

PRAYER FOR THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

A Play by Joshua Harmon

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"If 100,000 Frenchmen of Spanish origin were to leave, I would never say that France is no longer France. But if 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure."

-Manuel Valls, Prime Minister of France, in January 2015, just after the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the Kosher Supermarket

CHARACTERS

(2016-2017)

Marcelle Salomon Benhamou, 50's
Charles Benhamou, 50's, Marcelle's husband
Elodie Benhamou, 28, their daughter
Daniel Benhamou, 26, their son
Patrick Salomon, 50's, Marcelle's brother
Molly, 20, a distant American cousin
Pierre Salomon, 80's, Marcelle & Patrick's father

(1944-1946)

Irma Salomon, 70's, Pierre's grandmother
Adolphe Salomon, 70's, Pierre's grandfather
Lucien Salomon, 40's, Pierre's father
Young Pierre Salomon, at age 15

ACT ONE

A lone piano, on stage.

In the dark, we hear an instrumental version of La Marseillaise, the French national anthem.

Patrick enters near the front of the stage. He takes in the piano for a bit, then turns to us.

PATRICK

My father owns a piano store, on Rue du Faubourg Montmartre. He's the fifth-- and last-- generation to run the place. Pianos Salomon-- that's our family name, Salomon-- was founded by my great-great-great grandfather in 1855. Owning a piano used to be something you strived for, a sign you'd made it to the middle-class, but it doesn't hold the same appeal anymore. Most days my father sits in an empty store, an old man waiting for customers who almost never show. He's in his late eighties, but he won't give the place up.

Sometimes, a friend will ask how come my sister and I don't take over the business. Five generations! All that history! Think of what the store has seen-- and survived! But it's not how either of us want to spend our time, and besides, you can't support a family selling pianos, not really.

This is a Salomon original. Our name's on the fallboard. They used to manufacture them, Papa only sells them now. This one belongs to Marcelle...

I'd say let's start at the beginning, but what's the beginning of a family? We've been in France more than a thousand years. So let's start here: it's early fall. It's late afternoon, sixteen years into the 21st century. My sister's welcoming a distant American cousin of ours into her home, in the heart of Paris.

Marcelle enters with Molly, and approaches the piano, as Patrick disappears into the darkness.

MARCELLE

So my great-grandmother, Irma, was sisters with your great-great grandmother, Lucie. They were born in the east, in Strasbourg, then moved west, to remain French, when Alsace Lorraine became German for about 50 years. Then Lucie left

France, and went to America, but she stayed in touch, very close, with her sister Irma, and then Lucie had a daughter in New York, whose name escapes me but who is your great-grandmother, and Irma had a son in Lille, named Lucien, who was my grandfather, and they were cousins, and then your grandmother Renee was born, and my grandfather had Pierre, who is my father, and so I am cousins with your mother, and you are cousins with my children.

MOLLY

Right.

Quick beat

Say that again?

MARCELLE

We'll go backwards. You are cousins with my children. I am cousins with your mother.

MOLLY

Right.

MARCELLE

My father is Pierre, your grandmother is Renee, and they are cousins.

MOLLY

Ok.

MARCELLE

And their grandmothers were Irma and Lucie, and they were sisters. That's the connection.

MOLLY

In Strasbourg.

MARCELLE

First Strasbourg, then Lille, then Paris. You follow me?

MOLLY

Yes. No. Sort of.

MARCELLE

The details are not important.

MOLLY

Basically, we're cousins.

MARCELLE

We're cousins.

MOLLY

But not first cousins?

MARCELLE

No. No. Uh... I don't know how it works, exactly? Third cousins? Fourth? It's distant, but...

MOLLY

Yeah I don't really get the whole cousin thing.

MARCELLE

We share blood. We both descend from the man who founded Pianos Salomon. See? That's our name there.

Marcelle points out their name on the fallboard.

This was my great-grandmother's.

MOLLY

I thought your name was uhm, Ben, Ben uhm...

MARCELLE

Benhamou, yes, that's my married name, my maiden name is Salomon.

MOLLY

Uh huh.

MARCELLE

I can try to explain it in English, if you prefer--

MOLLY

No, please. Just French. I'm trying, I want to get as fluent as I can.

MARCELLE

You speak very well, I have to say.

MOLLY

Thank you. I feel like, I have such a long way to go, but--

MARCELLE

No, your French is very good.

MOLLY

Thank you. In school, they made us choose: French or Spanish, but my Mom was like, "There's no choice in this family: you're taking French." Everyone still fancies themselves, uhm, very French, even though no one on my side of the family has been, uh, French for, uh, a hundred years.

