

The Incredible Flying Machine

Personages

Sai, *an olive-skinned woman in her early twenties*

Judy, *an American woman in her fifties or sixties*

Mark, *an American man in his fifties or sixties*

Udia, *a middle-eastern woman in her fifties or sixties, Sai's mother*

Sally, *an American woman in her early twenties,*

Young Udia, *same as above, approximately twenty five years younger, played by the actor playing Sally*

Baha, *Sai's father, in his twenties*

Gregory, *a British aid worker in his twenties, played by the actor playing Baha*

Place

A walled village in the Middle East, a posh American suburb, and Lunendra twenty six years ago.

Time

One that feels a lot like ours.

The stage is set with tables and chairs-the skeletal pieces of a kitchen, of a living room, of an office, or just tables and chairs. On one side, they are distinctly American. On the other, vaguely middle eastern.

Judy addresses the audience. She holds the latest in communication technology- today that is a netbook or cellular telephone.

Sai works her own communication device.

SAI
Wanted: an adventurous person with great
faith in the creative powers of humanity.

JUDY
Wanted: an adventurous person with
great
faith in the creative powers of
humanity.

SAI
For an extremely important task. The only reward is belief. The only risk is pride...Do not reply with solicitations for prostitution.

SAI
Dear Judy,
What a lovely name.

JUDY
Dear Sai,
What a lovely name.

How ideally American

How exotic. It sounds so placeless, which means it cannot be European.

It's so simple. Clean.

Strong.

Your name is an idea.

She sighs.

SAI
Thank you for making contact.

JUDY
It says so much.
Thank you for making contact.

SAI
I invented something fantastic. This is the best idea I have ever had. It came to me when I was buying bread...What an odd time to have your absolute best idea, I know. This one came to me from out of absolutely nowhere. As if I had nothing to do with it. And it hit me suddenly, like the flu or hunger or...rain.

SAI
A flying machine.

JUDY
A flying machine.

SAI

So children do not have to live in a world with walls. This machine is superior to planes in every way. It cannot ever be used to kill people or drop aid- both of those are addictive.

SAI

Best of all, any child can make this machine
At home.

I need you to bring my plan back
to America

since you have a market of ideas.
Where people trade ideas like they
are fresh produce.
My machine is like an heirloom tomato to
this market. It changes everything.

And you will make no more war.

Do not misunderstand me.
I don't believe in the myth of America.
I do believe in the power of America.
And if the invention works for you,
my people will soon want it.
Right now they cannot understand
my machine.

SAI

We take our dreams from without,
like sugar in our coffee.

I will let you know when it is finished.

JUDY

A very noble goal. Many say that is
impossible.

I have a home. A family. It will be difficult
for me to
leave them for any length of time. They are
rather...helpless.

I take issue with one little piece of your
message:

We are not war-like. We are democratic.
Democracies do not declare wars.
Unless they vote to declare war.

Your machine sounds incredible. And I
would like to see it.

JUDY

Let me know when it is finished.

JUDY

Thousands of miles away. Hours away, someone wants me. Needs *me*.
It's amazing, to find each other in the vast
Judy walks toward an imaginary frontier. Sai and her can almost touch.

JUDY

Out there.
Like two rain drops in the desert...this girl makes me feel poetic...
And all we had to do was click "send".

Breakfast

*Mark sits at the table reading a financial publication. He has eggs.
Judy enters.*

MARK

Morning, Honey. I made eggs. They are wonderful.

JUDY

Anything interesting in the paper?

MARK

Not making eye contact.

Hmm...

JUDY

Getting your news in print. It's so wasteful.

MARK

Newspapers will never die. Humans are tactile creatures. We will always want our ideas in material form.

Judy watches Mark read..

JUDY

Must be pretty interesting.

MARK

Not really.

Hey, you didn't sleep well last night.

JUDY

I didn't?

MARK

It was like being in bed with a bull. What was the matter?

JUDY

I don't know.

MARK

Maybe take a pill tonight or something.

JUDY

Mark.

MARK

Just to help you sleep. I'm sure you are tired today.

Judy watches Mark read.

JUDY

Do you ever look at me and want to do something wild?

MARK

Of course not, Honey. I love you.

JUDY

Never?

MARK

What kind of wild?

JUDY

I don't know. Dance. Fly. Whittle.

MARK

Can't say I ever look at you and want to whittle.

JUDY

I think I'm talking about what is called the creative impulse.

MARK

Do you want me to feel the creative impulse when I look at you?

JUDY

Nevermind.

MARK

Aren't those eggs fantastic?

JUDY

Mm-hm.

Judy watches Mark read.

I want to go to the Middle East.

MARK
I would call that a destructive impulse.

JUDY
Seriously.

MARK
Why?

JUDY
I've never been to the Middle East.

MARK
You've never been to Florida.

JUDY
I'm going.

MARK
With what money?

JUDY
That money we have for Sally's college.

MARK
You want to steal from our daughter.

JUDY
She's not going to use it.

MARK
We don't know that.

JUDY
We know it Mark.

MARK
For how long?

JUDY
I don't know.

MARK
It sounds like you haven't thought this through very well.

JUDY

So what.

MARK

Okay. Fine. You draw up a budget for your trip. Present that to your daughter-

JUDY

Oh, so now she's my daughter?

MARK

No. She is our daughter. And this is an incredibly disruptive idea.

JUDY

I think that's the point.

MARK

I don't know what's gotten into you.

Listen love, I just want you to be safe. Happy. That's my goal.

JUDY

Okay.

MARK

So take a sleeping pill tonight. See how you feel tomorrow.

I'll see you tonight. Have a great day.

Mark leaves.

JUDY

These eggs are terrible.

DINNER

Sai sits in her empty kitchen. A cool, distant wind blows. It is refreshing and terrifying. Judy is somehow there in this vision.

SAI

We judge doodlers too harshly Judy. On the street as we pass by. We see her, sitting on the ground. Her hands look like they are performing a ballet on her notebook. And we get mad. At first it's about her blocking part of the sidewalk. How dare she!

But then we get angry because she is making time to doodle. To dream. And we think there might just be something wrong with us. Because we are not wasting time. We have no time to waste.

But that's wrong. A doodle can change the world.

Sai reaches to Judy but finds herself unable to touch.

The machine is almost finished. I promise. I have writer's block-Creator's block...I need something to counter the yaw and p-factor. You don't know what adverse yaw and p-factor are? I pity you. Spend more time doodling. I tell you.

In short, I need a rudder. This is what all the books at the settlement library tell me. Correction: this is what the one aviation book at the settlement library tells me. Aerodnetics by F. W. Lancaster. I'm surprised it's there at all. They usually want to keep us from thinking about a way out. No travel books, no science fiction books. We don't even have *Anna Karenina* because of the train! That's what my dad used to say. He's dead by the way...That aviation book must have slipped through the cracks. Wait..are you dead? Is that how you're here right now? Oh...I hope not...

Maybe some adventurous librarian risked her life for that book. How romantic. I imagine her... slipping it down the back of her pants just so the authorities wouldn't notice it...letting the ancient pages crumble against her sweaty skin as they inspected her bags. And that book *is* ancient. It doesn't even mention the Wright Brothers. That's how old Mr. Lancaster's book is. Maybe the settlers thought he had no idea what he was writing about.

Maybe they thought his book was just a bunch of doodles. Gibberish. That's probably what they said about the woman who invented the first fire to heat food. Or the girl who invented the first spatula to cook food...

Sai grabs a spatula. She holds it like a holy grail. We might even hear the high stringing of an orchestra for a moment. Judy fades away and Sai is suddenly in her home.

Udia enters, startling Sai. Sai hides the spatula. Udia begins their ritual.

UDIA
Hello Sai.

SAI
How was work, mother?

UDIA
Everyday reminds me more of the last.

SAI
That's because you have short term memory loss.

UDIA
What are you talking about?

SAI
My point exactly.

UDIA
(Like the Hebrew word)
Bat

SAI
(Like the Arabic word)
Omi

UDIA
I'm hungry.

SAI
Want me to make you something?

UDIA
I can do it myself.

SAI
First tell me about your day.

UDIA
You don't want me to forget.

SAI

You don't want to forget either. Sit down and tell me.

UDIA

Let's see. There's not much to tell. The life of a wall engineer is very boring. "Recast concrete in this section to widen the east boundary Udia"... "Find the best place to put another camera on the south side Udia."

SAI

What did you do today?

UDIA

I want eggs. That's what I want.

SAI

Today.

UDIA

That's what I'm going to make.

SAI

In a minute Omi.

UDIA

No. Now.

SAI

Did you select the spot for a new security camera?

UDIA

Yes.

SAI

That's good. You remembered.
Who is that camera going to stop?

UDIA

Them. It's going to stop them from attacking us.

SAI

Who's them Omi?

UDIA

Megs.
She stands up and begins wandering away.

SAI

Eggs aren't going to attack us.
Where are you going?

Udia has lost her place.

UDIA

I don't know.

SAI

You were going to make yourself dinner.

UDIA

That's right...Boysenberries.

SAI

Eggs.

UDIA

Eggs...

SAI

In the refrigerator. Here let me-

UDIA

I don't want you to do it!
I'm sorry Sai.

SAI

It's okay.
The eggs are in the refrigerator.

UDIA

Thank you. Now what were we talking about?

SAI

The wall.

UDIA

That's right. The wall.

We need a security barrier. To protect us from them. An eight foot b-block of concrete isn't good enough. We need vehicle trenches and fences.

SAI

Firuz said the wall is moving.

UDIA

Firuz the baker?

SAI

Yes.

UDIA

He's a fool.

SAI

Is the wall moving?

UDIA

I don't remember.

SAI

Is the wall moving?

UDIA

You ask too many questions sometimes.

SAI

That's my job. To help you get better.

UDIA

I'm fine.

That baker is dangerous Sai. You shouldn't speak to him.

SAI

Fibuz says the wall is moving so they put him on the other side.

UDIA

There is a reason for that.

SAI

What's the reason?

