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ZELIHA

by

Allan Havis

a play in twelve scenes for 3 actors

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Setting - A Manhattan Upper Westside Apartment

Time - November 2016 to mid-January 2017

Characters –

Dorian lawyer, age 50, friend of Andrew’s

Andrew architect, age 55, recently divorced

Zeliha clothing designer, age 27, from Istanbul

PROLOGUE – optional

(ZELIHA is getting dressed in an undisclosed location. There is folkloric guitar or some string instrument music in the background. Lighting is dark, we barely see her features. There is some suggestion that she knows the audience is watching her but she doesn't address this with any punctuation. She might proceed to apply some makeup in a mirror or in an invisible mirror)

SCENE ONE

(DORIAN enters ANDREW'S apartment, the front door left unlocked and has a mug of coffee in his hand and the New York Times folded under his arm. ANDREW is at drafting table studying a drawing. ANDREW is aware that DORIAN has entered, but there is no fanfare)

DORIAN

If the dead had to dress up for my wedding, I would urge them to go semi-formal. You look very sick, Andrew.

(Throws the newspaper on a table)

ANDREW

Just a mild fever.

DORIAN

Your forehead is damp. Let me check for a fever.

(His hand grazes Andrew's forehead and Andrew recoils ever so slightly)

You are hot, my boy. Weren't you going to take a two week vacation earlier this month?

ANDREW

Yes. But then . . .

DORIAN

You were sick? Not sick? Landmark Commissioner?

ANDREW

I'm way behind. Landmark is aboard. We failed to get the variances.

DORIAN

I know the rumor.

ANDREW

What rumor?

(Looking up finally at Dorian)

DORIAN

You're leaving New York.

ANDREW

What the hell are you talking about?

DORIAN

Your partners are dishonest. The firm's merging with McCain Flanders. The Walmart of architecture.

ANDREW

McCain Flanders?

DORIAN

You're moving to Boston.

ANDREW

Not true.

DORIAN

You're in denial. Are you the only Jew at McCain Flanders?

ANDREW

Dorian, knock it off.

DORIAN

You must be very ill today.

(Pause.)

Your star has fallen. After a dozen years of luck. Your designs were always stylish. Your renovations were brilliant. More breathtaking than your new buildings. Your commissions get magazine covers. And then the axis of the world shifts. Like a fairy tale curse. Trumpets from the clouds.

ANDREW

Have you been drinking?

DORIAN

Yes. And all of this was leaked online.

ANDREW

There is no leak.

DORIAN

Google it. On Twitter or Snapchat or DudeWheresMyApp.

ANDREW

My email account was hacked.

DORIAN

Coincidence?

ANDREW

Did you read my email?

DORIAN

No. Never. Well. Sometimes. Jamal, my Jamaican lover is a . . .

ANDREW

. . . consummate hacker.

DORIAN

Jamal is also a caveman. Do you know what cavemen are like today? They tear flesh with bare hands. They paint on the wall with their blood and urine. They drag bodies across the cold stone floor to prove a debating point.

ANDREW

My firm is not merging, Dorian, regardless what email you read. And promise me . . .

DORIAN

. . . I won't hack your computer again. I promise.

ANDREW

Or I will kill you.

DORIAN

Andrew, I just have these impulses. Jamal makes me lose my self-control. He is nearly seven feet tall with a missing finger. This challenges his sense of balance. It's so strange to take him onto the dance floor. But he really knows how to Zumba with open hips.

ANDREW

That's how you met. Zumba?

DORIAN

You disapprove of a lawyer who likes to dance at clubs? You probably disapprove of gay marriage.

ANDREW

I disapprove of prenuptials. That's why you never got to the altar.

DORIAN

I don't obsess about money. I don't love money, Andrew.

ANDREW

You encourage others to love money.

DORIAN

I'm an attorney.

ANDREW

Rita walked away with everything.

DORIAN

Don't blame me.

ANDREW

I don't.

DORIAN

Liar. Liar. Pants on fire.

(Pause)

I had nothing to do with your mediations when you two separated. She put on weight. You lost weight. She got your stock portfolio. You kept the cottage on Long Island. It always works out in the end. Marriage in America is really like a renewable five-year lease.

ANDREW

You've lost weight.

DORIAN

I'm dieting. I'm starving. In my closet are some of the finest silk suits from 2014 and I cannot fit into any pair of trousers.

ANDREW

Silk suits, Dorian?

DORIAN

I like your renderings of the Chester Art Museum.

ANDREW

Thank you.

DORIAN

You broke new ground with this one. Which rock star funds the Chester? Madonna or Cher?

ANDREW

Younger generation, Dorian.

DORIAN

Katie Perry or Taylor Swift?

ANDREW

I'm trying to concentrate on this design . . .

DORIAN

Sorry. I really like the way you play with volume by the river bank, the negative space past the parking lot, and curvaceous sculpture garden. And the two dramatic cantilevers.

ANDREW

One cantilever. Two different elevations.

DORIAN

Still in love with chiseled cornices against tinted glass? Textured relief can be so spiritual under a wall of reflection.

(Pause)

Andrew, are you dating? Do you date? Do you use that word? I notice that you're dying your hair.

ANDREW

I just comb it back.

DORIAN

Thinning some too. I keep asking. About the women.

ANDREW

No.

DORIAN

No, what?

ANDREW

No, I am dating.

DORIAN

You're lying.

ANDREW

Okay. I'm dating. Yes. Every weekend. I joined a six month dating service from Groupon.

DORIAN

That's the best joke of the week.

(Pause)

Your ex still pines for you. She told me so last month. I hear too much from the mad princess. She phones late nights. Just have coffee with her.

ANDREW

If I spend five minutes with Rita, she'll kill me. Do you want that on our conscience?

DORIAN

Nonsense. She's doing Birkram yoga these days and the heat has taken out all of her anger wrinkles. She looks smashing in yoga pants, Andrew.

ANDREW

She has a license to carry a gun. A Glock, I'm told.

DORIAN

That's something I didn't know. At least it's not a semi-automatic rifle. She just got a fortune from her grandparents. She expected you to love her despite her flaws. Everyone has a change of heart, Andrew. Her brother was beat up in a mugging. Three weeks ago. Prospect Park. Sunday afternoon. A superficial knife wound to his arm.

(Pause)

I don't know what to say about Rita's pain, Andrew. I went to high school with Rita. She had a crush on me for a whole year. And I introduced you to two. You must remember that. When she was ascetic and thoroughly into public service for foster youth. She was valedictorian and spoke about the staggering poverty in America. She eviscerated her parents during high school commencement. Rita was never a Jewish American Princess, Andrew. And even if she were, you owe her big time. Look at me, Andrew. Divorce doesn't free you. You owe her and I'm very scared that she's going to harm herself irrevocably.

END OF SCENE

SCENE TWO

(Andrew sits at his desk. We hear the Skype tone of a phone call about to start. Andrew speaks to an unseen listener via Skype in confiding voice)

ANDREW

Look. Richard, I will visit next summer. I promise. My aunt, the opera singer, moved to Assisted Living a few years ago and in her roll top desk was a letter from Istanbul. My grandfather had a brother living in Turkey. My cousin Sebastian – a London stockbroker - went to Istanbul two years ago to look up the family line. A Jewish Agency in Istanbul helped Sebastian with the address. Sebastian met our older cousins. My grandfather's nephew Nissim who was 80 years old before he died. Nissim's sister Ora is alive and blind.

They spoke no English but Sebastian was able to communicate with Ora in Spanish. You know, Ladino. Close enough. I see in the New York Times that Spain is giving the Jewish diaspora the option of securing Spanish citizenship if they can prove ancestry from Spain, speak Spanish, and pass a Spanish cultural history exam. I can apply to this program. I'm fluent. I've letters that link to the Turkish family. I can travel Europe as an architect with two passports. Better tax base. Better building opportunities. I got to leave New York for my health. Soon.

END OF SCENE

SCENE THREE

(The next day. The doorbell rings. Andrew goes to the door from his desk. Looks through the eyehole and then opens door. Zeliha is holding a suitcase and has her coat draped over her shoulder.)

ZELIHA

Yes, yes. Hello. Andrew? You are Andrew. I'm Zeliha Beniso. Your cousin.

ANDREW

I thought you were coming next week?