MARCELLE

And you're here for a year?

MOLLY

A school year, yeah.

MARCELLE

In Nantes?

MOLLY

Yeah. It's like, two hours from here, by train?

MARCELLE

I know where Nantes is.

MOLLY

Right. Of course. Sorry.

MARCELLE

You didn't want to study in Paris?

MOLLY

I did but my school-- they don't really encourage it.

MARCELLE

Why not?

MOLLY

I think they're trying to break the whole entitled Americans in Paris thing. My parents didn't want me to come to France at all, but...

MARCELLE

Why not?

MOLLY

Just cause of all the, you know. The terrorism.

MARCELLE

There's terrorism everywhere.

MOLLY

That's what I said, but they were scared.

MARCELLE

Aren't you from New York? What's to be scared?

MOLLY

I agree.

MARCELLE

The whole world has terrorism now. There's nowhere to hide. Either you live in the world, or you live in a cave. Personally, I don't want to be a caveman.

MOLLY

Exactly. But, they felt better if I was in a smaller city. And it's nice, totally ni... My host family is kind of... uhm, what's the word I want? They're not racist, but...

MARCELLE

Uh huh.

MOLLY

They're not *not* racist. But, at the same time, I have to live with them for a year, so I need to just...

So my Mom said, why don't you visit our family in Paris, which, I didn't really know we had, I knew my Nana wrote letters to France, I guess to your mother, right?

MARCELLE

No. To Philippe and Francine.

MOLLY

Oh.

MARCELLE

My father's cousins. They got out before the war.

MOLLY

Oh ok.

MARCELLE

But Francine is dead. And Philippe's in Switzerland now, most of the time, so he asked if I would--

MOLLY

But you stayed in France, during the war?

MARCELLE

I was not born before World War II.

MOLLY

Oh.

MARCELLE

I'm not *that* old.

MOLLY

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't--

MARCELLE

But yes, my family stayed.

MOLLY

Wow. It's so... it's unbelievable, to have French family.

MARCELLE

Ok.

In the hallway behind them, Elodie walks past, from her bedroom to the bathroom. She looks like she's been asleep for a thousand years, disheveled and exhausted. Molly sees her, Marcelle does too, but says nothing.

MARCELLE

So you will make yourself at home. Come and go as you please this weekend.

MOLLY

Thank you.

MARCELLE

I'm not usually home this early, but I'm moving offices, and they're painting today, so...

MOLLY

What do you do?

MARCELLE

I'm a doctor, now a professor, and after three completely inept department heads, they finally, finally realized, "Oh. Maybe a woman can run this department." Hence, the new office.

MOLLY

Congratulations.

MARCELLE

Thank you. So you will have dinner with us tonight?

MOLLY

Sure, yes, thank you.

MARCELLE

We are not strict here, but traditional, so...

MOLLY

I don't... I don't follow.

MARCELLE

We're traditional. You know. We light the candles, Shabbat dinner, you know.

MOLLY

I still don't...

MARCELLE

Shabbat. You don't understand me. Shabbat?

MOLLY

Do you mean, like, *Shabbat*?

MARCELLE

Yes. Shabbat.

MOLLY

Ohhhh. Ok.

MARCELLE

Do you keep Shabbat?

MOLLY

Uhm, no, no I don't. But I'm not really, you know...

MARCELLE

Not what?

MOLLY

I wasn't, I mean, I wasn't raised with any religion...

MARCELLE

But you're Jewish, no?

MOLLY

I guess technically? But I don't believe in organized religion, I actually think if we could, uhm, end all religions immediately we *might* have a chance at saving our planet but I, I *totally* respect if you want to. Believe. It's just, not for me.

Beat

MARCELLE

Well. Welcome.

Elodie walks past the room, slowly.

Elodie? You want to say hello to our American cousin? This is Molly.

ELODIE

Hello.

Elodie exits.

MOLLY

Nice to meet you!

Beat.

MARCELLE

Elodie is quite... tired.

MOLLY

Yeah.

MARCELLE

She's not-- very tired.

MOLLY

It's such a pretty name, Elodie.

MARCELLE

Yes, it is. Excuse me a moment, I need to check on dinner.

MOLLY

Ok. So, is there, uhm-- am I ok, to come to, whatever, like this?

MARCELLE

Yes, you're dressed fine. It's just dinner, here. Just us. We're just traditional.

MOLLY

Right.

What does that mean?

