

THIS NIGHT

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CHARACTERS

BOB, 71, M	A resident of this facility. Ashkenazi.
DANIEL, 36, M	Bob's son. A resident of this facility. Ashkenazi.
HANNAH, 38, F	Bob's daughter. A resident of another facility. Ashkenazi.
JOANNE, 66, F	Bob's sister. A resident of another facility. Ashkenazi.
MANDY, 65, M	Joanne's second husband. A resident of another facility. Sephardic.
LILA, 31, F	Joanne's daughter. A resident of another facility. Ashkenazi-Irish Catholic.
ALVARADO, 22, M	A guard. Gentile.

SETTING

A government facility. Not too many years from now.

NOTES

A dash (-) at the end of a line of dialogue means a character is being interrupted. Sometimes characters interrupt themselves.

A slash (/) indicates when the next line of dialogue begins.

A line break within dialogue indicates a short pause. A double line break indicates a longer pause.

[Brackets] indicate dialogue that is implied but not spoken.

Dialogue that ends with an ellipsis (...) indicates an unfinished thought. An ellipsis followed by a period (...) indicates a more conscious choice to move onto a new thought.

ACT 1

(A multipurpose room in some kind of government facility. Sterile, but not state-of-the-art; maybe some materials are mismatched. A photo of a nondescript white male president hangs on the wall. There are some metal cabinets. Security cameras monitor the scene and a couple of closed-circuit monitors play back their feeds to the occupants. In all, it's an ominous mood. In the center of the room, a long metal table and benches are set up.)

(After a few moments of silence, there's a loud buzz. DANIEL and BOB enter tentatively through a heavy door. They're pallid and downtrodden, wearing institutional garb - not prison suits but not civilian clothing. Before the door closes, Bob nods to someone on the other side. They look around for a bit in silence. Eventually:)

DANIEL

Wow.

...

BOB

Yeah.

...

DANIEL

I didn't even know this was here.
I mean, not that it's...

I knew about the side yard from that fire drill thing, but...

What do you think is around here? Maybe like an employee cafeteria or something.

BOB

I think they just bring in from...outside. Sometimes they smell like McDonalds.
The fries, and-

DANIEL

I can't believe you can remember that smell, I'm just like [wiped clean]....

BOB

Well. Scent is the most powerful sense. Did you know that?

DANIEL

(Smirking) I have heard that before, yeah.

BOB

Is that right?

DANIEL

Think so.

BOB

Could be...science homework?

DANIEL

Could be.

BOB

Fifth grade? Mrs....Lieber?

DANIEL

Sounds about right. "Scent is the most powerful sense!"

(They're both smiling for a moment.)

Oh, man.

Do you know...I mean they didn't tell you if Hannah or-

BOB

They didn't tell me anything. Why would they-

...

DANIEL

Or Mom-

BOB

No.

Daniel.

I mean you see me how much of the day, when would I have even-

DANIEL

I don't know, I thought maybe...at night in your bunk. Or.... Yeah. You're right.

...

BOB

They said something about "uniting families." But that's really all I know.

DANIEL

Because it would be amazing to see Mom. And Hannah. And...Aunt Sally. And-
Do you think they're-

BOB

Daniel. I really have no idea.

...

DANIEL

Well where did you hear the "uniting families" thing?

BOB

Lorenzo. He said the new directive is, you can bring some families together for
"holidays and milestones." Something like that.

DANIEL

"Milestones"? What milestone are you gonna have in here?

BOB

Maybe if someone...has a baby, outside? They'd let them-

DANIEL

They would never allow that! You think they would? Let you see someone [from
out there]?

BOB

Daniel, I don't-

DANIEL

Anyway if it's family they're probably somewhere like, in the system.

BOB

Well unless they...

(He gestures at the photo of the president.)

DANIEL

Well it wasn't him.

BOB

You know what I mean.

DANIEL

Unless they were good little Jews.

(Bob chuckles. Some silence.)

DANIEL (Continued)

I'm amazed any of them knew this was a holiday.

BOB

Yeah, well.

