

D I S G R A C E D

Ayad Akhtar

Final Production Draft

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SETTING

A spacious apartment on New York's Upper East Side.

TIME

2011 - 2012.

The first two scenes take place in late summer of 2011.

The third scene takes place three months later during fall.

The fourth scene takes place six months later during winter.

The play should be performed without intermission.

SCENE ONE.

Lights come up.

High ceilings, parquet floors, crown molding. The works.

Upstage -- a dining table. Behind it, a swinging door leads off to a kitchen.

Upstage right -- an open doorway leads to a hall that disappears from view.

Upstage left -- a terrace and windows looking out over further buildings in the distance. Through which the season will show in each scene.

Downstage -- a living room. A couch and chairs gathered together around a coffee table.

The stage left wall is covered with a large painting: A vibrant, two-paneled image in luscious whites and blues, with patterns reminiscent of an Islamic garden. The effect is lustrous and magnetic.

Below, a marble fireplace. And on the mantle, a statue of Siva.

To one side, a small table on which a half-dozen bottles of alcohol sit.

Downstage right -- a vestibule and the front door.

(The furnishings are spare and tasteful. With subtle flourishes of the orient.)

On stage: EMILY -- early 30s, white, lithe and lovely -- sits at the end of the dining table. A large pad before her.

Assessing her model...

AMIR -- 40, of South-Asian origin, in an Italian suit jacket, a crisp collared shirt, but only boxers underneath.

(Amir speaks with a perfect American accent.)

Amir is looking at a book open to a large reproduction of Velazquez's Portrait of Juan de Pareja.

Posing for his wife.

She sketches him. Until...

AMIR

You sure you don't want me to put pants on?

EMILY

(showing the Velazquez painting)

I only need you from the waist up.

AMIR

I still don't get it.

EMILY

You said it was fine.

AMIR

It is fine. It's just the more I think about it.

EMILY

What?

AMIR

I think it's a little weird.

EMILY

That?

AMIR

That you want to paint me after seeing a painting of a slave.

EMILY

He was Velazquez's assistant, honey.

AMIR

His slave.

EMILY

Until Velazquez freed him.

AMIR

Whatever.

I mean for Godssake, Amir. It has to be one of the most amazing portraits. Ever painted.

AMIR

It's a good painting. I'll give you that. I just don't see what it has to do with what happened last night. So we had a waiter who was a dick? I mean --

EMILY

He wasn't just a dick. He was a dick toward you. And I could tell why.

AMIR

It's not the first time --

EMILY

Right. But I'd just seen the painting at the Met. It was fresh in my mind. It gave me an idea.

AMIR

Which was what?

EMILY

A man, a waiter, looking at you. Not seeing you. Not seeing who you really are. Not until you started to deal with him. And the deftness with which you did that. You made him see that gap. Between what he was assuming about you, and what you really are.

AMIR

Just sounds like plain, old-fashioned prejudice to me.

EMILY

Okay. But I started to think about the Velazquez painting. And that same gap. And how people must have reacted when they first saw the painting. They think they're looking at a picture of a Moor.
An assistant.

AMIR

A slave.

EMILY

Fine. A slave.
But whose portrait - it turns out - has more nuance and complexity and reality than any rendition of even a king. And Velazquez painted more than a few portraits of the royal family.

(gesturing)

Could you do the thing?

Amir adjusts his arm back into the pose.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Anyway - I don't know what you're worried about. I doubt anyone's gonna see it.

AMIR

Baby. Jerry Saltz loved your last show.

EMILY

He liked it. He didn't love it. It didn't sell.

AMIR

Selling's not everything.

Amir's cell phone rings.

EMILY

Selling's not everything? You really believe that?

AMIR

Emily grabs the phone and tosses it to him.

AMIR (CONT'D)

It's a client...

EMILY

Get it. Just stay where you are...

AMIR

(into the phone)

Paolo, I'm not your therapist. You don't pay me to listen to you. You pay me to listen to me.

Yeah, but you're not listening.

You're going. To kill. This deal.

(Emily approaches, to adjust him)

Honey...

(continuing into the phone)

The point is, they buy it? They own it.

They do what they want. That's how it works.

AMIR (CONT'D)

Paolo. I'm getting another call. It's about the contract. I gotta go.

(switching over)

You enjoying your Cheerios?

Well, what the fuck else was keeping you from calling me back?

I don't care that it's Saturday morning. You're paid six figures to return my calls.

(breaking away and going to a contract on the table)

Paragraph 4, Subsection 3. Last sentence.

Why are those three words still in there?

You missed that? No. What actually happened is I told you to fix it and you didn't.

Then behave like it.

(MORE)

AMIR (CONT'D)

(hanging up)

Fucking career paralegal.

EMILY

You can be such an asshole.

AMIR

I don't catch his little fuck-up? It costs the client \$850 grand.

EMILY

(sketching)

It's really kinda hot, honey.

AMIR

(coming over to see the sketch over her shoulder)

You're so good.

(pointing at the picture of the Velazquez painting)

What's his name again?

EMILY

Juan de Pareja.

AMIR

It's a little fucked up. Give me that at least.

EMILY

(sexy)

I happen to know you like it a little fucked up.

AMIR

Mmm.

They kiss.

AMIR (CONT'D)

I should call Mort.

EMILY

(as Amir calls Mort)

You want coffee?

Amir nods.

AMIR

(into the phone)

Mort...

Good, good. So listen I talked to Paolo.

Seller's remorse.

It's a moot point. His board's gonna vote against him.

Well, let me keep trying to get through to him.

(MORE)

AMIR (CONT'D)

And if there's any fall out, blame it on me. You preserve the relationship.

Emily returns with coffee.

AMIR (CONT'D)

She's right here...

(to Emily)

Mort says hi.

EMILY

Tell him hi.

AMIR

She says hi...

We have plans for Labor Day, Mort.

Don't worry about it. Enjoy the weekend...

Sounds good. See you then.

EMILY

He wanted us to go out to the Hamptons again for Labor Day?

AMIR

Jory and Isaac. Bucks County. It's taken forever to make that happen...

EMILY

I know, babe.

I have to admit. It's got me a little freaked out.

Isaac's a big deal. Curator at the Whitney.

AMIR

He's gonna love your work.

EMILY

How is Mort?

AMIR

He thinks meditation is going to bring down his cholesterol.

EMILY

Until he has a coronary.

AMIR

He's barely coming in. A couple of hours a day. I'm doing his job. I mean, I don't mind. I love the guy.

EMILY

He loves you, too.

AMIR

He depends on me.

EMILY

Okay.
He spent I don't know how much on that birthday
present for you?

AMIR

Couple grand at least.

EMILY

Excuse me.

AMIR

I do a lot for him.

EMILY

So he gets you a book. Not a Hindu statue.
(beat)
Why'd he get you a statue of Siva? He doesn't think
you're Hindu, does he?

AMIR

He may have mentioned something once...
We never talked about it.
You realize I'm going to end up with my name on the
firm?

EMILY

Leibowitz, Bernstein, Harris, and Kapoor.

AMIR

Leibowitz, Bernstein, Harris, and Kapoor.
My mother will roll over in her grave...

EMILY

Your mother would be proud.

AMIR

It's not the family name, so she might not care...
Seeing it alongside all those Jewish ones...
But proud, my mother would not be.

From the kitchen: the INTERCOM BUZZES.

Amir looks over surprised. Emily puts
down her pencil. Heads for the kitchen.

EMILY

That'll be Abe.

AMIR

(surprised)

Abe?

EMILY
(disappearing into the kitchen)

Your nephew?

AMIR

Abe Jensen.
I'll never get used to it...
From Hussein Malik, he goes to Abe Jensen...
I can't take it seriously.

EMILY
(at the intercom, off-stage)

Yes?
Send him up.

As Emily now returns...

AMIR

You're not gonna let this thing go, are you?

EMILY
I don't like what's happening. Somebody's gotta do
something about it.

AMIR

I went to see that Imam in prison. What more does he
want?

EMILY

Will you please just talk to him?

There's a knocking on the door.

As Amir starts putting on his pants.

Amir's gotten to the door. Opening, it
shows...

ABE -- 22, of South-Asian origin. But as
American as American gets. Vibrant and
endearing. He's wearing a KidRobot T-
shirt under a hoodie, skinny jeans, and
high tops.

As Amir is buckling his belt.

ABE

(looking over at Emily, back to Amir)
Should I come back?

AMIR

No, no.

ABE

You sure?

AMIR

Yeah. I'm sure. Come in, Hussein.

ABE

Uncle.

AMIR

What?

ABE

Could you just call me --

AMIR

(finishing his thought)

I've known you your whole life as Hussein. I'm not gonna start calling you Abe now.

Abe shakes his head. Turning to Emily.

EMILY

Hi, Abe.

ABE

Hi, Aunt Emily.

Abe turns to Amir, lighthearted.

ABE (CONT'D)

(pointing)

See? How hard can it be?

AMIR

She hasn't known you since you were a baby.

ABE

You know how much easier things are for me since I changed my name? The Quran says it's okay to hide your religion if you have to. It's called taqiyya. It doesn't mean you're changing who you really are.

AMIR

I'm not talking about the Quran. I'm talking about you being called Abe Jensen. Just lay off it with me and your folks at least.

ABE

It's gotta be one thing or the other. I can't be all mixed up.

EMILY

(off Amir's reaction)

You changed your name, too.

ABE

You got lucky.

You didn't have to change your first name. Amir?

Could be Christian. Jewish.

Plus, you were born here. It's different.

EMILY

You want something, sweetie? Coffee, juice?

ABE

Nah. I'm good.

AMIR

So what's up?

EMILY

I'll let you gentlemen talk.

AMIR

No need. Everybody knows you're in on this.

(to Abe)

So you've been calling her, too?

ABE

You weren't calling me back.

AMIR

Why are we still talking about this?

I'm a corporate lawyer. In mergers and acquisitions --

EMILY

Who started in the Public Defender's --

AMIR

That was years ago.

