the door)**. Good night. **(As Jude approaches he exits)**.

Jude – See you soon (She watches him walk away).

Scene 8

Early morning. Jude's apartment and Mouche's apartment. Jude, Mouche and Julie.

Jude looks as if she was up all night. She is sitting on the couch surrounded by books and notes, empty cups of coffee. A quiet Tango music is heard. She stares at the phone next to her. Mouche is sitting his desk on which there's a laptop. He is holding some pages in his hand and it seems he has just finished reading from them to Julie who is dressed in summer shorts and looks fresh as a garden flower (compared to Jude). Jude turns off the music and puts the phone in her lap.

Julie – (Enthusiastic) Brilliant! Just brilliant!

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Mouche – Really? **(utterly grateful)** Thank you!

(At the same time Jude is dialing and the phone is ringing in Mouche's apartment. Julie looks at him, smiles and exits. He's in no hurry to pick up the phone and follows her with his eyes).

Mouche – **(Looks at the phone and identifies Jude's number, answers)** Hi.
(His eyes are looking through a window that is not necessary on stage but it's clear he can see the garden and Julie in it through that window).

Jude – **(Energetic)** Good morning! I have a surprise for you.

Mouche – If you're talking about the new resonance of optimism in your voice – I like it.

Jude – I solved the riddle of your research.

Mouche – Another sleepless night?

Jude – Hear me out. Your goal is to reconstruct the profile of a “peace making” leader, right?

Mouche – No objections. I'm with you - so far.

Jude – **(To herself)** I wish you were. **(To Mouche)** Leaders in love are prone to peace making.

Mouche - Get serious!

Jude – Remember the first time you came to visit me in Jerusalem?

Mouche – You mean the guided tour you gave me to the Old City and the Santa Maria Church?

Jude – Exactly. Southward to the church, there was a hospice built by the hospitallers. When the Crusaders were no longer there it became a house of worship and a dwelling place for Muslim dervishes. But in Richard's days male nurses tended there to the sick and the decrepit. While surfing the net last night, I stumbled upon citations from the diary of one of those male nurses who was, probably, in love with our Richard. Don't you think it would be interesting to investigate whether his love was requited? **(Pause – waiting for his reaction)**. I know there's an archive in the church.

Mouche – Are you trying to bring me back to Jerusalem by force?

Jude – You said you were going to look into the correlation between Richard's illness and his willingness to sign the peace treaty with Saladin. Maybe love was responsible for making a life affirming choice, for choosing peace over war.

Mouche – So according to you Richard was love-sick?

Jude – What is your assumption regarding the nature of his illness?

Mouche – His illness has more to do with the state of hygiene in the 12th century and the climate conditions rather than any romantic scenario you lost sleep over. Anyway, it was probably his brother John scheming against him in England that made him relinquish the idea of conquering Jerusalem and forced him to return to Europe. Honestly, Jude. I can't figure out why you're wasting your nights playing internet detective for my benefit. Why this fascination with my research? Is it because you have none of your own? **(Pause. Jude is hurt and doesn't respond)**. You're out of focus, Jude. I suggest some hours of uninterrupted

sleep and you'll be yourself again. **(Short pause)**. How did the pictures come out?

Jude – I was about to go get them.

(Julie comes in with a vase and some fresh flowers. She puts the vase on the desk).

Mouche – You should see the lovely flowers Julie brought me from the garden. **(Smiles all heartedly at Julie and approaches her. She reciprocates and arranges the flowers in the vase. Jude is “shrinking” in the couch)**. Call me when you get back. You know how anxious I get if I'm not on top of things down to the smallest of details, in order to be calm. **(A small pause during which he smells one of the flowers and his hand gently touches Julie's hand)**.

Jude – **(Barely manages to utter the word)** Bye. **(Jude puts the phone down, kicks one of the books on the floor and by doing so hurts her toes)**. Ay! **(While she's hopping on one foot, Mouche puts his hands on Julie's shoulders)**.

Scene 9

The same morning (an hour later), the greengrocery, Jude and Yuda.