UDIA

Nobody makes that much money selling bread.

SAI

His bread is wonderful.

UDIA

Nobody makes that much money selling *just* bread...

SAI

That's ridiculous.

UDIA

Unless it's blintzes. Good blintzes can make a man wealthy. That I would believe.

SAI

Do you ever want to leave?

Udia drops the pan.

UDIA

Oh.

Sai rushes to pick it up.

SAI

Here. I'll get it.

UDIA

(Burning herself on the pan)

Ah!

SAI

Don't touch that. It's hot.

UDIA

I know that now.

SAI

Let me see your hand.

Let me be. I can do this. UDIA

I know you can.
Let me see your hand. SAI

Udia offers it.

Let me furn-finish my dinner. UDIA

I think about leaving sometimes. SAI

Not this again. Don't talk like that. UDIA

I just think about it. I didn't say I want to leave. SAI

Good. UDIA

I've just never seen what's out there. SAI

Terrorists and bad food. That's all. You don't want to go. UDIA

I doubt that. SAI

Oh... UDIA

What's wrong? SAI

Where's the...the thing. UDIA

The what? SAI

UDIA

The thing I need to...
She makes a stirring motion.

SAI

Use a fork.

UDIA

No. That's not right. Where is the...

SAI

Fork. Fork is the word you are looking for Omi.

UDIA

No. I can't find it. The-

SAI

Fork. See? Four prongs. Fork. That's an easy way to remember. Fork for making your dinner.

UDIA

That's not what I want.

SAI

It is.

UDIA

No...

SAI

I mean, what if we went someplace safe but really far away?

UDIA

(Pounds the table)

Not fork!

In the backswing between hits, Udia freezes.

A vision of Judy enters Sai's mind.

SAI

I should tell you something before you come. My mother Udia is a stroke survivor. This made her left side dominant, even though she is almost fully recovered. She is logical, mathematical. She has trouble with spatial relationships, short term memory and communication. Her speech problem is called anomic aphasia. She loses her words or uses the wrong words. This sometimes frustrates her. Remind me to tell you this when you are real.

UDIA

(Pounds the table again)

WHERE IS THE NOT FORK?

She freezes.

SAI

She wasn't always like this.

Judy fades away again.

Udia slumps into a chair, crying a bit.

UDIA

I'm not okay.

SAI

Shh. You're alright.
Give me your hand.

Sai gives her mother a deep, calming hand massage.

UDIA

I need my melon to work. This is so...
I just want your father to come home.

SAI

Father is dead Omi.

UDIA

Did they get him?

SAI

He had a heart attack. A long time ago.

UDIA

That's right.
Oh, I'm so sorry. Why am I crying?

SAI

You were making dinner.

UDIA

Oh dear.
My beautiful girl.

SAI

My brilliant mother. It's going to be fine.

UDIA

I don't know how.

SAI

You get better everyday. Do you hear that? Everyday.

UDIA

It's getting worse. I am losing my melon. I am losing my melon...

SAI

No you are not. Tell me about the mountains Omi. Tell me what they look like in Lunendra.

UDIA

Oh Sai. It's such a shame this war...
The mountains in Lunenda make you small. They... t...

SAI

Tumble?

UDIA

No.

SAI

Tower.

UDIA

They tower, like great protectors. Dark when we were in danger. Bright and inviting when we were at peace. The gods promised our people that only songbirds would make it past those mountains into Lunendra. They promised that a long time ago.

SAI
What do they look like?

UDIA
Who?

SAI
(As if massaging the words out of her mother's hands)
The mountains.

UDIA
My mother said the mountains look as if a great animal carved them with her wings as she flew. Where she rested, Lunenda was born.

SAI
Mm...I like that story.

UDIA
Not even faith can move those mountains. That's how big they are.

SAI
You see them, don't you?

UDIA
Yes.

SAI
You can go back there Omi. You know that.

UDIA
Go where?

SAI
Home.

UDIA
Oh this war...
What is that awful smell? Are you cooking something?

SAI
The eggs are burning.

UDIA

Get the fork and stir them.

Sai gets up. She still has the spatula hidden on her person. She stirs the eggs so they do not turn indelicate.

SAI

What do you think of that Omi? Would you ever like to go?

UDIA

Go Where? What are you talking about?

SAI

Home.

UDIA

Oh this war...

Pictorial

Judy, at her communication device.

JUDY

Sai.

She sighs.

I feel like there is a tunnel just for you and me and you are at one end smiling at me. Every once in awhile you just blow...and this tunnel carries that breeze all the way to me. It calms me. Soothes me.

She closes her eyes and exhales. Sai appears.

Oh...I-I need to tell you something Sai...

Getting to your settlement is more difficult than I thought. Than we thought. I called an airline representative. Nobody does that anymore do they? It's amazing. We expect to be hurled halfway into space and we do this all by the click of a button, avoiding the very people responsible for our well-being.

I would like to say I called out of principle. I didn't. Travelocity doesn't exactly cover the war zone markets. So I called and spoke to this nice sounding woman. Maybe thirty years old, but you can never tell over the phone. I always imagine those voices belonging to people trapped in some middle age...like the Peter Pans of travel. Only older. Obviously...

When I told this lady where I was going, she laughed. Actually laughed at me. Instead of hanging up the phone, I asked her if she knew of anybody who could get me there. To you. And she suddenly stopped laughing. It was as if nobody had ever asked her that simple follow up question.

I heard a click on the other end of the line and thought for a moment she hung up on me. I heard all these whispers. Men's voices. Women's voices. But also children. Speaking in all kinds of languages: Chinese- or at least what I think was Chinese. Spanish, Arabic, French, Afar, German, Somali, Batanga, Benga, Bube., Kabuverdianu. And Canadian. There was at least one Canadian...

And then this man with an accent I didn't know came on the line. Over all the other whispering voices. Like he was the person I was meant to speak with in this secret meeting place. This dank little voice meeting place. He asked me my name, but not very politely. Sort of like,

Speaking gruffly and almost combining all the linguistic elements she lists:

JUDY

“Who is this?”

“Um, this is Judy”

“Judy, now your name is Benni Norris. Forward me a photograph and a check for \$10,000. Your travel documents will be sent to you.”

“Benni Norris? Isn’t that a man’s name?”

“You are not a man?”

“Judy is a woman’s name.”

“Fine. Now you are Zlota Baba. Check your messages.”

And then he was gone. Just like he came. I swear Zlota Baba is a Polish goddess. Not so bad when you think about it... You can still call me Judy, Sai. When we meet...when you are real...

As Sai fades away:

I need to send him a photo. I figured I would send you the same photo. So you know who to look for...I hope you are well Sai. In the vast out there.

Judy does her best yearbook pose for the picture. She tries to click the shutter button while looking glamorous and composed. It does not work. She tries this several ways- clicking the button while posing, clicking the button and running into place.

Sally bursts into the room. She dons an ironically cheery coffee shop worker’s uniform.

SALLY

You know, I don’t get what is wrong with people sometimes. It’s like nobody ever knows what they want. Rob, the manager you remember him? The fat, bald one? Well he’s yelling at us to like move things along a bit. He’s all “get me that decaf double tall non-fat extra dry cappuccino.” This while I’m sweating my tits off putting together the Grande with Whip Mocha Frappuccino Light Blended Coffee that the lady in the way too white pants ordered ten minutes ago because Lillian can’t get her ass out of the bathroom long enough to make the drink. I swear that woman is sleeping on the toilet. And it’s been like this for a full three hours mind you.

SALLY

So this guy in a suit walks up to the counter and stares at the menu. I'm making these drinks with my hands and feet at this point and the dude can't stick to one kind of milk. He's all "Ummm, make that whole. No. I better not. On second thought give me skim. Oh no...I don't want that. Split the difference. Give me breve. And whipped cream. Oh maybe not. To whip cream or not to whip cream, that is the question" When the lady behind him starts like, yelling at me. "Aw just get me a skinny latte with hazelnut you idiot." So without thinking much I stopped what I was doing, made the drink, and threw it at her....

And none of this happens if people are just honest with themselves and stick to what they want. Ugh!

What are you doing?

JUDY

Nothing.
You're home early.

SALLY

I got sent home early today. Did you even hear me just now?

JUDY

Absolutely dear.

SALLY

I threw the drink at her.

JUDY

I'm very disappointed in you.

SALLY

Oh don't give me your fake disapproval or whatever. You don't care. You are totally apathetic.

JUDY

I care.

SALLY

And that pisses me off to no end. Would it kill you to just engage a little bit?

JUDY

Why did you throw a drink at her Sally?

SALLY

Because I was mad. I threw a lukewarm drink at her when I should have thrown it at Mr. Milk. He was the one who pissed me off. That's the way the world works. The decisive ones always get it right in the face. Whatever.

JUDY

There are better ways to deal with anger darling. You can always talk to me.

SALLY

Right.
What were you doing when I walked in here just now?

JUDY

Nothing.

SALLY

Bullshit.

JUDY

Look, can you help me with something?

SALLY

What?

JUDY

I want this thing to take a picture of my face. Just my face. Like a-like a driver's license photo.

SALLY

Easy.

JUDY

Thank you.
I really am sorry that happened to you today Sally. Unfortunately, we don't control the actions of others.

SALLY

What's that? A quote from one of your old teacher posters?

JUDY

Maybe. Either way, we don't control other people.

SALLY

And it's a damn shame too. I'd be a great master of the universe.
What's the photo for?

JUDY

A friend.

SALLY

Mom. You don't have any friends.

JUDY

Out there.

SALLY

Out there? Like you are a cowgirl or something. Where's your hat?

JUDY

Yee haw!
No, she's a friend I met in the-the...intersphere.

SALLY

Intersphere. Ha. Mom enters the digital age. This is truly scary. Smile.

Sally snaps the photograph.

Wow Mom. You look really beautiful.

JUDY

Thanks Sally. It's all the photographer.

SALLY

Do you need help sending this?

JUDY

I'll be alright.

SALLY

Okay. I'm going to change out of these disgusting clothes.