ABE

Imam Fareed didn't do anything.

Every church in the country collects money. It's how they keep their doors open. We're entitled, too.

He's running a mosque --

EMILY

It's the law. It's in the constitution.

Just because they're collecting money doesn't mean it's for Hamas.

AMIR

What does any of this have to do with me?

EMILY

It doesn't matter to you that an innocent man is in prison?

AMIR

I don't know Patriot Act law. The guy's already got a legal team. Those guys Ken and Alex are amazing.

ABE

They're not Muslim.

AMIR

There we go.

ABE

What?

AMIR

What I thought.

I'm not gonna be part of a legal team just because your Imam is a bigot.

ABE

He's not a bigot. He'd just be more comfortable if there was a Muslim on the case, too...

AMIR

More comfortable if he wasn't being represented by a couple of Jews?

ABE

No.

(beat)

He liked you. He said you were a good man.

AMIR

Well, he might not feel the same if he knew how I really felt about his religion.

ABE

(off-hand)

That's just a phase.

AMIR

(taken aback)

Excuse me?

ABE

That's what Mom says Grandma used to say about you. That you were working something out. That you were such a good Muslim when you were a kid. And that you had to go the *other way* for awhile.

AMIR
(dumbfounded)
The *other way*?
(considering)
Sit down, Hussein. I want to tell you something.

ABE
So just tell me.

AMIR
No. I want you to sit down.

Abe sits.

AMIR (CONT'D)
When was the first time you had a crush?

ABE
I thought you wanted to tell me something.

AMIR
I'm getting to it.
Your first crush...

ABE
(glancing at Emily)
Umm...
Fifth grade. A girl named Nasleema...

AMIR
I was in sixth.
Her name was Rivkah.

EMILY
I thought your first crush was Susan.

AMIR
That was the first girl I ever kissed. Rivkah was the first girl I ever got up in the morning thinking about.
One time she went away to Disney World for a week, I was a *mess*. Didn't even want to go to school if I couldn't see her.
(remembering)
She was a looker. Dark hair, dark eyes. Dimples. Perfect white skin.

EMILY
Why didn't you ever tell me about her?

AMIR
I didn't want you to hate my mother...
(off Emily's perplexity)
Just wait...

(MORE)

AMIR (CONT'D)

(back to Abe)

So Rivkah and I'd gotten to the point where we were trading notes. And one day, my mother found one of the notes.

Of course it was signed, Rivkah.

Rivkah? my mom says. *That's a Jewish name.*

(beat)

I wasn't clear on what exactly a Jew was at the time, other than that they stole land from the Palestinians, and something about how God hated them more than other people...

I couldn't imagine God could have hated this little girl.

So I tell my mom: "No, she's not Jewish."

But she knew the name was Jewish.

If I ever hear that name in this house again, Amir, she said, I'll break your bones. You will end up with a Jew over my dead body.

Then she spat in my face.

EMILY

My God.

AMIR

That's so you don't you ever forget, she says.

Next day?

Rivkah comes up to me in the hall with a note. "Hi, Amir," she says. Eyes sparkling.

I look at her and say: "You've got the name of a Jew."

She smiles. "Yes, I'm Jewish," she says.

(beat)

Then *I* spit in *her* face.

EMILY

That's horrible.

ABE

Man. That's 'effed up.

AMIR

So, when my older sister goes on to you about *this* way and the *other* way, now you'll have a better idea of the *phase* I'm really going through...

It's called *intelligence*.

Pause.

EMILY

I'm surprised.

AMIR

By what?

EMILY

I don't know. Your mother was very open with me...

AMIR

Well...

EMILY

Well, what?

AMIR

Let's just say I made it abundantly clear not to mess with you.

EMILY

I thought she liked me.

ABE

Seemed like it to me.

AMIR

(to Emily)

She liked you fine. All things considered...

(off Emily's reaction)

White women have no self-respect.

How can someone respect themselves when they think they have to take off their clothes to make people like them?

They're whores.

EMILY

You don't have to be crass.

AMIR

On the contrary. I've sheltered you from a lot.

It's what Muslims around the world say about white women.

(to Abe)

Am I wrong?

ABE

Not everyone says that.

AMIR

Have you heard it or not?

ABE

Yeah.

AMIR

And more than once?

ABE

Yes.

AMIR

And from your mother?

Abe nods.

AMIR (CONT'D)

I rest my case.

Pause.

ABE

Imam Fareed is not like that. If you got to know him better, you'd realize...

He's actually your kind of guy. Men and women can worship together at the mosque. Once a month, we're doing a Friday prayer that's mixed.

EMILY

And -- he let me sit in his mosque and sketch every day for a month.

AMIR

He was probably hoping you'd convert. Who knows, you probably will.

EMILY

Don't be dismissive.

AMIR

I will never understand what you see in it.

EMILY

In Islam?

How about Ibn Arabi?

Mulla Sadra?

The Ardabil Carpet?

Those exquisite pillars and arches at the mosque in Cordoba?

Kufic script. Ottoman calligraphy. The Quran.

(pointing at the paintings)

The Andalusian mosaics that completely changed the way I saw the picture plane...

(beat)

There's so much beauty and wisdom in the Islamic tradition, Amir.

AMIR

It's not just beauty and wisdom, honey.

EMILY

Okay.

Pause.

ABE

Uncle. Don't think of him as a Muslim if you don't want to. Just think of him as a wise man. Who so many people depend on.

AMIR

I hear you, Huss. I really do.

ABE

So come to the hearing next Thursday.

AMIR

Next Thursday's a busy day at work.

ABE

An old man who didn't do anything wrong is in prison.

AMIR

(rough)

And there's nothing I can do about it.

Silence.

ABE

I should probably head out.

AMIR

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you...

After a pause, Abe gets up and goes to kiss his uncle and Emily.

ABE

Bye, Uncle.

Then leaves.

Once he's gone...

AMIR

It will never cease to amaze me. My parents move to this country with my sister, never make her a citizen. When she's old enough? They send her back, marry her off in Pakistan. She has kids with the guy - and lo and behold - he wants to come here. And what do they all do? Spend their spare time at an Islamic Center.

EMILY

It's a little odd.

AMIR

I know.

EMILY

Why would you have worked in the Public Defender's if you didn't care about justice?

AMIR

Public Defenders have the hottest girlfriends.

EMILY

I'm trying to be serious. I would like to think there some part of you that *believes* in right and wrong. I mean, I don't know...

AMIR

No... Of course.

EMILY

But when it comes to the Imam, it's like you don't care. Like you don't think he's human.

AMIR

You and Hussein wanted me to see him? So I went. I went to talk to him in prison. And the man spent an hour trying to get me to pray again. He's been in prison four months and all he can do --

EMILY

(cutting him off)

You told me. So what? So a man who has nothing left but his dignity and his faith is still trying to be useful in the only way he knows how? I mean, if he feels he needs one of his own people around him...

AMIR

I'm not one of his own people.

EMILY

You are. And in a way that's unique. And that can be helpful to him. Why are you so resistant to seeing that?

AMIR

Can we stop talking about this?

Pause.

EMILY

And why didn't you ever tell me that stuff about your mother? I never hid anything like that from you.

AMIR

What was there to hide?

EMILY

My dad?

AMIR

Your dad?! He was fine. Once we started talking about the Knicks? And we bonded over how much we hated Jim Dolan. Anyway, you'd broken him down. With that African drummer you brought back from Spain who didn't speak a word of English.

EMILY

That was a disaster.

AMIR

He was probably relieved.
At least he could talk to me.

EMILY

I thought she liked me.

AMIR

There was no need to create an issue between the two of you. You were winning her over. By who you really are. You were gracious, open-hearted, respectful. She kissed you on her death bed.
That's not nothing.

EMILY

I know.

AMIR

These people, they cling to the past. It's how they deal with things. But that's not what this country's about. It's about moving forward. And not looking back.

EMILY

It's also about justice, Amir. Or at least it should be.

AMIR

You really aren't going to let this go.

EMILY

No.

You could do so much good in this world.

(beat)

You remember when we were at my sister's house that first summer.

AMIR

2008. Of course.

First time you ever told me loved me. I'd been telling you for three weeks. You were holding out.

EMILY

I wasn't holding out. I didn't know until that weekend. Remember we were sitting out back at dinner and my brother-in-law was freaking out?

AMIR

About his 401K...

EMILY

It was all he'd been talking about. The markets. For days. Freaking out my sister, freaking out little Connor.

AMIR

Yeah.

EMILY

And remember when Connor asked -- at the table -- what was going on?

(off Amir's nod)

And you explained it to him. The financial crisis. In two minutes. To an eight-year old. Using his allowance as a way for him to understand.

And he did.

And so did I, for the first time...

AMIR

I'm a corporate lawyer, honey. I know that stuff. It's my stock in trade.

EMILY

It's not what you said. It was the way you were talking to him. So clearly, so tenderly...

That was the moment I fell in love with you.

(beat)

You have this ability. To communicate. With anyone. To move them. To make them see things differently. Is it so wrong for me to want you to use that gift to help others?

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE TWO.

The same apartment.

One week later.

Emily sits at the dining table. With a cup of morning coffee, the day's paper open before her.

Amir stands opposite her.

EMILY

(reading)

The defendant, surrounded by a gauntlet of attorneys, struck a defiant tone. He spoke eloquently of the injustices he'd experienced, and what he called an "unconscionable lack of due process." Amir Kapoor of Leibowitz, Bernstein, Harris supported the Imam, stating: "As far as anybody knows, there isn't a case. And if the Justice Department has one, it's time they started making it."

(beat)

I don't think you look like counsel for the defense.

AMIR

That's because you know I'm not.

EMILY

It's because it doesn't say you are.

AMIR

(taking the paper)

The defendant, surrounded by a gauntlet of attorneys, struck a defiant tone. And then she quotes an attorney. Me. Implying that I'm one of the gauntlet of attorneys. She doesn't quote another attorney.