Jude is dressed in Jeans and a T-short and is lightly made up. It looks like she's "invested" in her appearance. From afar she studies Yuda but he doesn't notice her. With a big broom he's trying to sweep the entrance to

the shop. He picks up the garbage and puts it in the bin. Jude stops for a minute when she approaches him as if to "prepare herself".

Jude – (Smiles) Good morning!

Yuda – Good morning! **(smiles, embarrassed)**. I'm missing an apron, I know. **(Enters the shop with the broom and Jude follows him)**. What can I do? The council doesn't do it. They're on strike and I hate it when it's dirty. Do you need anything? Vegetables? Fruits?

Jude – No. Thank you. The fridge is empty but I'm going to the conference in Greece on the weekend so there's no point in filling it up.

Yuda - Every morning I bring fresh produce in and watch it decay. Apart from a few widows and one divorcee who came to sniff me for future reference – the shop is empty.

Jude – It's the recession. Jerusalem has the highest percentage of poor population in the country.

Yuda – Let's go outside. It's too dark in the shop. **(Takes two chairs)** God took my light away. **(Puts the chairs outside)**. Please, seat. **(Sits down, tired as if he has "no air")**.

Jude – No, thank you. I need to go to the lab to get the pictures for Mouche and I still have a lot of things to do before I leave. You know how it is.

Yuda – Victoria and I didn't travel much. **(Laughs)**. Closing the shop for a few days seemed too risky. We were afraid of losing our clients... Her illness opened my eyes. We went to England. It was her dream – to see Victoria and Albert's museum, the palace, the gardens. She was very excited about it all.

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Jude – And you?

Yuda – I shared her excitement. But I don't like to feel like a stranger. I crave being connected. Being at home. That's me. I have this hole in my soul that only being at home fills up. Please, sit. I feel awkward that you're standing.

Jude – **(Sits down)**. For a few minutes.

Yuda – Last night when I couldn't sleep –

Jude – I also have trouble sleeping lately.

Yuda – A minute before I fall asleep I wake myself up because I'm scared of dreaming about Victoria. The dreams are so real it's impossible to wake up to a life without her.

Jude – Sometimes I feel that missing a person, the longing is some sort of a torture device. When a person dies it's like a black pit is created around him threatening to swallow whoever carries this dead in their heart.

Yuda – I feel like two Sumo fighters are wrestling in my heart. One wants to run after Victoria and the other keeps outflanking him.

Jude – It's so tiring when the soul becomes a field of combat between Life and Death.

Yuda – But this is not what I wanted to talk to you about. Last night I saw on BBC Prime, Victoria's favorite channel, a movie that reminded me of your Dancing Girl from the spring. It was a movie about a Jewish ballet dancer in England – Dame Alicia Markova. She was born at the beginning of the last century.

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Jude – I haven't heard about her.

Yuda – At first, I wanted to zap to another channel. Me and Ballet seemed like an incongruous match. But there was something in that woman. She was in a class of her own. The footage they showed of her dancing – it was like she was flying in the air. An angel. I think her real name was Lilian Marks. Like that chain store.

Jude - (Smiles) Marks and Spencer.

Yuda – She was born with weak feet. When she was 8 years old a specialist recommended ballet to her mother.

Jude – Alternative medicine?

Yuda – Something like that. He said that Lilian risked spending her adult life in a wheelchair if the problem wouldn't be solved.

Jude – And she insisted on turning a weakness into power.

Yuda – Yes. She was a star at an early age. That Russian –

Jude – Diagilev?

Yuda – How do you know?

Jude – My head is full of useless knowledge.

Yuda – If I'm not mistaken, when she was 14 he made her a member of his troupe. He was grooming her to be his –

Jude – Prima Ballerina?

Yuda – Exactly. This troupe – it was hard work. Harsh discipline. Till 1929, when he suddenly died. I remember because this was the year of the pogroms in Motsa and Hebron.

Jude – And our history is like mother tongue to you. You know it by heart.

Yuda – I was mostly impressed by what happened to her after he died. She stopped dancing. It was as if till then she had someone to guide her, show her the way – and without him –

Jude – She could no longer move. Not even one more step.