MARCELLE

We keep the traditions. My son is a little more religious, but we-- I myself, my brother and I were raised almost with nothing. But, this is to be expected, after the war, many Jews just...

Marcelle makes a quick gesture with her hands, indicating that they gave it up.

Then I met my husband. I wasn't looking for a Jewish husband, this was irrelevant for me at the time, but we met, we fell in love, despite our differences, and--

MOLLY

Differences?

MARCELLE

Well he is Sephardic, he comes from-- his family is from Algeria.

MOLLY

Really!

MARCELLE

Yes, really.

MOLLY

That's interesting.

MARCELLE

Most Jews in France today, the vast majority, their roots are Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan. It's very common.

MOLLY

I didn't know that.

MARCELLE

Yes.

MOLLY

Why is that?

MARCELLE

They came in the 60's.

MOLLY

Why?

MARCELLE

Because. It stopped being safe.

Many, many centuries they lived there, and then...

Quick beat

Anyway. The sofa is very comfortable, no one complains.

MOLLY

It's great. I'm already, so comfortable.

MARCELLE

I'm sorry I don't have a spare bedroom to offer but--

MOLLY

This is fine!

MARCELLE

I did not think, at this point in my life I would still have a full house, but--

MOLLY

This is fine. This is-- Thank you.

Marcelle exits into the kitchen. Molly is alone. She takes in the room, then approaches the piano again, and maybe touches it.

After a moment, the front door opens offstage.

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Marcelle?

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

I'm in the kitchen.

Charles enters, sees Molly, but ignores her and exits into the kitchen. We hear him and Marcelle speaking offstage.

Then, Daniel appears. He wears a kippah. He is bloodied. Dried blood on his shirt collar, dried blood coming out of his nose. He looks at Molly. She looks at him. They say nothing.

Marcelle and Charles burst out of the kitchen.

MARCELLE

Oh my god! Daniel what happened--

DANIEL

I'm fine, I'm--

MARCELLE

What happened? Look at you.

CHARLES

He got beat up.

MARCELLE

You were what?

CHARLES

I just saw him outside, stumbling into the apartment.

MARCELLE

This happened outside?

DANIEL

No, in Sarcelles. I'm ok.

MARCELLE

Are you ok?

DANIEL

I'm ok.

MARCELLE

What did the police do?

DANIEL

I didn't, I didn't see the police.

MARCELLE

You didn't go to the police?

DANIEL

No--

MARCELLE

Call the police.

DANIEL

No! Don't call the police.

MARCELLE

I'm calling the police!

DANIEL

DO NOT call the police. No. I don't want to--

MARCELLE

Why can't we call the police?

DANIEL

Because Mom, not now. I just need to--

Elodie emerges.

MARCELLE

Who did this to you?

CHARLES

Who do you think!

ELODIE

What's happening?

MARCELLE

Your brother got beat up.

ELODIE

What?

DANIEL

They just roughed me up a little.

MARCELLE

This is what we call roughed up? Did they break your nose?

DANIEL

Ow.

MARCELLE

Let's go to the hospital.

CHARLES

Let me look at him.

MARCELLE

But don't you think we should take him to the hospital?

CHARLES

Let me look at him.

MARCELLE

He may have broken his nose we need to go to the hospital--

DANIEL

I don't need to go to the hospital, nothing's broken I--

CHARLES

Sit down, let me see, let me take a look.

MARCELLE

Wait, not on the sofa you're all bloody.

CHARLES

Not on the sofa! Who cares about the sofa!

MARCELLE

Because not on the sofa!

CHARLES

Oh for God's sake, fine, let's go to the bathroom.

Charles, Marcelle, Daniel and Elodie walk down the hall to the bathroom, which is just off-stage. We hear everything. Molly stays in the living room, watching, unsure of what to do.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

How do you know you don't need to go to the hospital?

DANIEL

(o.s.)

Because I didn't break anything.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

How do you know?

DANIEL

(o.s.)

I can tell.

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Marcelle, can I take a look at him?

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

You're not an orthopedic surgeon.

CHARLES

(o.s.)

I'm a doctor.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

So am I!

CHARLES

(o.s.)

You're a psychiatrist, can I take a look at him?

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

So take a look at him! Who's stopping you?

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Sit down, son. Can you sit?

DANIEL
(o.s.)

Yeah I can sit.

ELODIE
(o.s.)

What happened?

DANIEL
(o.s.)