EMILY

But she says you're just supporting him.

AMIR

I don't see a *just*. There's no *just supporting him*.

EMILY

It's implied.

AMIR

I think it reads very clearly that I was supporting his defiant tone. That I was supporting him being defiant.

EMILY

Isn't he justified?

AMIR
That's not my point, Em.

EMILY
Maybe it should be.

AMIR
The man's basically an alleged terrorist.
(off another look at the paper)
Amir Kapoor supported the Imam...

EMILY
Even if it does make you look --

AMIR
(leaping in)
So it does?

EMILY
I don't think it does. But even *if* it does, why is that a bad thing? It makes you look principled. Like you're standing up for due process.

AMIR
It's just...

EMILY
What?

AMIR
Don't you think people are going to assume...
I mean...

EMILY
What?

AMIR
I guess they'll look at the name, and if they know anything at all, they'll know the name isn't Muslim...

EMILY
Amir.
Amir. What's going on?
(beat)
I mean if this bothers you so much, call the Times.
Have them retract.

AMIR
But the thing is, I did say this.

EMILY
I remember.

AMIR

But after clearly saying I was not counsel for the defendant.

EMILY

So maybe that's enough for them to print a retraction.

AMIR

Why did they have to mention the firm?

Pause.

EMILY

Why is this bothering you so much?

AMIR

I have to go to work today. My religious background isn't anybody's business.

EMILY

Who's saying it's become anybody's business? And as far as work goes, this is going to be good for you.

AMIR

Good for me?

EMILY

Honey, look at Goldman.

AMIR

Goldman?

EMILY

Sachs.
Jamie took all that philanthropy so seriously...

AMIR

What does your ex-boyfriend have to do with this?

EMILY

It's how the corporate world covers up the fact that all they really care about is money.

AMIR

I should get going.
(still caught up by the paper)
"...supported the Imam..."

EMILY

Honey, honey.
Look at me.
Stop it.

AMIR
Why are you annoyed with me?

EMILY
I'm not.

AMIR
Yes, you are.

EMILY
I'm not annoyed. I just... - I think you're over-
thinking this.

AMIR
Some waiter is a dick to me in a restaurant and you
want to make a painting. But if it's something that
actually might affect my livelihood, you don't even
want to believe there could be a problem.

EMILY
What does one thing have to do with the other?

AMIR
Must be nice to be able to go colorblind when it
suits you.

EMILY
Where is that coming from?

Rough silence.

Interrupted by the INTERCOM.

EMILY (CONT'D)
That's going to be Isaac.

AMIR
Yeah?

EMILY
Well, I mean he's here.

AMIR
Okay.

EMILY
What?

AMIR
Nothing.

EMILY
Do you want to keep talking about this?

AMIR

No. I don't.

(beat)

I have to get to work.

EMILY

Okay. So...

Emily goes to the kitchen.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(off-stage)

Send him up.

Emily returns to rough silence between them. Until Emily attempts, conciliatory...

EMILY (CONT'D)

At least it's on page A14. I mean nobody ever...

AMIR

Don't.

EMILY

Don't what?

AMIR

I know you're mind is elsewhere.

EMILY

Honey, this is a big deal for me. I have a studio visit with a curator from the Whitney.

AMIR

Who do you think is responsible for making it happen?
If it wasn't for me --

EMILY

I know. I know. Look, can we talk about this tonight?
Okay?

AMIR

(curt, disgusted)

There's nothing to talk about.

(checking his pockets)

I left my phone in the bedroom.

He exits.

Beat.

There's knocking at the door.

Emily opens the door to SHOW --

ISAAC -- 40, white -- smart, attractive.
A curator at the Whitney.

Hi.

ISAAC

Hi. How are you?

EMILY

Great.

ISAAC

Find it okay?

EMILY

Quick ride up Madison. Couldn't be easier.

ISAAC

We hear sounds off-stage of Amir slamming
around in the bedroom. Looking for his
phone.

Amir's on his way out...

EMILY

Amir re-enters.

The tension between him and Emily still
palpable.

Isaac.

AMIR

Hello, sir.

ISAAC

Good to see you.

AMIR

(beat)
Thanks again for a wonderful weekend in the country.

Was our pleasure.

ISAAC

I - uh - gotta run. I'm late for work.

AMIR

You'll probably still get there before my wife.

ISAAC

AMIR

Always do.
See you later. (to Emily, coldly)

EMILY

Bye, honey.
It's gonna be fine. You'll see. (to Amir, intimate)

Amir exits.

Beat.

ISAAC

Is this a bad time?

EMILY

No. No.

ISAAC

You sure?

EMILY

Yeah.

ISAAC

I mean - okay.

EMILY

Csn I get you some coffee, tea?

ISAAC

Um. You know what? I'm fine.
(coming into the living room)

So...
I've spent a lot of time thinking about our
discussions since last weekend.

EMILY

About me being a white woman with no right to be
using Islamic forms?
I think you're wrong about that.

ISAAC

I think I might be wrong, too.

Beat.

EMILY

What happened?

ISAAC

Well, I found a few images of your work online.

EMILY

And you read Jerry's review.

ISAAC

And I read Jerry's review. I don't always agree with Jerry.

(turning to the paintings)

This is the one you wanted me to see?

EMILY

This is the one in the apartment.
There are more at the studio...

Isaac takes a moment to inspect the paintings.

ISAAC

Yeah. I have to admit. I'm compelled.
(stepping back, assessing)
The figures emerging from the ground.
The surface tending toward the convex...
It's a bending of the picture plane, isn't it?

EMILY

That's right.

ISAAC

Like late Bonnard.

EMILY

Or like the exquisite mosaics in Andalusia four hundred years before him. That's what I mean. That's what I was saying. We wouldn't even have Aristotle if it was left up to *our* ancestors in the Middle Ages.

ISAAC

I get it.

Pause.

EMILY

Have you ever been to the Victoria & Albert?

ISAAC

Ages ago.

EMILY

You're going to London for Frieze, right?

ISAAC

I am. You?

EMILY

Haven't decided.
My point is, when you're there, you have to promise me to visit the the Islamic galleries. Room 42. Remember that. It will change how you see art.

ISAAC

Wow. Okay.

EMILY

(off Isaac's reaction)

What?

ISAAC

I don't know... It's the earnestness. The lack of irony. Don't take it the wrong way. It's just - unusual...

EMILY

Irony's overrated.

ISAAC

Can't say I disagree with that.

EMILY

But?

ISAAC

You know what they're going to accuse you of...

EMILY

Don't say it.

ISAAC

Orientalism.

EMILY

We've all gotten way too wrapped up in the politics. The way we talk about things. We've forgotten to look at things for what they are.

(beat)

The tiling tradition? Is a doorway to the most extraordinary freedom, Isaac. And which only comes through a kind of profound submission. In my case, of course it's not submission to Islam, but to the formal language. The pattern. The repetition. And the quiet that this work requires of me? It's extraordinary.

ISAAC

You sound like a mid-century American minimalist. Trying to obliterate the ego.

EMILY

(interrupting)

The Islamic tradition's been doing it for a thousand years. Pardon me for thinking they may have a bit of a better handle on it.

(beat)

We draw on the Greeks, on the Romans... - we should be drawing on the Islamic tradition as well. Islam is part of who we are. And we don't even know it.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE THREE.

The same apartment.

Three months later.

Lights come up. On the terrace, AMIR.
A drink in hand.

He drinks. Drinks again. Stares down
into the bottom of his glass. Burning.

Beat.

Then all at once, he SMASHES the glass
on the terrace floor. Shards fly.

Beat.

The burst of violence doesn't seem to
have soothed him at all. He comes into
the apartment. Going to the bar for a
glass, and another drink.

Finally, we HEAR -- KEYS...

The door opens and Emily enters.

EMILY

Hey, honey.

AMIR

Hey.
Where were you?

EMILY

At Gourmet Garage. Getting a few things. For tonight.

AMIR

Tonight?

EMILY

Issac and Jory. You didn't forget, did you?

AMIR

That's why it smells so good in here.

EMILY

I made pork tenderloin. And guess what...
(pulling something from the bag)
...they had La Tur! And that chorizo you love so
much!

AMIR

Great.

EMILY

Can't be bad news, right? "I'm coming to your house to eat your food and tell you you're not in the show." Nobody does that, right?

AMIR

So you're in.

EMILY

God I hope.
So I'm assuming you forgot the wine.

AMIR

I did. I'm sorry.

EMILY

Amir.

AMIR

I said I'm sorry.

Beat.

EMILY

What's wrong?

AMIR

Nothing.

EMILY

No, what?

AMIR

Meeting with a couple of the partners. I mean if you could call it that. I'm in my office, red-lining a contract due at six. Steven comes in. With Jack. Sits down. Asks me where my parents were born.

EMILY

Pakistan.

AMIR

I said India. That's what's I put on the form when I got hired.

EMILY

Why?

AMIR

It technically was India when my dad was born.

EMILY

Okay.

AMIR

But the names of the cities you've listed are not in India, Steven says. They're in Pakistan.

My father was born in 1946. When it was all one country, before the British chopped it up into two countries in 1947.

And your mother was born when?

1948.

So it wasn't India anymore, was it? It was Pakistan?

My clock is running, and I'm wasting time on a fucking history lesson. Turns out, Steven's trying to ascertain if I misrepresented myself.

EMILY

It sounds like you did.

AMIR

It was all India. So there's a different name on it now. So what?

(beat)

He knew about my name change. *Your birth name is not Kapoor, Steven says. It's Abdullah. Why did you change it?*

EMILY

Didn't he already know?

AMIR

I never told them.

EMILY

They must have run a background check.

AMIR

I - uh - had my social changed. When I changed my name.

EMILY

You did?

AMIR

Yeah. It was before I met you.

EMILY

Is that legal?

AMIR

They do it all the time. For identity theft. Steven must have been digging around. He's has it in for me. I knew I never should have gone to that hearing.