Yuda – She talked about it in the interview. She said it took some time but she realized that life entrusted her with a gift, her talent, and it was her duty to nurture this gift and let others enjoy it. People then, as they explained in the movie, were not familiar with Ballet. She created her own troupe and traveled all over England and then America and the East. She offered people who never even dreamed of it – the beauty of Ballet. She simply couldn't live without dancing. It was a force that guided her life. In a way it was her destiny.

Jude – It sounds like a love story: Lilian Marks and the Ballet met at a critical moment in her life and from that moment on - never parted.

Yuda - She never married.

Jude – She married the Ballet.

Yuda – Yes. Maybe. Her story captivated me. For a brief moment I asked myself what I would do if someone came in. Victoria's cousin, for instance.

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Jude – The Divorced one? Your accountant? Victoria tried to match us before I told her about Mouche.

Yuda – With all his education he is such a "macho". He was born with boots and a "lasso" "Wild West" style. Can you imagine him coming in and catching me glued to a movie on Ballet? Still I had to watch it till the end. For you. So I could tell you. **(Jude smiles, a bit moved)**. I'm knackered.

Jude – **(Gets up)**. I'll make some black coffee. Strong. With lots of sugar.

Yuda – **(Smiles, gets up)**. Thanks. Come on, I'll help you.

An explosion is heard. He hugs her and lays her on the floor, covering her body with his.

Scene 10

Evening (a few hours after the terrorists' attack), Jude's apartment, Mouche's apartment, Yuda, Jude, Mouche and Julie.

Yuda and Jude are at her apartment which seems chaotic as it looked that morning. Yuda puts down the phone and approaches the table. Jude serves him tea.

Jude – It's good that you called. Even though you woke them up. Otherwise, they would have heard it on the news in the morning or seen it on T.V. **(He sits down**

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and sips his tea slowly). Did you tell them that they checked you at the hospital and everything is o.k.?

Yuda – I did but it didn't put their mind at ease.

Jude – It's odd. I don't have anyone to call. Suddenly it's very clear to me.

Yuda – What about your boyfriend?

Jude – He is probably playing hide and seek in his library. That's why he wanted to go there in the first place, to avoid the news. He tends to prefer his own private reality. In any case, we're supposed to meet on Saturday at the conference in Greece – where we met two years ago. **(Short pause).** I don't know whether I should go. **(Pause – she looks at him, he seems distracted and pale. She comes closer and touches him gently).** This dancer you told me about this morning –

Yuda – Alicia Markova?

Jude – Yes. She can be my next research subject. Her story is a heroic one. I haven't stopped thinking about her while we were waiting in the E.R. surrounded by all the atrocities. My head kept dancing around her name – Dame Alicia Markova. Then – in 1929 – she didn't give in. She didn't let Diaghilev's death take hold of her life, rob her of her dancing soul. **(Looks at him).** Maybe you should lie on the couch. They said you should rest. Take off your shoes. I'll get you a pillow. **(Steps out for a minute).**

Yuda – No. There's no need.

Jude – **(Returns with a pillow and a light blanket).** I wanted to go just to be with him. But I feel I shouldn't pursue him like that. He's going to be there as a

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speaker and me – what shall I come as – his lacquey? **(Pause. She notices him holding his head, massaging his temples).** Would you like another cup of tea? **(Goes to prepare it and continues talking with her back to him).** We were lucky. Extremely lucky. **(Pause).** My mother survived the Holocaust but me – I've never felt death crawling over my skin before. Death has a strong smell. It clings to your clothes, your skin, your soul. We both need a decent shower to bring us back to land of the living. Are you o.k.?

Yuda – I don't know. All kinds of weird thoughts run amuck in my head. I almost joined Victoria in her heaven.

Jude – Me too.

Yuda – How would she react to the sight of me arriving with another woman in my arms? **(Gets up).** I think I should go now. **(Approaches the door).** I missed the service at the synagogue. For "Kadish" (* prayer for the dead) you need a Minyan (*a properly constituted group for a public Jewish prayer service).

Jude – I'm sorry.

Yuda – **(By the door)** It's not your fault the world is upside down.