JUDY

Okay darling. Thank you again.

Sally leaves, lingering just outside the door. Judy moves to send her secret messages.

Her note to Sai is easy. The one to her secret source, much more difficult. She pulls out a credit card and types its identity. Sally returns, surreptitiously reading over her mother's shoulder.

SALLY

The secret life of parents.

JUDY

Sally, I-

SALLY

Where is this money coming from?

JUDY

We have a little bit saved-

SALLY

There's more?

Judy shakes her head.

SALLY

Unbelievable. I had no idea we were living in this bleached suburb for no reason.

JUDY

It's-

SALLY

I don't believe it. I mean you certainly expect your parents to have little, inconsequential secrets. Like their sex lives. Nobody wants to hear about that. It's a secret. You just don't ask.

JUDY

Please-

SALLY

But this, this could have made life better.

JUDY

It wasn't-

SALLY

I don't care if you are into s & m. I don't care if you like to beat his ass in bed. This, this I care about. You let me work this degrading, like totally soul-digesting job for five years. Maybe the most important five years of my life. You wouldn't even buy me a car. Where has all this money been?

JUDY

Your father and I save a lot. He's a conservative man.

SALLY

Then there must be more of it.

JUDY

Your father is not happy with me.

SALLY

Oh god...

JUDY

But we save a lot. It will replenish itself in time.

SALLY

You save a lot. That's great. Just great. You must love watching me suffer. What are you people? Some kind of insects. Infanticide loving bugs. Monarchs eating your own eggs before they hatch. I've never left home Mom. How could you- How did you not help me?

Mark enters with a big bag of bagels.

MARK

Look what I bought! Thirty bagels for a dollar.

JUDY

We are waiting for when you need it.

MARK

They are three days old, but who cares right?

SALLY

How could you?

MARK

It's only three days...

I need that money now.

SALLY

A dollar?

MARK

I'm sorry it...you've taken so long to move out and-

JUDY

Are you jealous of me for my youth or whatever? For actually being young. So you had to gobble it up?

SALLY

What's going on?

MARK

Oh you know...finding out my future is now completely fucked...normal family talk.

SALLY

They're just bagels...

MARK

You didn't even have the balls to tell him.
Well I'm not going to do your dirty work.

SALLY

I-

JUDY

Judy.

MARK

This isn't about hurting you.

JUDY

This isn't about hurting me...

SALLY

Simultaneously.
You used the money.

MARK

No. JUDY

Well it HURTS. SALLY

I- JUDY
I'm going Mark.

To the Middle East MARK

SALLY
Oh this is disgusting. This whole family is such a farce. You can sit there and ask me "When are you going to school Sally? Shouldn't you get out of the house more Sally? Why don't you have friends over Sally? Do something you love Sally" and this whole time you've been sitting on that possibility. Squashing it. Letting it rot under your ass. I need that money now Mom. Now!

MARK
What money?

JUDY
She knows Mark.

SALLY
Nice of you to tell me. I guess college isn't in the cards.

MARK
Sally, your mother is-she's not well.

JUDY
I'm perfectly in my right mind.

MARK
She didn't mean to do this to you and me.

JUDY
Mark-

MARK
We can always get it back.

JUDY

I can't get it back. These are people- these people might be dangerous.

SALLY

Dangerous people. Ha! Such a farce...Who do you think you are Mom? James Bond. Pussy Galore. Dangerous people. I hope they eat you alive.

JUDY

Sally-

SALLY

That's what you were doing to me. This whole time. Instead of being a mother. Were you ever a mother? Do you know? Because I sure don't.

MARK

Don't talk to you mother like-

JUDY

(Simultaneously)

This isn't that big of a-

SALLY

I mean, who the hell are you. I've never known. We don't talk. Ever.

JUDY

I try to listen Sally. As openly as I can.

SALLY

To me you were just this voice telling me these vanilla rules of the world. Be a simple, good little WASP, Sally. Follow the rules, Sally. Be nice to people. Work hard and you will be rewarded. Follow the rules, Sally Eat your mashed potatoes, Sally.... But you never enforced them. You never made me finish my dinner. Maybe I desperately needed to join the clean plate club. Maybe I needed you to have a spine. Did that ever occur to you?

JUDY

That's-

MARK

Watch your-

SALLY

You're no better old man.

MARK

Your mother is sick! Now stop this.

SALLY

Follow the rules Sally. And this whole time you've been breaking them. What a farce. Dangerous people...

JUDY

Come with me.

MARK

Oh don't be stupid.

SALLY

I can't. I have to find another job.

Sally slams the office door behind her.

JUDY

I'm not stupid Mark.

Mark pulls out a bagel. He considers eating it.

JUDY

And I'm not...ill.
Do you understand me?

MARK

I understand you want to spend thousands of dollars to have your head chopped off. Yes.

JUDY

I supported you for twenty-seven years Mark. That's the longest span of time I've dedicated to anything in my entire life. Do you hear me? Anything.

MARK

I hope you have a burka. I hear they don't like to see their women so much as they like to murder them.

JUDY

Mark, this girl has a dream. And that's the most powerful...she wants me to help her save people. And that's the most useful task anyone has asked me to do. Ever.

Be a mother. MARK

Don't. JUDY

Be a wife. MARK

I do those things. JUDY

Be a rape victim- MARK

I am a good mother- JUDY

Be a dead body. MARK
Those are more attractive ideas.

I just- I want something more. JUDY

Sometimes it's better to fight for what you already have. MARK
They will eat you alive.

You already are. JUDY

She leaves.

Mark rips into his bagel.

The sound of a dank meeting place for voices is outflanked by the seismic symphony of an insect army on the move.

Birth Pangs

Udia is awake, restless. She turns on the kitchen light and shields her eyes until they adjust. She cradles a dusty box which she places gently on the table. Item by item, she pulls out and wipes clean-pastels, colored pencils, brushes, aged paper. Udia spreads these out on the table like gifts on an altar. She sits. Udia knows these things, but she does not remember their use, or why they are used, or why she holds them now. She considers putting them back in the box. She is an angel with clipped wings so old they are in danger of being shed. This is confusing and she slowly falls into a reverie.

Her vision:

Lunendra, about twenty-six years ago. In some ways you would not know it. There is a timelessness and bucolic effervescence to the place. Baha, a lanky young man with an academic but uncertain demeanor, weeps into an encyclopedia volume.

A butterfly, bigger than his head but not as big as a blue whale, flits in front of him. The beast beckons him and he answers. They dance for an instant. He looks totally stupid and free. The animal then dies, slowly.

BAHA

No. No...

He tries to blow on the animal. It is so big he almost does CPR compressions. Instead, he cries.

A young Udia enters holding a paint pail and some brushes.

UDIA

This is not something I see everyday.

BAHA

Oh. I'm sorry. This-this...

UDIA

It's okay to cry. We all should cry more often. I just don't see people crying everyday.

BAHA

It was so beautiful and...BIG.

UDIA

You loved her didn't you?

BAHA

I don't-I mean, yes...yes. I loved her for a time. It was just so brief.

UDIA

So you are crying because your love is brief or her life was brief?

BAHA

Both.

UDIA

Oh. I was mistaken. I thought you were crying tears of gratitude.

BAHA

...but she's dead.

UDIA

And love is never brief. It leaves a permanent impression on the soul. You will love her for the rest of your life now. Be thankful.

A beat. He almost understands.

BAHA

This is so-I've never seen one that big.

UDIA

Size doesn't matter. Length doesn't matter. Age doesn't matter. Unless it follows wisdom.

BAHA

I mean, I am grateful. I don't know what happened. I was-I am having a bad day, and then she made it better. Somehow. And now I'm grieving. Should we bury her or, I don't know...keen?

UDIA

You can keen all you want. I don't express myself that way. No, I would say my grief is more like a breeze on its way somewhere better. My grief is quiet.

BAHA

I'm Baha.

Udia. UDIA

I've just never seen a butterfly so...enveloping. What is this place? BAHA

You are in Lunendra. UDIA

You aren't surprised. BAHA

No. UDIA

Are all the creatures like her? BAHA

That big? UDIA

I...guess. BAHA

There aren't many limits here. UDIA

She starts painting the bridge.

I mean... BAHA

Get used to the freedom. That is, if you intend to stay. UDIA

Freedom? BAHA

You'll find the life here is motivated by gratitude. Gratitude is freedom. I know that's unusual...well, where you come from. UDIA

I don't follow... BAHA

UDIA

I had this aunt. We call her Onesie...she had one arm. She came up with the nickname. I swear. And if you lied to her, boy were you in for a beating. Like getting hit on the behind with a tree. Anyways, she lost her home five times over the years. Wild storms just threw her house to the ground. Five houses. Five losses. When she died, I asked her about her best day...thinking I would focus her mind on good memories or something. She said she had five best days...

Udia goes back to painting.

BAHA

Because she got new houses?

UDIA

Because she focused on other people. Their help. To wait out the storm and rebuild. So I thought you were crying tears of...well...

BAHA

I should tell you I feel so selfish. I was crying for myself before she...danced with me. Crying for a job. I'm an encyclopedia salesman. I sold one measly "x" today. Just one book. The littlest book. The lady who bought it told me I looked foolish.

UDIA

That's rude of her. I think you look like a man who is just a little bit lost. That's all.

BAHA

Oh she would agree with you. She told me I was a baby trying to grow up.

UDIA

Young, maybe. A baby...

BAHA

The woman is right. I take myself pretty seriously.

UDIA

You're not hopeless.

BAHA

I wonder sometimes.

UDIA

I saw you crying.

She stops, looks at him.

That means you won't lose your humanity. You won't lose the beautiful, delicate little wings that make you ache when you look at the stars. They are what got you there many years ago. You just forgot how to use them. While you were busy selling...knowledge.

She gets dangerously close to him.

BAHA

You're right.

I'm a knowledge salesman.

UDIA

For the moment.

BAHA

Only I would try to sell something that everyone can get for free. Everyday...I just...do you ever want to wake yourself up? Just get out of your patterns...of your sleepwalking little life and breathe...or something?

