

Jesus Crucified in Palestine
A Crazy Girl named Nahed

Two Modern Plays

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Jesus Crucified
in Palestine

For Mariam

my dear wife

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My principal debt is to his revered Dr.James Haddix, Pastor of “All Souls Church”in Bangor, for his appreciation of this play. His editing and brilliant suggestions added much of his poetic spirit to the text.

Nasim Mijalli

Place : Cairo

Time : At the end of the Sixtieth

The characters

Judge

Right member

: Prosecutor

Left member

: Theologian

Caiaphas

Pontius Pilate

Judas Iscariot

Claudia

: Pilate's wife

Mariana

: Israeli journalist

Herod

: governor of Galilee

PREFACE

This play is mainly based on a unique event which took place in the Vatican where the Second Vatican Council was held on October 28, 1965 and issued an important document entitled:

“Declaration on The Relation of The Catholic Church To Non Christian Religions”

The declaration expressed a new tolerant attitude towards all other religions even Hinduism and Buddhism, but this attitude towards the Jews provoked a strong opposition in Egypt and the Arab countries. That is because the document said that the contemporary Jews are not responsible for crucifying Jesus Christ.

The Coptic Church considered it an attempt to change sacred texts to serve the political goals of Israel in her conflicts with the Palestinian and Arab peoples. Consequently, the Coptic Church sent a delegation of priests and secular experts to advance its opinion against that document, but in vain; the declaration was signed and proclaimed at the Vatican.

To tackle this controversial problem, the author has formed an imaginary trial held by the Coptic church in Cairo to investigate the event of crucifixion of Jesus Christ in order to assure the identity of the real culprits. The trial came to a conclusion that only Caiaphas and the Council of the priests were responsible for the crime of crucifying Jesus, and this act cannot be charged against all the Jews without distinction, then alive, nor the Jews of today. This

outcome accords with the spirit of Christ who called His father to forgive them because they were ignorant of what they were doing.

In this way the author has opened a new horizon for a rational discussion of the Declaration in the light of the Holy Bible and the contemporary circumstances. Thus the Arab-Israeli conflict must be considered on political and human grounds.

The author of this play is an Egyptian Christian. He shares the sufferings of his own people as well as the sufferings of others especially those of the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine who are killing each other in fierce conflicts every day. Consequently, he discusses this topic in a fair way, calling all parties for more understanding and more tolerance to achieve peace and stability in the Middle east.

N.M

PROLOGUE

The narrator appears in the middle of a green spot light, and starts to speak:

Dear friends,

The plot made by Zionism and imperialism succeeded. It has achieved its aim. The declaration awaits only the signature of the Pope!

The Light changes and is focussed on a cinema screen at the back of the stage. The screen shows us His Holiness Pope Paul VI proclaiming the Declaration:

“Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues. True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ. Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews

and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone. Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows. And, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven".

Narrator appears again to resume his comment.

Dear friends,

That is a part of the plot against the firm belief we have been taught to hold, that Jesus Christ was crucified by Caiaphas and the council of priests, and the burden of the crime is inherited in their sons.

The representatives of the Coptic church went to address the council trying to express the voice of reason and justice at the council. But their voice was lost in the noise of the majority and the decision was issued .

Israel wants to clear herself of an old crime to indulge in new crimes in our land. But before giving a final decision of condemnation, let us turn our attention to the proceedings of this trial which will clearly reveal the motives of our enemies.

The court is formed of three remarkable professors of law, metaphysics, and history. They are men of great integrity and courage. At the end of this trial you will be called to share in the verdict against the guilty. This is the first step to support justice and freedom.

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Chorus: The game will not succeed nor hide the freedom light
Let us forget easy questions
Of majority or minority,
Of strength or weakness
Of weapons and planes
Of crowds and individuals.

Single voice: Has human conscience died?
Or does it merely sleep?
Are free voices doomed and suppressed?

Chorus: This talk will be in vain
Let go and run in pain
To resist and struggle
With love and with word
Why and why.....?
Never shall we keep silent
For each of us is involved in this case
and each is responsible for his own decision.

Music:

SCENE I

As the scene opens, we see men in judges' robes on a high level on the stage. The president of the court is seated in the middle, the prosecutor at his right while the Theologian at his left.

Opposite, on a lower level, sits Caiaphas the Chief of the Jewish Temple priests at the time of Christ. He is about seventy but seems strong and aggressive. Near him in the middle of the stage is Pontius Pilate, about fifty. He is a tall man strongly built with clear voice. His beautiful wife sits beside him. She is about thirty five. She has a delicate look, with Roman features, and a sweet voice. Behind them sits Judas Iscariot. Behind and above him, a gallows with a falling rope. After giving his testimony, he hangs himself with that rope.

Behind all the actors is a cinema screen on which is shown a picture of the Crucifixion of Jesus [If there is no cinema screen, a spotlight can focus on a large photo of the crucifixion]

Judge	: This court will now come to order. Our session will begin.
Prosecuter	: I call the first defendant. (Caiaphas moves to the dock)
Judge	Please state your full name.

Caiaphas : Caiaphas, son of Hizkial
Judge : Your age?
Caiaphas : about seventy.
Judge : Your profession?
Caiaphas : In the present, or the past?
Judge : Past and present if you please.
Caiaphas : Now I am a baker... in hell.
In the past I held several positions. I was promoted from cashier to a tithe collector; then I was made a priest. In the end I was elected the leader of the Jewish Sanhedrin, something like a senate.
Judge : (turning to the Prosecutor)
Will the Prosecutor please now read the charges against this man?
Prosecutor : We charge that this Caiaphas, being the chief of the Jewish priests and the council of elders, is responsible for the crime of crucifying Jesus of Nazareth.
Judge : How do you plead?
Caiaphas : This is not true. I plead not guilty!
Judge : You plead not guilty?
Caiaphas : Yes; not guilty.
Prosecutor : Who, then, is responsible for this crime?
Caiaphas : Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.
Prosecutor : Even if what you say is true, surely you have shared in this crime?
Caiaphas : I never shared in anything with the Romans! And certainly not with Pilate.
Judge : Very well. You may stand aside for the moment.
Mr. prosecutor: Let's hear from Pilate
(Caiaphas stands aside, while Pilate

advances to the dock)

Prosecutor : Your full name.

Pilate : Pontius Pilate, of Roman origin and birth.

Prosecutor : Your profession?

Pilate : I am best known as the governor of Judea. I served the Emperor of Rome and often presided over affairs of State in Jerusalem.

Prosecutor : You have heard the charges brought against you?

: What do you say to these charges? How do you plead?

Pilate : I am innocent of this crime. Shedding blood was not my habit.

Caiaphas : What a wicked villain!

(in a theatrical movement)

If you please, sirs. This man says that he was not used to blood shedding. Who then slaughtered the Galilians and mixed their blood with that of sheep?

Pilate : Theirs were not innocent blood, as Caiaphas well knows! Ridding the Galilee of that insurgency was an urgent measure. A necessity to maintain the stability of the empire!

Caiaphas : And the killing of Jesus? Wasn't that also a necessity for order and stability?

Pilate : No, That was completely a different matter. Christ did not represent any threat to our authority. You know very well that he threatened your class privileges. (He looks at Caiaphas) But how could a man like you turn into an inquisitor?

Judge : That is enough! Order! Mr, Prosecuter, please continue.

Prosecutor : (addressing Pilate once again)
Then who was responsible for this crime?

Pilate : The killer of Christ, is Caiaphas, the chief priest. It was he who issued the verdict that Jesus should be killed for blasphemy.

Prosecutor : That is all for now.

Judge : (turning to Caiaphas)
You can speak now, Caiaphas.

Caiaphas : Sirs, would you permit me to question Pilate?

Judge : I will allow this, but only on condition that your questions be relevant.

Caiaphas : (turning to Pilate) Who ordered the soldiers of Rome to crucify Jesus? You Pilate or I?

Pilate : It was I of course; but that was only an executive task: my responsibility as commander of the Roman forces.

Caiaphas : This admission is enough! But I would like to be able to ask more questions if necessary.

Pilate : This is not an admission at all! Remember that those soldiers who arrested Jesus and dragged him through the streets were of your sons, Caiaphas!

Caiaphas : No, no. Those soldiers were Syrians! And they were led by a Roman centurion.

Pilate : (addressing the Judge) Wait, please, your honour! (turning to Caiaphas)
Listen, Caiaphas, you know very well that those Syrian soldiers were keeping peace and order in Jerusalem. They were ordered to prevent the mob you gathered from rioting! You stirred the mob to help the Temple guards in arresting Jesus. It was they who

struck him through the streets. Can you deny, Caiaphas that you were leading them?.

Prosecutor : Please, Sir! May I ask a question here? As governor, hadn't you the right of objection to the judgement of the Jewish Sanhedrin?

Pilate : We chose not to interfere in their internal affairs. We left the matters of judgement and legislation in religious matters for them to manage according to their law and religious practice.

Prosecutor : What was your role in the sentence?

Pilate : I had no role in the sentence. My duty was just to execute it.

Caiaphas : This further admission by Pontius Pilate should stand on the record.

Judge : Certainly, Caiaphas. We have recorded Pilate's testimony. But why do you believe this last testimony to be of particular significance?

Caiaphas : Your honor, it is of the greatest significance! Sir, he admits – he confesses! that he executed the sentence!. Surely this is enough to resolve the matter.

Judge : He doesn't deny this. But he has also testified that you were responsible for the Judgement.

Caiaphas : This is a false claim. Can there be a wise man who would believe that the governor of the colony of Judea, who represented the Emperor of Rome! was a mere tool in the hands of the conquered people?

Pilate : Caiaphas! You wicked liar! Everyone knows history. How could you deny what everyone knows? I was the governor of

Judea, that is true. I was the Emperor's representative which is also true. But I never interfered in your internal affairs. You know we always respected the Jewish people. We respected your customs and beliefs?

Caiaphas : (Sarcastically) You would have this court believe that this behaviour you claim is ever the habit of colonialists.

Pilate : Yes. In fact I do. Our policy was to leave religious affairs up to you and the other religious Jewish leaders to manage because your life was strict and every detail of daily living was regulated by the law of your stern religion. In the meantime, I had trouble enough with administration and with taxes. I am confident that the court will be satisfied with these justifications.

Caiaphas : What a Machiavellian governor!
(to Pilate) You left the facts of history in order to talk about justifications.

Pilate : I mentioned these justifications only to compel you to keep silent. I think the court has understood now, that we hadn't left these matters due to lack of good sense or wisdom, but to relieve ourselves.

Judge : Pilate, your speech seems reasonable, and the court might well accept it. But I would like to hear more. What do you say about executing the sentence?

Pilate : Certainly, Sir. When they brought Jesus to me, my statement was: "I detect no guilt on him" and objected to the crucifixion and suggested that he should be set free on the feast of the Passover. But they demanded to

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crucify Him and to release Barabas.

Judge : And who was this Barabbas?

Pilate : He was a Jewish mutineer who was imprisoned for a political murder.

Judge : Can you give me more information about this event?

Pilate : It was one of our traditions to let the Jews chose one prisoner to release on the occasion of the Passover. That year when I asked them, which one do you want: Jesus or Barabbas? They shouted several times: Crucify Jesus and release Barabbas “.

Prosecutor : Who shouted?

Pilate : A large crowd of people, including the Temple guards and the mob, led by Caiaphas and the priests. I repeated the question several times but they insisted on having Jesus crucified. They gathered the villains of the society and surrounded the Fortress and cried: crucify Jesus.. crucify Jesus. and release Barabbas.

Judge : Who gathered the villains and urged them to do this?

Pilate : Caiaphas and the priests (looks at Caiaphas) I think you dare not deny this, old Caiaphas.

Caiaphas : Your honour; Sirs: You know, that the crowds have no mind. They move on the spur of the moment. They rush violently. They are motivated by fear -fear for their way of life!

Pilate : That changes nothing, Caiaphas! Don't fabricate! You urged the priests and the elders to this. You urged the mob to shout “crucify Je-

sus his blood on us and on our children". That outcry recurring several times, was exactly entirely your doing.

Caiaphas : The important point is that you are the only one responsible for the execution of the Judgement against Jesus.

Don't try to mislead this court! You are a cunning man but you can't deceive us any more. Your real intention is clear. Did you forget the game of balance between political powers? You played it well. This game which all imperialists prefer.

Prosecutor : (to the Judge) Caiaphas is wasting our time with all this talk of games.

Caiaphas : No, Your Honor: this is the very core of the subject. Please let me defend myself, otherwise this whole proceeding will lack any fairness.

Judge : No, Caiaphas; you have full freedom to express yourself (in a sarcastic dialect) there is no need for attacking this Court or our justice!

Caiaphas : Pilate's balancing game is the secret key to this case. You know, Sirs, that Pilate was an experienced ruler who was a master of governing and of intrigue. Therefore, he tried to make use of Jesus Christ for causing a split in the structure of the Jewish society. But we discovered his wicked scheme and suppressed it before being executed.

Pilate : By killing Jesus! please, Sirs. listen to what he is saying.

Caiaphas : (sharply) Wait Pilate, don't interrupt me..

Judge : Wait, Pilate. Please let him finish.

Caiaphas : Yes, we destroyed his plot. It was clear to Pilate how Jesus Christ gathered around him masses of the poor and of slaves who owned nothing and feared nothing. Pilate saw how Jesus misled them with words about salvation, freedom and the better life.

Prosecutor : You are a wicked man, Caiaphas! How dare you accuse Christ of misleading people.

Caiaphas : I don't want any interruption!

Judge : Can you explain, Caiaphas, the relation between Jesus and the political balancing game you have mentioned just now?

Caiaphas : Please, let me continue.

Judge : You may continue, but you must answer my question!

Caiaphas : It was in the habit of Jesus Christ to criticize the Jewish people and insult the elders and the scribes.

: This encouraged the poor and slaves to challenge us, and to threaten the stability of our society.

Prosecutor : Show us the evidence!

Caiaphas : Well, his disrespect for Saturday, the Sabbath, our sacred day. This holy day is devoted completely to worship. We are forbidden to do any work on this day. Jesus Christ did not honor the day, rather he sometimes used that day to cure the sick!. He claimed that Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath!. This provoked our people.

Prosecutor : Is that all?

Caiaphas : No, of course, this is one example only. On a second time he entered the temple in Jerusalem and attacked the money changers

and tithe collectors. He lashed them with a knotted rope and drove them saying “My house is for prayer, but you have made it into a den for robbers”.

Prosecutor : But he was quoting your own holy book when he said these words. Wasn’t this whole incident a sign of respect for the holiness of your Temple?. What wrong did you see in that?

Caiaphas : He was making false claims? How could he say that the Temple was “his”house? How could he dare call the Temple officials, and the money changers, thieves? This was heresy that he used to teach in the Temple, and he went on to make catastrophic prophecies about the Temple itself...

Prosecutor : Have you finished?

Caiaphas : Not yet. He predicted that the Temple would collapse, that not one stone would be left standing on another. He said it would crumble into pieces. Then another time he said that even if the Temple were destroyed, he, Jesus, would raise it again in three days. For all this blasphemy alone he was worthy of death!.

Prosecutor : What did he mean by these prophecies? Or how did you understand it?

Caiaphas He meant that he was preparing his followers for a violent revolution that would destroy the foundations of our society, our worship and our Temple.

Prosecutor : For what purpose would he want to destroy your society?

Caiaphas : To establish a new kingdom, a new king-

dom for himself.

Prosecutor : But records show that Jesus announced again and again that his kingdom is not of this world. It is not an earthly kingdom.

Caiaphas : All that talk of a kingdom not of this world was just playing with words, words intended to mislead us, if this were not his intention, why did Pilate write “The king of the Jews”, and put that phrase on the cross of crucifixion?

Judge : We have gone far afield here! Let us get back to the political game of balance.

Prosecutor : (to the Judge) Quite right. (to Caiaphas) You have not explained what you meant by this game and what was pilate’s role in it. That is what concerns the Court now.

Caiaphas : Here is what I mean. Pilate wanted to let Jesus’ talk stir up the poor and the slaves until they broke out in rebellion against us and swept us in its way.

Prosecutor : You believed there was an impending revolution? Or it was merely exaggerations of yours. Mr Caiaphas. Who was the leader of this revolution?

Caiaphas : Jesus Christ, of course! No one was imagining the threat he posed. Do you think that a social upheaval is too much for a man who claimed that the Temple would be torn to pieces, or that it would be he, himself, who would raise it up in three days? What would you or anyone expect from a man who declared again and again that he came to redeem the captives and slaves?

Prosecutor : You considered his way a way of destruc-

Caiaphas : Should we expect omens of more terrible destruction than this! To promise all kinds of miserable people a heavenly kingdom devoted completely for them, where the rich and notable have no right to enter? Who could doubt that all this was a temptation for the poor to wage a civil war that could de-struct social classes and eradicate very im-
portant differences religious and social.

Prosecutor You believe that Pilate had a direct relation with Christ? or his followers?

Caiaphas : No, of course not.

Prosecutor : How could he exploit this revolution then? Did you believe that such a revolution if it succeeded would seek some kind of agree-
ment with the Roman invaders of Palestine?

Caiaphas : No, we did not believe that, but the Jesus revolution would break Jewish society. Pi-
late would wait and watch that happen. Then with that accomplished, he could ride the wave and direct the social chaos for his own interests. This is the balancing game that he was playing.

Judge : Is that all? Have you finished?

Caiaphas : Yes, your Honor.

Judge : Pilate? What is your response?.

Pilate : Your honor, Caiaphas revealed my game clearly. But he left out an essential point, namely how he destroyed my plot. Or how he suppressed that revolution before it ever broke out?

Caiaphas : There were certainly virtuous Jews who rose up quickly and laid hands on Jesus and

handed him over to our council to be tried.

Prosecutor : Then, you agree that your council was responsible for the judgement?

Caiaphas : Yes, Because, as you have seen, Pilate failed to carry out his duty and put the life of the society in jeopardy.

Prosecutor : But you were the leader of that council and most responsible for the judgement against Jesus.

Caiaphas : Yes, I was the leader, but the ultimate decisions were issued by complete agreement of the majority of the council, and as leader, I had only one voice.

Prosecutor : So, then, the members of the council were responsible for the trial and the judgement.

Caiaphas : For the trial only.

Judge : And the judgement?

Caiaphas : Actually, the council met under severe pressure. The crowds were demonstrating around the council and in some sense, it was they who compelled us to pass this judgement against Jesus.

Prosecutor : How did they compel you?

Caiaphas : They threatened to attack the council and kill the members.

Judge : Have you finished your testimony? Is this your defence?

Caiaphas : I believe it is sufficient, at least for now.

Pilate : I would like to examine the testimony of Caiaphas, it is filled with lies and slanders.

Judge : Very well. I will allow it. But Caiaphas will have the right to respond.

Pilate : Caiaphas revealed my game clearly but he didn't mention anything about his evil tricks

which he used in arresting Jesus of Nazareth.

Judge : This sounds like an important point. Go on.

Pilate : Caiaphas testified that the crowds laid hands on Christ and handed him over to the council. This is patently untrue. The fact is that the council of the elders led by Caiaphas captured Christ by deceit.

Caiaphas : I object!. Pilate insults our respectable elders.

Prosecutor : He only describes the methods which were used, with no mention of persons.

Caiaphas : Can we separate means and ends?

Prosecutor : A question for you to answer!

Judge : That will do, Pilate, please continue.

Pilate : The poor and the slaves who followed Jesus Christ in such numbers were not misled or deceived as Caiaphas claimed. They really believed in Jesus as The Messiah who would lead them to salvation from slavery and exploitation. This is the real reason which disturbed Caiaphas and his council and drove them to arrest Jesus. So it was Caiaphas who gathered the temple guards and hired some thugs to capture Jesus with the help of Judas Iscariot.

Judge : Please identify this Judas Iscariot? Who was he?

Pilate : This Judas was an ambitious person. He was one of Christ's disciples, but he betrayed Him in return for thirty pieces of silver.

Prosecutor : What was his role in the plot you allege?

Pilate : Caiaphas persuaded Judas to lead the Tem-

ple guards with the thugs to where Jesus was in order to capture him.

Caiaphas : This is not true! Jesus was very well known. He was easily recognizable. He was not in hiding! No one needed a guide to find Jesus. Even Pilate says that Jesus was very popular among the people!

Pilate : Well, but the priests hired thugs and mercenaries who had never seen Jesus or listened to him. They wouldn't have known him without Judas. Those thugs were bribed like Judas.

Caiaphas : I had no idea about this affair of bribery.

Prosecutor : Perhaps Judas can tell us what he knows about this point?

Judge : Very well. I will permit it.
(Judas advances to the dock)

Judas : Please state your name.

Judas : I am Judas Iscariot. I was an eye witness to all that happened to Jesus Christ.

Judge : Thank you. I am sure you can be helpful. Please explain clearly the point concerning the capture of Christ.

Judas : When Caiaphas and the elders saw Jesus healing the sick, curing the blind and raising the dead, their anxiety increased and decided to kill him.

Prosecutor : Why? What was wrong in curing the sick?

Judas : This work won Jesus high recognition among the people. Hence, the elders began to doubt his intentions. Caiaphas made up his mind to kill him saying that Jesus was a chronic desecrator of the Sabbath and deserved death on a charge of blasphemy.

Prosecutor : What happened next?

Judas : The priests began to spread rumours and lies which deceived me and drove me to fall victim in their hands.

Prosecutor : What did they say?

Judas : They said that they would kill Jesus first, then they would round out his apostles and have them stoned. This made me anxious and perplexed. I couldn't decide what to do?. At this time they set out to persuade me with money and protection if I helped them. I resisted for a time but failed in the long run.

Prosecutor : And your exact role? What was it? Who designed it for you?

Judas : It was designed by Caiaphas, the head of the priests. They convinced me that the matter was not a crime. Just to give them a simple sign.

Prosecutor : And the sign?

Judas : A kiss. By kissing Jesus immediately on seeing him, they would know who he was, and they would rush in and captivate him.

Prosecutor : Was Jesus alone with no one of his disciples?

Judas : There was a few of them. They rushed to defend him. But Jesus prevented them saying: "He who lives by the sword, will die by the sword".

Prosecutor : Didn't the clash cause any casualties or injuries?

Judas : Yes, Sir. Simon Peter, one of the disciples drew a sword and attacked the slave of the high priest. He cut off his ear before Christ

prevented him –In the end Christ yielded himself to the soldiers who mocked and derided him.

Pilate : Your honor, would you please instruct Judas to explain something - it is important.

Judge : What do you mean?

Pilate : He mentioned that Simon Peter, a disciple of Christ, attacked the slave of the chief priest.

(then to Judas) What was the name of the slave and the name of his master?

Judas : The slave's name was Mulkhes and his master was Caiaphas.

Pilate : Your Honor: Is this evidence not sufficient to prove Caiaphas' direct responsibility for the crime? Did his slave go out on his evil path without his permission. Judas has proven now that all the words of Caiaphas are false. It was not the crowds, but Caiaphas who was responsible for Jesus' capture.

Prosecutor : Yes, that is quite clear now. There is no need for more testimony.

Pilate : Thus, you have seen sirs, that they took hold of him and tortured him. They tried him and handed him over that I could execute their judgement.

Caiaphas : You executed it. Of course. (He turns to the public and raises his voice) He executed it. He felt that the popularity of Jesus began to threaten his status.

Prosecutor : Your Honor, Caiphas is back at it, he plays with words and expresses himself in a theatrical way.

Pilate : An ancient cunning way that aims at dis-traction to hide the truth.

Caiaphas : It is not right that Pilate should insult me in the court.

Judge : That is enough. The court will take all this into consideration. When we return the prosecutor will summarize the crime and identify the responsible parties. This court now stands in recess.

Session is over.

Curtain

SCENE II

During the recess. Claudia, the wife of Pontius Pilate stands up to move around the hall, when a pretty young woman slips in. Her name is Mariana Rabine. She is tall and full of vitality. She moves quietly from right to left, looking carefully at the audience. At last she comes to the foreground near Claudia, almost colliding with her.

Mariana : (just misses colliding with Claudia, both are surprised) Oh, pardon me. I have just arrived here. I am pleased to meet an Egyptian woman of such elegance and beauty.

Claudia : Thank you, but I am not Egyptian.

Mariana : Still, it's good to meet you. You are...?

Claudia : Claudia Claudius, the wife of Pontius Pilate. And you?

Mariana : Mariana Rabinse, a journalist from Isreal.

Claudia : I have come here with my husband to attend the trial.

Mariana : Of course, to support him?

Claudia : How do you know?

Mariana : It doesn't need much intelligence.

Claudia : Oh, I would like to know more of you?

Mariana : (approaches her more closely) With pleasure! But if I confide in you, please keep it to yourself.

Claudia : Certainly. You can trust me.

Mariana : I am a representative of the Jewish Agency, and came here secretly to watch the proceedings of the trial, I hope I will have an opportunity to advance our Jewish point of view.