Jude – **(Approaches him).** Please stay. **(Touches him lightly).**

Yuda – I have to go. **(Exits hastily as if he's escaping).**

Jude lingers by the door that was almost slammed in her face. She looks around the room for a minute and then, as if her mind is made up, she takes out a suitcase from her wardrobe, opens it, takes out her white dress and puts it on the chair by the suitcase. At the same time, Mouche enters his study barefoot wearing a bathing suit and a towel – all red from over

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exposure to the sun. He puts the towel on the back of the chair, checks something on the laptop, dials. Jude hastens to pick up the phone.

Mouche – Hi.

Jude – Hi.

Mouche – How did the pictures come out? **(Julie enters in a bikini and a tube of sun protection lotion which she rubs into his shoulders).**

Jude – I didn't pick them up.

Mouche – What's the matter? You sound funny.

Jude – There was a terrorists' attack. **(He gestures to Julie to stop "playing" with the sun lotion).**

Mouche – When? I didn't listen to the news. We're having a heat wave like you wouldn't believe and no air-conditions. I've spent the whole afternoon in the garden hugging the sprinklers. **(Turns to Julie).** A terrorists' attack in Jerusalem.

Jude – Whom are you talking to?

Mouche – Julie.

Julie – Tell her I'm sorry. **(Looks at him tenderly and leaves).**

Mouche – She says she's sorry.

Jude – What for? I imagine she wasn't the one who activated the bomb by remote control.

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Mouche – Don't be sarcastic. She hasn't an evil bone in her body.

Jude – So the sweet young thing has you eating from the palm of her hand –
bravo!

Mouche – I don't understand what you're so angry about.

Jude – What am I angry about? You want a list?

Mouche – You expect me to guess? I thought at your age you ought to know that my intimate acquaintance with your body doesn't necessarily turn me into an optical scanner of your soul.

Jude – You miss my body?

Mouche – Sometimes.

Jude – Do you have to be so precise?

Mouche – You want the truth or a romantic novel version of it?

Jude – From the moment you left I haven't heard a word or a syllable of affection from you. I would have settled for some sexy innuendos. I'm walking here like a widow abandoned in the battlefield of life that keep exploding in my face while you are pouncing on a young chick to the rhythm of sprinklers.

Mouche – The attack was nearby?

Jude – A spitting distance. **(Short pause)**. I can't blame you for my orphanhood, but tonight I felt as if I were alone in the world. And don't you dare lecture me about loneliness equals the human condition.

Mouche – I'm sorry.

Jude – At 47 , I'm suddenly a Holocaust girl like my mother before me. As if we have no country of our own, a country that bleeds milk and honey. **(Takes a deep breath)** – I want to come to England. I have a great research subject – Alicia Markova – Lilian Marks. Jewish, born in England – she exemplifies the kind of feminine heroism I'm interested in. You might say she was a classic ballet pioneer. What do you think? **(Pause – waiting for his response)** I need to escape. Just like you. I want flowers in August and rain instead of burning heat. I want a country where the dead don't woo you from every corner begging you to follow them.

Mouche – And I'm supposed to make it all happen for you? To make it all right? You're throwing your life at me and I can't catch it. Tossing the ball around was never my game. I always let the ball go it's own merry way. I guess that's why my dad finally gave up on me. **(Pause)** I can't perform the "national savior" part. **(Pause)** I hear the wheels of your mind turning. If you're planning to assassinate Julie – you'd better know that she is not the issue here. I like having her around but if you eliminate her you'll have to become a serial killer because someone else will take her place. In this matter I've never disappointed my dad. I'm just like him.

Jude – Don Juan de la Shmatee. (*Shmatee in Yiddish = a rag). **(Pause)** When we met in Greece two years ago, I drank you like a medicine. A cure for my orphanhood. It's a shame you don't come with a warning – side effects: heartbreak.

Mouche – I am who I am. I can run the marathon only with my career. With other people it's only companionship for bits of the way. I can't run with packages on my back.

Jude – It's so pleasant – feeling like a package.

Mouche – You've changed. Admit it. In Greece I met a hip independent woman, the "go with the flow" type –

Jude – You met a swan that turned into an ugly duckling.

Mouche – Don't overdo it.