UDIA

No.

BAHA

Well you are an artist.

UDIA

Artist. Fine. Call me that. I think everyone is an artist. We are just taught to hide our...inner fool.

BAHA

Leaving your mark on that thing.

UDIA

I am finishing this bridge. No bridge is complete in Lunendra without art.

BAHA

That's a wonderful job. How does a person find a job like that?

UDIA

I searched. Tried many things. Everything. Even math. Math most of all, come to think of it. Until I found the thing I never wanted to stop loving.

BAHA

You are lucky.
I don't even know what to try next.

Simultaneously, Mark enters his kitchen, hurriedly searching for his bagels. He is an angel with clipped wings so old they are in danger of being shed. This is confusing.

UDIA

Given up on the encyclopedias have you?

BAHA

I think so...

UDIA

Before you even got to the letter A? How tragic.

BAHA

I get it. Sarcasm and mutant butterflies. That's what Lunendra is all about.

UDIA

Baha. You have to search like the world is ending. Like you need to find this thing you love before it and you die.

A beat.

UDIA

Want to try?

BAHA

I...

UDIA

Painting, I mean.

BAHA

I can't.

UDIA

Grown up.

BAHA

Hey. I'm grieving. Don't pick on me.

Mark finds his bag and wolfs down as many bagels as he can..

UDIA

You are grieving your old age. Because you are not wise. You just 'know' things.

BAHA

Observant of you. I'm young.

UDIA

I know. That's why you won't sell knowledge here. Selling knowledge is how we all forgot the way to fly. People started keeping secrets and we all forgot... You have to share knowledge. In Lunendra we sing our history. We shout our ideas. We dance our faith. We share our knowledge.

BAHA

I read all the volumes if that's what you mean.

UDIA

It isn't. But I would love it if you shared everything you know with me. Maybe over a cup of tea.

BAHA

But I don't know anything really...

UDIA

Good. Neither do I. So let's finish this bridge.

She gives him a brush. She paints in big, bold, free strokes. He is much more confined at first but slowly lets go. They make animated and enormous and goofy strokes until Udia and Baha kiss.

BAHA

What if I'm supposed to try you?

UDIA

Then you stay right here.

BAHA

And never leave.

The sound of air whipping and whirring as Udia's vision disappears.

Out of Mark and Udia's shared night the rumblings of air displaced- first in buckets, then in barrels, then in drums -begins. They both hear this massive and relentless dispersion from inside their incarcerating kitchens.

MARK AND UDIA

I think I'm going to be sick.

Misbegotten

Morning in Udia and Sai's kitchen. Udia is asleep on the floor. Her supplies are everywhere-signs of a struggle. Sai walks into the room.

SAI

...mom. Omi. Are you alright?

UDIA

Sorry. I must have fallen down.

SAI

Asleep. You slept in the kitchen. Are these yours?

UDIA

Yes. At least I think they are mine.

SAI

You painted last night? That's incredible!

UDIA

I did...

SAI

This is amazing. Omi, this is great news. Where is the painting? I want to see it.

UDIA

I can't...I mean it's not good.

SAI

Omi. That's okay. Your motor skills are going to keep improving. I know it's probably not as good as...who cares right? You painted! Aren't you proud of yourself?

UDIA

Yes. Yes, I am.

SAI

The artist returns...How did you bring her back?

UDIA

I just-well, I sat myself down at this table and I said to myself "scrub" and I did. I made a scrub.

SAI

Painting. You mean...That's okay. This is exciting for you.

UDIA

Yes. I am very excited for me...

SAI

We have to tell the doctor. This is so wonderful.

UDIA

Oh he doesn't need to- there's no need to make a fuss.
I'm going to get ready for work. Lazy bums-I slept out here?

SAI

Yes. You did.
Omi. Mother...I have something I want to tell you.

UDIA

What is it Bat?

SAI

We both had an exciting night...you see, I...I invented something. And it works.

UDIA

Good for you.

SAI

Don't you want to ask what I invented?

UDIA

I do, but I have to get ready for work.

She starts putting together the messiness.

Clean up after yourself next time Sai. How many times do I have to...

SAI

A machine that flies. People. It flies people. But only one or two. And it uses no fuel.

UDIA

(Holding up a pencil)

Now...

SAI

Did you hear me Omi? I invented a flying machine.

UDIA

Sai why did you break this perfectly good pen?

SAI

Mother. I have a friend coming to stay with us. And we are going to take a trip, the two of us. Do you want to come?

UDIA

What?

SAI

Listen to me. Do you want to fly over the wall and away with me?

UDIA

What did you just say to me Sai?

SAI

I invented an...this flying...thing. An incredible...flying machine. I want you to help me use it. Let's leave this awful place.

UDIA

Awful place? Five thousand years of history-your grandparents pulled a rock out of a hat for this land. To guard it. To-to farm it. Awful?
Go to your room.

SAI

I'm too old for that Omi.

UDIA

How dare you. How dare you...

SAI

Come with me mother.

UDIA

No. No *I* have a sense of duty. Of...dream...drama.

SAI

Take a deep breath.

UDIA

Not you. How dare you S-Sai. Awful?
I-go...

SAI

No. You need to tell me why we are here.

UDIA

Why-

SAI

There's no freedom here. No air. We're living in a desert with walls.

UDIA

Go.

SAI

I have nothing Omi. Nothing.
The first man at least had-had flint...something to spark. I have nothing.

SAI

Oh, poor Sai-

UDIA

I am young and I'm in the dark here. So are you. This isn't our home. Let's find it.

UDIA

No! Get...gone. Go away.

SAI

It will help you heal.
I've worked for years to do this for you. Let's leave this hell.

UDIA

Hell-I...you have no sense of dre...duty. You've lost your way

SAI

You are right. I am lost. I'm a displaced person.

UDIA

And it's dangerous-

SAI

I have no duty to this country. My only duty is to you. So let's go home.

UDIA

Go!

She pounds the table.

I am house...home. I am home.

SAI

There was a past Omi. You have a memory. And you need to deal with that. But now is what matters. This is not a home.

She leaves. Udia is alone. She cracks the pencil.

Accounting

Sai and Judy meet via their communication devices. Judy has a suitcase by her side.

SAI

Here is my picture so you will know who I am. When you see me, I will be living. Not some digital...pixilated outline of a human being, but a living person. It is often very easy to fall in love with a pixilated human- they don't talk, they are whatever you want them to be, they are static...I guess that means they aren't really human. The opposite of human really... They are also easy to hate which is just like a real human when you think about it...so I guess they are somewhere in between life and memory.

JUDY

When you are young, you have these big dreams. Here, in our country, they are dreamt for you. You want a house when you are a child. A big one, with a big green yard and you see two or maybe twenty of your children running around that yard. At least that's the way you see it as a child. And being a doctor makes sense as a vocation because then...well then you are helping people *and* making lots of money.

SAI

When you see me, please do not be surprised if I am smaller than you imagined, or if my nose is bigger. Real people have noses. Big ones sometimes. And the prettiest noses are rarely the ones that work very well...Look, I have a big nose. But it doesn't bother me because my senses are active. And I cry. I have a big nose and I might cry when I see you is all I am trying to say...

JUDY

After a certain age you realize that wasn't your dream. You are gay or you are terrible at chemistry, the two being mutually exclusive, but something changes. And you feel free for a time to dream big for yourself. The stage. I wanted to be an actress for years. Of course I tried out for plays and was good...was workable, in them. But you go to college and somehow acquire what your parents call a "backup". As if there are two versions of every dream and when one is aborted you can just pick right back up with the same feelings and the same...I don't know.

SAI

You are saving me Judy. And my dream of making the world a safer place for dreams.

JUDY

And the dream of having a companion comes true someday.
You can bring this to the rest of our people. Real people, that is, not the pixilated ones.

JUDY

Of having a person who sets you alight. Makes you feel bold, strong, courageous even. Like you can go after that backup dream with everything you have because you remember that at some point you wanted twenty children running around a big back yard. That's where memory fails us. When the distance between what we want and what we wanted is indistinguishable.

SAI

I'm a little stuck right now, even though the machine works. I tested it last night, but I am...the human resistance here is strong.

JUDY

But you have made the world young for me again Sai. I know your home is a difficult place. I know you are probably much different in person than this...this lovely ghost I've built in my mind. But I'm there all the same, because you-you are giving me another chance to live my big dream. The one where I save the day and get the big yard. But the human resistance is strong here too.

SAI AND JUDY

Very strong.

Here's Lookin' At You

Judy and Mark in the car. He is dropping her off at the airport. The cacophony of planes and car horns is, for now, somewhat muted.

MARK

Good day to fly.

JUDY

Mmhmm.

MARK

Not a cloud in the sky.

JUDY

It should be a nice flight.

MARK

Long.

JUDY

Yes. Very long.

MARK

But not very bumpy.

JUDY

Hopefully not.

MARK

You used to have trouble with bumps.

JUDY

I brought my xanax just in case.
Do you want me terrified? Because I am. I am...

MARK

I...no. I don't.

JUDY

You win if you do Mark. I haven't stopped shaking all morning.

MARK

That's the coffee.

JUDY

No.

A pause.

MARK

Something is broken here. Isn't it?

JUDY

It's not broken Mark. It's just old.

MARK

Did I do something wrong?

JUDY

No...well, yes. But no more than I did.

MARK

What do you mean old?

JUDY

It feels broken in, maybe beaten up a little bit.

MARK

Beaten up? Like an old sock or something. Thanks.

JUDY

That's not what I mean.

MARK

What then Judy? You are telling me I'm not good enough.

JUDY

You are good enough.

MARK

I'm not. That's what you are saying if you get out of this car.

JUDY

It's not you Mark. This isn't really about you. It's about us...maybe a little. Mostly this trip is about me.

MARK

I just don't know where you think we are going to put this crazy girl's machine. It's this assumption I'm going to just accommodate whatever- Judy this is selfish of you. I'm not moving the lawn mower, so you can stop right there if that's what you think-

JUDY

I will miss you.