ZELIHA

No. This is the day. The right day. So close to my birthday. I have a bigger bag downstairs. A big black suitcase. I had to change airlines but this is the day. I am so happy to see you. So happy. You look so young. But you're not young. What a special day, Andrew.

(Awkward silence)

Should I go? I can come back later. Tomorrow? Next week?

ANDREW

Come in. Let me take that. You look exhausted.

(He reaches for the suit case and she relents. She then puts her hands along her coat and folds the coat with great care.)

How was your flight?

ZELIHA

Not bad. We stopped in London. An unscheduled stop, I think. Is that strange? I think it is strange. Mechanical problems. The pilot said. The pilot had no hair. But I think we had bad passengers and the police was at the gate. So strange, Andrew. So very strange.

ANDREW

British Airlines?

ZELIHA

No. Turkish Airlines. All the terrorism fears. ISIS and Jihadists and jets getting shot down. Even the old men in wheelchairs have to get strip searched. Rough search. Lots of pushing and shoving. So sad, Andrew. Old people are wearing diapers and must be humiliated like they are dirty babies.

ANDREW

Well, you are safe and you are here. So welcome. You look like our photos.

(Awkward hug)

ZELIHA

Thank you. Thank you. I like your cologne. It is cologne?

ANDREW

No.

(fake laugh)
Your English is good.

ZELIHA

No, no. I struggle with English. You must be patient. Please be patient with me. Speak slowly, Andrew.

ANDREW

Sure.

ZELIHA

Did you vote today?

ANDREW

Yes.

ZELIHA

Big vote. Who did you vote for?

ANDREW

Not Trump.

ZELIHA

You think he's an asshole?

ANDREW

Yes. Are you hungry, Zeliha? Is that how you say your name?

ZELIHA

Zeliha. Yes. I am always hungry. Food goes through me like a tube. Are you hungry?

ANDREW

No. I'm not hungry.

ZELIHA

I think Trump is an asshole too. The biggest asshole in the world. Can I smoke? I'm dying for a cigarette.

ANDREW

Please don't. Not inside. You can smoke on the fire escape.

ZELIHA

You have a balcony!

ANDREW

Would you like a sandwich? A salad? Some can soup?

ZELIHA

Is that a joke? Can soup?

ANDREW

Yes. It is a joke. I can't cook. And I have can soup

ZELIHA

Andy Warhol liked tomato soup. This I know. He liked Campbell's soup. Do you like Andy Warhol, Andrew?

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

Why not? Because he is dead? He was shot. Because people thought he was albino? Is that the right word? Very white?

ANDREW

Yes. Albino.

ZELIHA

Was he albino?

ANDREW

Was Warhol albino?

ZELIHA

I think he suffered from St. Vitus' disease caused by scarlet fever. I read so much.

ANDREW

I didn't know that.

ZELIHA

It's true. I read all the time. That left his skin blotchy, so he probably looked like an albino because of the makeup he wore.

ANDREW

Fascinating.

ZELIHA

You have to read People magazine, Andrew. My sister is a nurse. Big fat nurse. She told me about St. Vitus. Andy Warhol was so cool. He made people look cool. Even the dead look cool.

(awkward silence)

Next I go to Florida. After you. Next week, Andrew. Time flies. You know I have many cousins. Thirteen cousins. Six by marriage.

ANDREW

Yes. I know.

ZELIHA

Thirteen is not a lucky number.

ANDREW

No, it is an unlucky number.

(He manages a warm smile)

ZELIHA

You were married once?

ANDREW

Yes. Did you emailed me your itinerary?

ZELIHA

No. I hate email. Do you like email? You can't be certain, you know.

ANDREW

Certain of what?

ZELIHA

The email goes to someone else. We can't see it travel. Who touches it. We can't see the servers. You know that. Hacking. Spying. Junk mail too. Who touches the email, Andrew? Who looks at your email? Do you get spam mail? We get so much junk in Turkey.

ANDREW

We die from spam.

ZELIHA

Yes. Yes. We die from the virus in the email. So much virus. Is this a work day for you?

ANDREW

No. It's Saturday. This is my *pied-à-terre*. A little small.

ZELIHA

Thank you for letting me visit.

ANDREW

My pleasure. I have a cottage on the east end of Long Island. Montauk.

ZELIHA

Two homes? So rich. I owe you so much. Yes. I will pay you back. I brought photos. Do you like photos? Photographs . . .

ANDREW

Photos of family?

ZELIHA

No. Photos of Istanbul. You're an architect. I took photos of the most exciting buildings and plazas in Istanbul. You see Europe in Istanbul and you can see Russia. You see the Islamic mysticism in Istanbul. Byzantine beauty. You see layer on layer of civilization in Istanbul. Old Constantinople. Now Istanbul. I did this for you, cousin Andrew. One of the most glorious cities in the world. I should show it to you.

ANDREW

Yes. A beautiful city.

ZELIHA

Beautiful but the sky over Istanbul is falling.

(Broad smile)

I will have a sandwich. You will make me sandwich? A sandwich with cheese and with oil and vinegar. I love wine vinegar. I don't know why. But I do. In my country we call vinegar – *sirke*. That was my nickname when I was a girl, and I was a cute little beast.

ANDREW

Why did people call you *sirke*?

ZELIHA

No one thought I was sweet, Andrew.

ANDREW

That's funny.

ZELIHA

No. It isn't funny. I cried for years.

ANDREW

I'm sorry, Zeliha.

ZELIHA

You know, when you cry for half your life the world never forgives you. The world follows you like a stray dog, Andrew. If you leave a trail. If you cry like water falls. Where is Niagara Falls?

ANDREW

It's near Canada.

ZELIHA

But Niagara Falls is in New York? And Viagra Falls is in Virginia?

ANDREW

There is no Viagra Falls. Certainly not in Virginia.

ZELIHA

I'm stupid. Forgive me. I'm so stupid, Andrew.

ANDREW

New York is a state and also a city. The state is as big as a small country near Turkey, Zeliha..

ZELIHA

Yes. Yes. I know. Can we drive to Niagara Falls? The photos are wonderful. I want to ride the *Maid of the Mist*.

ANDREW

Well, we could. But my Volvo is the shop under repair. We would have to rent a car. And it would be a 12 hour drive. And it's horribly cold in Niagara Falls this time of year. Maybe if you are here in the summer, not in November.

ZELIHA

A hot New York summer?

ANDREW

Yes. In the hot summer, places like Niagara Falls can be wonderful.

(Goes to kitchen to prepare a cheese sandwich)

What kind of cheese do you like?

ZELIHA

Goat Cheese. Any soft cheese? French cheese? I am an easy girl, Andrew. Put any cheese on a plate. A little plate. Overripe cheese makes me trip. You know, hallucinate. And I am a space mouse.

ANDREW

(Laughing)

You don't look like a space mouse.

ZELIHA

I have a tail that floats in the air. A space mouse has a tail. Do you understand?

ANDREW

You have a tail?

ZELIHA

Yes. A little tail. Give me your hand and I'll let you feel it.

ANDREW

Very funny.

(Focused on finishing the sandwich for her)

ZELIHA

Well, years ago I had the tail clipped so it could be controlled. Now it is just a little funny, stubby thing. Come here and give me your hand.

ANDREW

What do you want to drink?

ZELIHA

Wine? Warm red wine? When wine is cold, your luck can turn bad. I can go to the store and bring back a bottle?

ANDREW

I have red wine. Merlot or cabernet? These are California wines.

ZELIHA

What is open?

ANDREW

I'll open any bottle you like, Zeliha.

ZELIHA

Put down the bread and come here, my cousin. Be a brave man.

(He does. Andrew is uncomfortable)

Give me your hand.

(He presents his hand. She stands up and turns to show her derriere)

Don't pull away. Andrew. You have to trust me.

ANDREW

This is weird, Zeliha.

ZELIHA

What is weird?

ANDREW

Whatever you're doing.

ZELIHA

You have a space cousin from Turkey.

(She laughs sweetly)

I'm holding your hand. I want you to feel a little bump.

(She puts his hand inside her waist band)

You have cold hands, Andrew. Now. Do you feel that bump?

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

Here. Do you feel this bump?

ANDREW

Yes.

ZELIHA

Yes?

ANDREW

It's not much of a bump.