Jude – Why? It's just like the fairytale. The young beauty you made love to in the moonlight, turned into an old hag by daylight. **(Touches the white dress)**. You bought me the replica of your mother's dress in Greece because you already knew I would turn into your mother's evil twin one day. **(The tone of her voice expresses her defeat)**. Maybe you ought to tell Julie to prepare the bikini. On second thought, at her age she can parade herself naked. But tell her to be careful. Too much sun is a recipe for wrinkles especially where tender English white skin is concerned. **(Julie appears at the door, realizes he's busy and disappears again)**.

Mouche – The chips are down, Jude. Lay off the kitchen knives. Your tongue has cut me open.

Jude – My real name – the one my mother gave me – is Judith.

Mouche – It all makes sense now. The nymph rising from the cool water to the burning Greek beach and the beautiful widow cutting off Holofarens' head after a

night of passion, in order to save our holy Jerusalem. You were programmed from birth to be a man-eating medusa.

Jude – Only the unfaithful should fear me. **(Pause)**. Will you be o.k. without the pictures for your presentation? I can find a way to E-mail them to you. Although, I think you'd better let your audience exercise their imagination. It's a sure way of making them more involved in the process of creating the historical scene.

Mouche – Let go, Jude. All of a sudden you're turning nice on me? I'll cope. I'm used to coping on my own. **(A short pause, they both hesitate before finishing the conversation which actually means breaking up).**

Jude – You remember our last evening at the spring?

Mouche – I'm not senile, Jude.

Jude – You told me about Mordechai Makleff **(Pause)**.

Mouche – A minute ago you stoned me with a burst of words and now you're taking time out in between syllables? I've taken cover. Don't hesitate. Take your best shot!

Jude – If you think of Makleff in the context of your research, you can't escape reaching my conclusion. Leaders who can avoid letting past traumas shape the future – are capable of making peace.

Mouche – And what's all that got to do with us? I thought you were trying to convince me to love you forever. Romantic love – Eleanor of Aquitaine style.

Jude – **(Bracing herself)** Don't you see I'm paying for your mother's tears here? Isn't it time you let her go?

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Mouche – Why keep digging into my wounds? I am who I am. It's all I have to offer. To myself and to you. **(Pause)**. I'm sorry.

Jude - **(Breathing deeply)** Good luck to you. With the conference and everything else.

Mouche – You too. **(Hangs up. Remains sitting by the table. She hangs up a minute after him. Puts on Tango music and turns off the main lights. In semi darkness she brings a pair of scissors and starts cutting the white dress to pieces).**

Scene 11

Late afternoon at the spring. Jude, the Dancing Girl, Saladin, Richard and Yuda.

Jude arrives at the spring, looks for the girl. For a moment, it seems that it has all been just a dream. She's about to leave when the girl taps on her shoulder. The Dancing Girl is wearing the Jude's cut/dissected white dress and a Black top-hat decorated with golden ribbons.

The Dancing Girl – Looking for me? **(A short pause)**. You miss the music? Maestro! **(With her hand gesture she addresses an imaginary orchestra. Music is heard. The words are from the prayer for the dead that is part of**

the burial ceremony. "El Maleh Rachamim etc." ["Mericful God..."] + "Im Eshkachech Jerusalem..." [If I ever forget you, Jerusalem...])

Jude – Why are you wearing the dress of my dreams?

The Dancing Girl – It's not your dress. It's golden Jerusalem. Dissected and mourning but still Golden. Glowing with the golden dreams of all those who kill her.

Jude – I want to mourn too. For myself. For my lost dreams. And you're to blame.

The Dancing Girl – Me?

Jude – You dived into my "frame" in the middle of a shag that was meant to chain his body to mine so that he wouldn't be able to breathe away from me.

The Dancing Girl – You actually believe that giving him the shag of his life you would have prevented him from adopting the British "baby"? At 47 you decided to be a professional call girl? What for?

Jude – I can't stand being lonely anymore. I don't want to live in a place where you either kill or get killed. **(Helicopters are heard)**. Here we go again. The reaction to the terrorists' attack which will be followed by the next terrorists' attack. **(Shuts her ears)**. I want to live in England.