"Jewish Easter." Is how I described it to Lorenzo. I mean this was all in motion before that conversation. / I doubt he has any pull.

DANIEL

Sure.

BOB

And get real: By this point, they know our holidays. / The...powers that be.

DANIEL

Ugh. Yeah.

I still don't get how you cracked that guy. Everyone is so...stern to me.

BOB

Well. He's a Mets fan.

DANIEL

Ohhhh.

But there've got to be other Mets fans in here. I mean half of us are from-

BOB

No one thought of it, I guess.

DANIEL

So does he tell you who's on their roster now?

BOB

Little bit. But they traded- I don't know who half the guys are...

DANIEL

Mmm.

Do you know how they're doing?

(Bob laughs.)

BOB

How do you think?

(Daniel smiles. He starts to check out the table.)

DANIEL

You think they'll have matzoh?

BOB

Who knows.

DANIEL

I mean do they have matzoh in South Carolina?

BOB

So now it's South Carolina?

DANIEL

That's what Mikey thinks. You never heard his...?

(Bob shakes his head.)

It's like the way the sun sets, and something about the humidity - he knows a lot about weather patterns. And then he saw an HVAC repair guy once, on that day when- and his cover-up was slipping, and his shirt said something about South Carolina. So we gotta be close to there at least.

BOB

Well. It's a shirt. If he even read it right.

DANIEL

I mean it was hot that day.

BOB

It's hot a lot of places, Daniel.

But I'm sure there's matzoh somewhere in South Carolina. Or there was.

No, there still is. There is.

DANIEL

You should ask Lorenzo. He probably shops at a Publix down the street.

BOB

So you *do* remember Hilton Head?

DANIEL

Well. Every day in the Lowcountry air a little more comes back to me.

BOB

(Chuckling) In that case I hope you don't have enough days to recall very much.

DANIEL

Honestly. I have no idea what I even remember. At this point.

...

BOB

Well. I'd guess no matzoh here. If I had to say.

DANIEL

OK. What odds you want?

BOB

Danny...

DANIEL

Dad! Come on. Pretend we're at Citi Field! "I'll give you ten-to-one odds Alonso knocks it out of the park right now."

BOB

Fine. What's at stake?

DANIEL

My commissary credits for next week. Actually next two weeks: two-to-one odds.

BOB

(Shaking his hand) I do love those off-brand Cheez Doodles.

DANIEL

Chametz.

BOB

(Chuckling) I don't know; it's corn.

DANIEL

It's synthetic God-knows-what.

BOB

Well. For all we know Passover ended last week. Last month.
Anyway, if you tried to keep it in here you'd probably die of malnourishment.

DANIEL

Doesn't sound that bad.

(This hits Bob, who wraps Daniel in his arm. Then Daniel pops back up.)

Wait a minute: Lorenzo's a Mets fan, but he's never heard of Passover? Is he from New York?

BOB

I.... Probably...

DANIEL

That doesn't add up. That doesn't- Even if you're from like Staten Island you're at least a little bit Jewish.

BOB

I don't know I never-

(Another loud buzz. The door swings wide open and HANNAH enters.)

DANIEL

Oh my God.

(Hannah puts her hand over her mouth and can't get anything out. She starts crying. They all hug, first in one messy blob and then individually. Interspersed is some stepping back to take in the moment, and these lines:)

DANIEL (Continued)

I can't believe this.

I actually can't believe this.

BOB

Sweetie.

Sweetie.

(Eventually, they continue talking. At some point in this conversation they sit down.)

BOB (Continued)

How are you? Are you healthy?

HANNAH

I'm fine, Dad. Yeah.

I mean.... Well. I don't need to tell you I don't think.

BOB

What?

HANNAH

Like you know what it's like.... But, yeah; physically, I'm fine. This is fucking surreal it is really good to see you.

BOB

It's good too see you too.

(He tries to get something else out but is too overwhelmed.)

HANNAH

How long have you guys been here? Was the drive hell?

DANIEL

Oh, just like five minutes.