ZELIHA

That is my tail. I was more than alive because it was a part of me. A secret part. Something that I share with special people. You're making a face, Andrew. Please don't laugh at me. You know that I love you.

(He pulls away his hand. She reaches for that hand with care)

What was my tail? What was me? What was once real? Still a part of me. It's memory now. I have to respect memory. Even when we die, all that is left is memory. And someone's love.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FOUR

(A few days later. Dorian is on the sofa with some legal papers. Andrew prepares a tray of drinks and light snacks. Zeliha's clothing can be seen here and there strewn about)

DORIAN

You're a lucky man, Andrew. You're losing all exposure to torts and your firm should give you a nice Christmas bonus. It helps that the construction workers accepted the terms.

ANDREW

Thank you.

DORIAN

Yes, you do have me to thank. Another lawyer might have settled for something injurious to your career. Another lawyer would have taken sloppy short cuts.

ANDREW

Innovative design is the only pleasure in my life, Dorian.

DORIAN

Embrace practicality. If you lose your license, no one wins.

ANDREW

Maybe at this age I want to lose my license.

DORIAN

Yes, so you can teach architecture in a state university in Ohio?

(Pause)

I was on the plane yesterday in business class returning from Paris. I sat next to a holy man in a hospital white gown. His beard dropped to his chest. The pungent odor of musk and incense wafted all about. What happened? How did he get an upgrade? He had little beads strung together and he circled them around and around with a thumb. His breath was heavy and oily. I asked about the beads and he said they were worried beads. I said you look like the holiest man I've ever met on a plane. He had an odd accent. Not quite from the Middle East. Not from India. Not from Africa. And he said he feared the Air France jet would crash one hour into the flight. I said why would the plane crash? And he said that he heard a fucking voice in his head. He actually said that. A fucking voice! His voice turned into pure gravel. He scared the shit out of me. I asked if he had another necklace of beads for me to keep my hands busy. He said he did have more necklaces and gave me one. But the very next moment he said they only work for holy men. Then he fell asleep like a baby for the remainder of the flight.

ANDREW

Why are you telling me this?

DORIAN

Well, first off. We didn't crash. Second, a holy man could see that I was less than holy.

(Pause)

Where is your charming sexy cousin today?

ANDREW

She's going to job interviews.

DORIAN

So she's thinking about staying in the city?

ANDREW

I don't know.

DORIAN

Isn't she driving you crazy?

(Pause)

You enjoy her company?

ANDREW

It's okay. She talks and never runs out of breath.

DORIAN

And?

ANDREW

She's borrowed some money. We'll see if this becomes a habit.

DORIAN

How much?

ANDREW

A couple of hundred dollars.

(Pause)

Five hundred. For clothes. She is very uncomfortable with what she brought to New York. She has other family members in Dade County. Maybe she can help watch some of the nieces and nephews.

DORIAN

Mary Poppins in a bikini? She leaves her clothes strewn about?

ANDREW

Zeliha's a very good cook. Exotic dishes with lamb.

DORIAN

Well, you like curry lamb.

(Pause)

Have you taken her to any clubs?

ANDREW

When have I gone to dance clubs?

DORIAN

Seven years ago?

ANDREW

I don't think it would be a good idea.

DORIAN

Did you ask her how she feels about the Turkish military trying to overthrow . . .

ANDREW

No.

DORIAN

Or a year ago when the Turks shot down the Russian plane?

Wonder what she would say. Putin shirtless on a stallion?

ANDREW

She's not political.

DORIAN

Did you see that graphic on Facebook – Putin kissing Trump? What about Putin on a Ritz cracker? Putin on the Ritz.

ANDREW

The Turks never liked the Russians, Dorian.

DORIAN

Only Syrians like the Russians?

(Pause)

Any plans for Thanksgiving?

ANDREW

Bring in Chinese or Thai maybe?

DORIAN

I have to go to my sister's in New Haven.

(Pause)

The last time I ran into Rita, she told me you didn't enjoy sexual relations.

ANDREW

Are you going to play Dr. Phil?

DORIAN

Was it what really broke?

ANDREW

I wanted to have children. She was afraid to. And we had not much luck. She resented fertility clinics. Hated the idea of taking shots and hormones. I told you before.

DORIAN

In less detail.

ANDREW

I can't lose myself completely in my work. Maybe years ago I could.

DORIAN

Yes. You would make a really good father, Andrew.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FIVE

(A week later. Late November. Zeliha is on the sofa and Andrew is in preparing some light food in the kitchenette)

ZELIHA

The Turkish word for cousin is *kuzenler*. It's a good word. You can taste the word with coffee. I thought you would be a very tall man. A thin man. With curly hair. Maybe red hair. And maybe a big moustache. I thought you would smoke little cigars and wear a wool smoking jacket with round patches by the elbows. I thought you would have a deep gravel voice. I thought you would be full of children and barking dogs. I . . . I thought you were hug me until the stars would fall from the sky. You could rescue me in the deepest waters. My deepest fears. I had a dream about you Andrew on my second night in New York. And I don't always remember my dreams. Do you remember your dreams?

ANDREW

All the time.

ZELIHA

You're scared at night.

ANDREW

Sometimes.

ZELIHA

You wake up in a cold sweat.

ANDREW

Sometimes.

ZELIHA

We are very much alike. You knew it when we were emailing.

ANDREW

I couldn't tell.

ZELIHA

I could, Andrew. You write like a poet.

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

You want a child. You want to make a real family. I know the things that tug at you.

ANDREW

I don't know anymore.

ZELIHA

You must have a devil on your back.

ANDREW

A devil?

ZELIHA

Or. A dark twisted angel.

ANDREW

I don't know. Maybe so.

ZELIHA

Then let me help you chase this demon away.

ANDREW

And how do you do that, Zeliha?

ZELIHA

If I tell you I am telling one of the great secrets.

ANDREW

Please let me in on your secret.

ZELIHA

And risk scaring you?

ANDREW

I don't scare easily.

ZELIHA

(Smiling)
I open your chest. I slide my hand into your flesh. I pull out the demon.

ANDREW
Just like that?

ZELIHA
No. No. Not just like that. You have to be asleep. I can't be menstruating at the time. The conditions have to be just right.

ANDREW
The conditions are never quite right in my life.

ZELIHA
We can fix that. We can fix everything.

ANDREW
You have so much confidence.

ZELIHA
I like sex.

ANDREW
How many times have you done this for people?

ZELIHA
Pull out the demon?

ANDREW
Yes.

ZELIHA
If I tell you, I can never do this work again. I'm serious.
(She touches his forehead)
You are sweating, Andrew.

ANDREW
It's warm in here.

ZELIHA
I hope you win. I think you want your demon to leave. You have to want this.

ANDREW
You're very funny. It's your accent, Zeliha.

ZELIHA

Yes, I know. English is a hard language, Andrew.

(She unbuttons his shirt slowly)

I'm going to stab you with my hand. I can sense your demon.

ANDREW

No, no. You don't have to do anything like that. Not today.

ZELIHA

Lie down, Andrew. On the sofa. Don't say no. Do as I say. Do it, Andrew. I'm very good at this.

(She grabs his hand. He is confused. She walks him to the sofa)

Sit. Go ahead. Sit. Lie down. I'm turning off a few lights. The lights hurt what needs to be done.

(She turns off two lamps. The room is a little darker. She approaches him and opens his shirt which makes Andrew very uncomfortable.)

ANDREW

Your hands are cold.

ZELIHA

They have to be cold to do this right.

ANDREW

Like icicles?

ZELIHA

(She kisses him on the lips. He is stunned by this. Pause)

Close your eyes. Close your eyes. You want to fall asleep. Close your eyes, Andrew.

(He closes his eyes)

I'm the oldest soul who walks the earth.

The woman you see is the youngest girl still living.

I'm the memory of salt, herbs, and Dead Sea.

I'm the thunderbolt from a forbidden sky.

I'm the black river of endless tears.

I'm the evil cat on the flat roof tile.

I'm the serpent under the rock.

I'm the spell. I'm the curse.

I'm the knife hand.

A rope of sand.

A white pearl.

(She jabs her hand into his chest. He lets out a soft, elongated murmur)

I've just killed your demon.