The Dancing Girl – There are no killers in England? When the English were here during the mandatorial period – driving them away was a sacred mission. Now all of a sudden England is the "Promised Land"?

Jude – I want to stop carrying 2,000 years of exile on my back. I want to be free of the scared duty to the dead. A duty to be happy against all odds. Because they were the silver plate on which this country was offered to me. Because They paid for my happiness with their lives.

The Dancing Girl – Maybe your identity is breaking your back. But do you really believe you can trade places with a 24 years old British chick who has no collective memory to schlepp *(in Yiddish – carry) around? I can't help you. There's a no refund policy where identity is concerned.

Jude – Even if it sticks to your skin like a sweater that came out of the washing machine two sizes smaller? It could have been perfect. Me and him –

The Dancing Girl – hiding among books' pages in the English wilderness. This is not coping. It's running away. I suggest you think of your new heroine – Alicia Markova. You need a strong spine to dance your life. Without it you're chained to a wheelchair. Do you really want to rely on a man to push you up the mountain and choose your path for you? Why do you insist on gluing yourself to the prom king who has another queen and doesn't really want you? Maybe you too should get rid of your past trauma in order to make peace within your soul and stage yourself a different future.

Richard arrives. He tries, unsuccessfully, to take off his armour. A few seconds later Saladin limps in. He's dirty and disheveled and looks like Sadam emerging from his hiding place. He fondles a rosary and mumbles.

Jude – The bleeding theatre company is all I need now. **(She quickly puts on her sunglasses).**

The Dancing Girl – Even if you close the shutters and put blinders on your eyes, you can't convince me that you're not dying to know what happens now. Enjoy

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the show, dear! **(Vanishes among the trees. Jude, slowly, takes off her glasses).**

Richard – Help me. I need to get rid of this armour. **(Tries again, himself himself, licks the wound).** Au! You're not helping?

Saladin – Let me pray, you big baby.

Richard - For years I have been sweating under this armour. Ever since my mother planted King Arthur in my head I've been competing with him for her love.

Saladin – What are you babbling about?

Jude – **(When she opens her mouth to answer him, the girl stands in front her and they speak together).** In 1155 Eleanor asked the French cardinal Rober Weiss to translate the "The History of the Kings of Britain". This book was a mélange of history and folk-tales. This glorious salad offered us Arthur, the low-rank officer as the illustrious king of England famous for his victories over England's enemies. **(While they speak Saladin approaches Richard).**

Richard – Yak, what is this smell?

The Dancing Girl – **(To Jude)** Your ultimate Muslim is in urgent need of a bath. Excuse me for bailing out. **(Disappears. This time Jude doesn't back off. She sits on a rock and looks at them).**

Saladin – **(To Richard)** If you don't like my smell you can get rid of your armour yourself. I'm sympathizing with Sadam. We're both from Tikrit, Sadam and me.

Richard – You, the symbol of tolerance and enlightenment, identify yourself with a dictator, a mass murderer?

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Saladin - I identify with someone who prefers life over honour. Even if he stinks. This new trend of suicide bombers is giving me indigestion. **(Helps Richard with the armour).**

Richard – **(Finally free of his armour he looks a bit like a troubadour with tights. Saladin smiles at Richard who's enjoying stretching his limbs).**
That's it. Finally I can be who I was meant to be.

The Dancing Girl – **(Appears among the trees)** Bravo!

Jude - Richard as a troubadour?

The Dancing Girl – You don't remember that Richard wrote a poem in captivity? **(Tosses a musical instrument over to Richard who catches it, happy like a puppy. Saladin watches him trying to play. He succeeds in producing annoying sounds. Saladin and the girl close their ears. The girl vanishes).**

Richard – **(Noticing an invisible butterfly)** – Look, a butterfly. **(Puts down the musical instrument and tries to follow the butterfly).** Gone. **(Teary eyed)** Ran out on me.

Saladin – Have you lost your marbles? Sensitivity in a man is attractive but you're about to drown in it.