Claudia : (surprised) Israeli women work in politics?

Mariana : Oh, yes. Golda Maier is our prime minister.

Women in Isreal are very much involved in politics.

Claudia : We came directly to Cairo a short time ago. We did not have enough information about you, but we heard that Israeli women spend their time dancing and entertaining men.

Mariana : It sounds to me as if you have been to that Arabic play that is running at the National Theatre.

Claudia : Which play?

Mariana : Watani Akka - My HOME LAND, AKKA

Claudia : That is amazing. How do you guess?

Mariana : We are very interested in everything about Egypt. We read their poetry, their stories, and plays; we know what they write about economics and politics.

Claudia : That shows great care for these matters?

Mariana : Yes, more than that, we study their customs, and traditions even their folklore, and the ceremonies and rituals that are practiced in their villages.

Claudia : You must have reasons for being so interested?

Mariana : Yes, friendship and understanding are two. We want to know them as well as possible so that we can learn how to deal with them

people to people. We need their friendship!

Claudia : And the Egyptians? Are they so interested in your affairs?

Mariana : It doesn't seem so. They do not recognize our Jewish State, and many of them seem disinterested in what we write or think; that play is an example! they seem satisfied with images- false images- that were rooted in their minds hundreds of years ago. Just as you found, they think our women are dancers or prostitutes! And our men are drunkards and wine sellers.

Claudia : What accounts for such thinking?

Mariana : They say it's fear of propaganda.

Claudia : Fear of propaganda?

Mariana: : Yes, but fear only can't explain their attitude? It can't justify it. We fear their propaganda, too, but we don't close the door on knowledge. We really want mutual understanding with them.

Claudia : I know a little something of politics myself! You may have intentions beyond mere understanding.

Mariana : Of course, knowledge of our neighbours is useful in all cases? For understanding and friendship. And if hostilities come, knowledge is even more useful.

Claudia : They should learn from you!

Mariana : Oh. It is not easy for people of this mentality to learn from their enemy all his arts and ways of behavior, more over this takes a long time.

Claudia : May be they don't need this kind of knowledge.

Mariana : Never.. they are ignorant and fanatic. They are living in the past, not in the twentieth century, so they do not see the facts of real life.⁽⁺⁾

Claudia : Enough, please. (she looks around) I am a guest here. My husband is involved in this trial. You may drag me to involve into political questions that are none of my affair.

Mariana : Yes, I am a guest here, too, but I forgot myself, Oh look. The recess is over and the members of the court are coming.
(The members of the court enter and take their places)

Judge : (To Prosecutor) Mr. prosecutor you may proceed.

Mariana : (advances quickly to address the court)
Please, Your honor; please, gentlemen, wait.
If it please the court, I would like to speak.

Judge : Young lady, this is highly irregular (he pauses and considers) You may approach the bench.
(she approaches, respectfully)
Please state your name and your standing in this matter.

Mariana : Your Honor, I am Mariana Rabine, a representative of the Jewish Agency. I stand for friendship.

Judge : How have you come here?

Mariana : By plane, of course.

⁽⁺⁾ *This was the public opinion in Egypt and the Arab countries until the seventies before the peace treaty had been held between Egypt and Israel.*

Judge : (he can't repress a smile) I mean who admitted you to the court?

Mariana : I just walked in, your Honor...through that door (pointing) while the court was in recess.

Prosecutor : Your honor. (the Judge nods to the prosecutor in recognition) I suspect Mrs. Rabine may be an Israeli agent.

Mariana : I am an Israeli journalist. I have come here to cover this event – to report on it – not just to the people in Israel, but to people all over the world..

Judge : If you are so interested why didn't you apply through proper channels. I am sure you would have been granted permission.

Mariana : I learned of the trial too late...almost by chance. I had no time to waste in routine ways.

Judge : And you dared to slip into this hall without any permission at all.

Mariana : I came in good faith. Your Honor. Didn't you declare that the trial would be in public, and the case is reconsidered for historic authenticity and human ends?

Judge : We said that.

Mariana : I am one of the humans who have much interest in this case; or do you want to write history from your viewpoint only?
The Jewish Agency is one of the biggest international agencies representing the Jews and our view point may be decisive in this historic case.

Judge : Your claims are perplexing!

Mariana : Don't waste your time in discussing riddles.

Judge : This court was formed to raise high, the voice of the oppressed and the weak not the voice of the oppressors.

Mariana : Haven't we Jews been ruthlessly oppressed for centuries?

Judge : This is not our affair now. What has this to do with us here?

Mariana : Your Honor. You raised the matter of the oppressed. How can this proceeding ignore the oppression of the Jews or how millions of our people still live in the Diaspora.

Judge : Don't take us away from the matter at hand.

Mariana : Your honor is right, at this moment I am the matter at hand! I am standing here in your presence – a real fact with which you should deal fairly.

Judge : But your presence here is illegal.

Mariana : I am existing here now. This is a strong reality. I beg you please forget formalities a while. Let me join you in trying to discover the truth of these matters. Let's work toward good ends.

Judge : Good ends, madam, cannot be achieved by false means. You are here without proper authorization.

Mariana : I agree, Your Honor. But my intention was not to use false means. It was not possible to go through channels. But here, Sir, it is possible for you to authorize. You can make judgements in disputed matters. Reason and Judgement can play their part.

Judge : This what you always say to justify your occupation of our lands. But we do agree

that good ends must be connected with good means. If you will publically apologize for entering this court without proper authorization, I will consider whether or not it is appropriate for you to enter our discussion here.

Mariana : I apologize to you and to the officers of this court- and to any to whom my irregular entrance here may have caused any offense.

judge : Mr. Prosecutor, before I rule, I would like to hear your opinion.

Prosecutor : Your Honor, I cannot agree to the participation of Ms. Rabine in our proceedings. I believe her to be an Israeli agent.

Judge : I understand your reluctance, Mr. Prosecutor. Nevertheless, as presiding judge, I believe that the court should admit the testimony of Ms. Rabine. It would be unfortunate in so sensitive a matter if we were thought to be fanatic and not open minded to others' point of view.
In reference to the Prosecutor's sensitivities, I will ask our esteemed Theologian to question Ms. Rabine for the record.

Mariana : Ms. Rabine, this court accepts your apology.

Theologian : Your Honor, my apology is sincere; and again, Sir, I apologize to you and to all here present... (she bows) and many thanks to the court for this great spirit.

Mariana : Ms. Rabine. Do you have enough knowledge of this case to make relevant testimony here?

Mariana : Sir, I trust we can establish my knowledge through your questions and my answers.

Theologian : How can you have standing here if you don't know the details of the case.

Mariana : You will see that my testimony has less to do with the details of this case and is more about larger questions-of security. Moreover, we appreciate completely your human intentions of the trial.

Theologian : Are you going to explain our opinion or yours?.

Mariana : Both.

Prosecutor : How?

Mariana : Aren't you trying to prove that Caiphas and the council of priests and elders were responsible for the crime of crucifying Jesus?

Theologian : This is true. What do you say?

Mariana : It is also true from our point of view.

Theologian : Do you recognize that?

Mariana : We recognize their responsibility for this crime.

Theologian : Then you agree with this court.

Mariana : Yes, except on one point.

Theologian : Which point?

Mariana : The responsibility for this act falls on Caiaphias and the council, but only on them. It falls on no one else.

Theologian : But the burden of this crime is not theirs alone- it is inherited in their children!

Mariana : That is unreasonable. How can we believe this?

Theologian : It is not a matter of reasoning. It is a divine judgement.

Mariana : How so?

Theologian : It was Caiaphas himself who made it so.

Mariana : How and when did he do this?

Prosecutor : (interrupting) He shouted with the crowds saying: "Crucify Jesus. Crucify Jesus and his blood be on us and on our children"

Mariana : That was passion. That was despair. The high priest felt that the stability of the society was in jeopardy. He lost control of his words.

Prosecutor: : Shouldn't a killer be cursed for ever.

Mariana : A killer, perhaps yes; or a group who conspire to kill; but the blood they spill cannot be used to stain the generations yet unborn! our people has suffered tortures and expulsion, generation after generation, for hundreds of years. Someone must speak for those millions of men and women and children burned in furnaces of the Nazis. The ancient curse has taken its toll again and again, age after age.

Theologian : Divine sentences are not measured by time or generations.

Mariana : Sometimes we get so confused and perplexed. We can't understand you, Christians.

Theologian : How? This does not need a great effort.

Mariana : It needs strong nerves. Christ says, "Love your enemies and, bless those who curse you" but you damn us and refuse forgiveness.

Theologian : You misunderstand us. We forgive our personal enemies, but as for enemies of God, we have no authority to forgive them.

Mariana : God has no enemies. God is love! Christ said that. Enemies of God is unreasonable phrase. It is repeated by terrorists who consider themselves God's representatives on

earth and kill innocent people every where. How can a Christian think this way?

Prosecutor : (interrupting again) I am sorry madam, but you mischaracterize us and our beliefs. We denounce terrorism. We want justice. For giving grievous sinners is not for us. It is for God.

Mariana : God requires an eternal curse? Doesn't God seek to save sinners

Judge : Of course, when they repent.

Mariana : But forgiveness is the beginning of repentance.

Theologian : No, madam. Forgiveness can come only after repentance.

Mariana : Who laid this term?

Theologian : Our lord Jesus Christ, He was addressing the Jews.

Mariana : What did he say?

Judge : Listen. (a voice comes from off stage) "Your house will be left desolate until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Mariana : What does this mean?

Theologian : It means that peace and wholeness come when Jesus Christ is embraced as Messiah.

Mariana : Peace and wholeness cannot come without belief in Christ?

Theologian : This is the basis of salvation.

Mariana : For what?

Prosecutor : For peace and human brotherhood. This puts an end to your estrangement.

Mariana : This would be the end of God's chosen people?

Theeologian : Or of a certain kind of superiority.

Mariana : And let the Jewish state vanish?

Theologian : No, but there would be peace - even with Arab neighbours.

Mariana : So, we would melt amongst the nations?

Theologian : War and persecution would melt away.

Mariana : (yawning like schehrazade) And what of force and weapons? Of science and technology?

Theologian : He who lives by the sword, shall die by the sword also.

Mariana : But what of God's great promise- a land from the River to the Euphrates.

Theologian : If the promise stood valid, shouldn't the curse be everlasting? The curse of many crimes in Palestine will fall upon you.
(Mariana excuses herself from the dock and moves toward the door in rage)

Then on a screen behind, films of air -raids appear. In scene 1 some Palestinian locations are attacked with bombs, scene 2 shows attacks on the children school of Bahr – el Bakar in Cairo; scene 3 shows attacks on the workers of the factory at Abu- Zaabel. Loud explosions are heard and fires and destruction spread everywhere. The dead and injured are numerous.

Mariana : (while these scenes unfold, she turns to the court) Sirs, if you lack the authority to forgive God's enemies, perhaps Caiaphas lacks the authority to call down God's curse on a people for all time.

Curtain

SCENE III

The same scene. We see the court staff and the accused. (At the back a large portrait of Jesus crucified)

Judge : Order! Mr. Prosecutor, please continue.

Prosecutor : (stands and points to the portrait).
Ladies and gentlemen, look here; this is the crime and remains our responsibility to identify the criminals. I now call Pontius Pilate?

Pilate : (approaching the judge)

Judge : Please take the witness chair and remember you are sworn to tell the truth.

Pilate : Thank you, Your Honor.

Prosecutor : You have said that Christ had a great popularity following him.

Pilate : Yes, Sir. That is why I ordered that sign to be placed above his head on the cross that read: "king of the Jews"

Prosecutor : Was the Jerusalem council of elders and priests part of that majority? Would they have agreed with what you had done?

Pilate : No, the council was not part of the popular majority. At the same time it did not express the interests of the majority.

Prosecutor : If the majority of people did not support the sentence of death by crucifixion, why

Pilate : didn't you object?

Pilate : The council included the elders, the priests, and the wealthy citizens who were the real powers dominating the common people. So, I tried to avoid interfering with internal affairs.

Prosecutor : How can we believe that? You were the governor of the colony. You represented the emperor of imperial Rome. Didn't you care about the validity of the council and its decisions in the country you were ruling?

Pilate : This was not our affair and does not fall in our jurisdiction. My authority was confined to the imperial interests. So we decided not to interfere with internal affairs.

Prosecutor : Why?

Pilate : Our policy made them feel that they enjoyed some freedom and some areas of authority. It left us freedom to concentrate on collecting taxes and securing strategically important military positions.

Prosecutor : You said also that Jesus Christ was a pious man, that you found no fault with him. Why did you accept to execute the sentence and crucify Him?

Pilate : I did it unwillingly and after long hesitation. That gave the Jews a chance to make plots against me.

Prosecutor : How?

Pilate : My opinion was that Christ was a holyman, He wanted to reform the spiritual and social life of the Jews and help them become more tolerant and charitable. So at first I did not pay great attention to their complaints

against Him. I thought they should have a chance to better understand his vocation, his intent. But they remained steadfastly against Him, and made several attempts to turn the emperor against me.

Prosecutor : How did you come to believe that Jesus was a holyman and had a message for reform?

Pilate : One of the important reasons was my wife's attitude towards Jesus. She became curious. She tried to learn as much as she could about him. She watched the crowds that gathered around him, and listened keenly to his teachings. She was particularly enthralled by the stories of his miracles and his healing powers. From time to time, she would tell me about him and about the things she heard and saw. Then, after a time she began to see this Jesus in happy dreams, and glorious visions. She came to believe in him.

Prosecutor : Do you remember certain things which impressed you?

Pilate : Yes, I do. When the Jews started complaining of Jesus, she told me that she saw him in a dream relieving pains and comforting brokenhearted people. She asked me never to listen to the slanders of the council and their rumours against Him.

Caiaphas : (interrupting) Pilate! You are a cunning fox, Pilate!. Do you think that you can deceive this court by turning truth upside down. You tell these fabricated stories to show that you loved Jesus, but wait.

Judge : Order! order! Caiaphas no more outbursts!
Do you understand?

Pilate : All I have said can be corroborated by my wife's testimony. She is here, ask her!

Caiaphas : (in a theatrical movement) Take care, sirs, this criminal is playing with words, he tries to distract you with fantasies.

Judge : Caiaphas! Sit down and do not interrupt these proceedings again?. We insist on order in this court.
(The Judge turns to the prosecutor)
Mr. prosecutor, please call Claudia, the wife of Pilate to the witness chair.
(Claudia advances to the judgement seat).

Judge : Please state your name.

Caudia : Claudia Claudius, wife of Pontius Pilate, who was the governor of Palestine.

Judge : During your time in the imperial province of Palestine. How did you occupy your time?

Claudia : I carried out the normal household duties of a governor's wife – entertaining and so forth; and I devoted much time to charitable work particularly for the care of orphans in Jerusalem and the surrounding villages.

Judge : What did your charitable work entail?

Claudia : Setting up orphanages and giving the little ones, lodging, food and better opportunity, education, when possible.

Judge : Was this large enterprise?

Claudia : No. There was just a few women of us who were inclined to perform public service of this kind.

Judge : Were those members wealthy?

Claudia : Most of the members were of the middle class who were moved by the miseries of the poor and infirm.

Judge : How did you get money for charity projects?

Claudia : Some of us pledged money, and I said we received donations as well.

Judge : Didn't you ask the rich members of the council for money?

Claudia : Actually there was very little response from them.

Judge : Didn't they approve of your activities?

Claudia : No, I think it shamed them- how outsiders were caring for the orphans. It was almost as if they thought we were blackmailing them.

Judge : Did you have other fields of activities?

Claudia : Yes; I did all I could to spread Roman culture. We arranged sporting events and theatre evenings. We took a special interest in the children giving them every possible advantage that Rome could offer.

Judge : Did you face any troubles?

Claudia : Oh, endless troubles, especially from the wives of the priests. They spread rumours about us. They accused us of sexual immorality and of leading the children astray under the guise of helping orphans.

Judge : Were they aggressive in their opposition?

Claudia : Well, not exactly. But they feared any notion of change, even if it were simple. They only saw me as part of the oppressive occupying culture and they seemed to think almost of every thing I did as a threat of some kind. They often said "What benefit do we

get from your teaching the orphans? Who will serve us if they have got enough learning and given the opportunities that Rome can offer? "

Judge : Thank you, now about Jesus did He have any influence on the members of your immediate circle?

Claudia : Oh, yes. His miracles had tremendous effect on their minds and feelings. He healed sick people. He opened the eyes of the blind. He raised people from the dead - Lazarus of Bethany was the most amazing of all.

Judge : What about his spiritual message? Were your friends and co-workers impressed by his teachings?

Claudia : Oh, yes. Your Honor, they welcomed it from the beginning. Some of them were originally Jews, but open-minded and eager for spiritual and social reform. They believed His message could destroy fanaticism and might even help build a new society where love, freedom and justice could prevail.

Judge : Oh, they were too optimistic? Or you are exaggerating?

Claudia : Yes, they were really optimistic. This is simply because those who were not Romans, I mean the former Jews in my circle - they were extremely bored of their old traditions. The new teachings filled them with a new spirit or how could you count for the success of Jesus if his message had not found such a response?

Judge : This is a good point. But what about your

Claudia : personal attitude?

Judge : Being the wife of the Roman governor of Palestine, I was suspicious and hesitant at the beginning, but as time passed I realized the noble intentions of the Messiah. Finally, I accepted him and adopted his religion. But I could not declare this for fear of the emperor.

Judge : Was your adoption of the new religion representing any threat to your status as Romans?

Claudia : Yes, as Romans we had to worship the Roman gods –and that meant, too, worshiping the emperor himself. So we dared not publically convert to Christianity.

Judge : Did you really believe in Jesus Christ?

Claudia : Yes, Your Honor, especially after I saw him in a dream. I saw that He was innocent and that his word was true.

Judge : And your husband?

Claudia : Well, as I said. My husband sympathized with Christ and inclined to appreciate his teachings for such a rotten society which had been based on exploitation and slavery.

Judge : How did you know that your husband had sympathized with Jesus?

Claudia : He used to listen eagerly to all what I said about his preachings and miracles. He told me that the priests and the elders were making plots against him, and promised that he would not hurt Jesus.

Judge : This means that you exerted a great influence on him. Didn't you?

Claudia : Yes, I asked him to join Jesus.

Judge : (joyfully) And his response?

Claudia : He actually thought about it, but the priests forced things. He did not have time to think it all through.

Judge : Thank you (looking at the prosecutor)
Have you any questions for the witness?

Prosecutor : Thank, Your Honor. (addressing Claudia)
Thank you madame for your testimony. I do have some questions I would like to ask. Did you know the wife of Caiaphas?

Claudia : Yes, I found her most unattractive. I believe she was jealous of the members of my circle of friends. She was the source of malignant rumours against us. The other wives of the priests took the same stance against us. I would say they followed her lead.

Prosecutor : How did those women look on Jesus? I assume they took the side of their own husbands and denounced any change whether religious or social.

Judge : Mr. Prosecutor. Please let the witness to draw her own conclusions.

Prosecutor : Very well. What was their real response to Christ's movement?

Claudia : They criticized his teachings and mocked his miracles. They often said things like "How could we expect any good thing to come out of Nazareth?"

Prosecutor : Is there anything you would like to add?

Claudia : No, Sir, nothing. I would like to thank the court for your courtesy, and patience.

Judge : (looking at Caiaphas)
Now, Sir. I will entertain any comments from you.

Caiaphas : Her words need no comment. She has explained clearly the activities of her group in our country.
We were sure that they were working to destroy the stability of our Jewish society. When she saw that Christ's teachings could achieve their own goal of destruction, she claimed faith in Him and even implored her husband to adopt this new religion.

Prosecutor : (turns to Pilate) Oh, sir, you have testified that the Jews were plotting against you and they sent complaints to the emperor. Is that correct?

Pilate : Yes, Sir. The council sent a messenger to the imperial court with a letter of complaint. They also spread rumors that Jesus Christ was urging the people not to pay the taxes..

Prosecutor : Are you sure of that?

Pilate : Of course, the emperor asked me about these things. I told him that Jesus Christ represented no threat at all. I said his message was religious not political. He wanted to teach people how to love each other and live in peace. He did not oppose the tax system and his words were clear: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"

Prosecutor : What was their reaction?

Pilate : The priests' rage and spite surged against me. They sent a second message to the emperor saying that I was acting with Christ to isolate Palestine and separate it from the empire. They used Jesus' great entry into Jerusalem on "Palm Sunday" as evidence.

Prosecutor : What happened on that occasion?

Pialte : On that day Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Multitudes received him with great joy along the way to the temple. The donkey moved slowly, and the crowds pressed from all sides crying, “Hosanna to the son of David! “, as they waved palm branches and spread spring flowers on his way to the city. The hosannas rang to the sky and fathers held their infants as high as possible to look upon the face of the Lord.

Prosecutor : Do you know the meaning of their cheers and songs?

Pilate : Yes, I learned that “Hosanna to the son of David”was an exclamation of glorification and praise to Jesus.

Prosecutor : How did the priests see things?

Pilate : They saw that this great procession was really a recognition of Jesus as the true Messiah, and thought if they did not do anything, they would lose control over the temple.

Prosecutor : Did he do anything to provoke them?

Pilate : Well, I suppose you could say so. when the procession reached the temple, he stopped the donkey and dismounted. He walked into the temple grounds. As soon as he saw the money changers and peogeon sellers at work, he dismissed them saying “My house shall be a house of prayer; but you have turned it into a den of robbers.”

Prosecutor : How did the priests exploit these events?

Pilate : They claimed that Jesus had announced himself “king of the Jews”who came to inherit the kingdom of David and Soloman.

They said the Palm Sunday procession was really a march designed to arouse the mob and prepare them for a revolution.

Prosecutor

: What happened?

Pilate

: Suddenly I found myself in a critical situation. Emperor Tiberius, instigated by my enemies in his court began to think of ways to get rid of me. I did not realize that but at last a friend came. "Open your eyes" He said "Open your ears."

Prosecutor

: How did you face this crisis?

Pilate

: When the priests captured Jesus Christ, they accused him of blasphemy against God and sentenced him to death on the cross. They handed him over to me. They wanted him to be crucified. I found myself in a dilemma and I thought of a way out.

Since Jesus was a Galilian and said that He should be judged by the Galilian authorities. So I sent him to Herod, the governor of Galilee, to try him. As a Jew Herod could handle the case in a propitious way because I had no intention to harm that holyman.

Prosecutor

: Why didn't you speak the truth clearly to the emperor?

Pilate

: The emperor had no interest for the truth. He wanted security in his province and things were moving quickly. How was I to contact the emperor? Any way, I thought that Herod had the power to set him free without being objected by any one.

Caiaphas

: He wanted from Herod to kill him.

Pilate

: Nonsense! I could have killed him at once if I had wanted, and satisfied all parties, you

and the emperor.

Caiaphas : You wanted peace with Herod at the expense of Jesus, But Herod was more cunning than you; He didn't give you the chance.

Pilate : Yes, Herod was a cunning man - and an assassin! Wasn't he who killed John the Baptist and offered his head to Salome's daughter on a silver plate?.

Caiaphas : Don't get out of the subject. At the beginning, you left Jesus in the hope that he might cause a crack in the society and shake its stability, but when you saw that he began to threaten your status, you sent him to be killed away by others so as to appear innocent before the people. But Herod put you in a critical position, didn't he?

Judge : Gentlemen, gentlemen. Enough. Order, please.

Prosecutor : Your Honor. I would like to call Herod to join us here before the court.

Judge : Herod? Ah, yes; there you. Please come forward.

Prosecutor : Sir, would you please give us your testimony about these matters?

Herod : Certainly. The mock Messiah was a Jew, charged with a religious crime in Jerusalem, to which was added a crime against the empire. How then could he be brought before me to be tried, and it was well known that our Jurisdiction was confined to Galilee?

Prosecutor : But you saw Jesus; and talked to him?

Herod : Yes, I did, but my opinion was that no one

could advance a good reason why he should be judged on this case. So I sent him back to Pilate.

Prosecutor : This means that you didn't discuss the case.

Herod : No, because Jesus had many followers in his home province of Galilee, Why should I alienate these people? Let the burden of his death rest on the high priest here in Jerusalem and on Pilate.

Prosecutor : (returning to Pilate) What happened when Herod returned Jesus to you?

Pilate : A large crowd of people led by Caiaphas and the priests marched towards the governor's seat in the Fortress Antonia, shouting and calling on me to crucify Jesus. I had to hand him unwillingly to the soldiers then I washed my hands before them. I was not responsible for the blood of that pious man. I could find no fault with him as I have said.

Prosecutor : So, does this mean that they, Caiaphas and the council, crucified Jesus?

Pilate : Yes, in a manner of speaking. Their officers arrested Him. Their crowd struck Him on the face, and mocked Him and spat on Him. I absolved myself of all blame. I washed my hands of Him and of them. In this way, I made it clear that it was they- the Jews-who bore the guilt of this horrible crime.