(She retracts her hand showing Andrew's shirt is now ripped in shreds. Her fingers are entwined with the cotton shirt. She walks around Andrew. He is slow to recover)

from this exorcism)
 Can you speak, Andrew?
 (Pause)
 I'm waiting for you.
 (Pause)
 You can thank me. Many people thank me.
 (Pause)
 Are you in pain, Andrew?
 (Pause)
 Do you want me to take you to the hospital?
 (Pause)
 Some people need to go to the hospital.
 (Pause)
 Some people know their lives will be better.
 (Pause)
 Some people miss their demon. Do you?

ANDREW

(Stirring as if from quick nap or hypnosis)
 Do I what?

ZELIHA

Do you miss your demon?

ANDREW

I don't have a demon.

ZELIHA

Good. It is gone. Forever. Now you can have as many children as you can afford.

ANDREW

Very funny.

ZELIHA

Yes. But true.

ANDREW

Did I answer you?

ZELIHA

No.

ANDREW

You're welcome to stay another week.

ZELIHA

Thank you. I'll go on to Florida next Tuesday to see other family.

ANDREW

Great. I like to work often into the evening.

ZELIHA

I thought you wanted to spend more time with me.

ANDREW

I do.

ZELIHA

Why did your wife leave you, Andrew?

ANDREW

I told you.

ZELIHA

You didn't.

ANDREW

We didn't fit together.

ZELIHA

You didn't enjoy her body. Yes?

ANDREW

I don't know.

ZELIHA

She didn't give you enough of her body. You slept on either side of the bed and it really was a steel cage. I see the cage, Andrew. Why do you leave her photos everywhere?

ANDREW

I don't know.

ZELIHA

It's such a lie. But it is very sad. Maybe you want torment. Photos lie. I used photos to fool friends. Good you don't have children.

ANDREW

I suppose.

ZELIHA

Or maybe you have a child somewhere? Years ago?

ANDREW

What?

ZELIHA

With other women.

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

No? Did you use birth control?

ANDREW

Rita proved to be infertile.

ZELIHA

And with girlfriends before Rita . . . you know . . . the Spanish woman - Blanca - from Argentina.

ANDREW

Are you going through my things?

ZELIHA

I guess secrets, Andrew. I am good at guessing. Birth control has saved millions of souls.

ANDREW

You say crazy things.

ZELIHA

Because I am a person with philosophy. I know why bad things hit good people. Why good things stike bad people. I know when people will die.

(He laughs oddly)

Is that so funny?

ANDREW

Zeliha. You're like a creature from another planet.

ZELIHA

I'm not a creature from another planet.

ANDREW

We need boundaries.

(Pause)

I'm pissing you off. I'm sorry.

ZELIHA

Don't be sorry. It's stupid to say that you are sorry. You're not pissing me off. Why are artists so trapped in their head, Andrew?

ANDREW

I am stupid.

ZELIHA

Stupid is a stupid word, yes? Stupid with age.

ANDREW

People are stupid. In my country.

ZELIHA

And not in Turkey, Andrew?

ANDREW

When I was in Turkey, I didn't meet stupid people.

ZELIHA

Oh my god. There are millions of stupid people in Turkey. They smoke hookah, they curse, they drink, they spit, they lie, and they point their arms like loaded guns. They envy you in the morning, kiss you on the cheek in the afternoon, and knife you at night. Stupid in Istanbul. Idiots so clever? Stupid is a masquerade. Look at me, Andrew. I cannot wear a mask.

(She kisses him. And a second time, much longer)

I am available. A free woman. An open soul. Do you not find me attractive?

(He kisses her on the cheek or neck)

I am a mouth that can't stop itself. My heart is faster than my tongue. My heart is a hummingbird's. A bird like a helicopter. You should have met my husband. You would understand me much better.

ANDREW

And if I meet him?

ZELIHA

You would probably fight about something. He is fast to find his temper. He gets you to argue. You would lose the fight. He was born to kill. And if you win the argument — he would wait for night and have a few more vodkas and then break your fucking arm in front of a crowd of drunks. And knife you in the throat and use his boot heel to pull out the blade. He would toss your wallet to the ground, laughing at the beggars.

ANDREW

Delightful.

ZELIHA

Dario likes to find weakness in men, and loves to punish those who want to sleep with me. Very dangerous. He calls me horrible names.

ANDREW

In front of other men?

ZELIHA

He would call me a dirty Jewish whore.

ANDREW

Oh God. Is that why you left him? It's been six months now?

ZELIHA

I left him so I can learn to live.

(Pause)

So I can live without threat.

(Pause)

Dario's not Jewish. He lied to my parents. He can be charming. He has confidence and people think he's a rich. He helped Moslems find weapons. Maybe a gang. Maybe something worse. Never a dull moment.

ANDREW

Did you call the police?

ZELIHA

(Laughing)

Did I call the Istanbul police? Are you serious, Andrew?

ANDREW

You didn't say this when you Skyped. Why did you come to New York?

ZELIHA

I need to survive. Would be nice to turn 30.

(Pause)

Why did you visit Istanbul six years ago?

ANDREW

I like to travel.

ZELIHA

Why didn't you visit me?

ANDREW

I didn't want to see people on that trip.

ZELIHA

I know all about depression. And suicidal thoughts.

ANDREW

I wasn't suicidal.

(Pause)

You have no intentions on returning to Turkey?

ZELIHA

I can't go back. It's not just Dario. It's everything back home. Show enthusiasm for a Muslim government? And then the attempted coup? A young Jewish woman doesn't want to live in there. I took what I could and ran.

ANDREW

Did you bring money out of the country?

ZELIHA

No. But jewelry. More than I was allowed by law. Not enough for me to stay in America.

ANDREW

Then you risked arrest.

ZELIHA

One chance in a thousand of getting caught. You're so lucky to be American. Lucky to live in New York. Freedom to become rich. American women free to do anything. The chance to be an American woman. A modern woman.

ANDREW

There are modern women in Istanbul.

ZELIHA

(She smiles and moves across the room like a cloud)

Today's Istanbul is like an old black and white TV movie with a loud orchestra playing unbearably slow. Do you know what the fuck I mean Andrew?

ANDREW

I think so.

ZELIHA

I grew up on American movies. Gangster films. Cowboy films. Musicals with Gene Kelly. For a time, I thought I lived inside those movies. And I fell in love with the heroes and I was chased by the villains. Tonight I feel like a very naïve person.

ANDREW

I make you uncomfortable?

ZELIHA

You make me feel safe.

(She draws near him, grazes her hand along his shoulder)

We are family, Andrew. We have the same blood. We come from the same nomadic tribe generations ago.

(Pause)

A people good with business. Fast with money. All the women were amazing cooks. We came from Córdoba, Spain. We have a twin universe. One in daylight. The other in shadow. A thread connects the two.

(Pause)

If you spoke Turkish to me, whispering, I would know everything. When you speak English, I can only imagine things that you really need to say. Do you know what I'm trying to tell you?

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

I was born Jewish. A Jewish mother gave me life. But Jewish people don't like me. I know I am attractive, but women find me hideous. I can't be alone in an apartment or a home. And I don't steal things.

ANDREW

I know.

ZELIHA

I should seem Jewish. No. No. Not very Jewish

ANDREW

Yes. Sebastian in London told me as much.

ZELIHA

There are no sexy Jews, Andrew. Only smart Jews. I'd rather be a smart Jew than sexy.

(She laughs and pours herself a glass of wine)

You're a smart Jew. Maybe the only artist in my entire family.

ANDREW

Are you looking for a green card, Zeliha?

ZELIHA

A green card would be nice.

ANDREW

It isn't easy.

ZELIHA

I believe in magic. I really do, Andrew. Do you?

ANDREW

Do I what?

ZELIHA

Believe in magic?

ANDREW

When I was a boy.

ZELIHA

When did you become an architect?

ANDREW

Right after college.

ZELIHA

How did you know this was your chosen profession?

ANDREW

It was a feeling. I did summer construction work. I always liked art.

ZELIHA

Did you play with blocks when you were young? I like to watch children playing with with cardboard boxes and paper bags.

(Pause)

You know I am in pain. I had a miscarriage weeks before coming to New York. I wrote you.

ANDREW

No, you didn't Zeliha.

ZELIHA

I was in my fourth month. I gave up drinking and smoking when I got pregnant. Dario was nowhere to be found at this time.

ANDREW

Was this your husband's baby?

ZELIHA

No. I don't know.