EMILY

That was months ago. What does that have to do with anything?

AMIR

A lot, honey. A lot.

Beat.

EMILY

What did Mort say?

AMIR

I can't get a hold of him.

The INTERCOM buzzes.

EMILY

Wait a second. What time is it?

AMIR

(checking his watch)

Ten past.

EMILY

What're they doing here?
I still have to get ready.

AMIR

Go get ready. I'll get it.

Amir heads for the kitchen.

AMIR (CONT'D)

(at the intercom, off-stage)

Yes?

Send them up.

EMILY

(as Amir re-emerges)

You gonna be okay?

AMIR

I'll be fine.

EMILY

You sure?

AMIR

Yes. Go.

EMILY

Can you get the appetizers? They're on the counter in the kitchen?

I got it.

AMIR

Emily exits.

Amir goes to the door. Turning the bolt to prop the door. Then takes the bags into the kitchen.

We hear noises outside the door. Then the door creeps open.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Amir?

Just as Amir emerges --

AMIR

Come on in, Jor.

Enter:

Jory -- mid to late 30s, African-American -- is commanding, forthright, intelligent. Almost masculine.

We've seen Isaac before.

Both shed their coats as Amir gets to them.

ISAAC

(shaking hands)

Good to see you again.

AMIR

Good to see you, too.

JORY

Hey, Amir.

AMIR

Hi, Jory.
Did we say 7.30?

ISAAC

I was sure she said 7.

JORY

(to Isaac)

I told you.

AMIR

She's still getting ready.

JORY

No worries.

AMIR

More time to drink, right?

JORY

(handing Amir a box)

Oh, we brought dessert.

AMIR

Magnolia Bakery? Thank you.

JORY

(heading off)

This should go in the fridge.

ISAAC

(to Amir)

I was at the Knicks game last night.

AMIR

You were?

ISAAC

Aren't you a Knicks fan?

AMIR

I'm sorry to say.

ISAAC

No dishonor in it.

AMIR

No dishonor. But lots of pain.

ISAAC

I'm a Cubs fan. Don't get me started on pain.

Jory returns to hear:

AMIR

Oh, the Bartman.

ISAAC

I mean, I didn't think he should be killed.
But I had friends...

AMIR

Killed?

JORY

Who's Bartman?

ISAAC

Honey.

AMIR

The fan who stole the ball out of a Cubs outfielder's hand...

ISAAC

Moises Alou. Eighth inning.

AMIR

And denied the Cubs a trip to the world series.

ISAAC

(to Jory)

You don't remember this?

JORY

It's ringing a bell.

(beat)

Smells great in here.

AMIR

Em's making pork tenderloin.

(to Isaac)

You eat pork, don't you?

JORY

Every chance he gets...

ISAAC

Gotta make up for all the lost years... -
Could I use your rest room?

AMIR

Down the hall on the right.

ISAAC

I remember.

Isaac crosses to the hall. Exits.

AMIR

What are you drinking?

JORY

You have scotch?

AMIR

Still have that bottle of *Macallan* that you gave me.

JORY

I expect more from you, Amir.

AMIR
We'll finish it tonight.
On the rocks?

JORY
Neat.

AMIR
You're not kidding around.

Amir begins to prepare the drink...

JORY
You hear about Sarah?

AMIR
What about her?

JORY
She got her terrier back.

AMIR
How?

JORY
She hired a dog investigator who kidnapped it back
from Frank.

AMIR
Lord.

JORY
Frank's gonna sue her.

AMIR
On what grounds?

JORY
Just to make her life miserable.

AMIR
The two of them.

JORY
Tell me about it. She and I ran into Frank at the
courthouse.

AMIR
Oh, you were in court today?

JORY
Proctor insurance arbitration.

AMIR

How'd it go?

JORY

Fine.

We're just dancing around the number now. They have to pay and they know it. They just need a little time to get used to the idea.

AMIR

Mort there?

JORY

Steven took it over. He has me on it now.

AMIR

But Proctor's Mort's.

JORY

Was.

AMIR

Why is that not a surprise?

JORY

Mort couldn't be bothered. Rather be meditating.

AMIR

Yeah, instead of taking his Lipitor.

JORY

You know he took me to lunch and tried to teach me to meditate? I actually tried it a couple of times. Ended up gaining five pounds. I just kept thinking about food. I'd get frustrated, give up, and pig out.

AMIR

What's up with the offer from Credit Suisse?

JORY (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna do it.

AMIR

You're gonna walk away from two hundred thousand more than you're making now?

JORY

The partners are countering.

AMIR

I doubt it's two hundred more.

JORY

I've put down roots.

Beat.

AMIR

Kapoor, Brathwaite.

JORY

What?

AMIR

You and me. On our own. In business.
Steven and Mort got ahead underpricing the
competition. Back in the day, when they got started.

JORY

Well, downtown WASPS didn't want to be doing mergers
and acquisitions.

AMIR

Yeah, fine. That's why Jews were doing it. And then
mergers and acquisitions became all the rage. And
guys like Steven and Mort became the establishment.
We are the new Jews.

JORY

Okay...

AMIR

We go about it the right way? We'll get to where LBH
is now, in a quarter of the time it took them.

JORY

You coming up with this on the fly?

AMIR

This afternoon.
That firm will never be ours. It's theirs. And
they're always going to remind us that we were just
invited to the party.

JORY

I don't think it's a bad idea.

(beat)

Amir --

Just as...

...Isaac returns from the bathroom,
holding a book. Interrupting...

ISAAC

Who's reading this?

- ...sorry, am I interrupting?

Well... JORY

Just talking shop. AMIR

Just as Emily enters, in a lovely dress.

I'm so sorry. EMILY
(to Jory)
Nice to see you.

Nice to see you, too. JORY

Hey, Em. ISAAC

Hi, Isaac. EMILY

I'm sorry I thought I heard seven. ISAAC

Look. As long as you don't mind waiting for dinner... EMILY

Honey, they got cupcakes from Magnolia. AMIR

Banana pudding actually. JORY

Oh my god. I love that stuff. EMILY

It's like crack. JORY

You want something to drink, Isaac? AMIR

Scotch'd be great. On the rocks... ISAAC

Honey? AMIR

Port. EMILY

Port? Before dinner? JORY

EMILY

I know I'm strange. I just love it so much...

Amir gets started on the drinks.

ISAAC

(to Emily)

So who's reading *Denial of Death*?

EMILY

I am. Since you suggested it.

AMIR

(to Isaac)

She's been raving about it.

ISAAC

The only reason people remember this anymore is because it's the book Woody Allen gives to Diane Keaton on their first date in *Annie Hall*. And tells her: "This is everything you need to know about me."

AMIR

Denial of death.

JORY

(to Isaac)

You should've given me a heads up, too.

ISAAC

You think?

It's an amazing book. I actually got the title for my new show from here...

AMIR

What's the title?

ISAAC

The title... - well, first let me say - It's been generations and generations of consumerism and cynicism. And an art market that just feeds the frenzy. But something's shifting. There's a movement of young artists who are not buying into it anymore. They're asking the question - how to make art sacred again. It's an impossibly heroic task they've set for themselves. Which is why I'm calling it...

(gesturing to Jory to hold her criticism)

Impossible heroes.

(beat)

She doesn't like it.

JORY

It sounds like a segment on Anderson Cooper's 360.

AMIR

Paralympic athletes.

JORY

The impossible heroes.

ISAAC

Very funny.

How about you, Em? What do you think of the title?
After all, it's your show now, too...

Beat.

EMILY

You're kidding?

ISAAC

The work you're doing with the Islamic tradition is
important and new. It needs to be seen. Widely.

EMILY

Isaac, that's amazing. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Ensuing congratulations overlap...

JORY

Congratulations, Emily.

EMILY

Thank you.

AMIR

That's incredible. I'm so proud of you, honey.

ISAAC

(lifting his glass)

A toast is in order. To --

AMIR

(over)

To your show. And to Emily in your show.

ALL

Cheers...

All drink.

AMIR

So...how many?

ISAAC

What?

AMIR

Of her paintings?

EMILY

That's my husband. Always talking numbers.

ISAAC

I've got room for four or five.

AMIR

Five. That sounds great.

Laughter.

ISAAC

(pointing to the canvas above the
fireplace)

I definitely want *that one*. The couple I saw in the studio. And I've been thinking about the *Study After Velazquez's Moor*. But I'm not sure I want to include it...

JORY

Moor?

Haven't heard that word in a minute.

EMILY

I did a portrait of Amir a few months ago...
After an episode we had at a...

Noticing Amir's reaction to her bringing up the story, Emily shifts gears...

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'd just been to the Met and seen the Velazquez painting.

Emily goes to the bookshelf in the corner...

JORY

Which one?

EMILY

Portrait of Juan de Pareja -- who happened to be of Moorish descent.

(returning with the book)

This is the original portrait.

JORY
(recognizing)

Oh. Of course.

EMILY
I basically use the same palette, same composition. I call it *Study after Velazquez's Moor*, but it's a portrait of Amir.

AMIR
Your very own personal Moor.

EMILY
Muse is more like it...

ISAAC
I think I'd rather stick with the abstract pieces. Keep the impression of your work consolidated. But I'm tempted. I mean it's a stunning portrait. Quite a tribute to you, Amir.

AMIR
You think?

ISAAC
Standing there in your black suit. Silver cuff-links. Perfectly pressed lily-white dress shirt...
(to Emily)
...which is so magnificently rendered. You can almost smell the starch on that shirt.

AMIR
Not starch, Isaac. Just ridiculous thread count.

JORY
People do not stop talking about your shirts at the office...

AMIR
Really?

JORY
Sarah was joking you must spend half what you make on shirts.

EMILY
Wouldn't be far from the truth. Charvet, always.

JORY
How much do those run?

Amir seems reluctant to reply.

EMILY

Six hundred.

JORY

Dollars?