Prosecutor : Is there anything you would like to add?

Pilate : Just this. I am truly sorry for my helplessness. I wanted to take the right path and support Jesus. But I was a victim of powerful enemies in the imperial court, yet that was

not an excuse. I had to take a courageous stand in the face of Jesus' enemies even if I challenged the Jews and Tiberius.

Prosecutor : Thank you Pontius Pilate. This is enough, for now. (turning to the judge) Your Honor, I would now like to call a strange man – this man is Judas.

Judge : The court calls now as a witness the man called Judas Iscariot.

Prosecutor : (to Judas) Have you listened carefully to the witnesses and to all the testimony?

Judas : Yes, carefully.

Prosecutor : Please, tell the court...in detail...what you know about Jesus....and about the priests in Jerusalem.

Judas : It is a long story, sir?

Prosecutor : Say what you know.

Judas : When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the common people because the common folk believed he was a prophet. Then the chief priests and the elders assembled in the palace of the high priest, that is, Caiaphas-he is sitting over there (pointing at Caiaphas) There they plotted to arrest Jesus. In some way to have him killed - but not during the Passover feast, because they feared a riot among the people.

Prosecutor : How did you know this?

Judas : I was a disciple of Jesus, one of his closest followers. I followed him from place to place. I knew well their hatred- how they

despised us..Their threats terrified me. I was sure that they would kill Jesus, then they would arrest and torture all of us who followed him. In the end I knew they would kill us all, so in order to save myself - and others-, I offered to help them find Jesus and bring him in.

Prosecutor : What was their response to your offer of help?

Judas : The high priest –Caiaphas- had some questions.. When he was satisfied that I was really one of Jesus' closest disciples, he was thrilled. He said he was ready to give me money if I delivered Jesus to him secretly.

Prosecutor : How much?

Judas : We settled on thirty pieces of silver... only thirty.

Prosecutor : What was your plan?

Judas : I promised Caiaphas that I would return to Jesus and await an opportune time to hand Him over.

Prosecutor : Then what?

Judas : They gathered a number of men armed with clubs, led by the Temple guards. Even some of the elders, a few scribes, and some Pharisees followed me to where Jesus was. They might see nothing in dim light except fleeing figures in white clothes. When I looked at Jesus, he smiled - a little sadly-and opened his arms; I hurried to the Messiah and kissed him. The band then advanced and crowded around; They took him captive as if he were a bandit.

(this scene of Jesus' capture can be shown as pantomime on a cinema screen while Judas describing it)

Prosecutor : How do you justify your betrayal of Jesus Christ? He admitted that he loved you.

Judas : It was the religious leaders and their followers. They threatened me-all of us-and they used their influence and persuasion to entice me. I confessed my guilt. I could find no way to hide my sin, my shame.. So, I condemned myself to death.
(He walks to the gallows and climbs it, and hangs *himself*)

Prosecutor : Your Honor, I submit that we have presented irrefutable evidence, concrete proof that Caiaphas and the council plotted to kill Jesus Christ. We believe that the evidence shows that they are worthy of an eternal curse- a curse that is to be inherited in their offspring for generations yet to come.

Caiaphas : Your Honor. How can our children be responsible for our actions?
We were committed to defend ourselves and our society. Is there a civilized nation that says that?

Prosecutor : There is the divine justice!.. Didn't you say that "his blood on us and on our children"?

Caiaphas : This is not right, even if it really happened, I said it in a moment of fear and excitement. It was an emotional outburst! It wasn't a divine judgement. They were not God's words; they were mine. They were the words of the mob. Jesus forgave us on the cross when he

said: “Fogive them, father! They do not know what they are doing!”

Oh, We were responsible for the people, for their security. We took the necessary steps to do our duty.

Prosecutor : And you maintain that your actions were right?

Caiaphas : I do. The stability of the society was at stake, and it was good that one should die for the sake of the whole people.

Prosecutor : Thank you for this frankness.
(The members of the court form chorus addressing the audience to judge and condemn the slaughterers.)

The judge : But pilate! What about his strange standing? It calls for deep thinking. It is really a perplexing one? Is he truly a guilty man. or he is really innocent?

Prosecutor : No... Pilate is also criminal.
A source of tortures and sufferings
As all tyrants and oppressors
Like Bulphor and Johnson, and Eden or Moleh
He is like Nikson that's gone out of the way.
The staff of the court in one voice:
Oh, people! Good people of the earth!
Still everything at stake,
But now our task is done,
And your turn has come
Take it seriously with all faith,
struggle hard and long,
For peacemaking deserves every sacrifice.

The Narrator Appears:

Oh fellow friends
The Trial is not over...
Crimes persist;
And slaughters are everywhere.
In Palestine, the Martyr homeland
Of both Jews and Arabs.
For half a century and more,
people have lived in terror and fear
suffering humility and hunger;
Bloodshed!
The deserts and valleys
Are soaked in blood!
Slayers are never satisfied,
Their appetite for destruction and blood
Is never sated.
Innocent victims increase in number
And murderers on both sides,
Look at their faces -
Disfigured by hatred and grudge
The ground itself reminds us
That this crime is the subject matter of the
case,
The trial is going on to an end
But justice will come in the end.

Curtain

II-

A Crazy Girl
Named NAHED

To my beloved children

*Nabil, Mamdouh, Ayman
And their sister Irene*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel greatly indebted to my gifted and devoted editor, Suzan Agamy for her excellent suggestions and efforts in revising this text.

Nasim Mijalli

PREFACE

This play represents an attempt to portray a society which suffers from lack of individual freedom, justice and equality, and where looseness, corruption, and even fanaticism are dominant. The original text was published in 1988 in Egypt in Arabic, our native language ,and applauded by readers and men of the theatre who found no chance to put it on the stage because such a play, as it was Said, describes a world of anarchy void of law and justice. At the same time, it voices new ideas that can't be accepted by religious or political authorities. As a result, I thought of translating it, but this is not merely a translation of the Arabic origin, it is a fresh recreation of an interesting tragicomedy in English language.

Furthermore, critics who discussed it in literary journals and on radio had appreciated it. And I find it appropriate now to quote some of them in the next pages. This will help English readers or audience to understand it. It will give them a picture of another culture, which they want to know, and this in itself, is a good human purpose for mutual understanding and world peace.

Nasim Mijalli,
U.S.A. October 10, 2005

For further appreciation of this play I have chosen the following three comments made by critics.

- 1- The following is a report written by Mr. Hassan

Abdul-Salaam, a famous theatre director to the manager of the National Theatre in Egypt where he said:

I read this interesting play “The Crazy Girl” and felt great pleasure, because it revived a type of drama that we missed years ago namely, the Family Drama, which is mainly concerned with the social life of the family. Moreover, the play is full of good lessons, warnings, and revelations. It shows complete credibility in portraying, in digging and shaping, and in probing the hidden depths of the human being. The Crazy Girl is a good work written in a highly refined style.

This is my opinion of the work I like to produce on the stage, with my thanks.

(Hassan Abdul-Salaam.) 6/17/2002)

2- The next extract is part of a long essay by Jalal Al-Ashry, a remarkable critic of drama: (Al-Kahera – October 1988)

This play ascertains that madness is the spirit of this age, not the nature of its people. The author has managed, by means of his high dramatic sensitivity, to promote his realistic treatment, adding a new contribution to the dramatic art, a contribution that avoids naïve experimentation, as well as direct realism. Because realism here is charged with meaning and significance, where reality and symbol are welded together in one texture, and where the individualized character alludes to a bigger meaning without indulging for a moment, into the formality of mere symbolism or abstraction.

3- Introduction: by Nahed Naguib

In many parts of the world the theme of the unmarried or single woman has been the subject of comedy. The terms used to describe such a woman's social position, though outdated now, are telling. Such words as "spinster" and "old maid" have fallen out of favor. But it took a long time to change this concept. Egypt is no exception, for many years in the broad comedies of El Rihani and other private sector companies; the unmarried woman has been presented as a butt for cracks. The inimitable actress Mary Munib, who was one of Nahed Naguib El Rihani's closest collaborators, acted the most memorable of these roles. That was some fifty years ago or even more.

However the tradition continued, and in many a play the single woman was presented as an eccentric school teacher or headmistress, with a total disregard of the number of dedicated women who often were left as sole breadwinners for their families and sacrificed their chances of marriage in order to bring up their young brothers and sisters. This situation has been remedied on television and cinema with a more in-depth approach to the character of the unmarried woman. One case in point was Sekina Fouad's novel that was later made into a film and a television serial "The Night Fatma was Arrested" "It was a great hit. It was a woman seen by another woman, this time a writer.

The play we are reviewing here, The Crazy Girl, also tackles the same theme. This time, it is a man who is writing, Nasim Mijalli has as his lead role Nahed, who is supposed to be the crazy girl. However, as he points out, in the dialogue and in the

many recurring situations she has been wronged by her brothers. She sold her land to buy them a chemist's shop, indeed there are now two chemist's shops one owned by each brother, but she has nothing.

She lives on their bounty and has not finished high school. So she is not an eligible wife for suitors. In spite of that her brothers continue to reject the few suitors who come and ask for her hand on the grounds that their sister is crazy and would be unable to shoulder the responsibilities of married life. The character is familiar, the eccentric unmarried girl that is the situation. However, the writer probes deeper into her eccentricity and her obsessive desire to get married. She reminds her brothers that she has sold her land for them and it is with her money that they are both successful. The two brothers are portrayed as materialistic and insensitive to their sister's needs, just rushing her to doctors when the need arises, one person who offers sympathy, but little else because he is a mere employee, Hussein, who works in her brothers' chemist's shops.

There is a close bond of friendship between Hussein and Nahed, but he is unable to ask for her hand for the simple reason that he dares not. However, he offers advice, sympathy and writes poetry. This is some consolation for Nahed but as the writer will have it, she has an unswerving desire to get married. Accordingly, some friends of the family do a little matchmaking. The suitor they choose is Saied who is a secondary school painting teacher. He too is an eccentric and has tried to commit suicide.

After many events that take place in an intricate

plot, which we cannot relate in detail here, the brothers consent to Saied as a suitor. Nahed seems to be delighted, but that is not the solution, insists the playwright. The solution she should marry the man who offered her sympathy, understanding and friendship who concealed his love for her. This man is no other than Hussein who is employed by her brothers. The happy ending is that they get married.

The writer's choice of subject was interesting. He challenged one of the accepted ideas of society that is based on the premise that unmarried women are eccentric. Though he describes in detail the many situations in which Nahed has selflessly sacrificed for her brothers and her suffering of her brothers' insensitivity to her needs, yet in many parts he seems to accept the premise while challenging it. Hence he resolves the conflict in the play with a happy ending that is marriage, that is to say he both accepts and rejects the premise.

In other parts, however he shows insight and depth, when he insists on the single woman's right to go out as she pleases, her right to freedom and her right to choose her own husband. However his dialogue is smooth and witty, his character portrayal ranges between caricature such as in his depiction of Keriako Catonelli the dentist, through whom he tries to voice new ideas that are still strange to our society and his brief outline of the brothers to the more in – depth characterization of Hussien. His portrayal of Nahed oscillates between an outer and an inner point of view. Eccentric she is at times, but at other times he portrays her inner feelings that show that she is a woman who is grossly misunderstood by her society.

The play is part of the realistic theatre, whose first and most outstanding proponent was Numan Ashour. Soaked in realism, the play however conveys new ideas and as we have said before challenges accepted tenets. However it is still man's world as seen by a man. It would be churlish to criticize him for that.

Nahed Naguib, Critic and Translator

The Characters

Nahed : A beautiful girl of twenty eight.

Hamed : Elder brother of Nahed, works as a pharmacist.

Mahmoud : Her second brother, a graduate of commerce and owner of a pharmacy.

Samia : A handsome lady, Nahed's neighbor.

Fareed : Samia's husband, a teacher of English, about forty.

Hussein : Nahed's relative, a young man of twenty years working at the pharmacy.

Hosnia : Nahed's maid.

Keriako Catonelli : A Greek dentist, living in the upper floor in the same building.

Nawal : Nahed's neighbour. She is a pretty young lady, seemingly fat.

Saeid : A painting teacher at high school.

Dr. Suaad : Saeid's sister, a university professor about fifty.

Madeha : Saeid's elder sister working as a school headmistress.

Salah : A teacher of Athletics, about thirty.
El - Janaieny

Attif Boutros : A teacher of chemistry, the same age of Salah.

Fatma : A pretty young lady about thirty five, active and attractive, working at Keriako's house.

Zeinab : A dark reddish lady, charming and strongly built, works as Saied, s housekeeper.

Shadia : Zeinab's daughter, a pretty child of ten years.

Kamal : Shadia's younger brother.

Assaad el-Batrawi : A science teacher at the School of Agriculture.

Glossary

Abu Galambo : An imaginary figure with a clumsy face used as a butt for mockery and laughter.

Beck : A Turkish title of respect given to notable men.

Effendi : A title of respect to a government official.

Khwaja : A name by which a foreigner is called in Egypt and Arab Countries.

Om Shusha : An ugly figure of a woman that appears in

folk tales as a ghost to frighten people especially notorious children.

Sheikh	: A religious man responsible for marriage contracts according to Islamic law.
Ustaz	: A title of university professors and learned men.

Act One – SCENE I

A hall somewhat wide, the door is directly facing the spectators on the right where you can see the coming and the out going. To the left there is a sitting room open to the hall and to the dining room, and every thing is seen by spectators. The furniture is modern and shows the air of a sudden richness. Nahed appears, she is about twenty-eight years. She stepped to switch off the radio to stop the song of (Pay farewell to your love and forget it, by Abdul- Elmotaleb) then she picks a wedding picture, and turns it over.

Nahed : (suddenly in a loud voice) Hosnia. Najwa's picture! Who brought it here?

Hosnia : This is the wedding photo of your Brother, Hamed and his bride .

Nahed : I know this. But who brought it here?

Hosnia : Your brother Mahmoud brought it at night. He said he would put it in a frame and hang it in the sitting room.

Nahed : No, No, this will not happen. Listen girl, this picture must vanish.

Hosnia : But she is the wife of your brother Hamed, and he may be angry.

Nahed : Let them go to hell. Suffice it to hang her round his neck.

Hosnia : What shall I say to Mahmoud?.

Nahed : (in angry voice).. You know that Najwa is ugly and has been always jealous of me. She doesn't like to be with me in one place.

Hosnia : But she is married to your brother now, and will have to make friendship with you.

Nahed : Never. She feels that she has won and taunts me for being ill. I don't like to see her face in this house! She says I am crazy, and will not marry!

Hosnia : God saves you my lady. I wish you a better luck. I wish to close my eyes and open them to see you beside a smart bridegroom

Nahed : It's too late now. First Search for a place to hide this Ugly lady and her husband. (moves inside)

Hosnia : O.K. (She contemplates the picture) oh, your picture will be far better and lovely. I wish I could just open the door and find a happy suitor for you standing outside
(she wrapped the picture in a paper and put it on the cupboard.)
(Suddenly the door bell rings.. She hurries to open it, when a youngman of middle height rushes into the hall, with his long scattered hair. He speaks quickly).

Assaad : Where is your master.. Where is your mistress?

Hosnia : (she retreats back in fear) Oh, who are you?

Assaad : (stops in entrance and looks around)

Hosnia : Oh, my God!

Assaad : What is the matter with you girl? Do you see a ghost?

Hosnia : (in a loud voice) Who are you and what do

you want?

Assaad : I want an apartment. Do you understand? An apartment for marriage, and nothing more.

Hosnia : (confused) I am afraid, it... it seems that you have missed your destination.

Assaad : (shouting) What a day!

Hosnia : Why have you come here?

Assaad : Love has driven me. Do you know love..?

Hosnia : (looks in silence then smiles) Good God!

Assaad : I want an apartment, and a beautiful girl, like you.

Hosnia : (laughs) What do you want?

Assaad : Is this Mr. Mahmoud's house?

Hosnia : Yes, it is. What do you want?

Assaad : Why didn't you tell me that from the start?

Hosnia : Sorry sir, you have dropped suddenly and I was perplexed.

Assaad : I, also, am completely perplexed. Five years searching for an apartment. Every time I find the bride, I can't find the apartment (he approaches her). Believe me, I was engaged three times, each time to a pretty young lady but they flew away from my hand, one after the other, till my mind has gone away.

Hosnia : (amused with looking at him) and what then?

Assaad : I told my self to find the apartment first then to search for the bride.

Hosnia : (roughly) But this matter does not concern us.

Assaad : How, it is your concern. A bride needs an apartment to live in and the apartment is in

your new building.

Hosnia : I do not know any thing about this.

Assaad : Then call your master to talk with me.

Hosnia : (angrily) I'll call my lady Nahed to answer you.

Nahed : (coming from inside) Hosnia.

Assaad : (surprised) Oh. Good morning. This is a happy day. I am Assaad el-Batrawi, a science teacher at the high school.

Nahed : (smiling) Welcome!

Assaad : (looking at her in great admiration) Thanks. In fact I came here to rent an apartment, preparing for marriage.

Nahed : (pleased) Welcome Mr. Assaad. (hesitatingly) Are you engaged?

Assaad : Three times, ...I got engaged for a year or two ...then another man came and took the girl.!

Nahed : Have you found someone else?

Assaad : I feel lucky to- day. It seems that I may have found the apartment and the bride at one time (pointing at her)

Nahed : (pleased) Welcome Mr. Assaad

Assaad : I am tired of searching. We have a housing crisis, a severe crisis, but you can solve my problem now.

Nahed : All right. Don't worry.

Assaad : (Smiling) I 'll depend on you, would you help me?

Nahed : Yes, I 'll speak with my brother. (bewildered) Hosnia, (in a loud voice) Hosnia, hurry up, call Mahmoud.

(approaching him and speaking tenderly) Yes, Mr. Assaad?

Assaad : I am saying. I want to get married.

Nahed : To marry me?

Assaad : If that happened I would be the happiest man on earth.

Nahed : Did you even see me before?

Assaad : It is enough to see you now. To look at your smiling face every morning, means that I will never curse my luck.

Nahed : (shy and happy) Thank you ...Mr. Assaad

Assaad : Believe me. Three times I got engaged. But never have I felt happiness. But once I saw your face, my heart began to dance.

Nahed : (with great joy and absent mindedly) Thank you, thank you.

Assaad : (approaches her) Every thing in you is charming and makes my heartbeat faster. Believe me..

Nahed : I believe you but I want.

Assaad : You want to know me. My name is Assaad El – Batrawi, a science teacher at the high school.. I come from a very good family but my appearance, as you see, is not so good, does it please you?

Nahed : Yes, very much.

Assaad : My heart has opened to you.

Mahmoud : (comes quickly from inside in rage) Who is that man? What made you come here?? You should behave yourself.

Assaad : Sorry Mr.. Mahmoud.

Mahmoud : (pushes him out) Go away please. Houses must be respected, go away

Assaad : I have a good intention

Mahmoud : (still pushing him outside) Go away.

Nahed : Wait Mahmoud, (moves towards him) listen

to what he is saying.

Mahmoud : Forget about her. (Pushes him outside) we have no girls to marry.

Assaad : (his eyes is hung on Nahed as if calling for help)

Nahed : (looks at Assaad eagerly and takes hold of Mahmoud trying to stop him) What are you doing, Mahmoud? This is not right (then she shouts at him) Let him talk to you.

Mahmoud : (tries to get rid of her) Stop talking, don't be an idiot. You are crazy.

Assaad : (resists him, trying to remain in his place) This is not right Mahmoud. Give me a chance to explain my.....

Mahmoud : Go away, explain to your students.

Nahed : (getting out to hold Assaad, but Mahmoud pushes her inside and slams the door behind him) No. No. This is unbearable. Un reasonable. Why do you do that? You break my heart every time.

Mahmoud : (slaps her on her face) Stop talking, keep silent. Do you want to expose us to a new scandal

Nahed : No. No. This is too much. You are unjust. (then she bursts into tears and falls down broken)

Mahmoud : You idiot. Any one says a word, you believe him. And any one laughs with you, you think he will marry you. (Addressing the spectators) Even the doctor who treats her. Once he spoke tenderly to raise her spirits, she says, listen Mahmoud, the doctor loves me and wants to marry me. Enough of that, (in a sad tone) my dear sister awake. I want

no scandal, I will leave the town for your sake (he gets out and slaps the door behind him violently)

Nahed : (with grudge) O.k. Mahmoud. I will have my revenge from you (she continues weeping)

Hosnia : Enough my lady, don't break my heart.

Nahed : (recovers herself) I must make something to upset their life. I must avenge myself. I will burn the house and burn my self.

Hosnia : (crying) Oh, my lady, don't do that?

Nahed : Yes, Hosnia. What can I do to make them understand, or to feel as I do?

Hosnia : Think of something else.

Nahed : Take myself and run after the man? Hosnia: where would I find him if he has no residence?

Hosnia : He didn't say.

Nahed : Then what can I do to reach him? I won't wait any more. My brothers are stupid and insensible. I have to solve my problem.

Hosnia : He said that he is a teacher at the high school? Your neighbour Mr. Fareed is a teacher and he must know him. Madame Samia, his wife can help you. She loves you very much.

Nahed : Madame Samia is the only person who loves me in this building.

Hosnia : Ask her and Fareed if they can see the science teacher and speak to him.

Nahed : (laughs hysterically then stops suddenly) But my brothers will not agree, every man comes, they dismiss him and say that I am crazy. I will make them crazy

Hosnia : What are you going to do?

Nahed : Nothing but to disturb their lives and avenge myself. (She begins to turn the chairs up side down) I must turn this house into a heap of dust. Get me a gas can quickly.

Hosnia : (cries loudly) Oh, my God (runs to the door and opens it). Madame Samia. Hurry please. (She returns to hold Nahed trying to prevent her but Nahed pushes her strongly that she falls on the ground, then Nahed stumbles and falls also(at this moment Samia enters, she is affected by her sad mood and bends over her. She taps her face to calm her)

Samia : What happened, Nahed?

Nahed : Am I really mad Madame Samia?

Samia : (laughs). Who said that?

Nahed : Mahmoud dismissed a young man and told him that I am mad and unfit for marriage.

Samia : Does he come to ask your hand?

Nahed : He came asking for an apartment but as soon as he saw me, his eyes clung to me and he said that he wanted to marry me.

Hosnia : (after she had put the fallen chairs right) He is a teacher at the high school and Mr. Fareed must know him.

Samia : Don't worry, we will find him. Hundreds of men would like to marry a girl so beautiful like you.

Nahed : Me? (She shakes her head bitterly) You say that only because you love me.

Samia : Who said that (holds her hand, taps on cheeks and hair in admiration) All this beauty! Lips like roses; pink cheeks (stretches her hair) Oh, for that silky hair.

A Crazy Girl Named Nahed

All your features are wonderful and attractive.

Nahed : (shakes her head doubtfully) It is a matter of luck. Years are passing quickly and I may miss the right chance.!

Samia : (smiles in surprise)! A beautiful girl like you never says this. You are too young to express regret?

Nahed : Twenty-eight years, of which the larger part was penal servitude. I had to leave school at twelve to take care of my ill mother. Three years later she died. Then I moved with my brothers to the city of Mansoura where they attended high school, then we moved to Alexandria so they could study at the universiy. At last, they got their degress, but I got nothing.

Samia : You got nothing, how? Is it true? What about this big business? You must have a big share.

Nahed : Nothing for me. I am not sure of any thing. I wish I could have gotten a degree and a job..

Samia : Calm yourself down, why do we need degress? We work like cows all day long, sweeping, cooking, and washing. House wives are thousand times better, and young men prefer them.

Nahed : You know Hamed's wife, Najwa, does not know how to write her name. She is ugly and clumsy. He loves her and says he will never marry another one.
Didn't I tell you it is a matter of luck?

Samia : Tomorrow your luck will be better.

Nahed : I no longer believe in dreams. Don't you know madam Samia what happened yesterday? They took me to a notary's to sign a contract of sale for my land, the last of what I owned in the world.

Samia : (impressed and about to weep) Why should they do that?. Why do they want to take your land?

Nahed : They did not take it. They sold it.

Samia : How is that?. Two pharmacies and a big business and they sell your land why?

Nahed : This is a long story, madame. When they entered the university, they foolishly wasted a lot of money. They began to sell the land, one acre after another, and left just two acres only for my share. When they decided to open the pharmacy, they found they had no money and said they had to sell this last piece of land. Hamed had trouble at work and lost his job.. Mahmoud was unable to find a job with his degree in commerce. This happened eight years ago, the pharmacy grew bigger and they opened a second one, and also developed a large trade in grain, and fertilizers. They now have four trucks and two private cars. Only yesterday the buyer came to finalize the sales contract for the land and asked me to sign it.

Samia : What about your share in these pharmacies.

Nahed : I have nothing!. This is the point.

Samia : Oh my dear?