ANDREW

I'm sorry for you.

ZELIHA

I was bleeding like a wounded animal and I was miles from my home.

ANDREW

You have no other family left in Turkey? Did they all go to Israel?

ZELIHA

What do you want me to do, Andrew?

(She pours herself another glass of wine)

ANDREW

I know you have a sister in Tel Aviv. She just moved to Israel?

ZELIHA

Yes. Her husband got a job in Tel Aviv. She's too old to serve in the army so of course it was perfect for her. She's miserable to me, Andrew.

ANDREW

That's not good.

ZELIHA

She's 48 years old and looks like a grandmother of 30 children..

ANDREW

Tessa's that old?

ZELIHA

She's grey and stiff like Frankenstein. Dogs run like hell when she walks in the street.

ANDREW

That's funny.

ZELIHA

(Pouring two glasses)

Drink with me, cousin.

ANDREW

I have work.

ZELIHA

No you don't. Drink with me. Be a wild cougar. I have a story to tell you like Scheherazade. I think about Scheherazade and the story she never told the king. The story about the curse which comes to those who cannot sleep. Scheherazade was not sure if she was Persian or a Jew or a cougar. She read so many books, she collected a thousand tales of histories about kings and killers. She could protect herself with every bone in her body. Scheherazade studied the works of the great poets and knew one hundred poems. She studied philosophy. She could paint with speed and precision. She was wise and kept a dirty tongue.

ANDREW

Zeliha . . .

ZELIHA

You think I'm a little crazy?

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

You do. I can read your mind. What's true is true. My father always says that.

(Pause)

After college I am trained to be a clothing designer. That was our family business in Istanbul. For over forty years. We exported everywhere. We were very wealthy, Andrew, until five years ago. The government made it harder to continue. We failed with bribes and the inspections were bullshit. You know what I mean. Money comes and money goes. Isn't that an American saying?

ANDREW

I know it hurts to lose a family business.

ZELIHA

It broke my father's heart. So he died young.

ANDREW

I'm sorry, Zeliha. Are you planning to live in America?

ZELIHA

I don't know. I like New York. What do you think?

ANDREW

In your emails you seemed to prefer Florida and warmer weather.

ZELIHA

I can buy a warm winter coat.

ANDREW

There are more cousins for you in Miami and they have clothing businesses. Work opportunities. Manhattan is a hard city.

ZELIHA

It's an exciting city. Every day someone wins big. Yes?

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

But you're a big winner.

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

So modest. Your name is everywhere on the internet. Your buildings on websites. You're always so sad, Andrew. Why is that?

ANDREW

I'm not sad.

ZELIHA

Can we play a word game? It reveals your future and who you really are.

ANDREW

I don't want to know the future.

ZELIHA

Come on, Andrew. Play along. I will give you a clue and you have to make up something. Please?

(She kisses him on the neck)

The first clue is that you are in a large forest. Alone.

ANDREW

Why am I in the forest?

ZELIHA

It's a game. Imagine you are in the forest. Is it morning or afternoon or night?

ANDREW

It is morning.

ZELIHA

Good. How is the weather?

ANDREW

It's chilly.

ZELIHA

Do you have a jacket on?

ANDREW

Why do you need to know?

ZELIHA

It's part of the game.

ANDREW

Yes. I am wearing a warm jacket.

ZELIHA

Is there a path in the forest?

ANDREW

I don't know.

ZELIHA

Do you want to walk ahead?

ANDREW

Yes. I don't just want to stand around. There is a rough trail. The sun is peeking through the leaves.

ZELIHA

What season of the year?

ANDREW

It's autumn.

ZELIHA

Good. You find a cup on the ground.

ANDREW

A cup?

ZELIHA

Describe the cup.

ANDREW

It's a ceramic mug. A big coffee cup. It's blue. Has a chip on the lip.

ZELIHA

Do you keep it? What do you do?

ANDREW

I guess I can keep it. Is that good or bad?

ZELIHA

Keep walking. You find a key on the ground. What do you do?

ANDREW

A key? I put it in the cup.

ZELIHA

Can you describe the key?

ANDREW

It's an old fashioned key. Like a skeleton key. Rusted. Heavy. Big loop.

ZELIHA

You find a stream.

ANDREW

A stream? I'm not a boy scout.

ZELIHA

Describe it.

ANDREW

It's wide. Lots of rocks. Going downhill. There's sunlight bouncing off of the water.

ZELIHA

What do you do?

ANDREW

What do I do? I wash the cup in the stream. I fill the cup. I drink from the cup. I still have the skeleton key.

ZELIHA

How does the water taste?

ANDREW

Cold. Refreshing. Fine.

ZELIHA

What else do you do?

ANDREW

I walk along the stream which is going downhill. The path is rocky.

ZELIHA

How do you feel?

ANDREW

I'm okay.

ZELIHA

You find a wall.

ANDREW

It's a stone wall. Stones are stacked. Crooked wall. No cement. Sloppy.

ZELIHA

Can you see beyond the wall? How high is the wall?

ANDREW

It's a low wall. Three feet high. I see an open meadow on the other side.

ZELIHA

What do you do?

ANDREW

What do I do? I don't know. I'm tired of walking. I sit on the wall. Maybe I cross the wall since the meadow seems easier for this hike.

ZELIHA

How do you feel?

ANDREW

I want to leave the forest. Are we done?

ZELIHA

Yes.

(Pause)

So here is what everything means. Now I know you.

(Pause)

The forest is your life today. You have a good feeling about your world since you see sunlight. The weather is not hard on you. You say there is a chill but you have a jacket.

That means you are practical and open.

(Pause)

Autumn means different things. Your autumn wasn't moving to winter so you don't feel old. But you are nervous about change.

(Pause)

The cup means friendship. Your cup wasn't a paper cup. It has value. Even if the ceramic was chipped. You keep the cup. You use the cup twice in your story which means friendship is important to you and you tie friendship with your life actions.

(Pause)

You put the key in the cup. The key is knowledge and you see knowledge as from another time. The key is antique. It is heavy. Rust. You have one foot in the knowledge of yesterday. You treasure the key. The key and the cup are united. Maybe that is your secret to success?

(Pause)

The stream stands for sex and you are okay about sex. You walk along the stream. The stream has running water. You clean the cup and drink from the stream. This means you are naked to sex and are not guarded. The cup has a connection to another big element of life. The stream looks nice to you. Many people don't drink from the stream. But you do. Some put a hand or a foot in the stream. Many keep away from the stream. The stream guides you as you walk.

(Pause)

The wall stands for death. You don't have a high wall. Or a scary wall. Like the stream, your wall is nice to you. Stone on top of stone. Small enough to see a meadow on the other side. You sit on the wall to rest. You find comfort in your life when you have to meet your wall. You sense what is on the other side. You say you want to leave the forest and maybe the field is perfect. Andrew, this is a beautiful story because you have a forest that doesn't hurt you. And you have strength about death.

ANDREW

Nothing bad in my answers?

ZELIHA

Nothing bad.

ANDREW

You remind me of someone at college. Loretta. Always wore capes or a wool scarf. She read palms and was good at this game. Hair over her face. Tattoos before they became fashion.

ZELIHA

You don't like tatoos?

ANDREW

Tattoos make people look like branded cattle. You have tattoos . . .

(She approaches him and cradles his face with open palms. She leans in to kiss)

ZELIHA

Look at me. Let me see your eyes.
(They look at one another closely)

ANDREW

I'm uncomfortable.

ZELIHA

Do you want children?

ANDREW

I don't know.

ZELIHA

I could give you children.

END OF SCENE

SCENE SIX

(Early December. Dorian's on the sofa)

DORIAN

I thought she was leaving after Thanksgiving?

ANDREW

Probably not.

DORIAN

Is she staying into the new year?

ANDREW

I don't know.

DORIAN

Looks like you're a couple.

ANDREW

Don't judge me.

DORIAN

Because she's your second cousin?

ANDREW

Zeliha's never going back to Turkey.

DORIAN

I get that impression.

ANDREW

If she goes to Israel, it will mean military service.

DORIAN

I think the Israeli army could really use her talents.

ANDREW

You don't like her, Dorian.

DORIAN

I'm just not sure about her. She has odd habits.

ANDREW

Just smoking on the fire escape and on the rooftop.

DORIAN

Oh, good to know.