MARK

Stay.

JUDY

Come with me.

MARK

I can't. We have a daughter.

JUDY

Sally will be fine.

He looks away.

JUDY

Challenge yourself Mark. And be okay. Find yourself an adventure. I'll come back with some wind in my hair. Then we can meet each other again.

MARK

That really pisses me off. Don't be so cryptic.

JUDY

Okay. I won't. Goodbye Mark.

She gets out of the car before this gets any uglier.

The sound of a plane taking off as if right above their heads. Lights out.

End of Act One.

Street Theatre

Sai sits on a sidewalk sketching. It is the middle of the day, but the street is not particularly busy-a few cars drive by, conversations happen intermittently. Gregory walks by her, stops, and turns.

GREGORY

Dreamers love the heat.

SAI

I'm sorry?

GREGORY

It activates the imagination, heat does.

SAI

How does that work?

GREGORY

By overpowering the senses.

SAI

I think I'm just used to it.

GREGORY

Sure. I know I don't look like I should be used to this temperature. Even when we were imperialists, British skin never quite had pores big enough for the heat out here.

SAI

You're from England?

GREGORY

London is hardly representative of England, but yes.

SAI

How did you- what are you doing in here?

GREGORY

Vacation.

SAI

No. Really?

GREGORY

No. I work for the Freedom Fund. We are a non-profit that-

SAI

I know it.

Didn't you support the occupation of-

GREGORY

Yes. We make mistakes. But for the most part we help the damned.

SAI

That's very good of you...

GREGORY

We help dreamers. But only the ones stuck in hell.

SAI

Oh I don't really-

GREGORY

Is that why you were drawing a map in your book? Because you don't want to find a way through, over or under this wall?

SAI

Sh.

GREGORY

It's really truer to my purpose, our purpose to lift you over that heinous thing. Your people want our money to tear it down eventually, but not before they secure it further. That kind of duplicity bores me, to be honest.

SAI

Quiet. There are-

GREGORY

Believe me, I can talk like this. In the open. A checkbook gets attention.

SAI

You don't want the attention?

GREGORY

Feeling like a dog in heat? No. I want connection. I want to fall in with idea people. That's why I stopped. You at least have brave thoughts...

SAI

Sai.

GREGORY

Sai. What a lovely name. Like a- It's misplaced however. There's not a drop of resignation in you. I can see that...very clearly.
My name is Gregory.

SAI

Gregory. That name fits. It's very-

GREGORY

British.

SAI

No it's- I don't know. Boyish.

GREGORY

I remind you of a child?

SAI

No. I mean-in a good way. A very educated child. I like your name.

GREGORY

Educated child...

SAI

Yes...you seem, I-you are very educated.

GREGORY

Oh I'd give it all back to do this work. Four years of time wasted on myself, that's all university was. It seems costly with all that happened in that time. The world got a lot older while I was busy with myself.

SAI

You are still so young.

GREGORY

Clearly you think that.

SAI

You know what I mean. I don't see...I don't know. Passion, maybe, in here very often. It gets taught out of us as children.

GREGORY

You rarely see passion out there Sai. People like you light the fire. Ambitious people who are stuck. It's the necessity of want. I've seen it all over.

SAI

Light the fire?

GREGORY

Oh, I'm sorry. I forget we just met. It feels like you should know my sayings- all I mean is that you keep the communal fire burning. Blue even. We need your work.

SAI

But you don't even know what I'm doing.

GREGORY

I know a dreamer when I see one. I'm drawn to them. Like wants like. Or opposites-like lava to water.

SAI

You're very poetic.

GREGORY

It's the heat. I promise you. Wakes up my better instincts. I might even write today. Do you art?

SAI

That's a funny way to ask. Is this another saying-

GREGORY

It's the new phrasing. Art is democratic. No creator and consumers, just a shared experience. Like enjoying a meal or a dance, you know? Do you dance? Do you *art*?

SAI

Yes. I mean it's not what you think, I just-

GREGORY

Show me.

SAI

I shouldn't call it art- My work is...I can't even call it, it's functional.

GREGORY

Maybe I can bring it with me. My people love refugee art, victim art, that kind of thing-commerce is the new form of aid...and the old really when you-

SAI

No. I don't want this sold.

GREGORY

Good. Stand up for yourself.

SAI

This is silly, what I have is not art or commerce or-

GREGORY

You don't trust me do you Sai? That's the problem.

SAI

It's not a problem.

GREGORY

All this talk of boyishness. Must remind you of the playground or something else traumatic. Having your ball stolen by the boys.

He stands.

Here.

SAI

What?

GREGORY

Stand up.

SAI

(Standing)

Okay...

GREGORY

Turn around and close your eyes.

She does.

GREGORY

Now lean back.

SAI

I'll-

GREGORY

You won't fall. I'm here to catch you Sai. That's a promise. Now let go on the count of three. One...two-

She falls back into his outstretched arms.

You were early!

SAI

You were ready.

Lights out.

Haiku

A dark clearing behind Sai's home. There is what looks like a woodpile with a tarp laid over it...or not. The entire machine may be referential, so long as the actors have a vision of what they are experiencing.

Sai and Gregory enter laughing.

SAI

Okay, okay let me try one. Let's see...
This is hard. Okay, I have one:
Dream inside of me,
Rumblings of a future pain,
Never eat peppers.

GREGORY

I love it! So who won the contest?

SAI

My haiku was clearly superior.

GREGORY

We'll let this Judy woman decide when she gets here.

SAI

Okay, okay, be quiet. I don't want to wake up my Omi.

GREGORY

You live with your grandmother?

SAI

No. Omi, it's a word for mother. She doesn't...wouldn't approve of what you are about to see...

GREGORY

I'm so excited Sai.

SAI

Before I do this, I want to say...I want to thank you Gregory. After my mother's- she will never use this, but I want it to go out in the world. I want people to know the impossible-

GREGORY

For children to dream bigger dreams. For an escape to all who are oppressed. I've heard the speech five times already. I get it already.

SAI

Seriously.

GREGORY

I know Sai. Believe me.

SAI

Thank you.

GREGORY

No thanks needed. If it works, I'll tell my organization how to build one. We will help our clients build them all over the world and you will be famous.

SAI

I don't want to be famous. I want you to take credit. You and Judy.

GREGORY

I still don't have a handle on the American. How she fits in...

SAI

She's- you'll just have to meet her. She's amazing. The most generous human being I've ever known. She writes like a poet and her picture looks like a saint's portrait. She's a saint-poet. That's how I should describe her from now on.

GREGORY

Hold on a minute. Her picture? You've never met this woman?

SAI

Not in person.

GREGORY

Sai, I've got to tell you-

SAI

I don't want to hear it. You don't need to meet someone to know them. Touch, smell, hugs...those are just added benefits.

GREGORY

Wow. *Very* new age.

SAI

Oh, I'm sorry mister "do you art". Really, I can feel spiritually...fused, without even knowing a person's name. Haven't you ever seen someone on the street and looked at them for a moment...or a moment too long? Made eye contact maybe, and felt like you were looking at a dead relative...some spirit you should know but don't. And so many times I don't do anything about that feeling. Don't say a thing. What if we did?

GREGORY

Indeed.

And what if you show me this incredible flying machine of yours?

SAI

After I do this, you have to create a haiku. On the spot okay?

GREGORY

Fine.

SAI

I want you to write it down later and I will put your poem in the side pocket so you will be with me whenever I fly. Just say the first words that come into your mind. Your very educated mind.

GREGORY

Just get on with it.

SAI

Just don't laugh. Or do, I guess. I don't care.

Sai lifts the tarp, unveiling her flying machine. It is a sculpture of found objects, metal and plastic, childlike and dangerous- glistening like a spirit in the night, some mythical beast reincarnated out of garbage.

A beat.

GREGORY

Oh...oh my god Sai. You...and this really...

SAI

It really flies.

GREGORY

Oh god. I love...your mind. I love your brilliant mind. She's radiant.

SAI

I'll take you for a ride. It's dark enough.

GREGORY

Oh my. All this metal and light...you created air...you created flight.

He suddenly kisses her. She withdraws instantly.

SAI

...is that what this was about?

GREGORY

You mean you don't...want to, in a moment like this?

SAI

I'm not in love with you.

GREGORY

Where I come from you don't need to be to...

SAI

No. I don't want to.
Oh I feel so stupid...

GREGORY

It's her isn't it?

SAI

What?

GREGORY

This Judy woman. You both are...unbelievable. I should know how to spot one by now.

SAI

You should go.

GREGORY

These internet perverts always-

She slaps him. This shocks her.

SAI

I-I've never...I'm so sorry Gregory.

GREGORY

Yeah.

SAI

I'm sorry.

GREGORY

Don't be sorry.

SAI

That's not me- how I...I don't know what that was.

GREGORY

It is now.

He leaves, seething.

Sai is left alone with her creation. She runs her hand along one of its smooth edges.

Recomposition

Sally types on Judy's computer. She stops. Wets her lips. Smiles. Mark comes in wearing his work clothes, but unkempt, disheveled, broken down. He conspicuously hides a bottle of whiskey at his side.

MARK

Hey sweetie...

Her smile disappears.

SALLY

Get out.

MARK

I love you too.

SALLY

Dad, leave.

MARK

No.

SALLY

Excuse me.

MARK

No...we are going to have...a talk. A little quality time. If you don't mind.

SALLY

I absolutely do mind. Wherever I go in this house I can't get away from you and Mom. Give me some privacy. I want...to be left alone.

MARK

Well, you win! We are alone now. Your mother has flown away from us. The mama bird is gone. No more mother robin bringing us worms...she's onto the next season of death.

SALLY

Are you drunk?

MARK

No...

SALLY

Ugh. Disgusting.

MARK

I hate her for it. Really I do. Jack and I both hate her for doing this to me.

SALLY

You drink whiskey?

MARK

(Contemplating the bottle)

She's off in the middle east. I figure screw it, I'm drinking something American. Jack's as American as soup...bagels...bombs.