I was leaving school, I was walking to the metro, these three guys came up and started saying, "Hey Jew, fuckin Jew," things like that. I didn't say anything but they kept following me and then before I knew what was happening they started-- Because I don't want to wear a baseball cap I--

CHARLES
(o.s.)

Sit still stop moving.

DANIEL
(o.s.)

I'm not going to change my behavior because there are bigots in the world, I'm not--

CHARLES
(o.s.)
Sit still.

MARCELLE
(o.s.)

How many times have I begged you to wear a baseball cap? Why do you do this, why do you insist on putting yourself in harm's way for no reason! There's no reason!

MARCELLE
(o.s.)
Listen to yourself! Are you even listening to yourself, what you're saying!

ELODIE
(o.s.)

Can you let him finish? What happened?

DANIEL
(o.s.)

They followed me, they grabbed me, they punched me, a few times.

MARCELLE
(o.s.)

A few times!

DANIEL

(o.s.)

A few times. That was it.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

That was it!

DANIEL

(o.s.)

It really wasn't a big deal--

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

Not a big deal! No, it's perfectly normal to get punched in the face on a Friday afternoon, walking to the metro, that's perfectly normal--

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Does that hurt?

DANIEL

(o.s.)

No, I told you, I'm fine--

CHARLES

(o.s.)

How about that? How's that feel?

DANIEL

(o.s.)

It's sore when you press on it, but--

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

Sore! Oh my god!

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Marcelle you need to relax or I'm going to...

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

Going to what?

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Just, calm down.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

Ok fine! I'll calm down! I'll calm down! Great! Fine! Fine!
Great! I'm calming down! Let's all calm down while my son
bleeds to death in the bathroom.

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Marcelle.

Let's make a little space. Take a step back. Ok?

*Marcelle and Elodie become visible now in the
hallway, as they inch away from the bathroom.*

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Nothing seems broken to me.

DANIEL

(o.s.)

I know.

A beat.

MARCELLE

I'm gonna call the police.

DANIEL

(o.s.)

Mom! Stop!

ELODIE

Why should she stop?

MARCELLE

Why should I stop? Reporting a crime, is a crime now?

DANIEL

(o.s.)

I didn't even get a good look at them, it happened so fast.

MARCELLE

This never happened until you started dressing like this. You never had a problem before. You went out, wherever you went, no problem. I don't understand why you have to go out dressed like this--

CHARLES

(o.s.)

Stop yelling at the boy--

MARCELLE

You put a huge target on your back! Here I am! Here I am! Now is not the moment to walk around with a sign that says "Here I Am" on your back it's not the time!

DANIEL

(o.s.)

The sun is setting.

MARCELLE

Now is not the-- what?

DANIEL

(o.s.)

The sun is setting.

MARCELLE

This is what you're worried about? Lighting candles. Not the police, not the target on your back-- candles!

They all return to the living room.

DANIEL

Mom. Please.

MARCELLE

You're covered in blood.

DANIEL

I'm not covered--

MARCELLE

You're covered--

CHARLES

He's ok. He didn't break anything. It's just a little--

DANIEL

Everyone! Enough! Please. Can we please light the candles before the sun goes down? Please?

A beat. Then Marcelle gets two candles, in silver candlesticks, and puts them on the piano. She takes some matches. The others stand to the side.

CHARLES

Are you Marcelle's cousin?

MOLLY

Hi, yes, I'm Molly?

CHARLES

Welcome.

MOLLY

Thanks.

Marcelle puts a napkin over her head, then lights the two candles. The family gathers closer, but no one is touching. There is space between them. It's uncomfortable. Molly stands to the side.

MARCELLE

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.

Marcelle moves her hands over the candles, her eyes still closed. Then she looks up at her son, takes him in for a moment.

CHARLES

Gut shabbes.

MARCELLE

Breathless

Yeah.

No one knows what to do. Marcelle is staring at her son. Then she grabs him and pulls him close. He holds onto her.

MARCELLE

You must have been so scared.

He half-nods. She takes his face in her hands.

Let me call the police, ok?

DANIEL

Mom. No.

MARCELLE

But sweetie, why?

DANIEL

Because.

MARCELLE

Because why?

DANIEL

Because I don't want-- I've seen what happens-- Everyone... you're not just a person anymore, you become this thing, who's been through something. Even if it's not...

My students are already on edge. I don't want to be the reason they feel even more insecure. And besides.

I really didn't get a good look. I wouldn't even be able to describe them. So they'd write it up, it'd be in the news, and then it's all anyone would talk about but that's not what I... and then even then, after all that, it wouldn't change a thing, so there's no point.

