

AUTHOR'S AGENT
Susan Schulman
A Literary Agency
454 W.44th Street
New York, NY 10036
Tel 212 713-1633
Fax 212 581-8830
susan@schulmanagency.com

THE BLACK FOX

by

Allan Havis

Copyright, Allan Havis, 2026

allanhavis@aya.yale.edu

CHARACTERS

Amos mid-70/80s, Israeli-American
Josie. late-30s, black
Ruthlate 60s,
Hymanmid-70/80s male
Little mid-40s or 50s female

SETTING and TIME

Senior living facility, New Jersey, Summer 2009

**SCENE ONE
(AFTERNOON. AMOS' APARTMENT)**

AMOS

Move the flowers to the window.

JOSIE

Why?

AMOS

There's going to be a loud knock at my door and it's never good news when people bang on an old man's door.

(PAUSE)

Please move the flowers, Josie. I want the world to know that I am loved.

JOSIE

Oh, that's a laugh.

AMOS

No teasing. And I'm fragile.

JOSIE

The world doesn't care, Mr. Jacobi. Besides the lot outside is for service vehicles only. Just trucks and vans.

AMOS

So?

JOSIE

Those aren't your people.

AMOS

People are people. Blue collar, white collar, high collar.

JOSIE

I'm not talking about the color of their collars.

AMOS

I want the world to care, darling. We are not lonely here. No. No. No. You see, only astronauts are lonely. I feel their loneliness. Don't you?

JOSIE

No.

AMOS

You don't feel their loneliness or you don't believe me?

JOSIE

I do believe you. On Fridays you tell the truth. The other days it's roulette. Thank God it's Friday. It's time for your champagne bath. And then I leave you to fend for yourself.

AMOS

Do I smell?

JOSIE

Like anchovies outside the can.

AMOS

You know I like to conserve water.

JOSIE

Why?

AMOS

I want to be green.

JOSIE

You're gray. Miserably gray.

AMOS

So very green, Josie.

JOSIE

Your feet are green.

AMOS

My feet are ancient. They have climbed the Masada and dangled in the Dead Sea. Let's see your feet in a few years. Slippers off.

JOSIE

I'm not showing you my fleeting naked feet.

AMOS

Not too long ago, *fleeting* John Demjanjuk escaped federal custody. Try to say that name!

JOSIE

Bath time! Your hands are spotted.

AMOS

Demjanjuk, Demjanjuk .. sounds a vile part of the intestines. He escaped custody just hours after six immigration officers grabbed this lying Nazi camp guard from his Cleveland home. I've a low opinion of Ohio.

JOSIE

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is in Cleveland, Mr. Jacobi. Cleveland is cool.

(GIVING HIM HIS EVENING MEDICATION TABS)

Two more pills. Thank you. Your nose is red.

AMOS

That means rain tonight. My *schnozz* is a barometer.

JOSIE

Really?

AMOS

And when my *schnozz* is blue, the clouds unglue . . . into feather pillows.

JOSIE

Lovely image.

AMOS

You know, Demjanjuk was an accessory to 30,000 deaths at Poland's Sobibor camp – the fat dumb *schmuck* SS killer that he is.

JOSIE

(FINDING A PENTHOUSE MAGAZINE IN HIS BEDDING)

Is this *literature* yours?

AMOS

(IGNORING HER QUESTION)

No statute of limitations on genocide. He looks like Tor Johnson – the blockhead Swede wrestler who made B movies with Godzilla. Yes, that fine magazine is mine.

(PAUSE)

Demjanjuk's ten-year-old grandson was in the house when they arrested him. So Josie darling, what was going on in this kid's head during the raid?

JOSIE

Your grandson gave you this, Mr. Jacobi?

(SHE TOSSES MAGAZINE INTO TRASH CAN)

AMOS

Maybe he did and maybe I stole it from him.
Hey, don't throw my magazines away.

JOSIE

He's gay.

AMOS

Lots of kids are gay today. It's a fashion statement. Like Cher's kid and Ronald Reagan's boy. I like my grandson just as he is. I just think this body waxing crap has got to stop. You don't wax, do you? Waxing is for moon children.