ISAAC

So there you are, in your six-hundred dollar Charvet shirt, like Velazquez's brilliant apprentice-slave in his lace collar, adorned in the splendors of the world you're now so clearly a part of... And yet...

AMIR

What?

ISAAC

The question remains.

AMIR

The question?

ISAAC

Of your place.
For the viewer of course. Not you.
It's a painting, after all...

Pause.

AMIR

I like the stuff she was doing before.

ISAAC

The landscapes? Not a huge fan.

JORY

Isaac.

ISAAC

What? She knows that. I think it's smart she moved on. It's not as fertile a direction for her.

AMIR

I think the landscapes are very *fertile*.

EMILY

Amir...

AMIR

What?

EMILY

We both know why you like the landscapes.

JORY

Why?

EMILY

Because they have nothing to do with Islam.

ISAAC

(before Amir can speak)

What she's doing with the Islamic tradition has taken her to another level.

A young Western painter drawing on Islamic representation? Not *ironically*? But in *service*? It's an unusual and remarkable statement.

AMIR

What's the statement?

ISAAC

Islam is rich and universal. Part of a spiritual and artistic heritage we can all draw from.

(to Emily)

I loved that thing you said in London. At Frieze... About humility and the Renaissance...

EMILY

Right. The Renaissance is when we turned away from something bigger than ourselves. It put the individual at the center of the universe and made a cult out of the personal ego. That never happened in the Islamic tradition. It's still more connected to a wider, less personal perspective.

ISAAC

I'm using that in the catalogue.

(lifting his glass, to Emily)

You've got a major career ahead of you.

I'm just one of the first to get to the party.

Emily Hughes-Kapoor. A name to be contended with.

AMIR

Hear, hear.

While toasting...

JORY

Kapoor.

What part of India that name is from?

Pause.

AMIR

Why are you asking?

JORY

Did I say something wrong?

AMIR

No, no...

Steven came into my office today and asked me the same thing.

JORY

He did?

Awkward pause.

EMILY

You know - it's a pretty common Punjabi name.

ISAAC

I'm headed to Delhi day after tomorrow. That's in Punjab, isn't it?

AMIR

Not really, but... Same country... So... Why not?

Laughs.

EMILY

What are you doing in Delhi, Isaac?

ISAAC

Sothi Sikander has deigned to offer me a studio visit.

EMILY

I love his work. How exciting.

(to Jory)

You going, too?

JORY

Ezra has school.

ISAAC

Jory's being polite. It's not because Ezra has school. I have a... little bit of an issue when it comes to flying.

JORY

That's one way of putting it.

ISAAC

I hate flying.

It's a primal thing. The thought of not being on the ground...opens up this door to like every fear I have -- and the hysteria around security only makes it worse.

AMIR

It's a nightmare at the airports.

JORY

And now there's a whole new attraction. You get to decide between being ogled over, or felt up.

ISAAC

Felt up. Definitely.

JORY

Why is that not a surprise?

ISAAC

It actually calms me down.

(to Amir)

What's that like for you?

AMIR

What?

ISAAC

Security at airports.

(awkward beat)

I mean you hear stories...

AMIR

Wouldn't know. I cut right to the chase.

EMILY

He volunteers himself. Goes right to the agents and offers himself up.

JORY

What? To be searched?

AMIR

I know they're looking at me. And it's not because I look like Gisele. I figure why not make it easier for everyone involved...

JORY

Never heard of anyone doing *that* before...

AMIR

On top of people being more and more *afraid* of folks who look like me, we end up being *resented*, too.

EMILY

Those agents are working hard *not* to discriminate... Then here's this guy who comes up to them and calls them out...

AMIR

Pure, unmitigated passive-aggression. That's what my wife thinks.

ISAAC

Maybe she's got a point.

JORY

I think it's kind of admirable, Amir. If everyone was so forthcoming, the world would be a very different place.

ISAAC

It's racial profiling.

JORY

Honey. I know what it is.

ISAAC

I can't imagine you'd like that if it was you?

AMIR

It's not her. That's the point.

JORY

...and it's probably not some Kansas grandmother in a wheelchair.

AMIR

The next terrorist attack is probably gonna come from some guy who more or less looks like me.

EMILY

I totally disagree. The next attack is coming from some white guy who's got a gun he shouldn't have...

AMIR

And using it on a guy who looks like me.

EMILY

Not necessarily.

ISAAC

(to Amir)

If every person of Middle Eastern descent started doing what you're doing...

AMIR

Yeah?

ISAAC

I mean if we all got used to that kind of...*compliance*?

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

We might actually start getting a little too comfortable about our suspicions...

AMIR

So you do have suspicions?

ISAAC

I mean, not *me*, I'm just saying --

AMIR

Look. Hell. I don't blame you.

ISAAC

Wait. What?

EMILY

(warning)

Amir. Could you get me another glass of port?

Amir gets up, taking her glass...

EMILY (CONT'D)

(to Jory & Isaac)

You guys hungry?

JORY

Getting there.

EMILY

(getting up)

I'm starting us with a fennel salad.

(to Jory)

You eat anchovies?

JORY

Love them. And I love fennel.

AMIR

(pouring a drink)

Her fennel anchovy salad is a classic. A fucking classic.

JORY

(to Isaac, but indicating Amir)

See, honey.

An exemplary instance of spousal support. He never compliments me on my cooking.

ISAAC

I do most of the cooking.

JORY

Because you don't show me any love when I do.

ISAAC

Look. You make a good omelette.

JORY

I haven't made an omelette in ages.

ISAAC

Might be the best thing about them.

EMILY

(getting up, for the kitchen)

I can't believe you just said that.

JORY

(to Emily)

Would you like some help?

EMILY

Thank you, Jory. I would love some.

ISAAC

Just keep her away from the ingredients.

Emily and Jory exit.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(to Amir)

So...

I'm sorry if I brought up something sensitive...
Between you and Emily I mean...

AMIR

You didn't.

ISAAC

Oh.

AMIR

It's not a secret. Em and I don't see eye to eye on
Islam. I think it's... a backward way of thinking.
And being.

ISAAC

You don't think that's maybe a little broad?
I mean it happens to be one of the world's great
spiritual traditions.

AMIR

Let me guess. You're reading Rumi.

ISAAC

Amir...

Actually. Yes, I've been reading Rumi.

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

And he's great. But that's not what I'm talking about.
Do you know Hanif Saeed?

AMIR

I don't.

ISAAC

He's a sculptor, he's Muslim, he's devout. His work is an amazing testimony to the power of faith. He carves these monolithic pillar-like forms --

AMIR

(interrupting)

Have you read the Quran, Isaac?

ISAAC

I haven't.

AMIR

When it comes to Islam? Monolithic pillar-like forms don't matter...

Just as Emily and Jory return with the salad and bowls...

AMIR (CONT'D)

And paintings don't matter. Only the Quran matters.

EMILY

Paintings don't matter?

AMIR

I didn't mean it like that.

EMILY

How did you mean it?

AMIR

Honey. You're aware of what the Prophet said about them?

EMILY

I am, Amir.

JORY

What did he think?

AMIR

He used to say angels don't enter a house where there are pictures and/or dogs.

JORY

What's wrong with dogs?

AMIR

Your guess as good as mine.

ISAAC

Every religion's got idiosyncrasies. My ancestors didn't like lobster. Who doesn't like lobster? What's your point?

AMIR

My point is that what a few artists are doing, however wonderful, does not reflect the Muslim psyche.

ISAAC

Muslim psyche?

AMIR

Islam comes from the desert. From a group of tough-minded, tough-living people. Who saw life as something hard and relentless. Something to be suffered...

JORY

Huh...

ISAAC

Not the only people to have suffered in a desert for centuries, Amir. Don't know what it says about the *Jewish psyche*, if that's the word we're going to use.

The men start making their way to the table.

AMIR

Desert pain. I can work with that. Jews reacted to the situation differently. They turned it over, and over, and over... I mean look at the Talmud. They're looking at things from a hundred different angles, trying to negotiate with it, make it easier, more livable...

JORY

Find new ways to complain about it...

Jory chuckles.

Issac shoots her a look. All taking their seats. With the serving underway...

AMIR

Whatever they do, it's not what Muslims do. Muslims *don't* think about it. They submit. That's what Islam means, by the way. Submission.

ISAAC

I know what it means.
Look, the problem isn't Islam. It's *Islamofascism*.

EMILY

Guys? Salad?

AMIR

Martin Amis, right?

ISAAC

Hitchens, too. They're not wrong about that...

JORY

(under)

I'm starving.

AMIR

You haven't read the Quran, but you've read a couple of sanctimonious British bullies and you think you know something about Islam?

EMILY

Amir...

AMIR

What? That's not fair game? If he's going to offer it as a counter, it's fair game.

ISAAC

He has a point. I need to read the Koran.

EMILY

(to Isaac)

Did you want fresh pepper?

JORY

I read it in college. What I remember is the anger.

AMIR

Thank you. It's like one very long hate mail letter to humanity.

EMILY

That's not true!

(with the pepper)

Jory?

AMIR

It is *kind of*. Grant me *that* at least...

EMILY

I'll grant you that the Quran sees humanity as stubborn and self-interested - and it takes us to task for that. And I can't say it's wrong to do so --

ISAAC

All I was trying to say with Islamo-fascism is that there's a difference between the religion, and the political use of it.

AMIR

Isaac. In Islam there's no difference. There's no distinction between church and state.

JORY

Don't you mean mosque and state?

AMIR

I do. Thank you.
I'm assuming we're all opposed to people who think the Bible is the Constitution?

Last person has been served. All begin to eat.

EMILY

Bon appetit.

ISAAC

Bon appetit.

JORY

Mmm. This is so good.

AMIR

Did I tell you, or did I tell you?

EMILY

It's so easy. You slice everything up...

ISAAC

(looking at her plate)
Fennel, peppers, celery...

EMILY

...carrots, radishes...