Nahed : I have nothing. I live as a servant. Brother Hamed has got married and Mahmoud will get married later on. I will remain a poor girl

who has nothing

: (suddenly she became nervous) No. This will not happen. I have my rights and must assert them.

Samia : Bravo. This is the right way, speak to them calmly; try to win them over without shouting or fighting. But now you have to get some rest and forget your sorrows. This is not good for your health or beauty.

Nahed : I can't help it. My brothers don't care about me. Never in their lives have they thought of my future. I feel lonely

Samia : Don't think too much of the past. Remind them of your rights. I believe they will not forget you. They seem to be kind. They hurry to doctors in Cairo and Alexandria every time you feel ill

Nahed : They are stupid and criminals. They brought about my illness and distress. They take me to psychiatrists after they had made me crazy.

Samia : Oh, Nahed, my dear, this is the will of God and they have nothing to do with your illness.

Nahed : Never (she weeps) Mahmoud hit me in the head until I lost my senses.

(affected and threw herself on the sofa)

Samia : (bends over her and tries to help her) Why? And when?

Nahed : Because of Love. Madame. Is Love a crime?

Samia : (taps her cheeks) Wipe your tears, and tell me about these interesting surprises (she laughs and tries to get her relaxed) Where

was that love? Who was that lucky man who captivated your heart?

Nahed : A wicked cowardly young man who deceived me. I loved him with all my heart. I used to stand for hours on the balcony until he looked out of the window and waved to me. Then one day I found myself going to see him.

Samia : What happened then?

Nahed : I knocked at the door. I thought he would be happy and hug me, but he was confused and began to stammer. His face grew pale.. He stood at the door and said."Why have you come here? " I looked at him in surprise. Don't you Love me?. You got used to look at me from the window and waved to me. He said, yes, yes, and got silent. Then I noticed a wedding ring on his right hand and grew mad. I slapped him on the face. I pulled him from his hair. Why have you deceived me? People heard the noise and gathered. Then Mahmoud came. He hit me until I lost my senses. I did not know what was going on around me (she fell on the sofa broken down).

Samia : Oh, my God, you have suffered too much! May God help you Nahed but you must help yourself.

Nahed : (loudly) How ... tell me?

Samia : Forgive your brother and forget what happened. You are holding a grudge against them. Remember that your brother was shocked at that moment. You know that people like to talk about scandals.

Nahed : My brothers are cold blooded. Madame, they have no feelings towards me and this makes me sad. When I fall ill they rush me to doctors but as soon as I get better, they pay no attention to me. Neither one of them talked kindly with me. They do not understand that I am a lonely girl who is in need of friendship and love. My elder brother Hamed is kind. He never strikes me, but he never opens his heart to me.. Why doesn't he sympathize with me?. Am I not like that trivial girl Najwa whom he has married?

Samia : You are greatly injured.. Try to forget and look for tomorrow. But, try to save some money. You can save a lot, and make a fortune. Pay attention to your health and beauty, and a good man will come very soon.

Nahed : Is it reasonable, madame. Who would want to marry me? Everyone knows that I am ill; my brothers say I am mad.

Samia : (laughs) I wish they had a fraction of your wisdom. You are sensitive and think too much of the past. Forgive and forget

Nahed : They dismiss every young man that asks for me. They want me to stay like this.

Samia : I don't think so. Perhaps those men were not fit, or were farmers.

(Nahed was shocked and got pale, Samia goes out and shut the door behind her, then the door bell rings and Hosnia hurries to open it, a young man in his twentieth, enters with books in his hand. He puts them on a short fence that separates the hall from the

Hussein : dining room.

Nahed : (hesitating) Good morning, Nahed.

Nahed : (her face shines with a smile). Hussein. Come in.

(She shakes hand with him and invite him to sit down) stay for a while.

Hussein : Sorry, I got up late, and have no time to waste. I must go quickly to open the pharmacy. If Mahmoud knew that I was late, he would be very angry with me.

Nahed : Don't. Worry. Mahmoud has no time for such things. He is traveling here and there, wasting time and money, as he likes.

Hussein : How.? Hasn't he returned from Alexandria?

Nahed : He returned last night and left again in the morning.

Hussein : Why did he travel again?

Nahed : Why? You should tell me. What is he doing in Alexandria.?

Hussein : He is a businessman who does many things and buys medicines for the pharmacy.

Nahed : (in a loud voice) O Hussien, do you want to fool me (she holds his arm with one hand and put the other on his shoulder) I am your friend also, and want you to speak frankly with me. He is travelling more than usual?

Hussein : (confused, then laughs) What can I say!

Nahed : The truth. You went with him to Alexandria several times.

Hussein : Yes. I did.

Nahed : Once you spent a week there.

Hussein : Oh. You remember?

Nahed : I don't forget anything (she smiles), tell me

how you spent the time there? With whom?
Women or men?

Hussein : Men of course.

Nahed : (she strikes him on his chest lightly) You boy, don't hide anything? Did he go to Alexandria to spend his time with men? Tell me who you spend your evenings with.

Hussein : (looks around himself) No. No. I don't know what you mean.

Nahed : Why? Aren't you a man and spent time with him in these evenings?

Hussein : Of course I am a man, But penniless.

Nahed : (laughs with a loud voice) Does this make a difference?

Hussein : A big difference indeed. Poverty prevents peace of mind and rest of body.

Nahed : But Mahmoud Beck was there and wastes money generously.

Hussein : You speak the truth, but I am just a follower who carries out his instructions, but doesn't share in his pleasures.

Nahed : Why not? (with a thoughtful look) Are you in love, Hussein?

Hussein : Who would accept to love me? And for what?.

Nahed : Poor, Hussein, you carry a heavy burden like me.

Hussein : Where am I from you? The distance is too far. I am just a workman. Hussein, open the pharmacy, Hussein, go to the store, Hussein, sell smuggled goods on the black market. They make thousands of dollars, but if the police caught me, I would spend my life in prison.

Nahed : (with great sympathy) You are really poor, why do you put yourself in this position? Why don't you take your share in this business?

Hussein : They give me nothing and take everything.

Nahed : No, Hussein, Take care of yourself and get off that dangerous path. You are only a workman in the pharmacy. You must not work in smuggled goods.

Hussein : (Hosnia enters with tea and milk for Hussein)

Nahed : Hosnia, bring cake for Hussein (she holds the glass of milk and hands it to him)

Hussein : (looks at Nahed in surprise) But what has happened to-day? You are too generous with me.

Nahed : (offers him a piece of cake) Because like me, you are poor and lonely.

Hussein : Yes, I am poor and lonely. (swallows the piece of cake and drinks some tea) I must go now.

Nahed : Why did you get up late?

Hussein : (stretches his hand to take the books) I stayed up too late, and didn't go to sleep until dawn.

Nahed : (laughs and strikes him) Oh, you were awake till dawn, with whom?

Hussein : (shakes the books) With these books. I am studying for my diploma. only three months until the exam.

Nahed : Really, Hussein? You didn't say that before.

Hussein : I shouldn't say anything. If your brothers heard that, they would dismiss me at once.

A Crazy Girl Named Nahed

Nahed : Are you so afraid of them?

Hussein : Of course, they care about themselves only.

Nahed : (approaching him) You are right, Hussein? My brothers are too selfish, they don't think of anyone else.

Hussein : So we should think of ourselves.

Nahed : Bravo. Go on and don't worry. I will help you.

Hussien : Thank you. They have never said any good word like that to me.

Nahed : They never worry about anyone.

Hussein : But how could you help me? Would you give me English lessons? This is my problem now.

Nahed : I will ask Mr. Fareed to give you a private lesson.

Hussein : for nothing?

Nahed : No, I will pay him.

Hussein : (joyfully) God bless you.. At last, I have a person to support me.

Nahed : (looks at him in sympathy and joy) but I want you to open your eyes.

Hussein : Thank you very much. Goodbye (he starts to go out when she holds his shoulders and looks at him in love)

Nahed : Do you understand what I want?

Hussein : Of course, I do.

Nahed : (approaches him and taps on his shoulder) I will be waiting for you at dinner.

Hussein : I will see.

Nahed : I will not eat till you come.

Hussein : (looks in love and shakes his head, then he draws his hand from hers quietly). Bye. Bye.

Nahed : Bye. (She walks to see him off then shuts the door behind him)

I also have to think of my future. I must make a plan with Hussein and co-operate with him. I am at a loss, helpless and he is also.. We can form the team of helpless people; I must know everything about my brothers' business and know my share. Why should I wait for another person to think for me. Bravo Samia, Your talk has opened my eyes. I must save part of the household expenses and make a fortune (stops moving) Thus to start O.K (she suddenly laughs then switches on the radio, and begins dancing on music.. suddenly the door bell rings, she stops and calls) open the door Hosnia, (Nawal enters, a young lady somewhat fat, carrying a child on her hand)

Nawal : Good morning, Nahed.

Nahed : (does not answer, but looks at her in a strange way. Nawal moves across the hall in surprise and fear. Nahed turns round her and approaches her with a wide gaze)

Nawal : What happened? Why are you looking at me that way?

Nahed : (continues turning round her and suddenly laughs hysterically then stops.)

Nawal : Oh, my God. The way you laugh at me. You make my blood run cold (Nahed continues laughing) You frighten me. Are you joking like that?

Nahed : (becomes calm) Listen, Nawal. Do you sleep well at night?

Nawal : Yes, I usually sleep well; As soon as I put

my head on the pillow I fall asleep.

Nahed : Who is sitting with your husband now?

Nawal : My mother.

Nahed : Do you love him?

Nawal : Very much.

Nahed : Does he love you?

Nawal : (Laughs) You seem very funny today and want to amuse yourself at my expense.

Nahed : Instead of leaving you to laugh at me.

Nawal : Whom do you mean?

Nahed : You and your neighbours

Nawal : Is it so, Nahed. We feel sorry for you. We wish to see you happy and well.

Nahed : (Laughs) How do you see me now?

Nawal : (puzzled) Wonderful. But your jokes frighten me.

Nahed : (look at her in the same way and approaches her, Nawal retreats and both turn round each other) You did not tell me, does your husband love you?

Nawal : He loves me very much.

Nahed : Is he at home now?

Nawal : Ah. Ah, Yes, he is.

Nahed : With whom is he sitting now, with your mother?

Nawal : Yes, But what do you mean?

Nahed : Is it not better for you to be with him now.

Nawal : (moves to the door, opens it and runs out quickly, then she stops at the door. In a loud voice) truly you are crazy. (She shuts the door behind herself)

Nahed : Isn't this a strange thing? She says, she sleeps and enjoys sleeping all night, while I stay awake all night in bed (thinks for a time

and weeps). She sleeps all the night. What makes one like her sleep well. Is there any secret in marriage that gives relaxation and deep sleep. Isn't it so? She knows that her husband loves another woman, but she sleeps as soon as she lays her head on the pillow. She sleeps and doesn't worry about any thing. I wonder, even the woman whose husband got married to another woman and loves her half, half, sleeps deeply. Even the wife who knows that her husband is in love with another woman, sleeps. All of them find a way to sleep except me. I took pills and medicines, and all the folk prescriptions but in vain.. I read magazines and stories for long hours. I have also read tons of books in literature and politics and got a lot of knowledge but not sleep. Nothing could induce sleep to my eyes. Then marriage must be the solution.O Hosnia.

Hosnia : (comes to the hall) Yes. My lady.

Nahed : (looks at Hosnia) Why haven't I gotten married? Am I ugly, fearful, or dull (then she looks in the mirror)

Hosnia : Who would say such a thing, your face is shinning like a full moon.

Nahed : No one understands me except you, Hosnia. You are the only person who loves me truly. Without you at my side, I might have killed myself.

Hosnia : (laughs. runs towards her and hugs her) peace be upon you my love, you are the kindest one in the world.

Nahed : Am I beautiful, Hosnia? Is this true?

Hosnia : Of course, they say your beauty is rare.

Nahed : What do people say about me?

Hosnia : They say there is no other girl as beautiful. Your face is like the moon and your hair dark as night (she sucks her lips) and yet she has no luck.

Nahed : What can I do with luck? What do I need to have good luck? A degree..., money.. Don't they say that I am crazy?

Hosnia : No, my lady. Would anyone dare say that in front of me?

Nahed : That is what my brothers say, and also Naja. I must get revenge on them all. They must stop talking like that, but how can I make that? Must I go to a man and ask him to marry me?. A man can go and asks any girl to marry him, but the girl cannot say that she wants to marry this man or that. Isn't that a double standard? Aren't we equal? Oh. but I behaved like that once and had my share of punishment. No. not that way again. I must oblige them to run behind me but how?. This is the problem. Hosnia. How Hosnia?

Hosnia : (looks at her with sympathy) I don't know. Your beauty and your kind heart!

Nahed : (in a loud voice) You said the truth, Hosnia (Shakes her head in distress). My kind heart led me to obey them blindly and neglect myself. Kindness has no place in our society.

Hosnia : What will you do?

Nahed : To do what has never been done. To make them see that I am wiser than them. I am faithful and clean. Sacrificed my time and

efforts, suffered too much, served my mother and brothers., but they don't forgive me, because once I fell in love with a man, as if love were something shameful. Hidden crime is accepted and forgiven. But frank love is a crime. Frankness is madness. Illness is shameful and catastrophic

Hosnia : Don't worry, my lady. God will never leave you. He will send you a great young man who is worthy of you.

Nahed : Thank God. The man is available now. But how can I talk to him. I must think so as not to make the same mistake.

Hosnia : Think. and plan.

Nahed : How?

Hosnia : Ask madame Samia to help you.

Nahed : That is right Hosnia. Call madame Samia, Time is wasting.? Why shouldn't I go directly to my goal? (holds her hair and looks at the mirror, then she smiles) Alas! It seems that equality and justice are merely dreams. We have nothing to do except struggling to achieve our goals as they say on the radio. Yes, struggle to achieve our goals. But can I struggle alone?. I haven't a mother or a sister, Oh, Good God (silence). Madame Samia will be at my side, and Hussein must be involved in the plan and work with me. That is all.. (She lies on the sofa and holds a magazine to read)

Samia : (Hosnia opens the door and Samia enters)
Hi. Nahed

Nahed : Haven't you a farmer to marry me?

Samia : (Laughs but puzzled) Sorry, Nahed. I

Nahed didn't intend to make you angry. When I said farmers. I meant that they might not have been suitable for you, and so your brothers rejected them.

Nahed : I don't care. I intend to marry, and need a husband. He may be a farmer, or a teacher. My father and grandfather were farmers.

Samia : You can marry my brother Gergis. (She laughs)

Nahed : Please madame, I am serious; I only want a friendly man, worthy of love.

Samia : Oh, my dear. You deserve the best of men (taps over her shoulder) Leave this matter to me but don't get angry..

Nahed : Forgive me, madame. You are here my dearest friend.

Samia : Excuse me; I have to leave right now. The food is on the stove. (goes out) bye, bye.

Nahed : Good – bye, (shut the door behind Samia then returns to the front of the stage). This is the first step. Samia is a teacher. Her husband is a teacher. They will see the science teacher and bring him here again. Good luck may strike, and the hook catches a shark, because he needs an apartment and this is not available here except in our new building. So he will come again. But that is not enough? My brothers can dismiss him as usual. They will say that I am ill and not ready for marriage. I must play with their minds and disturb them until they recognize my right to choose and decide.

Black out

SCENE II

Fareed's apartment is like that of Nahed. Fareed and his wife Samia are sitting round a table and in front of them two cups of tea.

Samia : That is Nahed's story. What do you think?

Fareed : Nahed really needs to get married.. One, like her, what to do. To wait for what or for whom? If you were in her place, what would you do?

Samia : She should marry. She is mature and full of life. If she were Christian I would marry her to my brother Girgis.

Fareed : Nahed needs a man like Saied to marry her. He can solve her problem.

Samia : How?

Fareed : (Laughs) Sometimes he behaves in a strange way and seems to be mad.

Samia : (in a serious dialect) But Nahed is not mad.

Fareed : Saied is not mad either, but he is an eccentric person.
(He laughs as if he remembered something) once he tried to commit suicide. Unless we had stopped him, he would have thrown himself out of the window.

Samia : Would that solve her problem or complicate it?

Fareed : Now, he has recovered and become normal, because this suicide attempt resulted in an emotional upheaval that dispelled all whims from his mind. His only complex now, is to find a girl who will marry him.

Samia : You have confused me. Why did he try to commit suicide and how did it cure him?

Fareed : (Laughs) I will explain but pay close attention.
(He stands up and moves round)
It was some time ago, I returned home early in the evening to see an odd spectacle; Half of Saied's body was protruding from the window.
The upper part of his body was leaning out of the window. Salah and Zeinab were pulling him from the back. Zeinab was holding his legs and lying on the ground while Salah was holding his waist firmly and trying to take hold of his hands to pull him back in.
(flash back. a hall appears in front of us extending right and left, its furniture is simple. some chairs and a small table on the left. a carpet on the floor, there is a window and Saied bending onto the street and only the lower part of his body is seen. He was trying to throw himself into the street, and a man and a woman holding him from the back. They were Salah and Zeinab)

Fareed : (surprised at this scene, he cries loudly)
Oh, what are you doing?

Saied : (shocked by that surprise he looked behind with gazing eyes, then he fell to the ground broken down)

Fareed : What is this? I thought you were joking!

Zeinab : (with weeping eyes and affected voice) No, this must not happen. God forbids it. He will kill himself for nothing.

Salah : Let him rest for awhile, Go Zeinab and fetch him a cup of tea.

Saied : (recovers his breath and refuses to drink at first, but Zeinab urges him, and offers him the cup several times till he holds it)

Fareed : Make some coffee, Zeinab (offers Saied a cigarette) Take it and clear your head.

Salah : He was about to kill himself.

Saied : (angrily) I want to have a long vacation from this life.

Salah : This is beyond your reach. (Laughs) You want to have rest and leave us in trouble.

Saied : You are afraid that you might get into trouble!

Salah : Of course. They may consider you an important person; and accuse us of killing you.

Fareed : But you were drawing a portrait (looks round himself) where is that miserable picture? (Suddenly his eyes fell on it, above Saied's head) Oh. Here it is.

Saied : (shakes his head) Yes. (It is hung over his head to the right; they all contemplate it in great surprise. It is a big colored portrait; its background is red. In the center we see a frightened child and round him three women with scattered hair. Their eyes were greedily opened, sparkling with red flames, like arrows pointed towards the child. Their mouths were opened and their teeth were getting out in a fearful shape)

Fareed : (contemplates the picture with great interest then turns to Saied) But this is a strange picture! Are these women or beasts?

Salah : (in sarcastic dialect) these are the goddess of revenge and her sisters (to Saied) they are his future wives who appear in his nightmares.

Zeinab : Mr. Saied marries those ugly women?

Salah : That is why he was throwing himself from the window? When his eyes fell on them, his mind flew away. He decided to cut short his life trip.

Fareed : There was really something that startled him, and drove him suddenly towards the window.

Salah : Saied, speak please. Explain the secret of your gloomy miserable art.

Fareed : Tell me, Saied, how did this idea come to you?

Saied : (sitting right) It was the idea of an old story which I wrote when I was a boy in the first year of high school. I called it “ Grudge “.The terrified child is a boy who is surrounded by three older sisters.

Fareed : Three sisters, this is a great gift. He would be lucky.

Zeinab : He would be their pet - day and night.

Saied : (excitedly) No. There isn't love. But resentment.

Salah : (in a sarcastic tone) God grants you wisdom. Your knowledge seems to be wide and deep. Tell us more of your ghostly visions. Why would they feel resentment towards him, you unlucky miserable artist!

Saied : (in a severe, loud voice) No. They resent him just because he is a boy who has the freedom to go out and come in at any time.

Fareed : (shakes his head, then talks quietly) I want you to take off these dark glasses and never wear them again. They show you disturbing dreams.

Saied : This is not a dream; it is the actual situation in which I found myself.

Fareed : (sarcastically) Never mind. This happens in nightmares only.

Salah : And in the family of dinasaur (stretches his hand to spin Saied's moustache) get up and wash your face in order to go out with us.

Saied : I am very tired. I want to rest.

Fareed : It's better to go with us to the club. I want a chance to beat you at chess to help you get out of this nightmare.

Saied : No. I 'll take a shower and get some sleep (he hurries to the bathroom)

Fareed : Zeinab don't leave him until we return.

Salah : Let us stay and have some tea. He may change his mind.

Fareed : Perhaps it's better to stay with him.

Saied : (returns from the bathroom. He seems relaxed and calm, sits on the ground and leans over a cushion leaning against the wall. Above him on the wall, we see the portrait) Don't wait. I will go to bed.

Zeinab : (enters carrying a tray with three cups of tea)

Puts the tray in front of them., takes a cup on a small plate and offers it to Saied and sits near him) shall I bring you supper?

Saied : No. I have no appetite.

Zeinab : (in a tender tone of blame) Why do you think this way, Mr Saied? How do you forget us?

Saied : I got tired of my sisters, and of my hypocrite fellows at school,

Zeinab : Forget them all and live for your art.

Saied : I can't (angrily) I can't forget their hatred. I can't.

Zeinab : Don' let it bother you. Is it not enough that we love you?

Saied : (looks at her, then smiles but does not talk)

Salah : Don't you hear these sweet words of love? Say something in return or you are dumb?

Fareed : Don't blame him Salah, he is wearing dark glasses.

Salah : Listen, Zeinab. Saied, s life is in your hands.

Zeinab : Oh, God!. What can I do with my hands?

Fareed : Don't worry, Zeinab. Salah is joking.

Salah : No, I am not joking but speaking seriously. You could get him through this crises if you really loved him.

Zeinab : (Laughs and looks shyly) What do you want me to do?

Salah : To marry him.

Zeinab : (perplexed for a time then she burst laughing) I am his servant.

Fareed : You are an honorable woman, Zeinab. You are worthy of a good man.

Zeinab : (collects the empty cups and takes the tray and moves toward the kitchen)

Salah : (stands on her way) Wait. Don't run away.

Fareed : It's Saied's turn to speak.

Saied : (Smiles, but does not talk)

Salah : I think Saied has no objection. What can he say about this wonderful chance?

Zeinab : Mr.Saied is a great man who deserves a rich young lady with a good job.

Fareed : Saied does not like working women.

Salah : He is not as important as you say. Don't let his hanging moustache deceive you.

Zeinab : Saied is our great master here.
(She hurries to take the tray to the kitchen and returns)
(Fareed and Salah laugh)

Salah : This means that you are fond of him,

Zeinab : (Laughing) Something like that.

Fareed : She wants Saied to speak first (Saied does not talk)

Salah : What will he say? Where can he find an honest wife like Zeinab..

Fareed : Saied is an artist and does not care about social classes.

Zeinab : Oh People. Enough joking. There is a big distance between us.

Salah : He will not find another woman that loves him as you do..

Zeinab : But he must marry an educated woman who can understand him and share his thoughts.

Salah : But he does not want educated women

Fareed : I have never heard Salah speak so reasonably like this before.

Saied : (smiling but does not speak)

Salah : Zeinab should agree.. She is hesitating because she thinks of her children (to Zeinab)
But Saied loves them and plays very often

with them.

Fareed : Perhaps, she is waiting to return to her ex-husband.

Salah : Impossible because he divorced her three times. According to the Islamic law, she has to marry another man before returning to her first husband.

Saied : (laughs) Do You want to make me a bridge back to her first husband? How cunning you are!.

Salah If you succeeded in keeping her love she would be yours forever, if not, she could return to her husband. In any case your problems will be solved.

Fareed : Which one of them would have the right to divorce: Zeinab or Saeid?

Salah : Of course Zeinab.

Zeinab : Which law says that?

Salah : The law of justice; you must be able to decide for the sake of your children.

Fareed : Let us hear Saied's opinion.

Saied : It doesn't make a difference. The decision has never been in my hand. Three times I got engaged, and set the wedding date. Then my sisters came and spoiled every thing at the last moment.

Fareed : Why do you allow them to interfere in your personal affairs?

Saied : They go secretly to my fiancée and speak rudely with her family and ruin every thing.

Zeinab : How is that?

Salah : (laughs loudly) Don't be worried about Zeinab, she can defeat them with the fatal blow.

Fareed : Zeinab is a well built and strong woman. She can stop them with no problem.

Salah What a shame! We are struggling for the freedom of women and you are wasting the freedom of men. Wake up Saied and liberate yourself before you bring shame on all men.

Fareed A ridiculous situation! I think Zeinab can speak first and announce her decision. She must settle this dispute.

Zeinab : Enough please, no more pressure on Saeid.

Salah : O.K. we will leave you to settle it between yourselves.

Zeinab : Oh, nothing could be done without your help.

Fareed : I think our part is finished now; and we shall leave this apartment for you starting from tomorrow.

Zeinab : How. This is just a merry tale for amusement.

Salah : You must have the chance to discuss all the details with this unexpected bridegroom. We are ready to bring the Sheikh to write the contract.

Fareed : Don't waste time, Saied. Clear the way before your sisters come and spoil this agreement.