ANDREW

And I used to sleep on the couch.

DORIAN

You look like the cat who swallowed the canary.

ANDREW

You're just giving me crap because of Rita.

DORIAN

Has nothing to do with Rita.

(Pause)

You took her to the AIA awards presentation?

ANDREW

Yes.

DORIAN

You paraded her in front of the photographers?

ANDREW

Are you here to look at some legal documents? They're on the desk.

DORIAN

Thanks. When an explosion causes injuries due to an architect's failure to indicate the location of underground gas lines, you're not looking good.

ANDREW

The gas lines were on the preliminary drawings and . . .

DORIAN

You signed off on the blueprints.

ANDREW

I know.

DORIAN

Everything is rushed, Andrew.

(He picks up the legal paperwork from the desk)

ANDREW

Is this an unstoppable negligence suit?

DORIAN

No, but the firm will get slapped with a high fine. You won't be crucified, Andrew. The company has insurance for this sort of thing.

(Zeliha enters wearing a terry robe, perhaps right after a bath. She holds a wine glass and saunters to over to Dorian)

ZELIHA

My husband Dario tried to be a businessman. He had stores in the rich sections of Istanbul. A great fashion line from Italy. He liked cash sales. Dario and I went sailing on our third anniversary on the Bosphorus which is what thousands of Turks do who live in Istanbul. We went with another couple. We usually would go out in summer with a few other couples, but at the end of August we went out on a small rented boat. The wind was strong,

there was some rain, but Dario didn't care. I wanted to tell you this, Andrew, on the day I knocked on your door.

(Pause)

Dario was drinking before we got the sail boat. We were dressed for rain. We had food with us. We wanted to watch the sunset. The weather got bad fast. I had this fear. You know this fear, Andrew? I told Dario we should go back to the harbor.

(Pause)

You can guess the rest of the story. The Bosphorus is powerful and it is a river that can make any person like a mouse. The Bosphorus killed Dario and the other couple. Dario and his friends were drunk. I was not. I don't know how to sail a boat. Somehow our boat moved back to shore with the hand of God and others came to rescue me. Dario's body is in the Bosphorus. My body should be in the Bosphorus. I don't deserve to live. Andrew, you look like his older brother. The strength of your eyes, the sharp eyebrows, the sad mouth. Dario was always so sad when he wasn't moving. And so cruel.

END OF SCENE

SCENE SEVEN

(A week later – mid December)

ANDREW

How many tattoos do you have, ZELIHA?

ZELIHA

Just two.

ANDREW

The two I saw when you came out of the shower? You dropped your towel.

ZELIHA

I am very clumsy.

ANDREW

You have a Star and Crescent Moon on one ankle. A Star of David on the other ankle.

ZELIHA

I cover my ankles all the time.

ANDREW

Are you Moslem *and* Jewish?

ZELIHA

What kind of question is that?

ANDREW

I know you less than six weeks.

ZELIHA

You know me very well, Andrew.

ANDREW

No.

ZELIHA

Rita has damaged you. Was she a Jewish American Princess? Did she get headaches when you climbed into bed?

ANDREW

Who are you, Zeliha?

ZELIHA

I am 27 years old. Half your age. Like the actress Mila Kunis, I have two different colored eyes and in the Islamic world I would get big price. Ransom is high. My clothing designs won awards in Milan. I can create outrageous evening gowns. And I could pass as a Muslim. There is an actress inside me. I know my history. My people's history. I commit this to memory. Do I have to impress you?

(Pause)

Jewish life in Istanbul's Galata began in Byzantine times when Galata was a separate walled city across the Golden Horn from Constantinople. Galata is now called Karaköy but I prefer Galata. It was ruled by the Genoese, with many Jewish families. After the Ottoman conquest of 1453, Jews arrived. And Spain kicked out the Jews. The Italian influence is seen on every street. For four hundred years, Galata was Jewish. Even twenty years ago, Galata had Jewish children playing street games and speaking Ladino. But you know that.

(Pause)

Turkey's Chief Rabbi is a two minute walk from Tünel Square. And has been in Galata since 1876, when the sultan still reigned.

(Pause)

Along Ensiz Sokak to the Tünel building is the Galata Whirling Dervish Hall which is now the Museum of Calligraphy. Down on Galipdede Caddesi past the bookshops and you'll see the Galata Tower - the high-point in the Genoese structure. In the nineteenth century, the tower was rebuilt and used as a fire watchmen's post.

ANDREW

I went to Balat to see Istanbul's Jewish heritage but didn't get to Galata. Very much a slum today.

ZELIHA

You picked the wrong neighborhood to tour.

ANDREW

I blame the taxi driver.

ZELIHA

If you put on some nice music, I'll dance for you.

ANDREW

(She smiles and waves her hand nonchalantly. He puts on Flamenco)

Okay.

(She moves subtly and slowly at first. Zeliha picks up the pace and reaches for his hand. He moves closer to her and they dance together comfortably. She laughs. He smiles back. They now hold both hands and come skin tight to one another. The dancing stops but they are embracing each other intimately. Another moment passes and Andrew breaks away and stops the music. She grabs a glass of wine and crosses to the window. He pours himself a glass and approaches her)

ANDREW

Did your husband really die?

ZELIHA

I told you the truth.

ANDREW

I just got post card from Sebastian in London. He met your sister in Istanbul before she emigrated to Tel Aviv. You missed his visit.

ZELIHA

Did he call himself Bastian?

ANDREW

Sometimes. He's on a long business travel itinerary but he said that you are the black sheep in the family.

ZELIHA

I am black sheep?

ANDREW

Did you commit a crime?

ZELIHA

How can you ask such a thing?

ANDREW

Did you ruin the family textile business?

ZELIHA

That is so mean to say.

ANDREW

I see why you don't want to be in Turkey.

(Pause)

Are you Jewish, Zeliha?

ZELIHA

As Jewish as you. I observe Jewish customs.

ANDREW

But you have other influences.

ZELIHA

Why are you asking this?

ANDREW

Your tattoos.

ZELIHA

They're just tattoos. Jesus Christ . . .

(Pause)

The Star and Crescent Moon – the hilal – doesn't represent Islam. The hilal came 2000 years before Mohammed. The sign appears on seals and artwork of the Moabites, of Israel. I love the symbol. It is art. It is sorcery. I believe in magical things.

(Pause)

I got a job today. It's a volunteer job but can become a real job with a work permit. Two blocks from here is that French-American preschool. You know, that corner brownstone by the bakery. I filled some papers and had an interview last week with the school director. He was impressed that I could speak several languages and was fluent in French.

ANDREW

Don't you need certification to teach?

ZELIHA

Not preschool. He bought me drinks after the interview.

(Pause)

There is an Initial Certificate – you know - an entry-level document - valid for five years.

And maybe a green card.

ANDREW

How do you plan on a getting a green card?

ZELIHA

That's easy, Andrew. You'll marry me.

End of Scene

SCENE EIGHT

(A day later in December. Zeliha and Dorian are alone)

ZELIHA

Foundation work or something for your eyes?

DORIAN

Foundation will take years and we don't have time for that, do we? Just the eyes and the mouth.

ZELIHA

There's nothing I can for your mouth. Your lips are perfect.

DORIAN

How can they be perfect when my lower lip looks like a rubber raft from Haiti.

ZELIHA

(Flat irony)

Did you come from Haiti, Dorian?

DORIAN

You can't know everything about me, Zeliha.

(Laughs quietly)

I'll sit here and you get your magic tools. There's no reason to stop the thread of your conversation with Andrew, the master architect. On his best days, Andrew looks like Matt Damon in *The Martian* growing potatoes from manure.

(She gets some make up and lip stick from the next room)

ZELIHA

Are you allergic?

DORIAN

I should be but don't let that stop you, darling.

ZELIHA

Let's start with lipstick. Better with earth tones.

DORIAN

I do better with pink.

(He positions himself in a chair near a side table. She brings makeup to the table)

ZELIHA

What prescriptions is he taking?

(She loosens Dorian's shirt collar. She applies foundation to his cheeks)

He won't tell me.

DORIAN

Andrew is epileptic. He needs anticonvulsant medication.

(Pause)

He's in control of his health. I wouldn't worry.

(Pause)

Your hands are so warm.

ZELIHA

Do you wear contact lens?