ISAAC

What are these?

EMILY

Baby artichokes...

ISAAC

Adorable.

JORY

(coming in)

What gets me just as much as people who treat the Bible like the Constitution are the people who treat the Constitution like it's the Bible. I mean trying to figure out what a text written 200 years ago really meant? Like it's going to solve our problems today?

EMILY

Like all that bullshit about the right to bear arms. It was 1791, people.

AMIR

That's my point. That's exactly what I'm saying. Honey.

ISAAC

Mmm. This is delicious, Em. Really.

EMILY

I picked up the recipe when I was on a Fulbright in Seville.

ISAAC

I love Spain. I ran with the bulls in Pamplona.

JORY

You did not run with the bulls.

ISAAC

I watched people run with the bulls.

AMIR

We went to Barcelona for our honeymoon. The ceviche. The paella. The wine. Spanish wines are so underrated.

ISAAC

See, this is the problem I'm having... You're saying Muslims are so different. You're not that different. You have the same idea of *the good life* as I do. I wouldn't have even known you were a Muslim if it wasn't for the article in the Times.

AMIR

I'm not Muslim. I'm an *apostate*. Which means I've renounced my faith.

ISAAC
(overlapping)
I know what the word *apostate* means.

JORY
Isaac?

AMIR
Do you also know that -- according to the Quran -- it makes me punishable by death?

EMILY
That's technically not true, Amir.
It's not clear from the text.
Renouncing the faith is *condemned*.
It's clear there will be punishment...
But it isn't clear *what* that punishment is...
The tradition has *interpreted* it as punishable by death.

JORY
Impressive...

EMILY
He's repeated it enough, I checked. I have a vested interest after all.

Women laugh.

AMIR
Fine.
So let's talk about something that *is* in the text.
Wife beating.

ISAAC
Wife beating?

JORY
Great. Could you pass the bread?

EMILY
Amir, really?

AMIR
(passing the bread)
So the angel Gabriel comes to Muhammad...

ISAAC
Angel Gabriel?

AMIR
(mocking)
Yeah.

(MORE)

AMIR (CONT'D)

That's how Muslims believe the Quran came to humanity. The angel Gabriel supposedly dictated it to Muhammad word for word.

ISAAC

Like Joseph Smith. Mormonism. An angel named Marami came down in upstate New York and talked to Joseph Smith --

JORY

Moroni, honey. Not Marami.

ISAAC

You sure?

JORY

It was on South Park.

Beat.

AMIR

So like I was saying...
The angel Gabriel shows up and teaches Muhammad this verse. You know the one, honey.
I'm paraphrasing...
Men are in charge of women...

EMILY

Amir?

AMIR

(continuing)

*If they don't obey...
Talk to them.
If that doesn't work...
Don't sleep with them.
And if that doesn't work...*
(turning to Emily)

Em?

EMILY

I'm not doing this.

AMIR

Beat them.

JORY

I don't remember that being in the Koran.

AMIR

Oh, it's there alright.

EMILY

The usual translation is debatable.

AMIR

Only for people who are trying to make Islam look all warm and fuzzy.

EMILY

The root verb can mean beat. But it can also mean leave. So it could be saying, if your wife doesn't listen, leave her. Not beat her.

ISAAC

Sounds like a pretty big difference.

AMIR

That's not how it's been interpreted for hundreds of years.

JORY

(suddenly impassioned)

No. See. Sometimes you just have to say no. I don't blame the French.

ISAAC

The French?

JORY

For their problem with Islam.

ISAAC

You're okay with them banning the veil?

JORY

You do have to draw the line *somewhere*.

ISAAC

Okay, Mrs Kissinger.

EMILY

Endearing.

ISAAC

I'm married to a woman who has a Kissinger quote above her desk in the den...

JORY

"If faced with choosing justice or order, I'll always choose order."

EMILY

Why do you have that above your desk?

JORY

To remind me. Not to get lost in the feeling that I need to get *justice*.

(MORE)

JORY (CONT'D)

You pull yourself out of the ghetto, you realize *real soon* order is where it's at...

EMILY

Me. Justice. Always.

JORY

You know what they say? If you're young and not a liberal, you've got no heart. And if you're old and not a conservative...

AMIR & JORY

(together)

...you've got no brain.

ISAAC

I happen to know a few very brilliant Muslim women who *choose* to wear the veil.

AMIR

You really enjoy playing the contrarian, don't you?

ISAAC

I'm not playing the contrarian.

JORY

(to Isaac, over)

Who do you know that wears the veil?

ISAAC

You wouldn't know them.

JORY

I think you're making it up.

ISAAC

I'm not.

JORY

So who?

ISAAC

Khalid's sister.
She's a Professor of Philosophy at Cornell.
She wears the veil.

JORY

Khalid? Your trainer?

AMIR

You train at Equinox?

ISAAC

Yeah.

AMIR

I know Khalid. Balding? With the guns?

ISAAC

That's him. I didn't know you trained at Equinox.

JORY

What's your point?

ISAAC

Khalid may be a trainer, but he comes from a ridiculously educated Jordanian background. All the women wear the veil in his family. By choice.

EMILY

It's not always what people think. It's a source of pride for a lot of Muslim women.

AMIR

First of all, they're probably wearing headscarves. Not the veil. It's not the same thing --

JORY

(cutting in)

The veil is evil.
You erase a face, you erase individuality.
Nobody's making men erase their individuality.
Why's it always come down to making the woman pay?
Uh-uh. There is a point at which you just have to say no.

AMIR

Just say no.
That is exactly what Muhammad *didn't* do.
Here's the irony:
Before becoming a Prophet?
He was adamant about his followers *not* abusing women.
And then he starts talking to an angel?
I mean, *really*?

ISAAC

I still can't believe I've never seen the parallel with Mormonism before.

AMIR

You keep saying that like it means something.

ISAAC

Both religions where you can have multiple wives, too. Though I think Mormons are okay with dogs.

AMIR

You still don't get it.

ISAAC

Get what? That you're full of self-loathing?

Jory shoots Isaac a look to kill.

AMIR

The Quran is about tribal life in a seventh-century desert, Isaac.
The point isn't just academic.
There's a result to believing that a book written about life in a specific society fifteen hundred years ago is the word of God:
You start wanting to *recreate* that society.
After all, it's the only one in which the Quran makes any literal sense.
That's why you have people like the Taliban. They're trying to recreate the world in the image of the one that's in the Quran.

Amir has gotten up from the table and heads over to pour himself another drink.

EMILY

Honey, I think we get it.

AMIR

Actually. I'm pretty sure you don't.
Here's the kicker. And this is the real problem:
It goes way deeper than the Taliban.
To be Muslim -- *truly* -- means not only that you *believe* all this. It means you *fight* for it, too.
Politics follows faith?
No distinction between mosque and state?
Remember all that?
So if the point is that the world in the Quran was a better place than this world, well, then let's go back.
Let's stone adulterers.
Let's cut off the hands of thieves.
Let's kill the unbelievers.
And so, even if you're one of those lapsed Muslims sipping your after-dinner scotch alongside your beautiful white American wife - and watching the news and seeing folks in Middle East dying for values you were taught were purer - and stricter - and truer. You can't help but feel just a little bit of pride.

ISAAC

Pride?

AMIR

Yes. Pride.

Beat.

ISAAC

Did you feel pride on September 11th?

AMIR

(with hesitation)

If I'm honest, yes.

I was horrified by it, okay? Absolutely horrified.

EMILY

You don't really mean that, Amir.

JORY

Pride about what?

About the towers coming down?

About people getting killed?

AMIR

That we were finally winning.

JORY

We?

AMIR

Yeah.... I guess I forgot... which we I was.

JORY

You're an American...

AMIR

It's tribal, Jor. It is in the bones.

You have no idea how I was brought up.

You have to work *real* hard to root that shit out.

JORY

Well, you need to keep working.

AMIR

I am.

Emily has gotten up to go to Amir.

AMIR (CONT'D)

What?

EMILY

That's enough.

(taking his glass)

I'm gonna make you some coffee.

Emily exits to the kitchen.

Long awkward pause.

AMIR

What?

(to Isaac, conciliatory)

Look...

I'm sure it's not all that different than how you feel about Israel sometimes...

ISAAC

Excuse me?

AMIR

You're going to tell me you've never felt anything like that - an unexpected *blush* of pride, say...

ISAAC

Blush? I don't feel anything like a blush.

AMIR

When you hear about Israel throwing its military weight around?

ISAAC

I'm critical of Israel. A lot of Jews are.

AMIR

And when you hear Ahmadinajad talk about wiping Israel into the Mediterranean, how do you feel then?

ISAAC

Outraged. Like anybody else.

AMIR

Not everybody's outraged. A lot of folks *like* hearing that.

ISAAC

You like hearing that?

AMIR

I said a lot of folks...

Emily appears in the kitchen doorway.

ISAAC

I asked you if *you* like hearing it? Do you like hearing about Israel getting wiped into the ocean?

JORY

Isaac...

ISAAC

No. I want to know...

AMIR

Sometimes? Yes....

EMILY

(with hints of despair)

Amir. We're supposed to be celebrating.

AMIR

(ignoring, over)

And I'm saying it's wrong.

And it comes from somewhere.

And that somewhere is Islam.

ISAAC

No shit it's wrong.

But it doesn't come from Islam.

It comes from *you*.

Islam has no monopoly on fundamentalism. It doesn't come from a text.

AMIR

You don't need to patronize me --

ISAAC

You've been patronizing me this whole conversation.

You don't like organized religion? Fine.

You have a particular antipathy for the one you were born into? Fine.

Maybe you feel a little more strongly about it than most of us because... whatever? Fine.

JORY

Isaac.

ISAAC

But I'm not interested in your *absurd* -- and frankly, more than a little terrifying -- generalizations...

JORY

(firm)

Isaac.

ISAAC

What?

JORY

Stop it.

ISAAC

Okay.

Another tense pause.