Salah : That is right. We are leaving (Fareed moves to the door). Wait for a short time (talks to Saied and Zeinab) Shake hands, advance, Zeinab, offer your hand (she offers her hand) Saied holds her hand, get up Saied, don't bring shame on men. (Zeinab holds his right hand and Salah holds Saied's left hand and pulls him up strongly. (To

Saied) get up and sit in the chair, help yourself, man. (Saied leaves his hand relaxed without trying to stand, and Salah urges Zeinab to hold his both hands and pulls him strongly to stand on his feet. Here Salah draws his hand suddenly, then Saied falls to his back and Zeinab falls upon him. Both were confused. Salah and Fareed burst out laughing. As Saied and Zeinab try to stand up some faults happen and they fall again. Thus excitement and laughter get higher. At last Saied controls himself, stands up first and quickly holds Zeinab's hand firmly. She tries to jump up but loses her balance and stumbles on his chest, unconsciously he tries to help her, and thus he hugs her. Here Salah and Fareed laugh and clap hands loudly).

Salah : You are not alone here.
Fareed : It seems that he is enjoying the game.
Salah : (to Saied) Enough you old teenager
Zeinab : (pretends to be angry) How is that Mr. Salah?
Salah : Long Live and see more.
Fareed : Salah, we have no place here, let us go.
Salah : Let' s go to the club and there we can ask for another apartment.
Fareed : Bye-Bye.
(They go out and the scene changes. Lamps are lit again in Fareed's apartment)
Samia : Have you gone mad? You want him to marry a housekeeper?
Fareed : Isn't it better than committing suicide. She saved his life.
Samia : Did they get married?

Fareed : We are not sure, The next day we saw him happy and in a better mood. We decided to wait for them to talk first, but suddenly Saied's older sister dropped in and insisted on taking him at once to face a new catastrophe that befell their honourable family

Samia : What happened?

Fareed : Their youngest sister, the last branch of the family, eloped from the house of ghosts to marry a young boy whom she loved. His sisters wanted him to capture her and bring her home again.

Samia : What about Zeinab's marriage?

Fareed : They did not mention it again, but certainly he was greatly changed. He became joyful. I think he has escaped from his loneliness.
(Here, the door bell rings and Fareed hurries to open it)

Hamed Welcome doctor Hamed

Fareed : (a man in his fortieth, with gloomy face, his eyes were red and full of tears) I ... I am sorry to come

Hamed : Welcome doctor Hamed.

Samia : Nahed, of course.

Hamed : (in grief) Does she want me for anything?

Samia : No.... when I came to have dinner, I found her lying very sad and unwilling to talk.

Hamed : Did she tell you anything about her sadness?

Samia : She loves you very much. We know that you love her.

Hamed : I love her as my sister. But I don't go to her unless she sends for me.

Hamed : We know your feelings towards her and

appreciate your position. But please, madame, don't speak about marriage with her.

Samia : She called me and brought up the subject with me.

Fareed : Why doctor, do you ignore her feelings like that? You are highly educated and rich. Why don't you think of her marriage and her comfort?

Hamed : She is not fit for marriage. She is ill and her nerves are worn. How could she live alone with a strange man?

Fareed : Perhaps marriage could solve her problem.

Hamed : And if not, it will be more complicated. She may have a child or two and this will be a crisis

Samia : God's mercy. Why is all that pessimism.

Hamed : No, Madame. Marriage is not a game.

Samia : I see that marriage is the solution. Your sister's mind is good, but she feels injured and wants to feel secure.

Hamed : Please. We want her to forget this subject.

Samia : All right. She is your sister and I wish to help.

Hamed : (stands to leave) Thank you Mr. Fareed. Thank you madame Samia.

Fareed : Bye, Bye (goes out)

Black out

SCENE III

(Lights are lit in Nahed, s apartment) Najwa, the wife of Hamed is preparing dinner and setting the table. Nahed is sitting restlessly and her eyes on the door. She stands suddenly and jumps quickly to the door where she stands behind it overhearing Hamed,s words at Fareed's door. The bell rings. Hosnia opens and Hamed enters)

Hamed : Is dinner ready, Najwa?
Najwa : Yes, it's ready, come in (setting plates and dishes on the table)
Hamed : (Walks towards Nahed) Nahed, come on, have dinner with us.
Nahed : Thank you. Enjoy dinner with your wife, and leave me to myself.
Hamed : Why? Why do you say this?
Nahed : (cries suddenly) Enough of these cunning words. (turning round and rises) Where have you been? What did you say to Fareed? Why? You went to tell Samia not to come here?
Hamed : (calmly) No. I didn't say that.
Nahed : This is all what you can do for me? You told Samia not to mention anything about marriage to me because I am mad and do not understand marriage. Is marriage a branch of philosophy? Am I not like your antique wife

whom you drag behind you like a goat?

Najwa : (surprised as she puts the plates on the table, stops, hesitates for a moment). Oh, Nahed, God forgive you.

Nahed : God will never forgive you. You stand in my way. Why don't you want me to get married? Am I crippled or maimed?

Najwa : I have nothing to do with you. Talk to your brothers or do you just want to take your madness out on me?

Nahed : (angrily and in a loud voice) Then you see I am mad. Do listen to your wife, doctor. (Silent for a moment, takes her breath) Yes, surely, I am mad, and now I will show you real madness.

Najwa : Of course. Who will accept to marry you?

Nahed : You will see. I will marry in spite of your objections.

Najwa : When you find a man to accept you.

Hamed : Stop talking, Najwa.

Nahed : Don't you look at your face in the mirror?

Najwa : (stood, trembling with anger) I deserve this bad treatment because I have come here.

Hamed : (looks towards Nahed) Don't say that, sister. Najwa is your guest.

Nahed : (Laughs hysterically) O God, welcome guests. Najwa is not a guest, but a serpent that found a fool like you to give her value.

Najwa : (teases her by movements of her hand from behind Hamed's back) What can I do for you? Nobody wants to come near you.

Nahed : (becomes more furious and tries to attack Najwa) Wait till I show you true madness. (Holds Najwa from her hair and drops her

down but she quickly rises and escapes away, Hamed holds Nahed, but she caught a plate and threw it at Najwa. Fortunately, it missed her and hit the wall and broke. Afterwards she started to turn the plates upside down on the table)

Hamed : Crazy Nahed. You have ruined dinner. You don't want us to eat here.

Nahed : (cries loudly) I don't want you. I don't want to see this criminal woman. I can't bear her face here (she bursts out weeping and falls down on the ground. Hamed gets excited, sits on the sofa and weeps. Najwa approaches him, scared and weeping)

Hosnia : Shall I call madame Samia?

Hamed : Call Samia to see her, go quickly.

Najwa : I am going home.

Hamed : Wait for a while, wait Najwa.

Najwa : She will not recover unless I go away. (Holds her bag and prepares to go out) You can come at any time
(the door is opened and Samia enters, rushing towards Nahed and sits down on the floor and taps on her face)

Samia : Wake up Nahed. Are you O.K? What happened?

Hamed : If you please madame, stay with her till I send Hussein with the car to take her to the doctor (he goes out after his wife)

Nahed : (sits threatening them) that is O.K, Hamed. You and Najwa will see my madness. I will revenge from you.

Samia : Stand up, Nahed, and calm down.

Nahed : Oh, my God, that girl Najwa I wanted to

give her a hot beating. But he prevented me.

Samia : (laughs loudly) Oh Nahed. some times you seem to be a devilish person. Is it reasonable for a gentle lady like you to say that?

Nahed : (angrily) I was on the verge of explosion...

Samia : Oh, forgive and forget.

Nahed : I can't forgive them. They are cold blooded and pay no attention to my sufferings.

Samia : Control your rage. God will not forget you.. (Stands up) come on, Hosnia. Clean up the table and the floor, (to Nahed) go on and wash. (Nahed goes to the bathroom and Samia moves to the door. Hosnia begins to collect the dishes and cleans the table. Suddenly the doorbell rings. Just as Samia gets out, Hussein comes in and sees Nahed coming from the bathroom. At once she smiles to him.)

Hussein : I brought the car to take you to the doctor.

Nahed : (Laughs) Did you believe all that? I did that to make Hamed send you to have dinner with me.

Hussein : Is that right?; . Hamed told me that you are depressed and in a bad mood. He told me to hurry, and take you quickly to the doctor.

Nahed : Do you see how intelligent I am ! I played my part very well and deceived him. I must disturb them more and more till they know how to deal with me. I want you to clear your mind and think well.

Hussein : (smiling) O, K, I have cleared my mind. What should I think of?

Nahed : Wait till I change my clothes (she disappears for minutes)

Hussein : (moves in the hall. looks at the mirror. combs his hair then returns to the fore ground, speaks to himself) Open your eye, Hussein. Open your mind, Hussein. Oh, God, no one understands your medicine except me. I have your true remedy, but. I wish your brothers could recognize this kind of medicine. Their business is a success and the profits are piling in the bank.. Why do they disturb their heads with thinking? (Suddenly; he calls) Hosnia where is my tea?

Hosnia : You haven't asked for tea.

Hussein : Oh, Hosnia! Open your mind with me. You know that I do not finish my dinner unless I drink tea.

Hosnia : Oh, sorry. One moment and your tea will be ready.

Hussein : (looking at the mirror, then he puts his hand on the side of his head) Oh, my mind will fly soon. Go, Hussein. Open your eyes, Hussien (During that time, Nahed comes in, dressed fantastically and her face is smiling.)

Nahed : (strikes him on his shoulder) You talk to yourself. Have you gone mad?

Hussein : (turns round surprised with her wonderful appearance, retreats backwards) Yes. Oh. Sorry, I can't believe my eyes.

Nahed : (stands in a showy way) What do you think? Sweet?

Hussein : You are very sweet and beautiful, more beautiful than Venus. You are shinning like a full moon, no, but brighter. You are like the princess "Shams El-Nahar" in The

Arabian Nights.

Nahed : (enjoys his talk) All these sweet words at one time. Why have you kept silent all this long time? You haven't said any sweet words to me before. But you went to sing your sweet songs for Najwa.

Hussein : Oh, Nahed. I was singing for your brother and Najwa is his bride.

Nahed : Tell me. What is the story of "Shams El Nahar"? I haven't read any thing about her.

Hussein : She was a beautiful princess who dismissed all suitors who came to ask for her hand. In the end she chose a farmer who was a man of the common people.

Nahed : What did she want?

Hussein : Oh, this is a long story. I can't tell it now.

Nahed : I must do what "Shams El Nahar" did and reject all suitors who do not understand me.

Hussein : Bravo. Where do you intend to go now?

Nahed : To the movies.

Hussein : (looks at her in amazement) to the cinema! What to do?

Nahed : To eat popcorn, and candy.

Hussein : (gazes at her in surprise) You know how to make jokes.

Nahed : What do people do in the movies? Don't you know? Haven't I told you to open your mind?.

Hussein : Oh, sorry I forgot. And now we have to go.

Nahed : Where? Am I at your service?

Hussein : What exactly do you want?

Nahed : To play the role of Shams el-Nahar..

Hussein : But that needs a royal palace, a king and a queen and courtiers?

Nahed : What shall I do with those people?, Wasn't there a poet or a singer? And a maid to serve her?

Hussein : Of course, there was.

Nahed : That is enough for me. Hosnia, come on and hold this feather fan and wave the air around my head like those whom we see in the films. But you, Hussein, stand there and sing your most charming song.

(Nahed stands up and sets her dress right, then sits and puts one leg on the other, shakes the chair as if she were a princess)

Hussein : Do you think that I am a great poet?

Nahed : Hosnia, wasn't he singing in the wedding party?

Hosnia : (fans her with the feather fan) Yes, my lady. Sweet songs, never heard before.

Hussein : It was only some folksongs that villagers like to hear.

Nahed : I am a villager and love farmers. Didn't Shams El Nahar live among farmers either, forget the movies and sing now.

Hussein : (shaking his head in wonder) Even singing is done by order? O God. (Silent) (He begins to sing in a sweet voice but with a wink as a sarcastic imitation of one of the pop singers)

Oh, my lovely flower, bend and lean on me,
And cure my heart, of a puzzling disease.
For years and years living before you,
Watching your tempting eyes day and night,
Wishing to wave my hand, saying hello or
saying good bye
But scared is my heart by those others' eyes.

How could I induce your eyes to have a
glimps of mine

but still not daring to say welcome or to say
bye bye.

Reason has gone astray, and thinking found
no way.

But Love is still burning inside me. Yearning
to send a kiss across the air, but fearing
lest air might go and forfiet me.

This is the last I can say? How helpless and
miserable still my heart!.

Nahed : (fascinated with his voice) Who is that girl
you are singing to her?

Hussein : My mother...!

Nahed : Don't bluff me. (Strikes him on the chest)
For whom do you compose these songs?
Say, Hussein. Whom do you love?

Hussein : Love is forbidden for a person like me.
Love needs leisure time and money. And I
have none of them.

Nahed : Is there anyone who writes such a song and
says he is not in love? Is it reasonable, guy?

Hussein : No. Of course. I love. I love my mother,
and my young brother. I love your brothers
also for giving me work.

Nahed : Do you call this love or do you try to bluff
me (holds his hand) To whom do you wave
your hand? Is not this Sekina, the clumsy
girl who lives in front of you?

Hussein : Oh my lady, who would love me! Even
Sekina, would not think of me. You know
that my part now is to love on behalf of others.
I sang to please your brother Hamed and

his wife. And so I will sing for you and for your other brother.

Nahed : When will you sing for your own love?
Hussein : When I obtain a degree in my hand and find a job. At that time I could find the girl who would accept me.
Nahed : You are still a boy. Who would accept you?
(she moves towards the door to see him off)

Black out

SCENE IV

(Casino on the Nile in Mansoura. The time is afternoon. Immediately before sunset. Nahed and Hussien are sitting at a table).

Hussein : You intend to stay long here?

Nahed : I feel happy and healthy now, I wish I had an apartment on the bank of the Nile here.

Hussein : Then we will not go to the movies.

Nahed : No, no movies, no theatre. Let 's sit here and talk.

Hussein : I have some good news.

Nahed : (joyfully) Really! Why then didn't you say something?. Speak.

Hussein : I won two thousand dollars within two hours this morning.

Nahed : How did you win them?

Hussein : I won them in one shot.

Nahed : Two thousand dollars at one time?

Hussein : Yes, at one time! Listen carefully, or you will not understand.

Nahed : How did it happen?

Hussein : A simple game, and not too much trouble.

Nahed : Did you gamble?

Hussein : No, this is not my way. It was a game, but in the market. I got a permission of fertilizer from the cooperative society. I bought it

from one person and sold it to another and made a profit.

Nahed : Didn't Mahmoud know this game?

Hussein : He plays it several times every day, but he's gone, and knows nothing of this .

Nahed : Give me the money to keep it for you and don't mention it to anyone

Hussein : But why?

Nahed : This money should be kept for our future. Why do they take it?

Hussein : Didn't I tell you to open your mind?

Nahed : (puzzled) Ah, Ah and then?

Hussein : Nothing more. Open your eyes and your mind and make money for the future.

Nahed : But I am not accustomed to doing that.

Hussein : Now you will be accustomed. They do not care for you or for me. They waste money foolishly. (taps over his cheek) wake up. The waiter is coming..

Nahed : Don't be afraid. Say that this money reached Nahed. Did you forget that I sold my land to open the pharmacy.

Hussein : No, I didn't

Nahed : If you faced any difficulty, the money would help you.

Hussein : (shakes his head) Thank you

Nahed : Remember there is one important thing.

Hussein : What is it?

Nahed : To open your mind (she laughs).

Hussein : Well. It is said that the human mind is like a sponge, it opens quickly and shuts quickly. Opens and shuts. Do you know this?

Nahed : (laughs loudly) No. Your mind is not a sponge. From this day on, your mind should

be like a computer and your name should be the clever Hussein?

Hussein : You mean to say: El –shatter Hassan of the Arabian Nights?

Nahed : No, but Hussein my cousin, not Hassan of the fantasy tales.

Hussein : This is enough my lady. There is one thing left.

Nahed : What do you mean?

Hussein : (stands) You can stand on this table and declare in public the following statement: I, princess Shams El Nahar, the granddaughter of emperor Shahrayar, in my name and in the name of the people of the kingdom of Shahraman I declare the following decrees:

1. That we have decided to change the name of the poor man Hussien ibn Khadija to the name of el- Shatter Hassan, the hero of the Arabian Nights.
2. That we have promoted his status from the job of a laborer to the rank of the Executive Manager of the following five year plan which aims at buying a beautiful apartment overlooking the Nile in the great city of Mansoura.

Nahed : This is great. (She claps with her hands)

Hussein : (bows several times). Thank you. Thank you . (Laughs) by God am I not a merry guy?

Nahed : Of course you are, if it were not for your good manner, I would not have appointed you to this high office.

Hussein : Thank you, your Highness for all your favours

Nahed : Oh, boy. Enough joking, I am serious.

Hussein : O.K. Your orders?

Nahed : This girl, Najwa, the serpent began to ask about our business. She wants to interfere in every thing, She is worried about her husband's wealth.

Hussein : Of whom is she afraid?

Nahed : Of you and Mahmoud.

Hussein : What does that have to do with me?

Nahed : Haven't I advised you to open your mind?

Hussein : Oh, sorry!

Nahed : Listen to me and understand well what I tell you.

Hussein : I am listening

Nahed : I want you to excite her feelings of jealousy.

Hussein : How can I do that? (Looks at her doubtfully) How?

Nahed : (concentrating) Plant the story in her mind. Talk a lot in front of her and say that Mahmoud travels often here and there and wastes much money. This will make Hamed quarrel with Mahmoud, in the end the business will be divided.

Hussein : Ho, ho. You have gone too far!

Nahed : (laughs)? Didn't I tell you to open your mind! When the business is divided, I will find the proper chance to take my share.

Hussein : Isn't there another way instead of this fearful trap?

Nahed : All the ways failed. We have no time to waste. Didn't you say that my father was greedy and deprived your mother of her inherited piece of land. They would do the

same thing with me and deprive me of my share as your mother?

Hussein : Ah, everything is possible. You must urge Mahmoud to move. Tell him that the two pharmacies are registered in the name of Hamed alone.

Nahed : Good. Your mind has begun to work. (The waiter comes and offers ice – cream to Nahed)

Hussein : Help yourself. That is the kind you like.

Nahed : Thank you, I will help my self. (Begins to eat quickly, then suddenly stops) Ah!

Hussein : (Laughs) Have you bitten your tongue?

Nahed : No. But my teeth are aching me.

Hussein : Would you like a hot drink.?

Nahed : No ... my teeth cannot bear it.

Hussein : Go, to see a doctor here.

Nahed : There is no need. When we reach home, I will go to Dr Keriako upstairs.

Hussein : Would you like to go now?

Nahed : Yes, quickly (puts her hand over his shoulder on their way out).

Black out

Act Two - SCENE I

The apartment of Keriako Catonelli, the Greek dentist. On the side of the hall there is a sitting room, on the wall behind, there is a portrait of a naked woman. On the other side, we see a table with a backgammon on it, and on the wall behind it an anatomical picture of teeth. The dentist is putting flowers in a vase, while foreign music flowing from the radio. Suddenly, the doorbell rings. When he opens it, he is surprised to see Nahed.

Nahed : Sorry, doctor, I went to see you in the clinic, but they told me that you are here. My teeth are hurting me and I have a headache.

Keriako : (laughs) Welcome, come in Nahed. Please sit down (offers her a chair)

Nahed : Thank you; doctor. My teeth are annoying me. I came here now because I can't wait until morning

Keriako : Welcome Miss Nahed

Nahed : Perhaps my presence here may disturb you. I know that you don't like patients to come here.

Keriako : No. Not all the patients. I am pleased you have come here. I always ask about you

Nahed : Thank you doctor, you are a kind man.

Keriako : (stretches his hand with a small mirror into

her open mouth, and begins to examine her teeth carefully one after the other and moves her face with his fingers. At the same time he contemplates her beautiful face under the strong light of the lamp) you have nothing. Your teeth are very good; there is some swelling in your gums. Don't be worried.

Nahed : Thank you, doctor.

Keriako : You need to gargle for a few days, and then you will get better (He uses a piece of cotton to oint her gum, then reopens the recorder to hear foreign music) Do you like foreign music! It relieves tension and helps us relax.

Nahed : You are a happy man, Doctor. Your mood is always good, (looking at the picture of the naked woman on the wall), portraits and music,

Keriako : (after a short silence). I will bring you two tablets of aspirin and a cup of tea to get rid of the headache quickly.

Nahed : Tea also, God bless you, doctor. I am going to drink it at home.

Keriako : Impossible. It is the first time you come here. And you have to stay for a short time. Have you stopped going to Mansoura?

Nahed : Yes.

Keriako : Why is that?

Nahed : It depends on circumstances. When I feel ill they take me to doctors. Once I got better, they forget me.

Keriako : You need entertainment. Not a doctor. What would a doctor do for you, , a beautiful young lady like you, full of life and vitality,

does not need doctors.

Nahed : They do not give me a chance for pleasure or amusement.

Keriako : (shakes his head) Wrong. Why don't you go with Mahmoud to Alexandria in the weekend?

Nahed : I don't like to go to any place with him. He destroys my desire in life. If something happened and I laughed loudly he would grow furious and quarrel with me.

Keriako : Mahmoud does that to you? ! But Why? He is very gentle. He seems, very nice.

Nahed : He is a troublesome person. He is the cursed boy who has caused my sufferings

Keriako : Oh, don't get angry. You should marry and leave him.

Nahed : (laughs) Where is the man who would marry me? Would you marry me Dr?

Keriako : (laughs) It is too late. I am too old now.

Nahed : Who says so? You seem young and smart (looks at the spectators and laughs) Are you afraid of envy, doctor?

Keriako : (laughs) I have nothing to do with women.

Nahed : Then, what about that beautiful lady who comes here from time to time?

Keriako : That is a poor lady. She was married to a music teacher and had a daughter, then he deserted her and married someone else,

Nahed : A very bad man!

Keriako : Why did you refuse to marry Mr. Saied?

Nahed : Who said that?

Keriako : Your brother Mahmoud. He says that you do not want to marry.

Nahed : He never told me anything about him. Is he

a good man, doctor?

Keriako : Very good. He teaches fine arts in high school.

Nahed : Does he come here? Does Mr. Fareed know him?

Keriako : He is his close friend. He visits him frequently.

Nahed : Mahmoud did not ask my opinion (silent for a time) This shows you, how bad he is!

Keriako : Too much, but don't be angry. I shall tell him again.

Nahed : Is the man still ready?

Keriako : Of course. He may come tonight. He always plays backgammon with Mahmoud.

Nahed : But Mahmoud's head is too hard.

Keriako : He is selfish. You must get married. You need not wait anymore.

Nahed : Speak again to him, doctor. Try to convince him of this idea.
(Here, the bell rings, the doctor opens the door and a tall man, about forty comes in. He tends to be thin; his hair is long but not thick, he is wearing black thick glasses and has a long moustache hanging over his lips)

Keriako : Welcome Saied Beck, Miss Nahed, Mahmoud, s sister.

Saied : Welcome (stretches his hand and looks at her carefully)

Nahed : (stretches her hand and looks at him) welcome Ustaz.

Keriako : Would you please Mr. Saied. come with me for a moment.

Saied : (follows him to the dining table and sits there, then Keriako returns to Nahed

Keriako : What is your opinion, Nahed?

Nahed : (smiles and looks again to Said)

Keriako : Very good.

Nahed : Go on, Dr. but I have to leave now, bye, bye. (she goes out and he sees her off)

Saied : (as soon as Nahed went out, Said approached Keriako and before he uttered a word, Keriako started talking)

Keriako : Do you see Saied, Nahed is a very good young lady.

But her brothers do not want her to marry.

Saied : Why do they want to keep her so?. She seems mature and completely grown up (Moves in the hall).

Keriako : (laughs happily) Moreover, she has a stong desire for marriage

Saied : What shall I do doctor? I want to marry her.

Keriako : Her elder brother Hamed has got married, and Mahmoud still single.

Saied : Perhaps, they want to marry her to a doctor or a pharmacist.

Keriako : My dear, you have to say these words only: I want to marry her and I am ready for eveyrthing.

Saied : How could I afford everything?. In order to get married, I need to have a good house, furniture and many other things, all of which will cost a lot of money.

Keriako : They are very rich and have a large fortune. You are an important teacher. He (laughs). When you want to marry the daughter of a rich man, pretend that you are very rich in possession of a great fortune by saying ‘I am ready for everything’ Then

they will see that you are generous. In return they try to appear more generous and provide you with the most valuable jewels and furniture that you haven't dreamt of. Do you understand Mr. artist?

Saied : You are a devil Keriako.

Keriako : (puts his finger over his head) here is a brain not jerked beef.

(They laugh, then Saied bids him farewell and goes out. At this moment, Fatma appears) Fatma. Fatma.