DORIAN

Yes.

ZELIHA

(More foundation on Dorian's face)

I apply a primer with a built-in moisturizer to prep your face. Then I target under-eye circles and blemishes with a concealer to match your skin tone. Works for men and for women.

(Smiles close to his face.)

And foundation to your problem zones. If we had time, I would massage this into your skin. You can keep my brush for tonight. You got excess shine.

(Pause)

Next, I use a soft bristle for blush to your cheeks.

(Pause)

Starting here and then sweep up toward your temples. Dorian?

(He smiles and nods)

Now, I take an eyebrow pencil to fill in sparse areas and shape a strong arch. I like to focus this on the upper brow line for a lift.

(Pause)

To accentuate the eyes is everything, for the eyes are the jewels of any face. I sweep a neutral eyeshadow across your eyelids, a darker earthy shade -- like taupe or charcoal gray -- to add mystery.

(Pause)

The masterstroke is embellishing the eyelashes.

(Pause)

I hold the mascara wand like a magician, start at the base of your eyelashes, and move up zigzag - so every lash is covered.

(Pause)

Dorian. Your lips. What are we going to do to make your lips magnificent?

(Pause. Waving liner and lipstick)

We apply lip liner in synch with your lipstick. I apply a brush to dab the color to your lips. For your strong personality, I would choose a middle color -- rose or coral -- and add gloss to play up your lips for an evening out.

(Holds up mirror to Dorian)

You are transformed.

DORIAN

For my prom?

ZELIHA

What's a prom?

DORIAN

A formal school party where you bring a date. And you lose your virginity.

ZELIHA

How old were you?

DORIAN

When I went to the prom or when I lost my virginity? Seventeen. Do they have proms in Istanbul?

ZELIHA

I lost my virginity at 13.

(She cleans her hands on a small towel)

DORIAN

That's a shame.

ZELIHA

I was so naïve. I got into stupid trouble. I had older parents and we didn't talk.

DORIAN

I'm sorry.

ZELIHA

500 years after Sultan Bayezid II opened Turkey's doors to Jews after the Spanish Inquisition, life in Istanbul is completely broken. Jews can go to Israel, to Europe or to America. There are no beautiful Jewish children in Turkish kindergarten school. There are only old dying Jews in Istanbul. They can't walk. . They wait for death.

(Pause)

I don't always know what Andrew thinks. I know he talks to you about me.

DORIAN

Andrew's vulnerable. And he's in a quiet panic. He's in love with you and afraid of you. Worse, he's afraid of himself.

END OF SCENE

SCENE NINE

(A WEEK LATER. LATE DECEMBER)

DORIAN

Where did you go for Christmas?

ANDREW

Away.

DORIAN

You didn't answer your cell phone.

ANDREW

No

DORIAN

Bermuda?

ANDREW

No.

DORIAN

St. Croix?

ANDREW

Montauk.

DORIAN

Cold.

ANDREW

Cozy.

DORIAN

She's not leaving New York.

ANDREW

No. She postponed Miami.

DORIAN

Two months and counting?

ANDREW

I can't count the days.

DORIAN

She's changed you.

ANDREW

Do you think so?

DORIAN

You seem more spontaneous and happy.

ANDREW

That's a good thing, don't you think?

DORIAN

Yes. You look younger. Worry free.

ANDREW

I'm happy with life.

DORIAN

It's been a long drought, Andrew.

(Pause)

You are in love?

ANDREW
Yeah.

DORIAN
I want to protect you.

ANDREW
You don't have to think like that.

DORIAN
I'm your attorney and friend.

ANDREW
I'm using my instinct.

DORIAN
That scares me, Andrew.

ANDREW
I've got news for you.

DORIAN
Should I sit down?
(Andrew nods yes)
Do I need a scotch?

ANDREW
(Laughing)
We eloped. We did it.

DORIAN
What?

ANDREW
In Montauk.

DORIAN
Andrew . . .

ANDREW
I know. You should have been present as the best man. And I should have told you ahead of time.
(Fixing two scotches neat)
It was an impulse. The drive out was so much fun. I bought a ring in East Hampton for

her. We drank champagne and we found a judge to perform the service. It's all legal. We are allowed to marry. I spoke with an immigration lawyer. We'll file applications with USCIS after the new year and bring this papers along. Zeliha will be lawful during her tourist visa. Her non-resident status will change.

(handing over drinks for a toast)

Time to toast? Cat got your tongue?

DORIAN

There's a cardinal rule for divorcees in New York not to marry again if you haven't spent a calendar year together.

ANDREW

Never heard of it.

DORIAN

I can't protect every part of you, Andrew.

ANDREW

I'm too young for a chaperon, Dorian. Happy New Year. She's not my cousin.

(Pause)

Zeliha's pregnant.

END OF SCENE

SCENE TEN

(Two weeks later, early January. Dorian visits)

DORIAN

I thought Andrew would be here.

ZELIHA

He'll be back in a few minutes. He had to pick up a prescription.

DORIAN

You seem very happy.

ZELIHA

I am. Very happy.

DORIAN

Andrew told me you're expecting.

ZELIHA

Yes. Isn't that wonderful, Dorian?

DORIAN

And you eloped.

ZELIHA

That's right. He bought a ring. Everything was a surprise.

DORIAN

Congratulations on your nuptials.

ZELIHA

Thank you.

DORIAN

I wish I could have been at the ceremony.

ZELIHA

That would have been lovely.

DORIAN

Did you get photographs?

ZELIHA

A few on the iPhone. We'll print up a little album. I had a simple white dress.

DORIAN

What was Andrew wearing?

ZELIHA

A blazer. No neck tie.

DORIAN

Unbelievable.

ZELIHA

Maybe we'll get to have a honeymoon this spring when there is time.

DORIAN

I think that you would do better living in Montauk year round.

ZELIHA

Oh, that is isolating, Dorian. Besides, I want to get that work visa soon for the pre-school job.

DORIAN

When I let you put makeup on me, it was my way of showing trust.

ZELIHA

I thought we were just having fun.

DORIAN

We were having fun too.

ZELIHA

I trust you, Dorian. As much as Andrew trusts you.

DORIAN

I'm glad that you do.

ZELIHA

I imagine that you're a very good dancer.

DORIAN

I am. And so are you.

ZELIHA

We should take Andrew to a club and all dance all night long.

DORIAN

That will never happen. He hates clubs.

ZELIHA

We can work on him. You're persuasive.

DORIAN

And so are you.

ZELIHA

Two compliments in a row. What's the third compliment?

DORIAN

I saw you last month on Lexington Avenue.

ZELIHA

Yes?

DORIAN

In the afternoon.

ZELIHA

In the afternoon.

DORIAN

Yes.

ZELIHA

Me?

DORIAN

You were with another woman. A tall red head.

ZELIHA

Cassie. She's one of the parents at the school.

DORIAN

I called your name, but you didn't hear me.

ZELIHA

How funny.

DORIAN

Or did you hear me?

ZELIHA

I work at the preschool academy.

DORIAN

I know.

(Pause)

You're here on a tourist visa.

ZELIHA

Yes. But that will soon change.

(Pause)

The academy director is letting me volunteer while I file a Petition sponsored by the school. I'm fine on the due dates and my tourist visa is a B-1.

DORIAN

Well, I was just going to be an advocate for more caution.

ZELIHA

I appreciate that.

DORIAN

You know Andrew and I go back many decades.

ZELIHA

Yes.

DORIAN

I know his blind spots and his lapses in good judgment.

ZELIHA

That's why you're a lawyer.

DORIAN

Maybe all his life he was looking for a woman just like you. With an air of mystery. With beauty. With amazing contradictions.

ZELIHA

Is this the third compliment, Dorian?

DORIAN

The red head. Cassie? I saw from a distance of ten feet or so . . . you were holding hands.

ZELIHA

Were we?

DORIAN

Yes.

ZELIHA

Maybe she was trying to get my attention as we were crossing the street?

Tell me the truth.
DORIAN

I am.
ZELIHA

I saw you kiss.
DORIAN

That's hilarious.
ZELIHA

I did, Zeliha.
DORIAN

(Laughing)
Were you drinking in the middle of the day, Dorian?
ZELIHA

No.
DORIAN

You didn't see two women kiss. You didn't see me. You were looking at two other women on Lexington.
ZELIHA

I took cell phone photos.
DORIAN

Why would you do such a thing?
ZELIHA

To make this conversation realistic. I owe you and so do you.
DORIAN

This conversation is not realistic, Dorian.
ZELIHA

If you can love Andrew for the rest of your life, that's all I care about. I'm not out to ruin you.
DORIAN

ZELIHA

I believe you, Dorian.