(COUGHING TO CLEAR HIS THROAT)

In 1969, Buzz Aldrin made history when he and Neil Armstrong became the first to dance on the moon. Now, Aldrin struggles with depression in Fort Lauderdale.

JOSIE

And you don't?

AMOS

I think Fort Lauderdale is depressing. And Miami is worse. There is no paradise for old Jews.

(PAUSE)

How far is the moon if we really struggle for it? Do you ever struggle for things, Josie? I'm younger and funnier than Aldrin. He was just on *Dancing with the Stars*. I heard him speak at a fundraiser for the homeless. He said he was unprepared for fame and struggled for years with depression and booze.

JOSIE

And you smoke marijuana, Mr. Jacobi.

AMOS

Glaucoma, Josie. Medicinal. A man has got to see. I got to read books and journals. Look, I don't smoke in your presence. I don't smoke in bed. My memory is fine. Aldrin's mother, whose last name was Moon, was a drunk. His father was a drunk. Both parents killed themselves. Pity the orphan astronaut. Tom Wolfe romanticizes the astronaut and NASA loses the historic lunar video footage. Imagine a guy losing his wedding video? Look at that nutty woman astronaut Lisa Nowak who tried to kill her boyfriend *and* her rival. Why was she wearing diapers on that long car ride cross country? Why do spacesuits make people crazy?

JOSIE

It's really bath time, Mr. Jacobi. Or there will be no bath.

AMOS

Do you think I'm too good looking for my height?

JOSIE

You wear lifts and you hardly leave the wheelchair.

AMOS

You think I'm short or I'm too heroic?

JOSIE

I think you have bad posture.

AMOS

I voted for Obama.

JOSIE

So?

AMOS

I think that's good posture.

JOSIE

Because you're Jewish?

AMOS

Yes.

JOSIE

How Jewish are you *today*, Mr. Jacobi?

AMOS

More Jewish than Sammy Davis Jr. You don't even know who I'm talking about.

JOSIE

I do.

AMOS

He had a glass eye.

JOSIE

So does Peter Falk.

AMOS

Peter Falk isn't Jewish.

JOSIE

He's half Italian? Isn't that good enough?

AMOS

I really don't know. Isn't that God awful, Josie? I love the guy and don't know his goddamn nationality.

(RUTH ENTERS WITH A WALKING AID)

So what's up with Dave Chappell these days?

JOSIE

Was the door unlocked?

RUTH

Yes.

JOSIE

My fault, Mr. Jacobi.

RUTH

Doesn't matter. I have a key.

AMOS

Do you, Ruth?

RUTH

You gave me one.

AMOS

When?

RUTH

Labor Day. Our anniversary.

AMOS

What anniversary darling?

JOSIE

Do you want to be alone?

RUTH

Ours. Never mind. Play dumb.

JOSIE

I was just about to run his bath. He needs one.

AMOS

I remember our anniversary Ruth very well.

RUTH

I could come back in ten minutes.

AMOS

I gave you a ring, not a key.

RUTH

And you gave me a key because you don't have Josie every day.

AMOS

I see.

JOSIE

Weekend is coming. It's last call for bath time, Mr. Jacobi.

AMOS

Ruth, do you want to take a bath with me? A bubble bath?
(JOSIE LAUGHS)

RUTH

Because you gave me a nice ring?

AMOS

Because I gave you a *fabulous* ring. Are you wearing this ring?

RUTH

Yes, I am.

AMOS

Show Josie!

RUTH

Are we engaged?

AMOS

It's a two carat diamond. A one carat would mean a fling at the Hyatt in Morristown.

JOSIE

It's a blood diamond.

AMOS

Nonsense! It's been in the family for generations.

JOSIE

All diamonds, Mr. Jacobi.

AMOS

Shah! Nothing to do with Sierra Leone or Leonardo DiCaprio. An Israeli diamond, Josie, before 1948. No fingers were lost in the unearthing of this gem.