Fatma : Yes, doctor (a tall woman comes from the kitchen, with reddish brown face, strong body, full of vitality)

Keriako : Listen. Finish your work and go to sleep with your daughter.

Fatma : Why do you want me to go early tonight?

Keriako : Some people will come to visit me, and now I want to rest for a bit.

Fatma : I understand. You do not want them to see me? My love, you feel ashamed of me these days.

Keriako : I don't want them to see your big belly.

Fatma : (in sarcasm and carelessness) Your son, doctor. Your lovely son, the heir of your title and prestige. No one feels ashamed of this gift from God? A lonely old man like you should be happy and proud.

Keriako : It is a scandal. You are a bad woman. Go home quickly.

Fatma : Oh, Keriako! Do you want to escape from your crime?

Keriako : Nonsense, that is Doctor Fouad's son not mine.

Fatma : (pretends to be angry) Will you repeat this recorded tape again. Don't accuse Dr.Fouad. He has nothing to do with this. It is your son, Dr. Keriako!

Keriako : I have no children; I have hypoglycemia and high blood pressure, then, see who did it with you.

Fatma : You are a coward, Keriako. How can you accuse Dr. Fuad? Doctor Fouad came here two weeks ago, but this is three months old. If you do not keep silent, I shall ask them to analyze our blood and reveal the truth.

Keriako : You are a big liar. You give yourself to doctor Fouad, and want to blackmail me.

Fatma : Don't try to bluff me and wait, I will hang the baby round your neck. How dare you cast your child away in the street.? Do you want me to go out empty handed, ?, (shakes her hunch and shoulders) By God, this will never happen?

(Keriako moves to the kitchen and comes back with a cup of brandy in his hand. Fatma comes nearer as soon as he sits down)

Fatma : Yes. Let's calm down. Let's curse the world and say hello to love (holds the cup and puts it to his mouth, then she draws it away) where is my cup, how can you forget me? (he looks at her) Don't you want me to dance for you tonight? (Shaking her big abdomen) Does it no longer please you?

Keriako : (laughs naively) Go dance for Dr. Fouad.

Fatma : Would I be good if I miscarried this fetus?.

Keriako : Oh, yes. Very good.

Children are a heavy burden nowadays.

What would you do with them. The country is over-crowded with children who find no food nor houses.

Fatma : (stands and speaks in a loud voice) Not all the children my love. This is the son of Dr Keriako, the greatest dentist in Lower Egypt and Alexandria.

Keriako : (shakes his head). Keriako has nothing now, nothing; He is penniless. All my fortune was lost in gambling. Go to Dr Fouad, your valantino to perform an abortion

Fatma : You want to get rid of me? Abortion would kill me and leave you free.

No, Keriako, you are dreaming. This will not happen.

Keriako : (in a soft tone) Don't be afraid. You will not die Fatma. You are very strong, and your health is very good.

Fatma : (change her tone) Never mind, Khawaga. I will save you from all scandals (she fills a cup and drinks).

Keriako : Bravo, Fatma (in a childish joy) how will this happen?

Fatma : By a modern way ...

Keriako : What will you do? An operation?

Fatma : No operation, but by dancing, by shaking my belly. This is a new discovery not known to men like you.

Keriako : (very pleased) You are a Satan, Fatma (holds his cup and strikes it to hers) To your health, Fatma.

Fatma : (swallowed it quickly) Music Keriako. Let me show you.

(Keriako sits at the piano and examines the

chords trying to reach the correct tone. In the meantime, Fatma approaches the spectators and begins to speak to them.)

Fatma : No one is an idiot or a fool. No one is mad or mindless except me. Even Keriako Catonelli of the European origin fears scandal and tries to avoid it. There is no difference between Keriako, the Greek dentist and Sheikh Hamouda el -Sonbatty, the music teacher. They are all men, and wicked ones. (She looks at Keriako) curse upon that kind of men. They commit crimes and try to escape. They behave like foolish boys who deny their responsibility without shyness. They do not even feel shame before God.

Keriako : (turns to her) What is that. What did you say?

Fatma : Just talk Keriako don't give it much attention.

(turns to the spectators again) The first man was Hamouda El- sonbatty (shakes her head in sorrow). He taught music but he was really an artist. When he played the piano, I felt like my whole body was dancing and flying in the air.

He made me live in a world of beauty and love. Not only that, but he taught me how to sing and dance. He made me learn by heart the famous poems and songs of the Arabs and sing them. He plays, and I dance and sing. We were very happy. Seven years were like a dream. He retold tales of "Arabian Nights "and made me listen to hymns and ancient songs. There was nothing but love,

music and songs. We forgot every thing. (laughs sarcastically) We were living in the Arabian Nights of Baghdad and Haroun El-Rushed, music, singing and dancing, a world of fantasy. Suddenly, every thing changed. He would be away for days or weeks. He said he travelled for work. At last I discovered his secrets. He was having an affair with another woman, younger and more beautiful. A blond girl like Greeks or Italians. He forgot me and forgot his daughter. I had to leave him. I could not share my husband with another woman.

Keriako : (he stopped playing, and listened to the last part of her speech)

But you don't hesitate to share yourself with two men at one time. You are a rascal.

Fatma : Shut your mouth, Keriako, I believed that you were a human being, and free-minded but you turned to be a fox. You said that you were modern and free. Want every one to live, as he likes. Thus you deceived me. You are like them, but very wicked, ah, if I could kill you, I would not hesitate for a moment. I would avenge myself on El - sonbatty and on all the men like you. But what can I say? I can't do anything. I can't even protect myself from you. And how, after what happened. Now I have gotten used to drinking, and enjoyment (here, the sound of dancing music rose, she takes the scarf and turns it round her waist and dances gracefully. Keriako seemed pleased in playing the piano; and she got pleased in dancing with enjoyment

for ten minutes. At the end Keriako rises happily trying to take hold of her between his arms but she pushes him away, and speaks for the last time. “This was in the past, and gone forever. But now, Keriako I have an account to settle with you”
(She bursts into weeping).

Black out

SCENE II

(Nahed's apartment, Nahed in the hall, seems to think, suddenly the bell rings, she opens the door to find Hussein.)

Nahed : Hussein! come in.

Hussein : How are you to-day?. What about your teeth? How did the medicine work?

Nahed : Marvelous; you have a healing hand, Hussein.

Hussein : It is the hand of doctor Keriako who wrote the prescription.

Nahed : But your hand brought the medicine. You are the only one who cares for me now.

Hussein : It's the least I can do Nahed. You are my relative, my flesh and blood (his voice changes and becomes tender) when you get ill, I become sad and when I see you happy, I see the whole world happy.

Nahed : Is this true, Hussein? (She puts her hand on his shoulder) where do you get these sweet words from? Do you compose them or read them in books?

Hussein : This springs from deep within my heart, Nahed. I am poor; I work hard day and night. I have suffered much for things I wish to get but I can't. Therefore I feel your pains and understand your complaints.

Nahed : Enough Hussein. Don't remind me of my sorrows, I have a good sum of money now; I am ready to give it to you. Take private lessons as you like and study to achieve success. If they had allowed me to complete my education I would have gotten a job and led a better life. But they imprisoned me in the house like a monkey in a cage.

Hussein : Don't say that. You are a shining moon. The house without you would have been a very dark cave.

Nahed : It is not my house, Hussein.

Hussein : Tomorrow you will have a better one.

Nahed : (smiles) Is it possible, Hussein. What is in the box that you have brought? Has Mahmoud arrived?

Hussein : Yes... he has just arrived, and started to check on the accounts. I have brought this box but I don't know what inside it.

Nahed : (opens the carton box) It contains cake, Gateau and cookies. Sit down and take a piece. Don't forget to take some pieces to your mother.

Hussein : Shall I eat some and take some to my mother also? (She puts the gateau on the table)

Nahed : Of course she was always kind to me.

Hussein : But she is poor and has nothing to give now.

Nahed : (strikes him on the shoulder) don't say that. The future is before you. You can become a pharmacist like Hamed. Perhaps much better.

Hussein : Oh. Oh. You think too high of me. If I got

60% on the exam I would join the faculty of commerce, and this is my greatest dream.

Nahed : Trust in God.

Hussein : Oh, Nahed, Your words open the door of hope for me. It makes me forget my troubles for a time.

Nahed : But tell me, why don't my brothers want me to get married.

Hussein : I can't imagine that.! Nahed : Whenever a young man comes, they dismiss him at once. The last one spoke to Dr. Keriako, they said Nahed is not fit for marriage and dismissed him without my knowledge. I am afraid I might get older and miss the train of marriage.

Hussein : No, don't worry; this train will never miss you, you are still young and brilliant. As years pass on, you become more and more charming.

Nahed : Hussein my love. If any one of my brothers said one of these sweet words, I would never feel ill.

Hussein : There are things that have already been decided for us. Those who have sweet words have no money. And those who have much money don't care about words. Your brothers are no longer in need of sweet words. Money speaks for them.

Nahed : I feel like I am lost, and know nothing about my future. I must know my legal share in all this business? Try to find out every thing and tell me. When you see Mahmoud on your return, tell him I am suffering from a headache. I must search for my interests.

Help me Hussien and keep my secrets.

Hussein : Trust in me, I will do all my best to help you.

Nahed : Hosnia

Hosnia : Yes, my lady.

Nahed : I am going to sleep. When Mahmoud comes, tell him I am ill. Yesterday, she went to doctor Keriako (approaches her and shakes her shoulders) Hosnia my love, you understand what I said.

Hosnia : Yes, you are sick and can't get up from bed.

Nahed : Bravo. Give me a kiss my love (she kissed her) Another thing Hosnia.Nahed was tired and ill - tempered all the day long.Try to distress him.

Hosnia : (laughs) To the utmost my lady! .

Nahed : Go to the kitchen, have your supper. Prepare him food if he demands it.

Hosnia : Good night.

Nahed : (smiles kindly) Oh Hosnia, my love! Without you I would have killed myself. (No sooner had she gone in, than the bell rang. Hosnia opens the door and Mahmoud enters)

Mahmoud : How are you, Hosnia? Where is Nahed?

Hosnia : She is lying in bed.

Hamed : Why?

Hosnia : (begins to act with her hands and eyes and voice) Her teeth hurt her all the daylong. They made her dizzy and tired :

Mahmoud : Did she go to the doctor?

Hosnia : Doctor Keriako gave her medication. She has a headache and is in a very bad mood.

Mahmoud : (shakes his head) Ah, he may have told her

something (opens her door and calls her, Nahed appears half asleep, looks at him in blame, without speaking) Tell me what happened.

Nahed : (pushes his hand away and turns to put her head on the cushion)

Mahmoud : Get up, Nahed. Did Keriako tell you anything that upset you? Get up my sister and tell me? Keriako is a fool, speaks nonsense.

Nahed : (looking at him with a blaming look). Keriako is a fool and I am crazy, and you are the wisest man in Egypt!

Mahmoud : Ha, ha, that is all right. You have frightened me, get up. I have prepared a great surprise for you.

Nahed : (smiling) for me!

Mahmoud : Yes. For you.

Nahed : Ah. What is it?

Mahmoud : Can you guess? What do you say?

Nahed : Could it be what I think of?

Mahmoud : Perhaps better.

Nahed : Don't tease me. The only surprise that would please me, does not enter your mind.

Mahmoud : What is in your mind?

Nahed : A good youngman to marry me .

Mahmoud : Alas, is that an important wish? If I liked I would get you a hundred of young men to beg for your hand.

Nahed : Yah? Are young men standing in line at the door?

Mahmoud : Forget this now. I bought a Mercedes.

Nahed : (sarcastically) My congratulations. What shall I do with this car? Shall I drive it to the university or to work? The car concerns you

only, to go here and there aimlessly, while I stay here inside these walls like a mad dog.

Mahmoud : Oh, Nahed (taps on her shoulder) My dear sister. You are prejudiced against me. I am a businessman. You know how poor we were two or three years ago and how rich we are now. Who built all this wealth? I work as a pharmacist, and a dealer who trades in fertilizers and grains.

Nahed : Listen. Speak directly, and don't go round the point. Who am I? Where is my share? You forced me to sell my piece of land. You did not give me anything in return. When you get married, what shall I do? Serve your wife or Hamed's wife? And if I don't serve, what will happen? Shall I beg money from you?

Mahmoud : Oh, Nahed. Tell me all what you want.

Nahed : That is nonsense. Don't be so cruel.

Mahmoud : Don't say that, I can't be cruel with you.

Nahed : I have given you all my land to open the pharmacy. Isn't this true?

Mohamed : Yes, it is true. We cannot deny that.

Nahed : Then, I own a share in your business. This share must be identified and written on paper to ensure my rights in the future.

Mahmoud : Good. We have two shares and you are half a share. According to our Islamic Law, you have one fifth of the whole business.

Nahed : This means twenty percent of the whole business. Right? This must be registered. You must know your share also. Hamed has written everything in his name.

Mahmoud : Tomorrow, the papers will be ready and

Hamed is coming here.

Nahed : Hamed cannot be trusted now. His wife Najwa wants to put her hand in every thing.

Mahmoud : I will see.

Nahed : Have you had your supper?

Mahmoud : Not yet. Come eat with me.

Nahed : (moves and leaves the bed) Hosnia, set the table (to Mahmoud) Dr. Keriako told me about Saied. Why did you reject him without telling me?

Mahmoud : Oh, my sister, this is not a suitable man for you.

Nahed : Is he not suitable for me. Or do you think that I am not fit for marriage?

Mahmoud : No. He is much older than you. And his job is not a good one.

Nahed : But I saw him yesterday evening in the doctor's apartment. He seems to be a gentleman.

Mahmoud : But he is a poor man. He is just a teacher of drawing.

Nahed : Just a teacher! What is wrong with that? What then would you want for me, a doctor? or an engineer?

Mahmoud : At least a pharmacist to work at your pharmacy.

Nahed : It is said that a bird in the hand is better than ten on the tree. If the pharmacist did not come. What should I do?

Mahmoud : Be patient, teachers don't make good salaries. What I spend in one day is more than the salary of a teacher in one month.

Nahed : Why my brother? Ustaz Fareed leads a good life with his wife and children.

Mahmoud : Fareed is an English teacher, who gives private lessons. But Saied is a teacher of painting. He has nothing except his brush.

Nahed : A few years ago, we had nothing.

Mahmoud : This means that you want him.

Nahed : Yes. I do

Mahmoud : Give me a chance to consult Hamed, and see what we could do now that we already refused him..

Nahed : My love Mahmoud. You are very kind tonight. (She kisses him happily)

Mahmoud : I will change my clothes and have supper. (he moves towards the bedroom. Nahed begins to dance and sing in happiness)
Hurry up mother, please hurry up.
Handle me my jewels and my make up,
Hurry up mother; please hurry up.
(Then she remembers that her mother is dead)
But where is my mother now to hug me and say hurray!

(she stops singing and bursts out into tears)

Black out

SCENE III

(Nahed and Samia in the hall)

Nahed : Did you know, madame that Saied is coming to ask my hand?

Samia : Good news. He is my husband's friend.

Nahed : You did not tell me about that before.

Samia : Perhaps, I found no chance.

Nahed : He sent Doctor Keriako to talk to Mahmoud.

Samia : Good. Did you see him?

Nahed : Yes, I saw him for a short time, his hair is long but not thick. But he has a long moustache

Samia : (laughs) You can shave it.

Nahed : What do you know about his family?

Samia : He has a good family. One of his sisters is a professor in the university, the other is a headmistress. They have a house in Alexandria with four apartments. His sister lives in one, and the rest are rented?

Nahed : That is O. K.

Samia : Ah. It yields a good sum of money.

Nahed : Oh, my God!. Mahmoud says that he is poor and has nothing in his possession.

Samia : I've told you all I know. Excuse me now.
I have to prepare food for the children.
Bye-Bye.

Black out

SCENE IV

(A hall in Keriako's apartment. Fareed and Keriako are playing the backgammon. After a while Mahmoud enters and waves his hand greeting them)

Keriako : Welcome Mahmoud. Thanks for the glass of brandy, but the second kind was better.

Mahmoud : (smiles angrily) the second kind is not available. If I knew what you had done before, I would have poisoned it.

Fareed : What happened? Did he play tricks on you?

Keriako : What are you talking about? (Puzzled and speaks seriously) for whom do you want poison?

Mahmoud : (coldly) for a wicked fool.

Keriako : Who is that? What did he do with you? Is he like doctor Fouad who betrayed me?

Fareed : (Looks at Mahmoud and laughs) I don't understand anything.

Keriako : (speaks quickly and interrupts Mohamoud before he talks) Fouad is not a good man, he seduces women, he leaves his wife and comes here to play with Fatma.

Mahmoud : He found that you are a fool. But tell me are you married to Fatma?

Keriako : (Laughs) Fatma is a good lady. She was

married to a music teacher. He Left her and married another. He turned out to be a devil. He had left her without money. How could she live with her daughter. So she began to search for work. What could she do then?

Fareed : But Mahmoud asked if Fatma is married to you.

Mahmoud : She is pregnant.

Keriako : From Dr Fouad who betrayed me. I trusted him and gave him the keys and money for the funeral expenses if I died suddenly. But he came here and seduced Fatma while I was on the beach.

.Mahmoud : Tell us, what did you do when you discovered this matter?

Keriako : I went directly to his house. His wife is a very smart lady, working as a French teacher. She has two nice sons with him. I told her that he seduced my housekeeper and made a scandal for her.”

(Mahmoud and Fareed laugh at his way of speaking)

Fareed : How did Fatma give herself up to that fox?

Keriako : She is a very kind lady. She never says “No “(he puts his hands on his chest to explain) She has very strong emotion, I mean emotion of love.

Mahmoud : This is why she is living with an idiot like you. But Fouad is a fox; He has made a fool of you.

Keriako : (enters the room and fetches a big book, reads in Greek language, and translates) This book is on psychology. Listen Fareed Beck. It says (he reads few lines loudly and

then takes off his glasses and translates) This woman has a strong body, full of vitality, (He illustrates with his hands) Her face is very attractive.. She has very strong emotion, that makes her respond to any man when he tells her a sweet word, she responds at once because she wants to satisfy her feelings of love.

Mahmoud

: So, she loved you and gave herself to you.

Keriako

: Ah. She loves people because she has a strong emotion.

Fareed

: This case is very strange.

Keriako

: Not strange, she is very matured and wants a man to love her, to share feelings of love with him. She is like a rich man, who has a huge fortune. and wants to distribute part of this fortune on poor people who are in need of money. (to Mahmoud) She has generous passions and does not think of evil things like you.

Mahmoud

: (winks to Fareed) Don't pay attention to this nonsense.

Keriako

: You can't understand well . Why then do you go to Alexandria every weekend? To do what?

Fareed;

: I want to know exactly what is going on between you both. What is the cause of this dispute?

Keriako

: (laughs) That is one Effendi who does not understand anything about human feelings. He is a blocked minded-man and does not believe in science.

(He holds his moustache and twists it) Mahmoud wants to hold his moustache and

twists it, then shouts and gives orders and says traditions.

Mahmoud : We are Muslims and have our morals and traditions.

Keriako : What does it mean for a human being? Muslims or non-Muslims? (Points to Mahmoud).

Fareed : (Laughs /as he looks at Mahmoud who also laughs) What do you say?

Mahmoud : That is a fool. Nahed came here to treat her teeth. He turned her head against us and told her that Saied wanted to marry her.

Keriako : Why don't you want your sister to get married? Is this a fair decision. Why do you go to Alexandria and play with bad women there. You are like doctor Fouad. And you say you are Muslims and have traditions.

Fareed : Is that the reason, Mahmoud? He is doing you a favour.

Mahmoud : No, the girl is ill and nervous and cannot shoulder the responsibility of being a wife.

Keriako : What does this mean? If she was not pleased with marriage they could separate.

Fareed : That is a good idea.

Mahmoud : How is that? Shall we make her an experimental field? And if she gave birth to a baby?

Fareed : That is not a problem. They can postpone this for a year or two, until she is sure of the marriage success.

Keriako : Your sister is a sensible girl. Only she is injured by your neglect. She wants a man to love her

Mahmoud : (interrupts him) Fetch the backgammon

board and finish this silly talk.

Fareed : Why don't you think of a solution? And let us think with you..

Keriako : (Fills a cup and offers it to Mahmoud) this will open your mind and show you how to think in a correct way.

Fareed : (drinks his cup) It is an excellent kind, doctor.

Keriako : Thanks to Mahmoud, although he does not understand well.

Mahmoud : Are you a dentist or a doctor for loving hearts?

Keriako : You are not highly cultivated and your mind is blocked. You must fall in love to be able to understand.

Mahmoud : What would you say if we made you the lawyer of the broken hearts in this neighborhood?

Keriako : I would be very happy.

Mahmoud : If you believe that marriage is something necessary, why didn't you get married?

Fareed : That is right, doctor Keriako? You must answer this question.

Keriako : I was in love with a nice lady. She loved me dearly (shakes his head) she was very beautiful, very disciplined. She was a good housekeeper She was careful to have the house clean and neat. Even if she saw a cut stocking she would quickly sew it.

Mahmoud : You are specialized in serving women.

Keriako : She was a kind woman, married to a kind man.

Mahmoud : And she loved you besides her husband!

Keriako : Her husband was polite and gentle.

Fareed : Did he also love you?

Keriako : He used to come here from time to time.
(shakes his head in sorrow) I built them a
big house, in Mansoura, and he was very
pleased.

Mahmoud : Oh, admirable valantino. (in a mocking
tone) you broke my heart!

Keriako : But all is gone, gone forever. She died four
years ago. Look, Mr.Fareed, I visit her every
Sunday and put a red rose on her grave, be-
cause she loved red roses.

Fareed : (in a sarcastic tone) You are a wonderful
example of faithful lovers Keriako
Catonelli!

Mahmoud : What stupidity! The house is gone also?

Keriako : (shakes his head) I left it to her daughter
and husband because he was a kind simple
man.

Mahmoud : That is why you make foolish things.Every
time you bring a new woman.

Fareed : Because he has forgotten love!

Keriako : (shakes his head in regret) I was very
happy at that time. I inherited a large for-
tune, land and buildings of my father but all
was lost on gambling.

Mahmoud : Enough of your sad tales, please, , bring
the backgammon, and let us play.

Keriako : Before we play, set an appointment for us
to visit you with Mr. Saied.

Mahmoud : Forget this subject. Get it out of your mind,
and when Nahed comes here, don't mention
it again.

Keriako : You have a university degree but you are
ignorant.

Fareed : Listen, Mahmoud, let us go on with Saied, and manage this matter between us. I think they can get married.

Mahmoud : (angrily), Oh, dear friend, yes, they can but they would get into trouble.

Fareed : Let us try, and if she got tired, there could be a solution.

Mahmoud : And the children?

Fareed : They could postpone birth for two or three years,

Keriako : The solution is available. Or you haven't heard of birth control, foolish pharmacist!

Mahmoud : We said that Europeans like you, couldn't understand these matters because they are related to our traditions.

Keriako : What traditions prevent a girl from being married!

Fareed : Your fears are exaggerated Mahmoud. Let us hope for the best.

Mahmoud : It is a serious matter. We don't hate her. Why? If that man discovered her case after marriage, he would be shocked. What would we say then?

Fareed : There is no need to tell him anything. Let them discover each other gradually. Her case is not serious, and she will get better.

Mahmoud : Who is sure?

Keriako : I am sure she will be very glad.

Fareed : You can help them to overcome any difficulty.

Mahmoud : With money, of course, we are ready for all her demands.

Fareed : Money is not every thing. Understanding is more important. If they faced any problem,

they could find you to help them.

Mahmoud : She perplexes us, sometimes she behaves in a strange manner. She keeps silent for long days and doesn't speak to us. We go to doctors and use different medicines but in vain.

Keriako : Oh, ignorant Effendi. How do you expect a sensitive lady like your sister who is living a lonely life to be normal?

Mahmoud : We said, you must keep silent for a time. Europeans like you cannot understand this subject.

Keriako : If the marriage failed, she could be divorced, as this is one of your Muslim traditions.

Mahmoud : The foolish doctor wants us to make her a field for experiments.

Fareed : Not really an experimental field. Marriage is always an adventure; It requires understanding and good will. Saied is kind and sensitive. Whenever his servant feels ill he takes her to the doctor. He spends hours playing with her young son. He is a kind man in all the true meaning of the word.

Keriako : (fills the cups, speaks to Mahmoud) You master of traditions, you are a reactionary person. Don't you know that there was a minister in the days of the Ottoman empire, called the minister of traditions.

Mahmoud : (interrupts Keriako) O.K, Mr.Fareed. But how could we put this kind man's life at risk?

Fareed : It is not a risk. It is a plan to help both of them. May her complex be solved, when she

Mahmoud tries her luck;
: If the marriage failed, we would get into trouble. We have no time to spend in courts or with lawyers.

Fareed. : Let us look at marriage as a new kind of psychotherapy. What do you say?

