

The Incredible Flying Machine

(Sample Pages)

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
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 to
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.

Seriously. JUDY

Why? MARK

I've never been to the Middle East. JUDY

You've never been to Florida. MARK

I'm going. JUDY

With what money? MARK

That money we have for Sally's college. JUDY

You want to steal from our daughter. MARK

She's not going to use it. JUDY

We don't know that. MARK

We know it Mark. JUDY

For how long? MARK

I don't know. JUDY

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

So what. JUDY

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. Aerodynamics 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.

Hello Sai. UDIA

How was work, mother? SAI

Everyday reminds me more of the last. UDIA

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

What are you talking about? UDIA

My point exactly. SAI

Bat UDIA
(Like the Hebrew word)

Omi SAI
(Like the Arabic word)

I'm hungry. UDIA

Want me to make you something? SAI

I can do it myself. UDIA

First tell me about your day. SAI

You don't want me to forget. UDIA

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

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?