Richard – Can't you see? I've never had time for butterflies. **(Choking with emotion).**

Saladin – **{{(Hands him his Shebaria (*Knife in Arabic))}**. Go, slay a rabbit. You'll feel better. **(Richard gestures "no" with his head and goes on crying).**
Maybe you should put your armour back on.

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Richard – I don't want to be the "sorrowful knight". All those knightly games of potency have rendered me impotent. We have turned our lives into a wasteland. We fought for God, we fought for land and why? Because we believed that territory, religion made us who we were, created our identity. But our lives are just a fraction of a second in human history which consists of many identities, many faces of God, and ever changing territories.

Saladin – A fairy and a philosopher too!

Richard – Take a good look at this land – at what has happened to it in 56 years. The Jews have turned it into a terrestrial paradise. You may find a million kinds of yoghurt on their supermarkets' shelves but Life in Israel tastes like shit.

Saladin – People are like that. They create, then destroy. What are you so worked up about? If you don't destroy there's no room for new creations. Earth is over populated as it is and I heard there's gravity problems on the moon. And above all – you shouldn't judge yourself too harshly since we were the ones to make peace on this celebrated corner of the earth. **(Richard blows his nose and calms down)**. We were a moment of sanity in the bloody history of this place. So, my dear troubadour, in the spirit of our camaraderie – instead of showering me - with your tears – please spare my nerves and learn to play some decent tunes on your instrument.

Richard – **(Picks up his musical instrument)**. We made peace because we were too tired of war which doesn't exactly push us forward in line for a Peace Nobel Prize. **(Tries playing and produces some pleasant sounds. Sings along and makes up words in the process)**. "Sweet, sweet butterfly

Don't be afraid.

Come, sit on the palm of my Hand". (*A Hebrew nursery rhyme).

(He tries to dance but his feet go haywire).

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The Dancing Girl – (Appears among the trees) Maybe we ought to arm him with some decent dancing music? **(The music of "Zorba the Greek" is heard. Saladin starts dancing much like the illustrated Zorba – sensually and joyfully. Richard eyes him with envy).**

Saladin – Instead of eating your heart out, come stand behind me and do exactly what I do.

Richard – (Tries approaching him but can't stand the smell). It's a very generous offer but maybe we could soak in the spring for a bit, first? **(Pause).** You smell.

Saladin – So?

Richard – You scare my butterflies away. And besides you don't need to grow crabs to make me prefer Life over deadly Honour like Sadami did. Can't you see I've changed?

Saladin – Even your mother won't recognize you. And if the crazy Jewish lady – the majnuna (*crazy – in Arabic) hasn't figured by now what we were trying to teach her – we are entitled to declare her a lost cause. **(Tries to walk).** Ay! My leg. Maybe the cool spring water will take the pain away. **(Richard approaches and helps him. Saladin leans on him and they exit together. "Bonnaza" music is heard – western style – and they seem to be riding their imaginary horses into the sunset...)**

Jude – (Her eyes follow them). I don't understand.

The Dancing Girl – What's there to understand? It's the beginning of a beautiful friendship!

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Jude – You're quoting "Kasablanka" to me? Do you really think that your cinematic version of lost love nostalgia can help me? How, pray tell.

The Dancing Girl – What do you want from me? I am the oracle from Delphi. I am your echo. But since you insist – for you I'll be banal – smile to the world and at the risk of exposing all its false teeth it'll smile back at you.

Jude – And this is how I'll get him back?

The Dancing Girl – The fly? (**Jude grimaces**) In French – the language of love – mouche means a fly. Your boyfriend, ma chere, is a fly. By the bare hands of your soul you turned this fly into one of the seven wonders of the world. At your age one generally shops at the surplus department but that doesn't mean you have to settle for damaged goods.

Jude – (**To the girl**) You talk as if I have a parade of suitors marching before me and all I need to do is – choose. (**Yuda arrives**). What are you doing here?

The Dancing Girl – A nice question to ask a potential suitor. Love is not for cowards, my dear. You want love? Be gutsy! (**Jude gestures her to walk away**).

Yuda – I was looking for you. I'm going to Australia.

Jude – For how long?