Mahmoud : Please Mr. Fareed; don't talk again about this subject. That is a foolish doctor. He does not understand our society or our habits.

Keriako : We can come with Saied to have coffee with you the day after tomorrow.

Mahmoud : Fetch the backgammon and let us have some rest.

Black out

SCENE V

(Nahed's apartment)

Hussein : Look, Nahed, I have carried out the plan, and turned them against each other. Every one began to look out for himself. I continued to persuade Najwa till she turned her husband's head. Don't mention anything about me. Your brother Hamed is like a raging bull, searching everywhere. He went to the bank, to check his accounts, and then returned to check on the pharmacy. He asked me to lock the store and took all the keys. I came here to tell you something.

Nahed : What is it? What will you do?

Hussein : I will see Mahmoud and tell him.

Nahed : Will you come with him?

Hussien : No, of course not. I will disappear completely till the storm passes away.

Nahed : How can you leave me in this critical situation?

Hussein : It is better to be away till they come to an agreement. Don't let a word to slip out of your mouth. I have given you all the money.

Nahed : (looks at him silently)

Hussein : I am leaving to see Mahmoud, before Hamed arrives.

Nahed : (looks at him in sorrow) You are a coward,

Hussein!. How could you leave me in this position? How could I depend on you again? I thought you were a man, and would stand by my side.

(Puzzled) what shall I do with them now? Suppose they quarrel with each other? But I deserve this punishment . I've brought about all this trouble. Hussien agreed with me and encouraged me, but he has escaped now.Cursed men of cursed fathers. They are all selfish. (Thinks for a short time) O, Hosnia, finish quickly and listen to me.

: Here my lady

: (speaks on the telephone) Madame Samia. Thank God I have found you.Mr. Fareed is here now? My brothers are angry. And I am afraid they may quarrel with each other.So I want you to be ready to help.Thank you.

Hosnia, do you hear me! Lay the table, so that anyone who comes first will be busy eating.

Hosnia : Yes, (moves in the hall and sets the plates, the door bell rings)

Nahed : (trembling with fear, she moves to the door slowly, opens it and Hamed enters quickly)

Hamed : Where is Mahmoud?. Where is my money? You, cursed brother where are you?

Nahed : What money? Have you been robbed?

Hamed : Ah, I have been robbed. He has not put any money in my account for six months, He opened an account in his name.

Nahed : What is wrong with this? Did you argue with him?

Hamed : Your brother bought a car.I said good. It

would be useful. But to buy an apartment in Alexandria for a hundred thousand dollars without my knowledge!

Nahed : (holds him and tries to calm him) Sit down and have dinner. Forget this now? (Here the door bell rings) He has come. Don't talk until you have had dinner., Hosnia, open the door.

Mahmoud : Hey, hey, the elder brother has arrived. (Looks at Hamed) What is the matter? What happened to your mind? What money you are searching for?

Hamed : My money.

Mahmoud : You mean our money.aren't we partners. We are two brothers and one sister, Nahed. See your share and our shares

Hamed : You have taken more than you deserve, a car and a large apartment and what else?

Mahmoud : Let's estimate everything .

Hamed : You have nothing with me, it is all my money. If you were employed by the government since your graduation, you couldn't have earned the price of the suit you are wearing. But I made you change cars.

Mahmoud : Wait a minute. I am not an employee at your business. I am a partner, equal to you. And the fortune we have now is gained by skill and risk in selling forbidden things, not only from selling medicines.

Hamed : The pharmacy is the source of all our gains. It is my own.

Mahmoud : The pharmacy here or that in Tanta?

Hamed : (excitedly) Both.

Mahmoud : You have only one pharmacy in Tanta. But

the pharmacy here is for Nahed who paid the basic capital of the whole business.

Nahed : My money.

Hamed : Your money? Take your money from him. He stole the money and put it in his account (to Mahmoud) but from today on you will not enter the pharmacy.

Mahmoud : What do you mean by that?

Hamed : You have taken enough. Deal with it away in the market.
(he moves to go out, but Mahmoud takes hold of him)

Mahmoud : Give me the keys to the pharmacy.

Hamed : (pushes him) Are you threatening me?.

Mahmoud : (holds him firmly from his shoulder)

Hamed : (slaps him on his face, Mahmoud hits him with his fist, then they begin to exchange fists. Hamed succeeds to throw Mahmoud on the ground, Mahmoud rises quickly pointing his pistol at him)

Mahmoud : It would be better if you give me the keys.
(Hamed stuck to his place. Nahed begs Mahmoud not to fire.)

Nahed : Don't shoot your brother, Mahmoud. I don't want anything.

Hamed : (stretches his hand and holds a plate to throw it at Mahmoud. Mahmoud's hand trembles and a bullet is fired, Nahed throws herself on Hamed. She cries and falls down, the door is opened, Fareed and Samia come in, then Dr. Keriako).

Fareed : What is the matter?

Samia : Oh, has it come to this (she throws herself

over Nahed and tries to wake her up. Mahmoud weeps for his sister. Hamed sits beside her. Samia holds Nahed's hand and raises it) quickly, Hosnia, give me a piece of cotton (Nahed opens her eyes and looks around at Hamed and Mahmoud)

Fareed : Don't worry Nahed. Your brothers are good.

Nahed : (bursts out weeping)

Samia : (examines all her body) there is only this simple wound.

Hamed : (holds her hand and kisses her on her forehead) rise, Nahed. Rise my sister. Take the pharmacy that you like.

Keriako : Didn't I tell you that she must get married and be pleased (Fareed and Samia laugh)

Hamed : Enough, doctor. Show us your friend

Black out

SCENE VI

(Nahed, standing in front of the mirror, dressed in her fine clothes and sings)

“My man is coming.
At last he is coming. We will live happy
and vex all rivals.”

Samia : (enters) Yes, Nahed. Why did you send for
me?

Nahed : (Joyfully). Yes ... I can't do anything with-
out your advice. You are the best neighbor in
the world.

Samia : (smiles) What happened for all this change,
what is the matter?

Nahed : Good. Of course. Saied, is he coming in
time or will he be late?

Samia : Surely, in time.

Nahed : (Jumping towards her) My good friend, tell
me what to put on? This blue dress or that
white... This eye- liner or that? You know
what he likes. What pleases him?

Samia : You are very beautiful and attractive. No
man can resist all this sweetness and charm.
Any dress you wear will appear elegant and
fantastic.

Nahed : God bless you (Jump towards her, and hugs
her). When he comes, what should I offer

him; tea or coca?

Samia : Lemonade is preferable.

Nahed : I think so. I will enter with the tray in my hands. Say hello and then what will happen?

Samia : (laughs) I don't know, that's up to you.

Nahed : Should I offer him the lemonade immediately? Wouldn't he stand to shake hands first?

Samia : He should do that.

Nahed : (returns to look at the mirror and looks absent mindedly, then returns to talk to Samia).
Should I offer him passion fruit or lemonade?

Samia : No. dear, ...it must be red rosy, the sign of love and burning emotion.

Nahed : Right. (Smiles simply) One last questions. When shall I say "to your health" when he drinks the cup or when I offer it.

Samia : It doesn't make a difference. Either way, he will be pleased. Excuse me.

Nahed : Don't leave me.

Samia : No. I won't leave you for long. We will come and have a drink. Then we will leave you with Saied to get to know each other. (Samia goes out, Nahed is standing before the mirror looking at her face).

Nahed : Very good, curse upon anyman who does not respect my right to enjoy a happy life. They want to bury me here inside the house. I must get married and enjoy freedom.. Even ignorant Najwa, who looks like a statue has got married to a doctor and has become the lady of a house. How can I be compared to

Hala or Najwa? I wish I could have the same luck. The question is that who distributes fortunes in this world? Were he blind and couldn't see the difference. (laughs at herself and combs her hair again) This is the first step. The wheel must move quickly and never stop.

(At this moment Hussein comes in and talks loudly from the hall)

Hussein

: Nahed, Where are you?

Nahed

: Yes, Hussein.

Hussein

: (looks in the room) Oh.What is all that for?(He holds her hand and turns round her in astonishment). Oh, What rosy cheeks, dark eyes? (she looks at him and moves with pleasure) You did not tell me where you are going.Is it a wedding party or waiting for a bridegroom?

Nahed

: Don't you know?

Hussein

: Of course, not (silence). Oh, Oh, I am really a fool! To buy a lot of cakes and drinks without asking for what.

Nahed

: (laughs) You are a fool because you don't ask about the occasion.

Hussein

Sorry, I am busy studying all the time. I must prepare myself for the exam.

Nahed

: Forget all this now. Come with me.. You will play the part of the bridegroom. I will offer you a glass of lemonade and see what will happen. (Pulls him from his hand and walk jumping to the hall where Hussein sits. Then Nahed enters carrying the lemonade. She laughs shyly and puts the tray before him) good evening dear. Help your self.

Would you prefer the rosy or the white green. (Raises her hand with a glass)

Hussein : (pretends to be serious) Thank you Mademoiselle. I like both because they show me your fine taste. Even the glass that you touch with your fingers. I like it (he holds the first glass and before he drinks, he kisses its edge) this is a blessing. I must kiss it so that I might not to be deprived of this grace.

Nahed : (impressed with his words and looks at him with great eagerness. Hussein holds her hand, taps on her cheek, but Nahed is gazing absent mindedly for a while)

Hussein : Nahed, don't go away. I am here.

Nahed : (looks at him in amazement) are we in a dream my love?

Hussein : No. But in reality. It will happen sooner than you expect.

Nahed : I wish it could happen ; Hussein. I wish the bridegroom could tell me such sweet words.

Hussein : (startled) a bridegroom! Then the matter is serious. You are playing with my feelings? (He tries to go out, but she takes hold of him)

Nahed : Wait; don't go out. You are., my best friend. You are the dearest man I have in this world.

Hussein : Enough of that. Yes, I am your best friend, but I am poor, just a workman at your pharmacy, not fit as a husband (she sticks to him and her voice shakes as she weeps)

Nahed : Don't be hard, Hussein, you did not tell me clearly that you love me. And as I am older than you I didn't believe that you would

really think of marrying me.

Hussein : I wish you the best of luck, my lady (he goes out, and Samia's voice is heard from outside)

Samia : Nahed, get ready. The man has come (she looks in the room and finds Nahed still sitting and tears in her eyes) Oh God. What happened? (pulls her to stand up) Dry your eyes quickly, don't think of anything now. Hurry up please, it's time. Where is Mahmoud?

Nahed : (Wipes away her tears) I will call him (Samia gets out), Hosnia

Hosnia : Yes, my lady.

Nahed : Ring him up. Tell him that Fareed is waiting for him and wants him quickly. (Mahmoud enters with Saied, followed by Fareed and Keriako. No sooner had they sat, than Samia entered, followed by Nahed carrying four glasses of lemonade on a tray. Her mood is not well.)

Nahed : (puts the tray on the table before them) Help yourselves. (She said it and sat down)

Saied : Thanks.

Mahmoud : (offer the glasses to the guests) Help yourself Mr. Saied

Samia : (takes a sip) thank you. It's very delicious.

Nahed : (smiles) Thank you, madame Samia.

Saied : (drinks a little, then puts the glass down, to get out the packet of cigarette. In the meantime, Mahmoud offers him a cigarette. As they exchanged cigarettes, Saied's glass fell from his hand. All burst laughing even Nahed, that he felt awkward)

Nahed : (stands to remove the tray) Never mind. She takes a handkerchief and dries Saied's pantaloons. Hosnia, take the tray (Hosnia takes the tray and Nahed gets out behind her, then she returns with another glass of lemonade) Help yourself with this cup.

Saied : Sorry, I cost you an extra glass of the drink.

Fareed : Two blows in the head could have a painful effect.

Mahmoud : We are used to this.

Keriako : Where is the backgammon, Mahmoud? Come. I want to get my revenge. (Gets out and Mahmoud after him)

Samia : Excuse me, Mr. Saied. Goodbye Nahed.

Saied : Bye (Samia gets out, Nahed stands behind her)

Samia : No, stay with Saied.

Nahed : (returns to the drink and offers it with her hand)
Drink, Mr. Saied or do you not like this kind.

Saied : How, it is very sweet.

Nahed : Would you like coffee?

Saied : (looks from behind his glasses in surprise)
No this is fine.

Nahed : Then. Drink (he looks carefully at her and she gazes at him. Then he stretches his neck towards her. After a short time, she bursts into laughter that makes him feel awkward, then he laughs in a low voice, and searches for something)

Saied : What about your teeth?

Nahed : Fine.. They are just fine.

Saied : Didn't you go to the doctor again?

Nahed : No, it was the first and the last time.

Saied : Your teeth are like white pearls.

Nahed : Did you have many teeth pulled out?

Saied : (looks at her in doubt) No. Not many.

Nahed : How many. Four, or Five?

Saied : (laughs cunningly) Don't worry. Three or four.

Nahed : Have you had your wisdom teeth pulled out?

Saied : (laughs) Not only the wisdom teeth, but the source of wisdom also.

Nahed : (laughs loudly) Oh, God, help us.

Saied : Don't worry. I haven't reached this point yet (they laugh)

Nahed : Of course, you are right because sound minds have become a source of trouble now. Let's give them a holiday and enjoy life.

Saied : Don't worry. They will take a long holiday (he laughs)

Nahed : (stands up and goes towards the door) Excuse me for a moment (she returns with Hosnia carrying the tray with coffee) Help yourself Mr. Saied.

Saied : (lowers the glasses on his nose and contemplates her attractive body).

Nahed : (offers him the cup of coffee and while he is gazing at her, he stretches his hand to hold up the cup but he holds her hand and both get confused and laugh)

Saied : Oh, sorry.

Nahed : Never mind.

Saied : This is too generous of you.

Nahed : We are farmers and farmers are generous

Saied : My father was a government official.

Nahed : Do you have sisters, Mr. Saied?

Saied : I have two.

Nahed : You must be lucky. I have no sisters

Saied : God loves you.

Nahed : Why, isn't a good thing to have sisters?

Saied : No, sisters are troublemakers

Nahed : They must be very kind and not as cruel as brothers.

Saied : (laughs loudly) Don't say that. Your brothers may hear you.

Nahed : It doesn't matter. I express my opinion. Why haven't you brought your sisters with you?

Saied : I don't want them to interfere in my personal affairs.

Nahed : Bravo Saied (laughs) Are your sisters house wives or do they have jobs?

Saied : One is a professor at the university; the other is a headmistress of a high school.

Nahed : They sound like great sisters. How do they cause trouble for you?

Saied : Not now, but some years ago I was responsible for them. I am the only man in the family, who goes out and brings them what they need.

Nahed : (annoyed) why is that?

Saied : The girl goes out only to work or to the market and for a limited time because women are not like men.

Nahed : What do you mean?

Saied : That woman is woman and man is man.

Nahed : Of course (laughs) this is true.

Saied : Do you see anything else?

A Crazy Girl Named Nahed

Nahed : I see that they are equal. Woman is a human being who has a mind like a man; She has eyes and legs and can walk. This means that she has the right to go out and work. If God wanted to keep women inside houses, he would not have created legs for them.

Saied : (surprised) Yes. But she goes out with a man; not alone.

Nahed : This means she must have a bodyguard, to go to school with a guard. And if she goes to the dentist, she takes a guard also.

Saied : What's wrong with this?

Nahed : It means that a woman is like a goat that needs someone to drag her behind him (Hamed, Keriako, Fareed and Samia come in)

Hamed : Good evening. Welcome Ustaz Saied.

Saied : (hurries to stand) Welcome, doctor.

Hamed : (looks at Nahed) How are you, Nahed?

Nahed : (somewhat nervous) Very well.

Keriako : You know Doctor Hamed, Mr. Saied is a teacher in high school and an artist.

Hamed : We are honored, Mr. Saied.

Saied : Thank you.

Samia : (takes Nahed aside) Oh Nahed what about the atmosphere?

Nahed : (gazes her eyes and moves them right and left. Then moves her lips..) Good..

Samia : (laughs and turns to Saied). Saied. What are you thinking about.?

Hamed : He must think carefully. How often does a man marry? A man has only one good chance to decide his fate. If he misses it, he will never seize it again.

Mahmoud : Mr. Saied. Take all the time you need to think, before you decide . we welcome you at any time., till you both understand each other and become sure that you can live together in peace and happiness..

Fareed : Bravo. Mahmoud.That is right. This relationship must be based on mutual understanding.

Saied : Thank you for your good thoughts. In fact I am happy to be acquainted with you.

Hamed : Welcome Mr. Said You are a good teacher, worthy of trust and respect.

Keriako : This is enough. (to Nahed and Saied) You must arrange a time for you to go out for a walk or to go to the movies.

Mahmoud : You are always funny; there is nothing in your head except movies and amusement.

Keriako : What is it? What does he say? (stretches his ear to hear)

Mahmoud : (laughs) nothing ... you are an antiquity

Keriako : I said, you do not understand anything.

Hamed : When will your sisters visit us. Mr. Saied?

Saied : Is it necessary?

Hamed : No.It is not necessary, but it would be nice to get to know each other.Marriage is a family relationship.

Fareed : So they say.

Saied : O.K, when we get engaged .

Mahmoud : This is good.

Samia : ...Congratulations, Let's go out, Fareed.
(Fareed and his wife go out then Keriako follows them)

Black out

Act Three - SCENE I

(Saied's apartment, a long hall with a small table and a few chairs of bamboo. Two bedrooms open on the hall.. We see Saied standing in front of us, with pajama trousers, without his eyeglasses. Shadia, a young girl of ten years and her brother Kamal about seven years, standing before him. Their mother Zeinab about forty, sitting beside the table watching joyfully the movements which the children make according to Saied's instructions. This serving woman is beautiful, reddish brown in face enjoying good health. On the other side, Salah El Janaieny and Attif Boutros, Salah was short, thin with scratched face. He seems to have no relation with sports. Attif was white faced, fat to some extent, and wearing eye glasses.)

Saied : Let us. Begin (Kamal puts his head on the ground and raises his legs. Saied helps him to make his legs upright) Bravo. (It is noticed that Kamal wears a short slip and a flannel without sleeves) Another time. Bravo. (Thus, several times then jump up side down on the ground. Then another movement begins, where Saied stretches his hands before him, and Kamal puts his head between them and jumps up to turn his legs round Saied's neck.)

Salah : Bravo, Saied is training to work as an acrobat.

Attif : He wanted to be a teacher of sports but took the wrong way and became a teacher of drawing.

Salah : (hits him on the hand) Don't say sports, say athletics.

Attif : I think there is no difference; what does the word mean? It is good for you to get rid of these complexities; a teacher of sports says "Athletics" and of drawing says "Art education". Frankly speaking, none of you has anything to do with art or athletics.

Salah : (snatches Attif's eyeglasses and leaves him perplexed and moving like a blind man) you, chemistry teacher. You don't understand in these matters. I warned you several times not to argue with me. What you said about Saied is right, because he is the last one who understands anything about art or painting.

Attif : (stretches his hand) give me my glasses and stop your foolish joking.

Salah : (stretches hand but Salah holds it and pulls him) I told you, you can't defy me.

Saied : (To Salah) O, boy, give him the glasses (holds it and hands it to Attif) I told you long ago, be a man and give him a hot beating to make him respect you.

Salah : (Laughs) You are mad. If he obeyed your advice I would kill him.

Saied : Keep silent; both of you, I don't want to hear a sound in this house without permission.

Kamal : Oh, wait please, I want to finish my training.

Saied : Tell them, Kamal, who is the master here.

Kamal : You.

Salah : (laughs) The fit of madness has returned to him.

Saied : Say, Attif, who is the master here.

Salah : Don't say it, Attif. Be a man. There is no master or mastership here

Attif : (smiles and takes off the glasses and turns round himself puzzled and unable to talk)

Saied : (hits him on his chest) Won't you speak or not. You see the rope in the ceiling; I shall hang you on it. (To Zeinab) You, woman, who is the master here?

Zeinab : (laughs till she is hardly suffocated with laughter)

Saied : (In a commanding tone) Speak quickly. I don't like this frivolous behavior.

Zeinab : You are our master here.

Salah : (makes a fuss and laughs) Oh, poor, Zeinab. Do you fear his moustache, which looks like a sweeping broom.

Saied : Shut up, you (pulls Attif from his shoulder) Come here. Why didn't you pronounce the word (Attif shrinks in fear)

Shadia : (looks at Attif's face scornfully) Oh, Mr Attif, how do you control the boys in the class?

Attif : (in a firm voice) Who told you that I control them, in fact they control me.

Zeinab : (laughs) How Mr. Attif?

Attif : How can I control them? I have in my class, forty strong boys, not boys, but say big bulls: (Saied leaves him, Kamal and Shadia clap with joy)

Shadia : (pulls Saied from his hand) My turn now.

Saied : Yes. Wait, till order is settled in this house. Every one should know who is the master here.

Salah : Ok, you can now practice your hobby. Try to stop the madness of mastership. This is better for you.

Saied : (returns to train Shadia) Raise, stretch, bend the body. Jump up side down.

Salah : (strikes a palm to another) God cures your madness. You can be a monkey trainer working in a circus and earning a lot of money.

Shadia : Choose better words Mr. Salah. I am not a monkey.

Salah : (Laughs) who said this?

Shadia : Isn't he training me? And I will be his eighteenth wife (the doorbell rings, and Zeinab opens it, Keriako and Mahmoud come in and see the scene and laugh. Saied does not see them as his back is towards the door)

Salah : Welcome doctors (pointing to Saied jokingly) that is a simple fit that occurs to him once every week and then leaves him in good health.

Mahmoud : Good day, Mr. Saied.

Saied : (turns suddenly) Ho ho, welcome. I am sorry.

Shadia : Welcome. Mr. Mahmoud. You are Nahed's brother.

Keriako : Oh, what a nice pretty girl.

Zeinab : Thank you, doctor

Keriako : (to Shadia) Would you marry me?

Salah : No.she is engaged.

Shadia : Yes. I shall marry Mr. Saied.

Mahmoud : Mr. Saied!. But you are still younger?

Shadia : I will grow up and wait my turn.

Mahmoud : (laughs joyfully) He marries them by turn?

Shadia : I am his eighteenth wife.

Salah : After the hundred..

Shadia : (laughs) No. Mr. Salah, the eighteenth only.

Keriako : What is that? Will Saied marry eighteen times?

Mahmoud : (to Keriako) After the way of emperor Shahrayar in Arabian Nights. (To Shadia) What were you doing?

Shadia : I was exercising to achieve the master's principle that "sound mind is in the sound body "

Salah : He is fond of raising young girls and leaving them to marry others

Shadia : Don't say that Mr. Salah. (Saied enters) Do you hear, master?

Saied : Don't believe him, (she sits beside him as he offers them the cigarettes)

Mahmoud : Why do you stop the exercise?

Saied : To sit with you.

Shadia : Mr.Salah says that you will leave me?

Saied : Do you believe him?

Salah : If you don't believe me ask Mr. Mahmoud, the brother of the bride.

Mahmoud : But we would not neglect your right Shadia.

Shadia : I am the eighteenth (all of them laugh and Zeinab brings the cups of tea)

Saied : You know each other of course, Salah?

Salah : I know Dr.Keriako, the dentist and Mr. Mahmoud the owner of the pharmacy.

Saied : Mr.Salah El Janaieny, the athletics teacher at the high school.

Salah : From Alexandria.

Mahmoud : The best people; I graduated from Alexandria University. Every week, I spend a day or two there.

Salah : In fact, I am not Alexandrian. We are originally from Upper Egypt. Our grand father came to Alexandria in the days of Mohammed Ally Pasha, the founder of modern Egypt.

Keriako : That's a very long time ago..

Salah : Ah, my grandfather was the first man who introduced the art of gardening in Egypt. (Attif and Saied look at each other and laugh, even Shadia laughs loudly)

Salah : (angrily) Why do you laugh? Don't you believe me, you ignoramus? , (holds Attif from his shoulder) What are you laughing at?

Attif : Nothing.

Saied : Say Attif, why do you laugh, are you afraid of him?

Attif : No. Of course not.Nobody knows who introduced the art of gardening to Egypt (to Salah), O man, take it easy and don't mind.

Salah : (in great anger) Do you mean I am a liar (to Mahmoud) When you get off Sedi Gabber station, ask the first man you see about Abu Ghareeb, he will lead you to our house. There you will find my brother whose arm is like a thick pillar. (Pointing to the door pillar) This brother saved twenty people from

drowning. If it were not for him they would have died (they all laugh)

Saied : Without your brother and your grandfather, the world history would have been changed.

Salah : Of course, you man of a hanging moustache, do you want to argue with me?. You saw my brother or not? Can you behave rudely in front of him?.

Saied : (Laughs) No.of course not .

Attif : You mean that your grand father introduced gardening in Egypt. (Silent for a moment) Ah. Right, he was a gardener in the municipality.