BOB

No drive.

DANIEL

We're like [over there]- It's a different / building, but-

HANNAH

Wait wait wait wait wait. You live here?? BOTH of you?

DANIEL

Yeah.

BOB

I guess we're lucky.

HANNAH

So you see each other??

BOB

Every day.

DANIEL

Pretty / much.

BOB

Well- / Yeah.

HANNAH

Holy shit. Holy shit. Do you know- I have like nobody to talk to. I mean all of this is...but I have NOBODY to talk to and as a Jewish woman that is very difficult.

BOB

Sometimes it feels like we run out of things to talk about. If that makes you feel any better.

HANNAH

It doesn't! I just hope you don't take it for granted. That's...wow! That's just... I thought the whole purpose of this was to like split us up.

DANIEL

I guess we're not as much of a threat as you.

BOB

Daniel.

HANNAH

I cannot believe I'm seeing you. Wow. This is.... I didn't know what the hell this was even about but then one of the shitbags kind of let it slip. But then I didn't know if he was just fucking with me, or.... / Piece of shit nazi fuckers.

BOB

It's just- I can't believe you're here.

HANNAH

Gotta love the neoliberal playbook, right? Keep political prisoners, or whatever we are, but let them have a widdew biddey sedew toogevoo, because tolowence!

BOB

That may be, but we can enjoy seeing one another, Hann.

DANIEL

Aren't we past neoliberalism at this point?

HANNAH

Yeah, that's fair.

Wait. Dan. Oh my God. I think of you every day. *(To Bob)* I mean I think of you, too. *(To Daniel)* But do they give you the [cups of] milk?

DANIEL

...Yeah? Like in the little cups?

HANNAH

I think of you every time I get that fucking milk.

(They both look at her blankly.)

Come on! That doesn't make you think of...?

(Still nothing.)

Oh my God! The manic shiksa / dream girl? What was her name?

DANIEL

Oh!

(Laughing) That girl from...Larchmont / or whatever? Elise?

HANNAH

(In a voice) "That girl from Larchmont or whatever?" Like you weren't OBSESSED with her for like, six months?

DANIEL

OK, that's... Anyway it was a bigger cup. Like waay bigger red flag bigger.

HANNAH

And she just [downed it].

DANIEL

I mean not in one gulp.

(They laugh.)

BOB

So what is this story?

HANNAH

Daniel was dating- Well [you tell it]...

DANIEL

Oh. Uh, I was like casually seeing this woman-

HANNAH

(In a voice) "Uh, I was like casually seeing this woman"...

DANIEL

OK...

BOB

This was how long ago?

DANIEL

Like...two years? Or I guess like three, probably. Um, anyway she was a little eccentric? But it wasn't- Anyway, we went out to dinner one time and with her meal, she ordered like a big cup of milk. Like just to drink with her dinner.

...

BOB

OK...

DANIEL

That's the story.

HANNAH

Dad, that's a red flag. That's like / a huge-

DANIEL

It was weird.

BOB

Well what did she have for dinner?

DANIEL

Hmm. Where were / we?

HANNAH

Does it matter! Like what's an acceptable entree with a big glass of milk? I don't think anything!

BOB

Maybe a...cheeseburger...

HANNAH

A cheeseburger?!

DANIEL

Oh! It was chicken paillard! At Pastis.

DANIEL (Continued)

Like pounded flat, with the salad on top. That does not go.

BOB

OK. That does not go. But a lot of kids your age dismiss perfectly good people. Over silly things.

DANIEL

Well I'm sorry I didn't marry the milk woman.

BOB

I'm not saying that.

DANIEL

Maybe if I did she'd be in your pod, Hann.

(She shudders.)

HANNAH

Chicken paillard sounds so good right now. As much as I love our Sysco mush.

DANIEL

Don't disparage the Sysco mush. Though I always say ours has more of an Aramark aroma.

BOB

What do you always say? *(Suddenly more serious, remembering something)* Wait. Hann. You haven't heard anything about your mother? She's not-

HANNAH

I haven't seen Mom since that place in Jersey...or wherever.