AMIR

You're naive.

EMILY

Amir. In the kitchen. Now.

Emily exits.

AMIR

(following her out)

Naive and well-meaning. And you're on a collision course with history.

Amir crosses to the kitchen.

Emily shoots Isaac a look, then follows him out.

ISAAC

I'm naive? What a fucking asshole.

JORY

He's the asshole?

ISAAC

Did you hear him?

JORY

What's gotten into you?

ISAAC

Fucking closet jihadist.

JORY

Will you shut up?

ISAAC

I will never understand what you see in this guy.

JORY

Something's off tonight.

I think maybe he knows.

(off Isaac's look)

About me.

ISAAC

How would he?

JORY

He's mentioned Steven a few times...

I don't know? Maybe Mort told him?

ISAAC

Well. He's going to find out sooner or later.

JORY

I wanted to be the one to tell him.
I owe him that much.

ISAAC

Then you should have told him when it happened.

JORY

I'm under confidentiality.

ISAAC

Well...

JORY

I think I need to tell him.

The kitchen door flies open and Amir comes bounding back, heading for the coats.

Emily appears behind him.

AMIR

(clearly intoxicated)

You come over here with good news. We should be celebrating. It's Emily's night. I'm gonna go get us some champagne.

(off Emily's reaction)

And then we're gonna have a wonderful dinner.

JORY

I'm gonna come with you. Is that okay?

AMIR

Of course.

Amir puts on his coat.

Jory throws on her coat.

Amir looks at Emily.

AMIR (CONT'D)

What?

EMILY

Nothing.

AMIR

Amir pulls open the door.

Both exit.

Emily turns to Isaac.

EMILY

You think I don't know what you're doing?

ISAAC

What am I doing?

EMILY

Isaac, please.

ISAAC

He's a big boy. He can't handle a little push-back?

Emily heads for the side table to pour herself another drink.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You guys get into an argument before we showed up?

EMILY

Why would we get to an argument?

ISAAC

You're married.

EMILY

I don't have the marriage you do.

(beat)

You could have told me about the show over the phone.

ISAAC

I wanted to tell you face to face.

EMILY

This is my home.

Isaac...

London...

Was a mistake...

ISAAC

I don't think you really believe that.

Isaac touches her. She pulls away.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You're in the show now, so that's it?

EMILY

If that's why you're putting me in the show...

ISAAC

Of course not. God.

The whole idea for the show came from you.

Isaac makes another move toward Emily.

Which she doesn't resist at first. Until she pulls away again.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I had no idea your husband was such a mess.
And a fucking alcoholic to boot.

EMILY

He's not an alcoholic. He had a bad day at the office.

ISAAC

Oh. So he knows.

EMILY

Knows?

ISAAC

About Jory?

EMILY

What about Jory?

ISAAC

They're making her partner.

EMILY

Wait, what?

ISAAC

They offered her a partnership. Name on the firm.
Their counter to the offer she got from Credit Suisse.

EMILY

When did this happen?

ISAAC

Last week.

EMILY

Nobody told Amir.

ISAAC

Well, Jory's telling him right now.

EMILY

I don't understand.

ISAAC

There is not a lot to understand. They like her. They don't like him.

EMILY

Mort's like his father.

ISAAC

Mort doesn't wear the pants. Steven does.

EMILY

Amir's been there twice as long as she has.

ISAAC

Well...

EMILY

What?

ISAAC

The whole thing with the Imam?
That Amir represented?

EMILY

He didn't *represent* him.

ISAAC

That's not what the Times said.

EMILY

He went to a hearing.

ISAAC

The paper mentioned the firm and they mentioned Amir
and it looked like he was representing a man who was
raising money for terrorists.

EMILY

That's absurd.

ISAAC

That's not what Steven thought. He went ballistic.

EMILY

He did?

ISAAC

Don't you know this?
Jory said your husband broke down. Was crying at a
staff meeting. And apparently shouted something about
how if the Imam had been a *rabbi*, Steven wouldn't
have cared.
Steven thought the comment was anti-Semitic.

EMILY

I'm sorry, but sometimes you people have a problem.

ISAAC

We people?

EMILY

Jews. You see anti-Semitism everywhere.

ISAAC

You're married to a man who feels a blush when Ahmadinajad talks about wiping Jews into the ocean. Steven is a huge fund-raiser for Netanyahu. I have no idea why Amir would go anywhere near a guy like that Imam.

EMILY

(crushed)

For me. He did it for me.
Oh God.

Pause.

ISAAC

He doesn't understand you. He can't understand you.
He puts you on a pedestal.
It's in your painting.
Study After Velazquez.
He's looking out at the viewer - that viewer is you.
You painted it. He's looking at you.
The expression on that face?
Shame. Anger. Pride.
Yeah. The pride he was talking about.
The slave finally has the master's wife.

EMILY

You're disgusting --

ISAAC

It's the truth, Em. And you know it. You painted it.

Silence.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

If what happened that night in London was a mistake, Em, it's not the last time you're going to make it. A man like that...
You *will* cheat on him again. Maybe not with me, but you will.

EMILY

Isaac.

ISAAC

And then one day you'll leave him.
Em. I'm in love with you.

Isaac leans in to kiss her.

Emily doesn't move. In or out.

Just as the front door opens --

Jory enters. In huff. Returning for Isaac and her things. Ready to leave for the evening --

JORY

Isaac, we need to get out of here --

-- but stopped in place by the moment of intimacy between her husband and Emily.

ISAAC

Honey?

JORY

What the fuck is going on here?

Amir enters, inflamed.

AMIR

You wait a week to tell me this? And the second I say something you don't like hearing, you walk away from me in mid-fucking sentence?
Who are you?!

Jory just stares at her husband...

AMIR (CONT'D)

What?

(looking around)

What?

JORY

(to Emily)

Are you having an affair with my husband?

AMIR

Excuse me?

ISAAC

(to Jory)

Nobody's having an affair.

JORY

I walked in here and they were kissing.

EMILY

That is not true! Amir, it's not true.

JORY

They were kissing.
(pointing)
There.

EMILY

That's not what was happening.

JORY

I know what I saw.

EMILY

Isaac told me about them making you partner. I know how much longer Amir has been there than you. I was upset. I was crying.

ISAAC

I was consoling her.

JORY

By kissing her?

EMILY

(incredulous)

We weren't kissing! Why do you keep saying that?!

JORY

(to Isaac)

Are you having an affair with her? Tell me the truth.

ISAAC

Honey. I already said. We're not having an affair.

JORY

So *what the fuck* were you doing when I walked in here?

ISAAC

(going to his wife)

I was hugging her because she was crying.

JORY

Get off me!

EMILY

I was upset they made you partner.
I know how much longer Amir has been there.
I was crying.

Amir turns to Jory. Vicious.

AMIR

First you steal my job and now you try to destroy my marriage? You're fucking evil. After everything I've done for you?

Jory goes over to get her purse. As if to leave.

JORY

I know what I saw.

AMIR

(exploding)

You have any idea how much of myself I've poured into that place? That closet at the end of the hall? Where they keep the cleaning supplies? That was my first office!

Yours had a view of the fucking park!

Your first three years? Were you ever at work before anyone else in the morning?

Were you ever the last one to leave?

Cause if you were, I didn't see it.

I *still* leave the office after you do!

You think you're the nigger here?

I'm the nigger!! Me!!

ISAAC

(going to his wife)

You don't need to listen to anymore out of this asshole.

JORY

(to Isaac)

Don't touch me.

AMIR

(to Isaac)

You're the asshole.

ISAAC

You better shut your mouth, buddy!

AMIR

(to Isaac)

Or what?!

ISAAC

Or I'll knock you on your *fucking* ass!

AMIR

Try me!

JORY
(to Isaac)

GET OFF ME!!

Inflamed, Isaac finally releases his wife, facing off with Amir.

When suddenly...

....Amir SPITS in Isaac's face.

Isaac wipes the spit from his face.

ISAAC
There's a reason they call you people animals.

Isaac turns to his wife.

Then turns to Emily.

Then walks out.

JORY
(collecting her things)
There's something you should know.
(at the door)
Your dear friend Mort is retiring.
And guess who's taking over his case load? Not you.
Me.
I asked him, *Why not Amir?*
He said something about you being duplicitous.
That it's why you're such a good litigator. But that
it's impossible to trust you.
(at the door)
Don't believe me?
Call Mort. Ask him yourself.
Let me guess.
He hasn't been taking your calls?

Jory walks out.

Pause.

EMILY
Have you lost your fucking mind?!

Amir turns away, withdrawing into himself. Pacing. The inward spiral deepening.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Amir!

AMIR

She's right. He hasn't been taking my calls.

EMILY

I'm gonna get you that coffee.

Emily heads for the kitchen...

Leaving Amir on stage by himself for a moment. As he watches the swinging door sway. Back and forth.

Emily returns. A mug in hand.

AMIR

Em.

Something in Amir's tone -- vulnerable, intense -- stops her in place.

AMIR (CONT'D)

Are you sleeping with him?

Pause.

Emily puts the mug down on the table.

Beat. Finally shakes her head.

EMILY

It was in London. When I was at Frieze.
We were drinking. It's not an excuse...
It's just...
We'd just been to the Victoria & Albert. He was
talking about my work.
And...

Emily -- seeing how her words are landing
on her husband -- makes her way to him.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(approaching)

Amir, I'm so disgusted with myself. If I could take
it back.

All at once -- Amir hits Emily in the
face. A vicious blow.

The first blow unleashes a torrent of
rage, overtaking him. He hits her twice
more. Maybe a third. In rapid succession.

Uncontrolled violence as brutal as it needs to be in order to convey the discharge of a lifetime of discreetly building resentment.

After the last blow, Amir suddenly comes to his senses, realizing what he's done.

Emily drags herself out from behind the couch. Upstage. Blood trickling from her mouth.

AMIR

Oh my God...

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE FOUR.

The same apartment.

Six months later.