Salah : Keep silent, you maimed. You think he is like your miserable father (he laughs and directs his talk to Mahmoud); when you go to Alexandria. You can ask any porter, any delivery man. Do you know the family of Salah El Janaieny?

Attif : Of course, all the porters and the delivery men know you (At this moment Salah tries to hold Attif but he jumps away. Mahmoud, Keriako and Saied laugh)

Mahmoud : I think that's enough. We will leave, Saied.

Saied : Just give me a few moments to put on my suit and I will go out with you.
(He enters his bed - room)

Salah : (returns to his place) Don't worry. Despite all this he is a kind man.

Mahmoud : (awkwardly) Good bye, Let us go Keriako.

Salah : (interrupts him) He amuses these kids because he loves them.

Keriako : Didn't I tell you, Mahmoud? Saied is a kind man.

Mahmoud : (Shakes his head in sorrow), of course.

Birds of a feather flock together

Saied : (gets out of the bed room) Let's go.

(They exit and the curtain falls)

Black out

SCENE II

(Hussein with Nahed in her apartment)

Nahed : Glad to see you.

Hussein : (looks at her in doubt) Yes, your orders!

Nahed : Oh. Why do you look at me in this way?
Where have you been all these days?

Hussein : Studying my lessons.

Nahed : No, that's not the reason. You seem to be angry. Can you say why?

Hussein : Nothing. Is this an inquisition?

Nahed : Oh, you use big words that I don't understand. (Holds his hand, taps on his shoulder) Why do you treat me in such a cruel way?, I am still Nahed your poor relative, whom you feel sorry for!

Hussein : (smiles in sarcasm) That was in the past.

Nahed : What has happened, now?

Hussein : You are no longer in need of anyone.

Nahed : (Laughs and about to hug him) Hussein, the first joy in my life makes you angry?

Hussein : (in a weeping voice) Of course, no. I wish you good luck

Nahed : (looks at him in enjoyment) What can I do Hussein? I could not believe it. Suddenly my brothers agreed to my marriage. Still, we haven't done anything yet.

Hussein : How do you say that? And the engagement party is tomorrow?

Nahed : What do you mean? I am still thinking.

Hussein : Is it a boys' game?

Nahed : May be. He may not love me. Who knows?

Hussein : What else?

Nahed : Don't you want that?

Hussein : I don't want anything.

Nahed : Won't you come with us tomorrow in the car to buy the engagement ring and the candy for the party.

Hussein : Of course. This is my natural job, driver and servant!

Nahed : (looks at his face meaningfully) No, no dear friend, let me rejoice a little. Say, I am glad for you. Say, I will dance with you tomorrow at the party. Say, I will sing for you a new song. Or a sad person finds no place for joy. (She weeps, and sits down)

Hussien : (being affected, he approaches her and taps on her shoulder) Never mind, Nahed, don't be sorry. I had a great hope in you. I thought, you loved me.

Nahed : Of course, I love you very much. You are the only one whom I love in this world. Only with you can I find myself.

Hussein : (tenderly) Is that true Nahed? Then why did you accept that man?

Nahed : (strangled with tears). I cling to a straw like a drowning person, what could I do. Tell me.

Hussein : Calm down now, don't worry, I will stand at your side.

(after a short time) What are you thinking?
Wouldn't you go to bring the ring?
Nahed : I will say, I don't want him. And I love you?
Hussein : Is that so easy.?
Nahed : Don't you love me?
Hussein : Of course, I do
Nahed : Then. Why are you afraid?
Hussein : I am not afraid of anything. But what would they say?
Nahed : You loved him? He loved you? When.? Why didn't you say that?
Nahed : Is it a crime that you love me. Or I love you?
Hussein : (thinking) No. Say what you like to say. And let the other go to hell.
Nahed : Is it strange to tell Mahmoud that we love each other.
Hussein : Is smuggling goods and working in the black market accepted, and love forbidden?
Nahed : Things are up- side down. What can we do?. I have had enough of sadness and sorrow because once I said that I loved a man. (Thinks a little) listen. We'll go tomorrow and I will finish it.
Hussein : How?
Nahed : My fiancé is much older than me. He seems jealous and his mind seems unstable. He wants a lady to shut her at home.
Hussein : O.k. You can perplex him and force him to go away.
Nahed : We have found it. Tomorrow, do not leave me even for one minute. And we shall see what he will say?

Hussein : (joyfully) What a girl you are, Nahed !
(Taps her cheek with his hand) Bye bye.
(He gets out and the lights fade)

Black out

SCENE III

(Casino on the Nile in Mansoura. Nahed and Hussein, Saied and Mahmoud are sitting at a table.)

Mahmoud : Hussein and I are going to get some thing and return (going out.)

Saied : (turns to Nahed) what are you looking at?

Nahed : I enjoy looking at the Nile and the vegetation.

Saied : Are you eager to see these things?

Nahed : Very much, I am imprisoned all the day. What do you think that I am eager to?

Saied : But you said that you come here often with Hussein.

Nahed : Yes. In fact, Hussein has done me many favors. He has always been at my side. I depend on his help to relieve my anxiety and amuse me in bad times

Saied : Will he stay long like that beside you?

Nahed : Of course. I have nobody else to be with me!

Saied : (nervous) How is that?

Nahed : Hussein is my closest relative. He is my intimate friend. We were brought up together as brother and sister.

Saied : (shakes his head) No. This is not a good thing. This Hussein will not enter our house.

Nahed : (Laughs loudly) That is nice. Do you feel jealous?

Saied : Don't raise your voice, the people will hear us.

Nahed : I don't care about people.

Saied : No. No. I care about all people. And my word is an order.

Nahed : (stands and salutes him by raising her hand up) Yes, Sir, beginning when?

Saied : From this day on.

Nahed : (laughs in pity) No. Don't be unjust. When we get married. I will carry out all your orders (stands and acts)

When you go out I will stand to see you off at the door, and tell you "Peace be upon you" Then you shut the doors on me and take the keys. What do you think of me?

Saied : You are making fun of everything.

Nahed : Do you see that I am foolish and stupid?

Saied : Who said that?

Nahed : That's the meaning of your words

Saied : Sit down and talk. It is wrong to stand up and speak like this.

Nahed : I am tired of the word "wrong" I want to feel free even for one day in my life.

Saied : Do you think that marriage will give you freedom?

Nahed : Of course. Why then do girls get married?

Saied : Marriage is a responsibility: For the man and the woman.

Nahed : I know my responsibility. Sweeping, washing clothes, cooking and taking off your shoes when you enter the house. I understand this story.

Saied : Good, then we have agreed.

Nahed : On what thing have we agreed? On being a servant. Isn't it so?

Saied; : No, a house -wife. (Smiles)

Nahed : (sits). O.k, as you like.

Saied : Get up. Mahmoud is waving for us. (They go out)

Nahed : Let us go.

Blackout

SCENE IV

(Hussein with Nahed in her apartment)

Hussein : We haven't reached a solution yet.

Nahed : Patience. Look at this bracelet and this ring. Does this brooch match the dress?

Hussein : (watching her moving before him) Esh, Esh, wonderful. But what a loss. I want to have a picture of your astonishing portrait now to compare it with that of your prospective bridegroom.

Nahed : Why?

Hussein To laugh at your disappointment.

Nahed : Shut up boy. Stop this nonsense. He is a great artist not a rash singer like you.

Hussein : Ho ,Ho, he is really an artist. That's obvious by his moustache, hanging on his mouth like a farmer's whip (they laugh)

Nahed : (tries to arouse his jealousy by the movement of her hands)
His look is exciting. It is true that your face is comfortable and having good features, but you are like colorless water that has no taste. But Ustaz Saied has a funny look.His face is full of ups and downs. He has unusual peculiarities that give me delight and satisfaction.

Hussein : (in a dreamy, sarcastic voice) O God. What else?

Nahed : (Jumping in joy) When you look at his face, you find sad aspects that attract you. His small dark eyes, which go deep down inside his forehead, and the black thick glassess that remind me of the nightmares that haunts me at night . But when I look at his moustache. I forget everything and burst out laughing.

Hussein : I wish you a happy life. Excuse me now, I have no place here.

Nahed : Wait, what do you mean? Don't be in a hurry. We are still on the first step.

Hussein : Oh, you are mad. You see all that happened with him just a first step. What do you think of people? Are they toys in your hands?

Nahed : No, but I see that life is a grand stage and we are all acting a silly play, so you and I must play our parts and make them play with us.

Hussein : But; not at the expense of the poor man who has opened his heart for you.

Nahed : Opened his heart for me!. How do you know? Did he tell you that?

Hussein : No, but he agreed to marry you.

Nahed : Why boy? Am I ugly or old? A hundred of better men wanted me, but my brothers rejected them.

Hussein : I don't mean that.

Nahed : Then what do you mean?

Hussein : I mean that he came and asked for your hand, and bought all this jewelry for you.

Hussein : No. These things are outdated for our time. Even, the love of Romeo and Juliet does not suit us. We must be better.

Nahed : Not even Lila's mad lover!.

Hussein : Our love is free from madness. It is a wise love. Or say civilized love.

Nahed : Love without sorrows or sighs.!.

Hussein : Who says that? It is full of emotion and excitement. But it has no sign of madness.

Nahed : Are these real facts or mere words of poetry?

Hussein : In the last two days. I lived in great grief and sadness. I was thinking of you. I imagined that you betrayed me and wrote a sad song expressing my feelings.

Nahed : (Jumps towards him and hugs him) My love, Hussein. (emotionally) Let me hear it; say.

Hussein : (He sings, and she listens in admiration and delight)

(After a short time, Mahmoud enters)

Nahed : (hurries to meet him joyfully) Yes, How are you?

Mahmoud : (Shakes his head in sorrow)

Nahed : What is the matter with you?

Mahmoud : What should I say? The idiot dentist has turned my head.

Nahed : How is that, Mahmoud?

Mahmoud : The bridegroom appeared to be foolish; his mind is ruined, to the last.

Hussein : Have you discovered his truth? My word never falls to the ground.

Nahed : Tell me what have you seen?

Mahmoud : (Laughs) I found him half naked playing

with the children.

Nahed : Perhaps, he likes children.

Hussein : Ah. That is right.

Mahmoud : But we do not want you to have children, for the sake of your health.

Hussein : Ah, that is important.

Nahed : (looking at Hussein) Don't worry my brother; we can finish this matter now.

Hussein : This is very simple. Nahed can enforce him to run away.

Mahmoud : How?

Nahed : Oh, We can wait till his sisters come to see us. He said that they used to spoil all his plans at the last moment.

Hussein : Let's wait for tomorrow. May God change every thing? Good-by

Black out

SCENE V

(The same previous scene)

(Saied and his sisters, Suaad, and Madeha—Samia and Fareed)

Suaad : (more than fifty, seems old and beautiful)

Mahmoud : Welcome.

Nahed : (gets in - - they stand to shake hands with her)

Samia : (introduces saied's sisters to Nahed and her brothers) Professor Suaad, Saied's sister. Mrs. Madeha, his second sister.)

Suaad : (looks at Nahed uncomfortably) hello, O bride. My sister Madeha is a headmistress and has two beautiful daughters like you.

Nahed : (smiles) Thanks, you have honored us. My brother Mahmoud is a graduate of commerce and owner of a pharmacy. My brother Hamed is a pharmacist and has another pharmacy in Tanta.

Madeha : That is great. Don't you have sisters.?

Nahed : No.

Mahmoud : Nahed is enough.

Suaad : You do not love girls like Saied?.

Mahmoud : (Laughs) No. I love Nahed very much.

Saied : You have avoided the question.

Suaad : This is just our luck. We went to the university and got important jobs and you don't want to change your traditional view.

Mahmoud : No, of course. We don't deny any change.

Madeha : Mr. Fareed must have another opinion.

Fareed : That is true. I believe that man and woman are equal. She is now educated and plays her part in serving the society.

Suaad : For that reason you have married a school-mistress.

Samia : That is true. But, every one has his own circumstances. Marriage with a housekeeper does not mean the opposite.

Suaad : But I mean that the man who gets married to a workwoman, gives a concrete evidence of his faith in freedom and equality.

Saied : (smiles) Let us forget this subject now.

Nahed : (to Suaad) Where do you work as a doctor?

Samia : In the university.

Suaad : I have got a doctorate and I am teaching schoolmistresses who are working in high schools.

Nahed : O God. I thought you were a medical doctor.

Madeha : My sister preferred to join the faculty of Archaeology. She was fond of antiquities. She got her doctorate in Pharaonic history and ancient languages from a big university in America.

Fareed : Marvelous. Archaeology is an exciting field.

Mahmoud : (Laughs while looking at Suaad). Many people are fond of antiquities now.

Suaad : They are usually infatuated by the fantastic pieces of arts such as the head of Nevertiti

and that of Hatshpsut.

Nahed : (in a sarcastic tone) but Hatshpsut has a frightful figure.

Suaad : Where have you seen it?

Nahed : (retreats) No, I have never seen her. When people see a clumsy girl at school or in the street, they say she is like Hatshpsut.

Suaad : (stretches her lips in rage) This is nonsense. Hatshpsut was a great queen in ancient Egypt. She made great achievements for our country. She sponsored numerous construction projects, and mounted important trade expeditions and military campaigns.

(The atmosphere of the meeting grew hot and Fareed is trying to cool it down)

Fareed : Some writers said that Hatshpsut was represented in the traditional costume of a male king.

Suaad : This is because Egyptians considered it unusual for a woman to become king. She had to play this role because her younger brother Thutmose III who was the real heir to the throne was too young to rule alone, and so Hatshpsut became regent. This is her true history and glory. It is not the beauty of coloured faces or empty heads.

Samia : Her pictures shows that she had a beautiful face also, but young ladies are fond of imitating Nevrtili as a woman of striking beauty and attractive features.

Suaad : Those girls are naïve and empty-minded . They are deceived by superficial appearance. If they were highly educated, they would think of spiritual beauty and culture.

Fareed : Moderation is a good ideal in these matters.

Madeha : The problem is that some schoolmistresses exaggerate too much as if they were going to a party not to school. The girls pick up these bad examples and imitate them.

Samia : They are few now and in the end it is a matter of taste.

Fareed : Excuse me professor Suaad, I would like to ask you a question that seems to be interesting.

Suaad : Please ask.

Fareed : What are the strangest customs of marriage you read about during your search in ancient history?

Suaad : It is not too strange because it exists in Upper Egypt and some Arab societies. Some parents insist that the girl does not show her face to her future husband except at the wedding night (all laugh)

Keriako : What is that marriage?

Mahmoud : Marriage in darkness.

Nahed : A good chance for ugly women.

Keriako : Those are reactionary people living in ignorance, I want to tell you about interesting habits. I read a book about primitive dancing in the Peloponnesian Islands. When a man wants to marry a woman, he takes her and they go to the mountains where they strip off all their clothes and stand naked like Adam and Eve.

Fareed : Yes. Dr.Keriako, go on and complete ...

Keriako : After stripping off all their clothes ...

Mahmoud : Wonderful Keriako, relate your funny pieces.

Keriako : They exercise sports. The bride and the bridegroom begin to dance. Of course they are not completely naked. But there was the mulberry leaf.

Madeha : (Laughs) Dr. Keriako exposes everything clearly. (They all laugh)

Fareed : Yes, go on, Keriako.

Keriako : The people stand to sing and salute them.

Mahmoud : What after the dance?

Keriako : Wait. Don't interrupt me.

Hamed : Silent, Mahmoud. Let him take his time.

Keriako : At the end of the dance, the bridegroom holds the hand of his bride and advances to perform an acting scene .

Mahmoud : God Disappoints you. Is this a story?

Keriako : No, but wait and listen. They practice an ancient ritual called "Race conflict". They walk opposite each other. The bride walks in a certain direction. Her bridegroom walks in the opposite one. She goes west; he goes east and moves quickly till they meet face to face. At last, they stop and gaze at each other for a long time until they burst into laughter.

Mahmoud : May God curse you, Keriako.

Keriako : (pleased) The last stage begins with questions to both of them.

Fareed : You mean an examination.

Keriako : No, not an examination. It is something like the dialogue that we see on television screen.

Nahed : How?

Samia : Wait please Keriako is talking.

Keriako : The bridegroom asks the bride if she loves

him or not?
If she says "No" it means that she cannot marry him.

Nahed : It is a good way for solving problems.
Suaad : (angrily) Do you like this way bride?
Nahed : Yes. It is very interesting.
Madeha : Rise then Nahed, take Saied, show us this dialogue

Saied : This was in the past.
Fareed : What prevents it now?
Samia : Don't waste our time, rise up and show us. Walk in opposite directions and gaze at each other for a time.

All : (in one voice) Heh, Heh. Go on. Go on.
Samia : (pulls Nahed from her hand) Go on, Nahed (Nahed stands and laughs).
Fareed : (pulls Saied but he refuses) Get up Saied. Go on to prove your superiority as a man.

Madeha : What Saied. Who ought to be shy? Rise up please, brother; rise (she smiles and tries with him but his shyness overcomes him)

Samia : Oh, bridegroom. Why do you hesitate?
Keriako : (stands) Oh, Saied. It is a simple game?
Saied : (to Nahed) You ask the questions and I will answer.

Hussein : No, Ustaz. You must stand up or leave this role to me. I will play it. (he holds a glass of water as a microphone) if you please, miss Nahed answer my questions, but quickly, and without hesitation. Do you agree?

Nahed : The questions must be clear and easy.
Hussein : Ok. Do you love the bridegroom?
Nahed : (quickly) It hasn't happened yet.

Hussein : What do you like in the bridegroom?
Quickly, please.

Nahed : (looks towards the bridegroom, then to the others) His sad eyes.

Hussein : (encouraging her) Bravo, (All of them laugh)) silence, please. (To Nahed) This question, you must answer it in a second without hesitation because it is very important.

Nahed : (controls herself) Ask and finish quickly.

Hussein : Tell me. What thing don't you like in the bridegroom?

Nahed : The thing that makes me nervous and upsets my mind is (stop talking for a moment)
(All want her to hurry)

All of them : Come on, say it. Don't hesitate.

Hussein : quickly.

Nahed : His long moustache, yah (all clap except the bridegroom and his sisters)

Suaad : No, no, this is an insult that we cannot forgive. Let us go (stands up and pulls her sister and makes for the door, then she talks to her brother) We are leaving, and if you are interested in the talk you can stay. (Mahmoud, Fareed and Samia try to cool her temper)

Mahmoud : That is a mere joke doctor. Wait for a while.

Suaad : Sorry. I can't wait for a second. (To her sister) Let us go (they go out with the bridegroom)

Black out

SCENE VI

(Saied's apartment)

Suaad : (Very angry) It's a matter of luck.
Madeha : What does Saied like in this girl?
Suaad : He admires red and white colors, she is an ignorant. Has Fareed deceived him?
Zeinab : No, . It was the wish of Ustaz Saied to choose a girl that does not read or write.
Suaad : Why does he want that? I am a professor in the university and Madeha is a headmistress. Why does he take an ignorant one?
Zeinab : It is your brother's wish. A young girl who does not know how to read or write. Once he sent me to a girl who was more ugly and told me to talk to her parents about him (she laughs)
Madeha : Why do you laugh? Do you remember anything?
Suaad : She remembered his foolish mind.
Zeinab : He told me to tell her parents to donate their ten acres of land for her.
Suaad : Did you go?
Zeinab : (Laughs) I couldn't, but my mind led me to tell him a lie and save myself.
Madeha : Why did you tell a lie?
Zeinab : Those people have nothing except those

ten acres. How could I go and tell them to give all the land to their girl, who has two other sisters and two brothers.

Suaad : Anyhow, he must leave this girl.

Zeinab : But why?. She is a beautiful bride and her family is wealthy.

Madeha : Don't say that. She is ignorant and rash.

Saied : (enters and sees them excited) What is the matter?

Madeha : Do you like this bride, Saied?

Saied : What is wrong with her?

Suaad : She is not a good match for you. She is ignorant and stupid.

Saied : I want one like this. I don't like educated women.

Suaad : You have the right to hate the educated women because we caused you so much troubles.

Saied : She is not the first one you reject..

Madeha : This girl is not fit for you. She will cause you much trouble .

Suaad : She is young and proud, and you are suspicious.

Madeha : Yes. Very young, about twenty years old at most. This means that she is twenty years younger.

Suaad : If you married twenty years ago, you would have a daughter of her age.

Madeha : Saied. Think carefully about this difference. This is an adventure,

Saied : (absent – minded) let us finish with all this talk, there will be no marriage at all.

Suaad : Why not? Just not this one. I have a better girl than this. A good schoolmistress

Madeha : Nadia? O Saied. I hope she will be your wife. She is a modest girl that can live with you in peace.

Saied : It is finished. Never to talk about this subject again

Zeinab : How! What will you say, Ustaz Saied?

Saied : Keep silent. No more talk.

Madeha : Then. We shall go. (She goes out with Suaad)

Black out

SCENE VII

(Nahed's apartment)

Hussein : (in sarcastic tone) Look Nahed, I have prepared a nice song for the party.

Nahed : Is it true, Hussein?

Hussein : Yes, I will sing a very passionate song revealing my inner wound.

Nahed : Hasn't this wound healed?

Hussein : What happened to make it heal?

Nahed : I told Mahmoud that I don't like this man.

Hussein : What did he say to you?

Nahed : He said to me: "you are free"
(Hamed and Mahmoud enter. They seem busy thinking.)

Hamed : What Nahed? Don't you like these people?

Nahed : I am confused. I don't know what to say.

Mahmoud : Nahed, my sister. It is marriage. You are free to choose.

Hamed : That is what we have agreed upon.

Nahed : His sisters like scorpions, what could I do with them?

Hussein : Would you live with them?

Mahmoud : Even so.. They are not easy, the professor of the university has the complexities of the whole world.

Hussein : She is fearful. Her eyes remind me of the

owl that cries at midnight, a sign of bad omen.

Nahed : What about the engagement invitations, which we sent to people?

Mahmoud : Never mind. We can apologize to them.

Hamed : This is not a problem, all the invited guests are of our relatives.

Hussein : (to Nahed) Let us hope for the best, I wish you good luck

Nahed : (Laughs) O boy. Why do you then, prepare the song so quickly?

Hussein : My only cousin I thought. I must share in celebrating your wedding day.

Nahed : It means that you wanted to get rid of me.

Mahmoud : No, Hussein does not mean that.

Hamed : What has that to do with Hussein?

Nahed : I am joking. I have no friend except Hussein. He is always at my side. He relieves my pains in sad moments.

Mahmoud : This is right. Will you marry him and finish this story?.

Hussein : (looks at him in doubt) Why Mahmoud? Do you see that I am not a good match? Tomorrow I will get my degree and have a respectable job.

Mahmoud : (laughs loudly) Listen Hussein, I am serious, we respect you whether you get a degree or not.

Hamed : Don't be angry, Hussein. He is joking with you.

Mahmoud : No. Not joking.. I am serious. Only Nahed must speak first and say her word. We will bring her the most precious jewels and the party will be tomorrow at the set time.

Hamed : I have no objection to you Hussein. At least, you are our cousin.

Nahed : (looks at Hussein joyfully without a word)

Mahmoud : What do you say Nahed'? This is a good solution to get out of this critical situation.

Nahed : Does Hussein say that he wants to marry?

Hamed : Why not?..

Hussein : (looks in puzzle) I can't believe this.

Mahmoud : Hussein can't say anything. It is a chance he has never dreamed of.

Hussein : (shyly) It is a happy solution. I love Nahed and I wish to make her happy.

Nahed : (in rashness) My darling Hussein.

Hamed : Why were you silent all this time.

Nahed : (runs towards Mahmoud and Hamed to hug them) O dearly brothers. I hope I will not be deprived of your kindness.

Hussein : (in joy and astonishment) I didn't think you were so kind (He hugs them, one after the other, then he approaches Nahed and opens his arms for her. she leans towards him and quickly runs away)

Nahed : Be shy, boy! Not now.

(Fareed comes in)

Fareed : What about Saied? I see you are not pleased with his sisters.

Mahmoud : Yes. Nahed does not want him.

Fareed : Shall I tell him this decision?

Mahmoud : O.k.

Fareed : And the party of tomorrow?

Mahmoud : It will be held at the set time

Fareed : (astonished) How?. Who will be the bride?

Mahmoud : Don't worry. We agreed to marry Nahed to Hussein.

Fareed : Bravo, this is the best solution. (he goes out)

Nahed : Wait Ustaz Fareed (meanwhile, Samia enters) Hello madame. Oh Hussein. Start.

Hussein : (laughs) to start what?

Nahed : To sing. You must sing the song you prepared for the party (all encouraging him) Let us hear. Hush (they applaud)

Hussein : Tomorrow at the party.

Mahmoud : Tomorrow we shall hear it again with the guests.

Fareed : But this is a private request of the bride.

Fareed : We can record it so as to hear it again tomorrow.

Hamed : Sing Hussein to please your sweet bride, you must fulfill her wishes, this is our main term.

Hussein : Ok. (He sings an Arabic song)

The End