SALLY

We didn't invent any of those things Dad.

MARK

Well we should have!

SALLY

All these years of boxed wine. Now whiskey. I was starting to think you were gay.

MARK

Maybe I am. Maybe that's why Judy left. We didn't do it that often-

SALLY

That's enough! Gross.

MARK

Oh come on...We never talk about anything in this family.

SALLY

Now's not the time to start.

MARK

Let's start. Talking...what's going on in your life Sally?

SALLY

No.

MARK

Come on...

A beat. He is pathetic.

She goes to him, takes a huge swig of whiskey, and sits down.

SALLY

I'm broke, I just lost my job because...well because it sucked, my friends have all moved away so I find it impossible to meet people, especially men...or women. So I haven't had a date in three years. Some of my old classmates have babies. Like actual babies, not some plastic doll that cries when you drop it on its head. Drop these on their head and they die...*die*. That's real responsibility. And I have none of it.

MARK

Babies are overrated...not you of course.

SALLY

I am overrated. And now I'm getting old.

MARK

Let me tell you something about getting old-

SALLY

And I've done nothing. Absolutely not one single thing except make a few bucks an hour. A few bucks for my youth. And now it's leaving me. I wake up with possibility, you know? And I go to sleep with guilt. More and more each night.

Mark offers her the bottle again.

MARK

Wow. You wanted to talk.

SALLY

No. I'm mad at you.

MARK

At me?

SALLY

Yeah. And I want you to know it.

MARK

For what?

SALLY

For making me feel special. When I'm not.

MARK

You are sweetie...you are.

SALLY

No Dad. This is the lie that ruins kids. It ruined me. Telling me I was pretty. Telling me I was smart. I could be a writer. I could be a photographer. I could run a business. I should be a lawyer. I can't do it all.

MARK

Maybe you had to make those...choices. I dunno...

SALLY

(taking another swig)

Then why was that money for college?

MARK

What do you mean?

SALLY

The money mom took and...ran off with. It was mine. She stole it from me.

MARK

She didn't.

SALLY

It was college money. Why couldn't it be for what I want?

MARK

Because you go to college in this country, otherwise...I'm sorry.

SALLY

It's ok.

MARK

But you are special Sally. Believe me...if we ever talked I would say it more.

SALLY

I don't want to hear it Dad. That's the point.

MARK

Special. Special. Special...

SALLY

You're not funny.

MARK

Drink more and I will be.

She does. He does.

MARK

I'm the one that isn't special. That's why she left. She wants me to be bold or...have an affair or...go on a suicidal journey.

SALLY

She's about to have one.

MARK

Maybe I should do that. Go on a stupid trip. Fly to Canada and piss on a bear's doorstep.

SALLY

Sounds like a great idea.

MARK

I just hope she survives....

SALLY

Why? She doesn't care about us. She's always been...aloof. I've never seen her cry or hit anybody or throw a vase or smoke a cig. She's just...not even there.

MARK

She was Sally. She gave it up for y- she gave away her career.

SALLY

I'm not talking about careers. I'm talking about some...personality. Some angst. Some fire.

MARK

Fire is overrated. Water. Water can kill fire....like a rock can kill scissors I guess...

SALLY

Maybe you should stop.

MARK

No. I have been wronged. Badly. I'm angry too damn it.

He stomps.

Damn it!

SALLY

She stomps.

Damn it!

They do a little "damn it!" dance.

SALLY AND MARK

Damn it! Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!

They start laughing like children. Rolling on the ground.

SALLY

She's gonna get it!

MARK

She's gonna get it!

SALLY

I cancelled her cards!

MARK

I cancelled her cards!

SALLY

I cancelled her flight back home!

MARK

I cancelled....what?

SALLY

I did... isn't that incredible?

MARK

You did what Sally?

SALLY

I cancelled her credit cards and her flight back. She's stranded in sand hell.

She drinks. He is stunned.

MARK

That's so...

SALLY

Awful.

MARK

And brilliant. I'm in...awe Sally.

SALLY

Offering her hand.

You may kiss my ring.

MARK

You have this cruelty inside you?

SALLY

I think of it as justice.

MARK

Cruelty. Justice. Screw the difference. You have it girl.

SALLY

Damn right.

MARK

Maybe I gave it to you. I made you...

SALLY

I don't want to hear the story.

MARK

My little girl.

SALLY

Shut up.

MARK

No really. You are a miracle...I just remembered.

SALLY

Thanks. Now shut up.

MARK

My brilliant daughter. My creative half...

SALLY

I'm just mean.

MARK

No. No...don't you remember how creative you were? Not just mean...

SALLY

I really only remember being mean.

MARK

I don't know...there was that-that race. The boat race. When you were twelve.

SALLY

Girl scouts? The cardboard boat race?

MARK

Yes! Yes. And you made a boat that looked like a pirate ship.

SALLY

I hated girl scouts. The boys had more structure.

MARK

Out of cardboard...

SALLY

I liked the girls. I just wanted to be a boy scout. Play with fire. Have a pocketknife...

MARK

You won. Yes...

SALLY

By boarding all the other ships.

MARK

Right...right. And cutting holes in them.

SALLY

It was war...

MARK

God you were brilliant.

SALLY

Ruthless.

MARK

Ruthless and brilliant...

SALLY

The better half of you and...

MARK

What an adventure that was.

A deep rumbling is overtaken by an insect celebration.

Digging

The sound of a jet flying dangerously low to the ground. Unintelligible whispers. A woman's voice singing. The sound of a car pulling up and a door opening, slamming. Tires squealing. Lights up.

Sai stands nervously waiting. Judy walks in with her bags and stops.

Hi. SAI

Hello. I'm- JUDY

Judy. SAI

Yes. JUDY

I'm- SAI

I'm sorry I was late. The man who- I had a hard time getting someone to drive me here. It's...the people who I paid to...this is a dangerous place. Do you know that? JUDY

Yes. SAI

I'm sorry. That was a stupid question. JUDY

It's not stupid at all. SAI

Well I- JUDY

You must be tired. SAI

I am but that's- JUDY

Are you okay? SAI

I mean- I...what are you- JUDY

You said it was dangerous. SAI

Oh I'm fine. I mean...I'm here. JUDY

Good. SAI

Yes it is good. I mean, I'm glad I'm... JUDY

You are okay. SAI

Yes. I'm glad. JUDY

So am I. SAI

Do you want to show me- JUDY

Yes. SAI

Okay well- JUDY

Sai goes for her bags.

Let me- SAI

No. That's-I can carry them. JUDY

Sai suddenly hugs her. They embrace deeply. An exhalation.

SAI

Thank you.

JUDY

You don't have to...It's fine.

SAI

You don't know what you're doing here.

JUDY

Yes. I mean-no...

SAI

That's okay.

JUDY

I know.

SAI

You are doing a good thing. I promise. It works.

JUDY

It's...Sai, I should tell you something.

SAI

What?

JUDY

I'm not an advocate....for anything. I've never advocated for anything in my life.

SAI

That's alright.

JUDY

I'm not a scientist.

SAI

That's okay.

JUDY

I don't know anything about science.

Fine. SAI

I don't know important people. JUDY

I know. SAI

I'm a housewife. I know my kid and my husband. That's it. JUDY

I know. SAI

This is...I'm finding this very difficult already. JUDY

But you still came. SAI

I came. JUDY

That's all I asked. SAI

I'm sorry I-I didn't mean to demean or- JUDY

Not at all. SAI

I'm excited. It's just... JUDY

I understand. SAI

There's a cost. When you run...I don't know. JUDY

SAI

I know what you are risking.

JUDY

That's the thing Sai. You can't. You're a... You can't know.

SAI

Okay.

JUDY

You poor thing. You're putting up with my... I'm just frazzled. None of my cards work out here and I...

SAI

They were dangerous people.

JUDY

I'm just not used to this place.

SAI

Neither am I.

JUDY

It works?

SAI

It moves air. It flies. It works alright.

JUDY

You are... I want to help you however I can.

SAI

There's something you should know.

JUDY

What's that?

SAI

I...there's this thing I have. I sometimes think that I can move things by force of will...by thought. I know that sounds silly but...still. You coming here. This machine. This all started from wanting something...something a little selfish. There's this piece of my life that I haven't moved-been able to move. By hope and prayer and...That I haven't been able to will into... I made the machine to get away from

SAI

someone. I didn't do it to help anybody else.

JUDY

That's-does that mean you want to...

SAI

I just want you to take the machine and use it. You should just know that I'm not... this was about me. At first. I feel like you should-

JUDY

So was this.

SAI

...I wanted to get away.

JUDY

So did I.

SAI

You don't feel different because of-

JUDY

I still came.

The sound of insects scurrying toward the ocean. Sirens in the distance.

Cosmic Light Show

Udia at the table. She paints furiously. Sirens ring in the not so distance. Sai enters with Judy.

SAI

Omi! Omi- are you alright? What's going on?

UDIA

I-I tried to loot them...to-to...

SAI

What happened?

UDIA

I tried to lure-I tried to scare them.

JUDY

Should I get help?

SAI

Omi, what happened?

UDIA

It's gone.

SAI

What?

JUDY

Should I-

SAI

I don't know yet.
What is gone?

UDIA

The-the oh what's the word! Damn it. The...your ding. Your dream thing.

SAI

What?

UDIA

Out back.

Oh god. SAI

I told you this is what... UDIA

Put that down! Talk to me. Who are you talking about? SAI

The only denence...defense we have. UDIA

The machine out back. SAI

Oh god. JUDY

Yes. UDIA

Sai goes. The siren continues.

I'm sorry Sai. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. UDIA

Udia notices Judy.

Hi. I'm Judy. JUDY

Udia. She calls me Omi because- UDIA

It means mother. I know that one. JUDY

You are the American. UDIA

Yes. Apparently I bring quite the disruption. JUDY

Sai comes back in.

JUDY

It's true.

SAI

I...