The dining table, a couple of chairs.

Much of the furniture gone. The rest of the room covered with the detritus of moving. Boxes. Etc.

The paintings above the mantle are gone.

As the lights come up, the stage is empty for a few beats.

(The audience will need a moment to process the end of the last scene. Music in this transition can help, a contemplative, perhaps even purifying, sonic landscape. Something like Gorecki, or Taverner, perhaps with Eastern flourishes.)

Finally, we hear sounds at the door. Keys, etc. And then:

Abe. Followed by Amir.

Abe sees the boxes.

AMIR

Yeah.

(beat)

You want something?

Abe shakes his head.

AMIR (CONT'D)

They didn't give you anything to eat?

ABE

Water.

AMIR

That's it?

ABE

No, I mean, could I get a glass of water?

AMIR

Sure.

Amir heads off to the kitchen. Returns with a glass of water.

Hands Abe the drink. As his phone buzzes with a text. Amir reads it.

AMIR (CONT'D)

Ken says he's actually gonna come over.

ABE

You're moving?

AMIR

I guess he figures he owes me. Since I've been helping him with Imam Fareed's case.

ABE

You have?

AMIR

Yeah.

ABE

Since when?

AMIR

Been a few months.

ABE

Why?

AMIR

(with a shrug)

Can we talk about what happened?

ABE

Yeah. Just, please. Don't tell Mom? You're the only person I could call. She's gonna freak out.

AMIR

I understand.

ABE

So Tariq and I were in Starbucks --

AMIR

Tariq? Is that the guy...?

ABE

My parents are wrong about him...

AMIR

Okay.

ABE

So we're in Starbucks -- and look, I know it's gonna make it seem like my folks are right. But they're not -- this blonde barista was on break, and Tariq starts a conversation. I can tell he thinks he's got a shot... I mean he always thinks he's got a shot. So somehow it becomes about our *kufi* hats and are we Muslims. I can tell she's not into him, but he isn't getting the message. She asks him, *How do we feel about Al-Qaeda?* So Tariq tells her. That Americans are the ones who created Al-Qaeda.

(off Amir's look)

You don't believe me?

The CIA trained the mujahideen in Afghanistan. Those are the guys that became Al-Qaeda.

AMIR

It's a little bit more complicated than that.

ABE

Not really. That's the truth. He was just telling the truth.

AMIR

What did she say?

ABE

She gets snippy. And Tariq gets pissed. And then he tells her this country deserved what it got and what it was going to get.

AMIR

I see.

ABE

She goes back to work, and before we know it, the police are there. She called them. They cuffed us. They took us in. Two guys from the FBI were waiting at the station.

AMIR

What did they ask you?

ABE

Did we believe in Jihad? Do we have girlfriends? Did we want to blow stuff up? Did I watch porn? How often did I read the *Koran*? Had I ever had sex? Do I hate America?

AMIR

Okay.

ABE

They knew a lot about me. Where I'd gone to school. About Mom and Dad, where they were born. It was like they already had a file or something. They brought up my immigration status.

AMIR

What'd they say?

ABE

That they knew my green card was up for renewal. When they said that...

(hesitating)

...I laughed.

AMIR

You laughed.

ABE

I didn't mean to. It just happened.

AMIR

Were you trying to antagonize them?

ABE

No.

I mean...

(pause)

Look. I know what they're doing.

AMIR

What are they doing?

ABE

They're going into our community and looking for people whose immigration status is vulnerable. Then they push us to start doing stuff for them.

AMIR

You need to be smarter...

ABE

You don't believe that either?

AMIR

I didn't say that.

ABE

Tariq told me about his cousin --

AMIR

(cutting him off)

When you step out of your parents' house, you need to know that it's not neutral world out there.

(MORE)

AMIR (CONT'D)

Not right now. Not for you. So you need to be mindful about sending a different message.

ABE

Than?

AMIR

Than the one that landed you in an interrogation with the FBI.

Pause.

ABE

What do I do now?

AMIR

Let's hear what Ken has to say. I mean it's not good. But at least they let you go.

ABE

If they tell me that I have to go into our mosque and pretend I'm planning some bullshit attack just to stay in this country --

AMIR

You don't know that's what's going to happen.

ABE

If you spent anytime with your own people...

AMIR

Excuse me?

ABE

What would you do? If the FBI asked you to work for them? Hmm?

AMIR

This is completely hypothetical...

ABE

(cutting him off)

What would you do?

AMIR

(considering)

There are ways... to let the authorities know that... you're on their side...

ABE

I'm not on their side.

AMIR

You better be. Because they make the rules.

ABE

Make the rules? Wow.
This was a mistake. I shouldn't have called.

AMIR

(suddenly)

No. You should've called me. Because we're family.

ABE

Then say something useful.

AMIR

Okay, fine:
If you don't take this seriously, you are going to
get deported.

Pause.

ABE

Maybe that wouldn't be the worst thing.

AMIR

To a country you haven't known since you were eight
years old.

ABE

Maybe that's the problem. Maybe we never should've
left. Maybe we never should have come to this one.

AMIR

There's a reason your father came here. Same reason
my father did. They wanted to make a better life for
themselves and their families.

ABE

(over)

A better life?!?

AMIR

(continuing)

And to do it honestly. Which isn't an option in
Pakistan.

ABE

(exploding)

You don't have a better life!

Abe's sudden intensity is shocking to
Amir, and likely to us as well. The
release of months of pent-up frustration
with his uncle.

ABE (CONT'D)

You think I'm an idiot?!
You think I believe that stupid story you told me
about leaving your job and Emily? Because you needed
to *make a change*?

AMIR

I don't know what you think you know --

ABE

(interrupting)

I know you were fired.
I know she left you.
I know what you did to her.

AMIR

I'm still your Uncle. Show me a little respect.

ABE

You're not one of them! And you never will be!

AMIR

(moving away)

This conversation is over.

ABE

You think the Prophet would be trying to be like one
of them? He didn't conquer the world by copying other
people. He made the world copy him.

AMIR

Conquer the world?

ABE

(defiant)

That's what *they've* done.
They've conquered the world.
We're gonna get it back someday.
That's our destiny. It's in the Quran.

(beat)

I don't expect you to understand. You've forgotten
who you are.

AMIR

Really? *Abe Jensen*?!

ABE

I changed it back!

AMIR

So now you think running around with a *kufi* on your
head, shooting your off mouth in Starbucks, sitting
in a mosque and bemoaning the plight of Muslims
around the world is going to --

ABE

(interrupting)

It's disgusting. The one thing I can be sure about with you? You'll always turn on your own people. What do you think that gets you? You think it makes these people like you more when you do that? They don't. They just think you hate yourself. And they're right! You do!

(pause)

I looked up to you.
You have no idea --

AMIR

I know you did.

ABE

No! You have no idea what it did to me.
I mean if you can't make it with them?

(pause)

For three hundred years they've been coming to our part of the world. Taking our land, drawing new borders, replacing our laws, making us want be like them. Look like them. Marry their women. They disgraced us. They disgraced us. And then they pretend they don't understand the rage we've got?

Rough silence.

Just as...

There's a knocking at the door.

Amir and Abe exchange a look.

AMIR

I guess the doorman must have let Ken up...

Amir heads for the door. Opening.

To find EMILY.

Her hair pulled back. Looking pale,
dressed in a black cashmere overcoat.

She is holding a canvas.

AMIR (CONT'D)

Em.

Emily steps inside. Her eyes meeting
Abe's...

Beat.

Emily?
ABE

Hi.
EMILY

Hi.
ABE

Moved, Abe goes to her. And hugs her.

A long hug. Emily filled with emotion.

Abe releases her.

Looks back at his uncle. Heads for the door.

I should go.
ABE (CONT'D)

Stay.
AMIR
(reaching out)

Abe exits to the other room.

Emily steps inside...

Long pause. The two of them looking at each other.

You're packing. I didn't realize...
EMILY
(pointing at the boxes)

I told your lawyer I wanted you to have the place. I mean I wrote you that, but you haven't written me back.
AMIR

The apartment's not mine, Amir.
EMILY
(beat, then indicating the painting)
I don't want to throw it out. I figured you should have it. It's the portrait.

How are you?
AMIR

Fine.
EMILY

AMIR

I saw the notice for your show. I was so proud of you.

EMILY

You saw a notice?

AMIR

The announcement. Online.

EMILY

Oh.

Pause.

AMIR

I don't know if you've read any of my letters... -
There's a lot you were right about me.
I'm finally seeing what you were seeing.
I'm finally understanding your work.

EMILY

My work was naive, Amir.

AMIR

No it wasn't. Why are you saying that?

EMILY

Because it's true.

AMIR

God.
If you had any idea how sorry I am.

EMILY

I know.

(pause)

Amir...

I...

I had a part in what happened.

AMIR

Em, no...

EMILY

I need to say this.

(beat)

I don't think I realized what I was doing.

I mean...

There's you. And then there's what I wanted to see
through you.

AMIR

Em...

EMILY

(continuing)

I cared so much about my work.
It made me blind. It was selfish.

Pause.

Finally, Amir takes a step toward her.
But when he does, Emily recoils, her body
responding before she even realizes it.

The trauma of that night still very much
present. Between them.

Abe appears in the hall. Watching,
listening. Visible to us. But not to
Emily or Amir.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Don't.

Long pause.

AMIR

I just want you to be proud of me.
I want you to be proud you were with me.

Emily suddenly shifts.

EMILY

Good-bye, Amir.
Please don't write me anymore.

She exits.

Once she's gone, Amir cries.

We watch him cry. When his tears run
their course, Amir wipes his eyes. He
notices the painting.

He walks over to it, picks it up. Then
tears the wrapping off.

Looking at the painting, he walks over
with the canvas and places it on the
mantle.

For the first time, WE SEE the painting
discussed earlier:

Study After Velazquez's Moor. A portrait
of Amir.

Amir considers the painting for a long moment.

LIGHTS OUT.