Yuda – Six months. A try-out. Victoria's cousin found me someone for the shop. (**Pause, Jude averts her gaze**). I can't be alone. I know it's odd. A man of my age- after all I've been through. I feel like a little boy in the orphanage in Morocco again. Only I have no home-land to dream of. This country keeps vomiting us out of its womb as if by coming here we interrupted her beauty sleep.

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Jude – Everybody is going away and leaving me behind.

Yuda – I thought you were flying to him, to your boyfriend in Greece.

Jude – No. I'm not chasing after him anymore. **(Pause)**. It's so hot today. I would love to dive naked into the spring. **(Embarrassed by the "nakedness")**. When the first settlers came here in 1892-3, the crystal clear water of the springs they found here made them think of heaven.

Yuda – It's the Ninth of Av today. (*A Jewish holiday – a fast in memory of the destruction of the temple).

Jude – The Babylonians destroyed our temple in 586 B.C. but me and you we don't need a biblical enemy to destroy our lives – we're doing it ourselves.

Yuda – What do you mean?

Jude – The month of Av is also called Av-Menachem – a month of comfort, redemption and restoration. As the prophet Isaiah said – after all the disasters redemption will come.

Yuda – **(Smiles)** You know your Bible.

Jude – **(Smiles back)** I heard it on the radio on the way here. They talked about the Fifteenth of Av (*A feast in the time of the Second Temple). The maidens dancing in the vineyards...you know –

Yuda – **(Still smiling)** Not really.

Jude – During the time of the second temple on the 15th on Av they had a sort of a celebration of love. The young bachelors chose their brides from the maidens who danced before them, exhibiting their worldly goods, so to speak. I've been thinking about it. First Ninth of Av and then 15th – first destruction and then hope. I know Yuda and Yehudit sounds funny together but do you think we might stand a chance? **(Pause. Yuda turns his back to her and looks at the spring).** Why are you running away from me?

Yuda – During Victoria's last days I thought the best thing for me was to "go" with her. But I couldn't. **(Pause).** On the way here I passed the house of the Makleff family. As I said my goodbyes to the palm tree in their garden in my heart I was saying goodbye to you too. Then I remembered Chaim Makleff. And it dawned on me that he, too, wanted to die with his family and his name – Chaim = Life – forced a different destiny on him. He survived against his will, so to speak. I'm running away because I don't know whether I'm capable of building a new life for myself.

Jude – The soil around the palm tree in Makleff's garden is soaked in blood and the one who planted it is long gone. But this palm tree doesn't make allowances to the despair and the endless tears that surround it. It keeps on growing higher and higher, all the way to the sky.

Yuda – We're not twenty anymore. Dare we begin again?

Jude – It's up to us to create our paradise. Unlike Judith my namesake I can't save my country but I have a duty to save myself. It's you who told me that our powers of imagination can heal us. So I'm trying to imagine a hopeful future for us both. **(Pause).** Besides, I'm not ready to be shipped over to an old folk's home yet. Will you dance with me?

Yuda – I haven't danced since my wedding day. **(She takes his hand)**. With no music?

Jude – I hear music.

Yuda – (Smiles) Why doesn't it surprise me?

Jude – Theodor Herzl said: "If you will it to happen – the dream may come true". Zionism has taught us we can't exist without imagination. **(Yuda who is a bit rusty where dancing is concerned therefore he concentrates on his performance. Mike Brandt's "Laisse Moi T'aimer – is heard and Jude sings along. Yuda embraces her. They cling to each other and dance almost without moving).**

The Dancing Girl – (Bows to Jude and takes off her top-hat to her).

Chapeau, gutsy lady! What a grand happy end you've orchestrated for yourself. Just like the movies!

(She tosses the hat in the air and it "disappears" back stage. She follows it dancing. Jude, still in Yuda's arms keeps dancing while the girl's voice is heard):

The Dancing Girl's voice – "All is foreseen but freedom of choice is given" (*A tractate in the Mishnah - Avoth 3, 15. ***The Mishna is a collection of oral laws which forms the basis of the Talmud). Maestro! It's time to change the music! **(Dancing music is heard - joyful and sensual. Jude and Yuda dance to the music while the lighting creates in their honour a blazing sunset).**

The End

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