UDIA

I stopped them Sai. I tried. I want you to have your...I tried. A-And now it's- the silence...sirens.

SAI

They...

UDIA

I tried...you worked so hard.

SAI

How did you know...

UDIA

I knew. You were- there was a look in you...and I let it pass. Now e-everyone is lupdet...upset.

SAI

Nobody is upset at you.

UDIA

The noise.
I tried to top-to stop them. Now this...

SAI

What did you do?

UDIA

I thhh...I threww it.

JUDY

What's that?

SAI

She threw something. What did you throw?

UDIA

I threw it and they left.

SAI

You threw something at them. What? Tell me.

UDIA

I threw the...the...

Sirens fade and bleed into a reverie of Baha from twenty-six years ago.

Baha enters with a glass of red wine. He takes a deep breath. Sighs. He takes a long drink of wine, swirling it around in his mouth. An oud sings in the distance, siren-like. Baha takes out a letter. He almost opens it and reads before Udia rises from the table and approaches him, conspicuously hiding a hand behind her back.

UDIA

Baha!

BAHA

My love.

UDIA

I have a problem. We must solve it right now. Right *this* instant.

BAHA

You want the moon? I don't have a lasso but for you, I will start walking.

UDIA

No. I absolutely do not want the moon. She can't even make her own light. She's too dependent on the sun.

BAHA

What then?

UDIA

No, I don't know what to call you. I will not call you husband and you will not call me your wife.

BAHA

You are right. We need to be more creative. You call me wife and I will call you husband.

UDIA

I'm serious. Wife. Husband. You and I read about these words in the encyclopedia. You are not merely the father of my children and I am not a virgin...By any means. These words do not work for us.

BAHA

I want to call you Udia. That's your name and it belongs only to you.

UDIA

But that's a name someone else gave me.

BAHA

I don't...

UDIA

Let's play a game. I will count to three and snap my fingers and whatever word is in your mind at that exact moment is the name you will give me forever and ever.

BAHA

That's a lot of pressure darling.

UDIA

Don't think. Just do. One...two...three!

She snaps her fingers.

BAHA

Cheesecake.

UDIA

Cheesecake?

You are going to call me CHEESECAKE for all eternity?!

BAHA

Food was on my mind. I haven't eaten all day. I was too nervous.

UDIA

You had no reason to be nervous. I wasn't going to run away. Were YOU going to run away?!

BAHA

It's so foolish but...I just. I want to be perfect for you. Sometimes I don't feel like I am grown up or-man enough for this time with you.

UDIA

Just be you. I will take care of the rest. As long as you promise not to eat me.

BAHA

I'm so sorry about that.

UDIA

No excuses. We have to own that decision for the rest of our lives. That terrible, terrible decision.

They kiss.

I have a present for you.

BAHA

You didn't need to-

UDIA

Shut up and sit down.

They do. She hands him a rock.

BAHA

Thank you Cheesecake, it's so lovely. The most lovely...

UDIA

Don't say rock.

BAHA

I give up.

UDIA

This is a comet.

BAHA

But comets are-

UDIA

Just ice and dust. I know. When we read about them I knew it was wrong. I didn't say anything.

BAHA

I don't understand. This is amazing and I will...I'll treasure it all the same.

UDIA

Baha, I'm going to explain why I gave you this.

BAHA

Okay good.

UDIA

I was a little girl when this found me. My father had just died and I was restless. Angry...furious. So I went out to this pomegranate field to... I don't really know, try to yell at the gods or something. I wanted them to hear me. I wanted some control. Some whisper of acknowledgement that I was human and hurting and...and going to be okay. Most of all, that I was going to be okay.

So I spread out in this field. I was mad at having him taken from me. As I lay there, I cried a lot. I grieved. Some of those noises must have been worse than your keening.

But after a time, I got tired. So tired I didn't think or feel anything. It was as if I had, I don't know...totally purged whatever was in my past. It took me hours to do this, but I eventually got there. I was totally exhausted with the past. There wasn't anything left to feel. And it would come back, but for the moment, I beat time at its own game.

And suddenly I saw the sky light up. These...I don't know, these bright...iridescent lines formed and started to slowly connect everything in my vision. They weren't even a color really. Just light. Maybe every color all at once. Just pulsating faster than...shaking the entire sky. I'm not sure how, but I started to realize what I was seeing and when I did, they began to fade. I tried to will them back to strength...I clenched my fists... but this just pushed them further away. It was as if I had this little look into the present or the inner workings of the universe and the curtain had to close again.

So I took a deep breath, unclenched my fists...I was not even really conscious of my body. I couldn't feel my toes or my fingers. I closed my eyes and there they were again. These colors beyond recognition, like my own personal view of the cosmos. I just don't have words Baha to describe this experience, but when I woke up, this comet or meteor or star was lying right next to me, glowing this bright, lustrous blue. So I kept it all these years. It eventually faded...

UDIA

When you were crying that day we met, when I went to that bridge, the colors came back. It happened the second I saw you. Everything in my view hummed, throbbed. Just like when I was a little girl...And I knew I wanted to be a child with you for all eternity. To live in the moment and never have the curtain shut on me ever again.

BAHA

I don't...

UDIA

It's okay Baha. You don't need words. That's why we give little gifts. Let me have a sip.

They drink and then gaze skyward. The rock begins to glow.

UDIA

Why are you out here when there's a perfectly good party going on?

The rock stops glowing.

BAHA

Shareem sent us a letter.

UDIA

What did your brother have to say?

BAHA

He was just congratulating us.

UDIA

It's bad luck to ignore congratulations. Read it to me.

BAHA

There's a little more to it than that. I didn't want to share this with you tonight...

UDIA

It's okay.

BAHA

My home was attacked. Shareem wants me to help him. They are not sure who at this point...he wants me to help him defend the village. I'm not- Udia, I don't know how to fight.

UDIA

Then don't.

BAHA

He's asking me to go. I can't just leave him there.

UDIA

Was it bad?

BAHA

I don't- who would want to do this? Torch the whole village. Looking for one person he said. One fighter.

UDIA

Shareem shouldn't let them make a fighter out of him. He needs to leave.

BAHA

You don't understand. There are religious...
Look, this land is everything to us. My people.

UDIA

I don't understand? I understand perfectly how important home is.
You said you would stay here.

BAHA

I will be back. You are safe here. That's all that matters to me.

UDIA

You aren't a fighter. Your life is precious. Don't be foolish.

BAHA

But for a cause...I'm sorry.

UDIA

Your home is here.

BAHA

Udia, I can help somehow. I don't know I-I'll help him rebuild the house, build a wall,
tend wounds. I don't know. I...He said they need me.

UDIA

You want to do this.

BAHA

I am needed. I don't have a choice Udia.

UDIA

But I do.

BAHA

I-look, Udia don't leave me. We just got married. Please.

UDIA

I'm not going to leave you Baha...
I'm coming with you.

BAHA

This might not be-you don't care if it's safe.

UDIA

I can build bridges.

BAHA

So it is then.

UDIA

Promise me something.

BAHA

Anything.

UDIA

We are coming right back to Lunendra.

The oud in the distance bleeds back into sirens in the foreground. Rockets are launched in the distance.

Udia, walks back to the table as she re-enters the present.

UDIA

I threw my star at them.
I knew you were building something. I-I could see that.

SAI

Star? What word are you looking for Omi?

JUDY

What is that sound?

UDIA

That's the word. Star. I threw my star at them. I was in the-the bedroom when they...it was nearby. Now the terrorists...

JUDY

Star?

UDIA

It's my fault now...

SAI

She confuses words sometimes. The stroke-it's part of the aphasia...
What do you mean...a shoe? Did you throw a shoe?

UDIA

No.

JUDY

I'm scared.

SAI

A sheet? A chest?

UDIA

No...

SAI

An iron?

UDIA

No!

SAI

Help me understand.

UDIA

I can't. It's a...

JUDY

Should I call for help...

UDIA

The sky lit up. Like it was sunny...daytime.
And now they think we bombed...

SAI

Her short term memory is...
You- a long time ago or right now?

UDIA

Both.

JUDY

WHAT IS THAT NOISE?

The sound of a bomb going off. It is unbelievably loud and incredibly close. Time slows down, except for Sai. Rapid gunshots, human voices, footsteps, screams all happen, yet for her, a quiescence descends, like temporary deafness.

SAI

Everything you hear about bombs is true and...not true. They are sudden and brutal and.... Every description we have ever heard is true. A bomb going off is sharp and quick...sound and pressure...confined for just a moment within four walls, this is what makes the impact for humans truly awesome. Like someone tearing glass inside of your ear. Judy will never hear the same way again...

And then the sound of debris softly sprinkling to the ground-like sand and rain. The real problem with bombs is that they destroy language. Every description is one we already know...and accept. But we don't stop dropping them. Even poets-turned-presidents drop them. Nothing we say or write is the same as having life pulsate away from you on an army of hungry sound waves. Language is destroyed too-all those words... It's sick, because the same thing is true of love. They destroy language, ruthlessly, bitterly...beautifully. Bombs...and love.

The sound of a high, metallic ring fills the space, and sand mixed with actual rain. Whatever seemed permanent about the houses disappears. Suddenly we are in a no man's land-a desert, a beach, an extinct volcano.

Judy and Sai sleep. A hollow breeze spins and swirls around them. Udia, awake, draws on charred paper. The star-rock is at Udia's side.

Elsewhere, the sound of a wind blushes into that of the remotest ocean breeze. Mark

rows a makeshift cardboard boat. Sally is passed out. They both look worse for wear. Mark, however, has a fire in his eyes. He takes a big sniff of the breeze and slightly changes direction.

Ugh... SALLY

Good morning sunshine. MARK

Dad... SALLY

MARK
You missed the sunrise. Spectacular stuff. We're going to have to start getting up earlier.

Are we... SALLY

Middle of the ocean. Yup. MARK

A beat.

Fuck...we really did this. SALLY

MARK
It really was a beautiful sunrise. The best ever I think.

SAI
Slowly coming to.
Omi...