JOSIE

Are you sure?

Go Josie. Take an extended weekend. Come back Tuesday.

RUTH

Go, darling. I'll watch the bastard for you.

AMOS

(TO RUTH)

Kiss, kiss.

RUTH

(TO JOSIE)

You're buying him Viagra and it's not good for his heart.

JOSIE

No, Mrs. Miller. Mr. Jacobi buys it online and it comes in the mail.

AMOS

My insurance pays for it. Blue Cross Blue Shield.

JOSIE

Can't argue with the boss.

(PAUSE)

Good night.

(SHE EXITS)

AMOS

She's tough, Ruth. Josie started like a pussy cat but in the last few months, she's a lioness.

RUTH

You need some toughness.

AMOS
Solly had a stroke.

AMOS
I heard, yes.

RUTH
Do you care?

AMOS
I sent flowers already.

RUTH
Really?

AMOS
Dozens of beautiful red roses.

RUTH
Lately you're not taking dinners with the group, Amos.

AMOS
So?

RUTH
I'm asking.

AMOS
I'm not.

RUTH
Why?

AMOS
I'm annoyed.

RUTH
At me?

AMOS
No. Are you the group?

RUTH

Tell me who you pissed you off.

AMOS

Your girl friend Mindy. Mindy Motor Mouth.

RUTH

Don't say that.

AMOS

She could out-talk Joan Rivers. Mindy has no brain. She might as well be a parakeet on amphetamines. Feathers would help her. So would a little cage.

RUTH

Don't be mean.

AMOS

I know. Mindy gives to charity. Mindy helps the environment. Mindy babysits for battered mothers in Newark. Mindy gives blood. Mindy killed her husband.

RUTH

What's really going on? Is it your health?

AMOS

My health's fine. My eyes are dilating.

RUTH

Your children?

AMOS

My children are fine. My children are dilating.

RUTH

They missed your birthday last month.

AMOS

So?

RUTH

It upset me, Amos.

AMOS

I like leveraging a little guilt their way. You know - guilt for *gelt*.

RUTH

How much *gelt* do you need, Amos? There's more to the story, yes?

AMOS

There's never more to the story.

RUTH

Are you off your medication?

AMOS

Yes. It wasn't helping my memory and I was not sleeping well. I'm becoming incontinent and now I wear astronaut underwear with a little cowboy insignia.

RUTH

Thank you for telling me.

AMOS

They're coming for me, Ruthie.

RUTH

Who?

AMOS

Men in dark suits and dark sunglasses.

RUTH

(IGNORING THE REMARK)

I know about the recent fights you're having wit Hyman next door.

AMOS

He's the biggest idiot of this township. The Hyman of New Jersey.

RUTH

Hyman just likes to provoke you in the dining room. He's an eclectic art collector.

AMOS

And I'm an eclectic Swiss brain surgeon.

RUTH

He has fine art on his wall. Matisse and Miró.

AMOS

Big deal. Knock-off lithographs.

RUTH

Watercolors.

AMOS

Why defend him?

RUTH

He could buy five nursing homes with such assets.

AMOS

The Hyman tells me he's about to bid on the next Hitler paintings auction in London. That's right, Adolf Hitler. I can't wait until he drops dead before his next dialysis.

RUTH

You talk more like this, I'll have to go . . .

AMOS

Don't go, Ruthie . . . sit, I'll make a nice cup of tea. Sleepy time or peppermint? I even got that crappy Lipton which stains your dentures. I'm sorry. My art connoisseur neighbor drives me crazy. He's on the meal plan yet he grills liver on a hot plate and doesn't use the goddamn vent. Who the hell cooks liver today? You want something truly herbal with a little vodka spike?

RUTH

Amos . . .

AMOS

Look at my hands. This is normal arthritis? Or am I the elephant man?

RUTH

(LOOKING CLOSELY)

Water retention.

AMOS

We're so past our menopause.

RUTH

You haven't been the same since you came back from Israel.

AMOS

What does that mean?

RUTH

It means you seem distant. And yet not tan enough.