DORIAN

I'm not out to dig into your habits.

ZELIHA

Don't make things sound dirty.

DORIAN

I don't know how else to say this.

ZELIHA

Are you in love with Andrew?

DORIAN

No.

ZELIHA

I think you are. And I can respect that, Dorian. I really can.

(Pause)

Show me the photo.

DORIAN

A photo or two shouldn't be the trigger to being honest.

ZELIHA

But you're accusing me.

DORIAN

You can do anything you like with your free time. And I can delete the photos. Or send them to email accounts. I prefer that Andrew never see photos.

ZELIHA

I don't want a little secret with you, Dorian.

(long gaze)

I wasn't with another woman.

DORIAN

Here's a photo.

(Takes out his cell phone)

Look.

ZELIHA

(She won't direct her eyes to his phone)

Dorian.

DORIAN

What's the truth?
(Flipping through photos)

ZELIHA

Stop.

DORIAN

You think New York is very big, but you have to be better at hiding.

ZELIHA

There's nothing to hide.

DORIAN

(Still holds out his phone)
I can be your ally or I can turn you inside out.

ZELIHA

Why would you do that?

END OF SCENE

SCENE ELEVEN**(A week later – mid January. Dorian is visiting Andrew)**

DORIAN

You know my cat, Caligula, has a cruel streak after 9pm. From the animal shelter. A rescued feline. He is docile all day and has a lovely purr. But like clockwork, at night Caligula unveils a kickass inner cat that scares the shit out of me. He bounces off walls, attacks my legs, tears paper, pisses with preternatural precision at valuable household objects.

(Pause)

So I fault not the cat, but me. I named him Caligula. He is just living up to his namesake.

(Pause)

You're not laughing.

ANDREW

You've told me about Caligula before.

(Pause)

Something's come up.

DORIAN

Something bad?

ANDREW

Very bad. I had a seizure a few days ago.

DORIAN

Were you at work?

ANDREW

I was home. Zeliha was here. I never went through the rehearsal with her but she knew what to do and she was totally solid. She knows where my medication is. I came to and she was calm. She'll see me hit the floor again.

(Pause)

I got an email from Sebastian in London who just got back from a long stay in South Africa. He was sick with an intestinal infection. He had surgery too. Sebastian had no internet connection for over four weeks. He said that he was informed in an email by Tessa – Zeliha's sister - that Zeliha had drowned with her husband in a boating accident on the Bosphorus some months ago. Their bodies were never recovered. Tessa assumes that Zeliha died.

DORIAN

What?

ANDREW

Incredible. I phoned Sebastian and that's all he can say for now. I emailed him photos to send to Tessa.

DORIAN

Is Zeliha lying about everything?

ANDREW

Sebastian met Tessa in Istanbul. But he never met Zeliha. .

DORIAN

Unbelievable.

ANDREW

I've been trying to reach Tessa via email but her email is bouncing back. I don't have a phone number for her. How do I say this to Zeliha?

DORIAN

The Talented Mr. Ripley?

ANDREW

She looks like those photos from Facebook.

DORIAN

Clearly she survived the boating accident.

ANDREW

Then why didn't she tell the truth about misleading Tessa?

DORIAN

She could be running from her husband. He could be alive?

ANDREW

I need to hear the truth. And I have to tell her everything.

END OF SCENE

SCENE TWELVE

(Later that night. Zeliha comes into the apartment. Andrew is waiting for her on the sofa.)

ZELIHA

Full moon out tonight, Andrew.

ANDREW

I see.

ZELIHA

Bigger than a birthday balloon.

ANDREW

Yes.

ZELIHA

Something wrong?

ANDREW

Yes. You need to know more about my seizures.

ZELIHA

You gave me a complete instructions.

ANDREW

I know. But the seizures are becoming more frequent.

ZELIHA

What does your doctor say?

ANDREW

He says it is to be expected. With age. With stress. With becoming a father.

ZELIHA

I don't want you to worry.

ANDREW

I know.

ZELIHA

I love you, Andrew.

ANDREW

And I love you.

ZELIHA

Are you angry?

ANDREW

Yes.

ZELIHA

Have you been drinking?

ANDREW

Yes.

ZELIHA

I'm sorry, Andrew.

ANDREW

Why?

ZELIHA

From your face, I can see something is causing you pain.

ANDREW

I need the truth, Zeliha. That's all I ask of you. Please don't lie to me about your life in

Istanbul. I've heard from Sebastian.

ZELIHA

What did he say?

ANDREW

He said your sister Tessa thinks you're dead.

ZELIHA

That's crazy. How well do you know Sebastian?

ANDREW

I trust Sebastian.

ZELIHA

More than you trust me?

(Pause)

Let's call Tessa and straighten this mess out.

ANDREW

We can't find her number in Israel.

ZELIHA

What difference does it make what he said? I'm not dead and I have no living relationship with my sister.

ANDREW

But your husband drowned?

ZELIHA

Yes, like I told you before.

ANDREW

Dorian thinks your husband is still alive.

ZELIHA

How stupid of Dorian.

ANDREW

He thinks like a lawyer.

ZELIHA

Better he thinks like a friend.

ANDREW

Who are you?

ZELIHA

Zeliha.

(Pause)

I'm carrying your child.

ANDREW

Who are you?

ZELIHA

A girl who fell in love with you. A lost immigrant. A cousin.

ANDREW

What is your name?

ZELIHA

Zeliha.

ANDREW

What happened in Istanbul on the river?

ZELIHA

I didn't drown anyone.

ANDREW

That's not what I asked.

ZELIHA

I am a survivor. I love you.

ANDREW

Everyone but you died on the boat.

ZELIHA

I think so.

ANDREW

Why does your sister think you're dead?

ZELIHA

All my life she wished me dead.

ANDREW

Your Turkish family thinks you're dead?

ZELIHA

There isn't many more besides Tessa. And I don't really care. Why should you?

ANDREW

When you first told me about the boating accident . . .

ZELIHA

I knew it would scare you. I don't want your pity, Andrew.

ANDREW

What if your husband knocks on my door tomorrow?

ZELIHA

(Silence)

You are falling out of love with me, Andrew? Don't you think that is sinful?
Do you think I will cause your hurt?

ANDREW

I don't know what to think.

ZELIHA

Am I not the woman you married?

(Pause)

Do you think I would not die for you?

(Pause)

Did I not removed the demon buried inside your chest?

(Pause)

We will not be in Istanbul and that means we will not have any problems in the future.

(Pause)

I am like the city with two names, Andrew.

(Pause)

Constantinople. Istanbul. Both real. Both coincide.

ANDREW

I think you have to go, Zeliha.

ZELIHA

I can't go, darling. Where am I to go?

ANDREW

I don't know. Maybe I need to go away for a while.

ZELIHA

Montauk? Alone? No, Andrew. Please.

(She slowly approaches him. He doesn't move. Her hands reach for his face. She kisses him tenderly and tussles his hair. When she pulls away her face is in tears)

ZELIHA

Where am I to go? In this condition . . . and if I go home I will be arrested, Andrew. The police are monsters. There is no justice at home. You see the newspapers. I'm no longer a single woman. I only ask for you to give me this chance. In your city. I know we can find happiness. I can be an observant Jew. I will be so amazing. The best mother in the world to our son. You will never be embarrassed. And if your demon comes back, I will not only remove it but I will kill it. What more do you want?

(She goes to the window, parts the curtain, and raps her knuckles against the pane)

Bright moon tonight, Andrew. There's a Turkish superstition if moon light is spilling into your window, it is best to rap with your knuckles three times. This keeps our home safe. If you look out in this direction, you can see God's love. Between those two buildings across from us. God brought me here. I don't feel scared anymore. I don't. Tomorrow morning, you tell me if you want me to go. And if you do, I will go. But tonight you give me please the favor the king once gave Scheherazade. For I am no worse than Scheherazade.

(He takes a few steps toward the window and stops. Lights go to black)

END OF PLAY