Bat. UDIA

Where are we? SAI

UDIA
You are asking this of me with all of my memory problems?

A gentle smile between them.

Sorry.
You really are drawing.

SAI

Yes.

UDIA

What?

SAI

I don't know yet.

UDIA

I'm hungry.

SAI

Do you want me to make you something?

UDIA

There is nothing.

Omi, are you okay?

SAI

I don't know.
Are you?

UDIA

I think I am.

SAI

Dad. Can I ask you a question?

SALLY

Yes.

MARK

And you won't take offense at this.

SALLY

MARK
Not at all. Ask me anything.

SALLY
Why did we do this again?

MARK
We are looking for your mother.
He takes a big swig. This might not be his first of the day.

SALLY
You're joking.

MARK
Yes. I'm joking.

UDIA
Our house is gone. The whole-

SAI
I know. I remember.

UDIA
Why do you think it hurts sometimes?

SAI
What?

UDIA
To remember.

SAI
I don't know.

UDIA
Every time I see your father's face I want to cry and I want to laugh and...

SAI
Maybe it hurts so that...so you finally stop.

UDIA

She stops drawing for a second.
Did I-Did I run...ruin you?

Sai moves to her.

JUDY

Suddenly shoots up.
HELLO.

SAI

Judy is awake.

JUDY

SPEAK LOUDER. I'VE GOT THIS HEADACHE. IT SEEMS TO BE...

SAI

Your hearing is gone for a little while.

JUDY

NO. I DON'T WANT ANY HERRING. WHAT AN ODD QUESTION...

SAI

Points to her ears.

JUDY

YES. THE RINGING IS SIGNIFICANT.

SAI

Do you feel okay?

JUDY

YES.

SAI

I think it's gotten worse since last night. Omi, we need to get her to a doctor.

UDIA

Hold on. Let me call one.
She does nothing.

SAI

Judy. Do you remember anything?

JUDY

WHAT?

SAI

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED?

JUDY

RUNNING. I REMEMBER RUNNING.

UDIA

Which way is east?

SAI

It's hard to tell. Maybe...the sun is tilted a little that way.

UDIA

Yeah.

JUDY

DO WE HAVE ANY FOOD?

UDIA

She's American. She probably wants a pizza.

SAI

Do we have anything at all?

UDIA

Some bread.

SAI

Here Judy.

UDIA

We will need it later.

SAI

Just a bit. For her. For now.

Sai gives Judy a small piece of bread.

JUDY

OOH THAT'S GOOD RIGHT NOW. ASK ME ABOUT THAT HERRING AGAIN IN A COUPLE HOURS. IT MIGHT SOUND GOOD THEN TOO.

A shared smile.

SAI

Judy I...I don't know when you will be able to go home.

JUDY

IT'S OKAY. MY HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER HAVE BARELY NOTICED I'M GONE. IF I STAY A FEW EXTRA DAYS, SO BE IT.

SAI

You are going home empty-handed.

JUDY

WHO JUST LANDED?

SAI

YOU ARE GOING HOME EMPTY-HANDED.

JUDY

AT LEAST I HAVE A STORY...
I have a question.

SAI

Yes.

JUDY

It's kind of private.

SAI

That must be why you are talking normally.

JUDY

WHAT?

SAI

Never mind.

JUDY

Is there a good way to...you know...

SAI

Oh. No...I don't think there are rules for that out here.

UDIA

By that tree.

SAI

Which one?

There is presumably only one. Sai points and Judy runs off to relieve herself.

UDIA

Does that tree look like an upside down hen...human?

SAI

Kind of.

UDIA

It does or it doesn't.

SAI

Yes. It looks like an upside down human. A man.

UDIA

Good.

SAI

Dancing. Like he's dancing on the bottom of a cloud.

UDIA

Good.

SAI

Why?
Are you drawing that tree?

UDIA

Yes.

SAI

Your timing is so off, but this is good news. At least you are creating art again.

UDIA

I'm not.

SAI

Okay. You are not creating art.

A beat.

Sai starts crying. She doesn't actually want her mother to see, so she hides her face. A mother knows...

UDIA

It's not your fault.

SAI

People died...

UDIA

We don't know that yet.

SAI

Babies maybe...

UDIA

We don't-

SAI

Whole families...

You were just defending me.

UDIA

Stop...

SAI

I wish I never invented that-

UDIA

Grabbing her daughter, holding her.

Look at me. Look at me. You never apologize for your dr-dr-dreams. Do you understand me?

I'm sorry about your house. SAI

It's just concrete. UDIA

You don't believe that. SAI

Beliefs change. They have to sometimes. UDIA

Omi. I want to tell you something. SAI

What? UDIA

That machine, it's... SAI

It flung. UDIA

Yes. It flew. SAI

Good job on that one. UDIA

But I made it because- SAI

You were going to leave. UDIA

I... SAI

I know. It's okay Sai. I push you. UDIA

I wasn't- SAI

You are a good daughter. UDIA

No. SAI

Yes. UDIA
Now look at this and tell me which way is east...east. I've got to...

Udia hands her the paper and exits to the tree.

Just sit down. Daddy's navigating. MARK

Okay, how long before we're home? SALLY

He does not answer.

Dad. Answer me. I've really got to pee. SALLY

He slashes the water.

STOP.

He ignores her.

This isn't funny. SALLY

I know. MARK

You...oh my god. We really are far...turn around. SALLY

Okay. MARK

He doesn't.

SALLY

Listen to me. You don't know where you are going.

MARK

Oh I know. I can smell her.

He sticks his nose in the air again.

We're not far.

Judy returns.

JUDY

IT DOESN'T FLUSH.

UDIA

Savages.

SALLY

Laughs.

That's ridiculous. She-we don't even know what country she went to.

MARK

Doesn't Matter.

JUDY

I MIGHT HAVE JUST PEED ON A HOLY TREE. How funny.

SALLY

Yes it does, Dad. You see, if we don't even know where she is, we cannot guide the boat in her direction. And then we starve to death or drown...hopefully before the sharks smell cardboard.

SAI

Hmm...

JUDY

THAT'S RIGHT. THE TREE MIGHT BE A HOLY SPOT FOR ALL I KNOW. IT LOOKS SORT OF MAGICAL. LIKE A PERSON.

MARK

I know where she is.

SAI

Dancing.

JUDY

DANCING! YOU ARE SO RIGHT. That's the word for it. Dancing.

SALLY

You don't. And hours into this journey the cardboard will...they don't send out rescue boats for idiots. They only do it for sunken airplanes. Nobody will find us. We will run out of water and...turn around! I'VE GOT TO PEE!

A beat.

JUDY

I want to help.

SAI

What?

JUDY

Come on. We need to rebuild it.

MARK

Keep your voice down.

SALLY

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IF I YELL? WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA!!!!

MARK

More ferocious than he has ever been.

Sally.

Sit.

Down.

A beat. She respects him a little now.

SAI

You would do that?

SALLY

This is the worst family vacation ever.

JUDY

I came.

MARK

We can go to Disneyland after we pick up your mother.

SALLY

A beat.
Right.

SAI

Judy.

JUDY

Sai.

SAI

Do you feel strong?

SALLY

So this is what love looks like?

Mark sees something in the distance. He throws Sally to the deck, action hero style, and pops up with a massive shotgun in his hands.

JUDY

OH NO. I DON'T SING SONGS. HAVEN'T SINCE COLLEGE-

MARK

Stay down. That thing will not eat us. I promise you.

SAI

No. / DO YOU FEEL STRONG?

SALLY

DAD! No! / It's just a bird-

JUDY

I feel alive. / That's about it.

MARK

No bird flies like that.

SALLY

It's-

SAI

Can you keep walking?

MARK

No bird is that big-

He aims the gun.

JUDY

I'm glad I'm alive. Huh...

SALLY

It's a butterfly! Stop!

Sally grabs the gun. Some struggle ensues.

SAI

CAN YOU KEEP WALKING?

MARK

It could be dangerous-

SALLY

Think about what you are-

JUDY

YES.

MARK

I'm thinking about us-

JUDY

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

SALLY

It's just an enormous-

MARK

It's hungry!

SALLY

I'll throw you overboard! / Don't kill it.

SAI

We can rebuild the machine there. / And call your family.

MARK

This thing-

SALLY

Land! It means there's land nearby.

This calms him somewhat. They are both breathless. A giant butterfly, maybe the size of Baha's, flies past them. Something changes for Mark.

JUDY

My family. It's strange.. Last night...when you're scared, you really do think about the people you...

SALLY

We are definitely on drugs.

SAI

Judy this isn't a safe journey.

SALLY

He was...

MARK

I know

A beat.

JUDY

CAN YOU SPEAK ENGLISH PLEASE?

SAI

THIS WON'T BE SAFE.

JUDY

I THINK I CAN HANDLE THAT NOW.

SALLY

Wait...you own a gun?

MARK

Bought it the day you were born.

SALLY

Glad I didn't know this when I was a teenager.

JUDY

We need to rebuild the machine Sai.
So somebody doesn't lose...
You and I and...
Not just get away from danger.

MARK

She's close.
I can feel it like...

SALLY

I'm starting to believe you.

MARK

Breathes in deeply.
Do you feel that?

SALLY

What?

MARK

Breathe in.

SALLY

Just do it.

Sally takes a deep, purposeful breath. He does too. Sally puts her arm around Mark.

Udia comes back, stands with dignity.

SAI

We will need water.

SALLY

When we find Mom can we...
Let's just...

UDIA

We will have to travel at night. For n-now we need to move.

MARK

Board military ships against their will.

SALLY

No. I was thinking we could just...I don't know.

Gathering her things.
What will it take-

SAI

I know.

MARK

Days?

SAI

Weeks maybe.

UDIA

SALLY
Have some tea and...

Sai looks at the paper in her hand for the first time, the paper Udia gave her.

Let's go.

SAI

MARK
Yeah.

JUDY
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING?

We have a map.

SAI

Talk.

SALLY

The sound of waves lapping against their cardboard boat.

Blackout.

The end.