BOB

Yep. Yeah.

DANIEL

Same.

HANNAH

Why, do you know anything?

BOB

No.

HANNAH

I did hear someone talk about her article once. Got excited, but-

BOB

What do you mean? Who?

HANNAH

One of the women in my pod. But she was just saying she'd heard of it.

DANIEL

The bad article?

HANNAH

Yeah, the one at the end.

DANIEL

Did they end up taking that down?

BOB

It wasn't "bad." And it's / still online...I think.

HANNAH

I know: we'd be here anyway, blah blah blah. But, whatever, this woman was just talking about it because she'd heard it got put on a watch list or some stupid shit. *(To Bob)* Don't look at me like that! I said same outcome! I know! We're all Jews and we haven't pledged our fealty to the right assholes.

BOB

Hann...

DANIEL

"Fealty"! S.A.T. word!

HANNAH

(To Bob, who is making a face) What?

DANIEL (Continued)

(In a baby voice, petting her hair) Smarty Hann.

BOB

I just...you're really cursing quite a lot, honey.

HANNAH

Oh my fucking God! Dad! We're.... Like, maybe my surroundings have riled me up a little! Maybe our circumstances warrant-

BOB

OK. You're right, honey. You're right. I'm sorry.

I love you. I hope you know that. Both of you.

DANIEL

We know, Dad.

HANNAH

(Breaking down a bit) I love you. *(Hugging them)* I thought I might not, um...fuck.

DANIEL

(Losing his composure) Stop it.

HANNAH

I didn't know where I was going, and...I hated it. And now...

BOB

It's OK, honey. You're OK.

HANNAH

(Composure half-regained, maybe laying on her father's leg) I'm sorry...it- They told me I was leaving with like, 10 minutes notice. And it was just me and this like Indonesian woman - and she barely spoke English, so I couldn't figure out what any of it was about. And I was just sitting in the back of this truck for *sixteen* hours - I'm not kidding you. I mean I only know that because we stopped to sleep at some other facility, and the guy who was driving said like, eight hours down, eight to go. And that place was awful! They put me in a solitary cell-

BOB

Honey, what?

HANNAH

Yeah. Like no windows, one shitty little light - which, by the way, is illegal under the Geneva Convention and U.S. law-

BOB

Oh my- are you-

HANNAH

I mean- I survived.

But then when they wake me to get back in the truck the other woman isn't there, it's just me, and of course no one will tell me what happened to her, like was she supposed to end up at this place or did they just like, shoot her for fun, or...

BOB

Hann...

DANIEL

Wow.

HANNAH

So then I sit there for eight more hours, and it gets hotter and hotter, and I have no idea where I'm going, or why, or if I'll ever see anyone again, and... (*After a moment to collect herself*) yeah I was...I don't know, it was like, for some reason - like, literally maybe because I thought this was my death march, I don't fucking know - but I was sitting in this truck thinking about just...like...like (*gesturing to Daniel*) running in Nana's yard and...and like Poppy's pool and like the ice pops and...like those, the heaviest chairs in the world. / You know?

DANIEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HANNAH

And sometimes I thought too like, am I- like, did they just decide to let me go and is my family free like waiting for me somewhere...or is my family dead...or.... (*With some tears*) I don't know. I'm really happy to see you. I'm sorry I'm being such a bitch but I'm really happy to see you.

DANIEL

Hann. Stop.

BOB

Hush. We love you. We love you, Hannah, dear.
All I want is for you to be safe and comfortable...as much as...you can be, dear.

HANNAH

You don't really have to- I mean you have to worry, but (*finding herself laughing*) no more than about all of us. (*Making a joke*) Less than about your wife, probably. This trip was like the worst thing that's happened to me since all of this, so...

BOB

OK...OK....

DANIEL

So, what, your facility's not that bad?

HANNAH

I mean, it's...like how bad is it here? Like...it's purgatory. It's not hell, but it's purgatory. You know?

BOB

That's not a bad description.

(END OF EXCERPT)