MARCELLE

But you don't think, it's important, for them to keep track of things like this?

DANIEL

I'm not doing it. So.

CHARLES

Do you want to-- does he have time to get cleaned up, before dinner?

MARCELLE

He has time of course he has--

CHARLES

Do you want to take a shower, wash off? I think you'll feel better.

DANIEL

Yeah. Ok.

MARCELLE

That's a good idea.

DANIEL

But honestly? And I mean this... I'm done talking about this tonight. Ok?

Daniel waits a second for someone to agree. But no one does. He exits.

Beat

MARCELLE

We have to talk to him, we have to talk to him tonight, this stops now, this stops tonight--

CHARLES

Maybe this isn't the moment to have this conversation--

MARCELLE

We need to put a stop to this Right Now.

CHARLES

I think it can wait, Marcelle--

MARCELLE

You wait I'm talking to him tonight, we are talking to him tonight.

CHARLES

He's a grown man, we can't make him do something he doesn't want to do--

MARCELLE

He wants to dress like a maniac? In the house, be my guest. But when he goes outside, it stops.

CHARLES

And how do you propose we enforce that? He's 26 years old--

MARCELLE

We just do! Then he can't live here if he's going to... Where is his-- Why can't he be private? Religion is not

something to advertise, that's not how we-- He wasn't raised that way, he--

ELODIE

Don't you think it's a problem, that a person can't go outside wearing something on his head for fear of being attacked?

MARCELLE

Of course it's a problem but you don't solve a problem by exacerbating a problem that's not how you solve a problem.

ELODIE

So how do you propose solving this problem?

MARCELLE

And you certainly don't do it in neighborhoods where you know there's a high risk of being attacked. Then you're just asking for it.

ELODIE

Oh so Daniel's asking for it now? Is that seriously your argument? He's asking for it?

MARCELLE

Elodie, I am so not in the mood for your *shit* tonight--

CHARLES

Let's all just stop it please! Just stop it! I can't even think. Please.

Beat.

Let's get dinner on the table, ok? Let's have dinner.

Beat

Let's have-- Let's have dinner.

But no one moves.

MOLLY

I-- I don't know if I mentioned, I'm a vegetarian?

The lights fade on the Benhamous and come up on Patrick, at the lip of the stage.

PATRICK

More than seventy years earlier, in 1944, on the other side of Paris, in a modest apartment on the Boulevard Beaumarchais, an elderly couple sit down to a meal.

Irma and Adolphe enter, and sit at a dining room table. Adolphe is nearly blind.

These are my great-grandparents. Their names are Irma and Adolphe. It's their piano Marcelle inherited. Which is fine. I'm not bitter.

The story goes, the SS sent someone to arrest them, but their building's super grabbed him and said, "What are you doing, it's old people, leave them alone." And he did. He left, and Irma and Adolphe spent the war in their apartment in Paris, untouched.

They have three grown children. Jacqueline got out with her family before the war and fled to Cuba. But Robert was arrested in '42, Lucien in '43, along with his wife and three children.

There's no mail service, no telegrams, no phone calls. For the last year, Irma and Adolphe haven't heard a word about their children. They know nothing.

And I know almost nothing about them. I didn't ask questions as a kid. I know just a handful of details: They were first cousins-- people married their cousins in those days. I know Adolphe was nearly blind, and Irma had won first prize at a piano conservatory when she was young. I know they'd tried to make it in America, but couldn't scrounge up any work, so they'd come back to France and took over the family business.

But these are just facts. What were they like, as people? Papa had just one anecdote: When he was little, Irma would butter his bread, then scrape her knife against his piece of bread to get butter for hers. She'd survived World War I, the Great Depression. She'd learned to economize.

Irma has been buttering bread for Adolphe. She scrapes her knife against it, takes butter for her own, then puts Adolphe's slice on his plate.

And this stayed with me for a long time. To think-- all anyone remembers when you're gone is this tiny gesture, this trick you taught yourself, when you were one small person facing the giant forces of history. War, Depression, and this woman who'd been a prize winning pianist figures out how to make butter last longer.

What did they talk about? I have to imagine it was hard not to talk about their children, their grandchildren...

IRMA

We don't talk about our children that much.

ADOLPHE

Oh?

IRMA

We don't.

ADOLPHE

Irma.

IRMA

What?

ADOLPHE

That's not entirely the truth.

IRMA

Well, of course, I talk about them sometimes. They're my children.

PATRICK

Where do you think they are?

IRMA

Somewhere safe, I hope.

ADOLPHE

We don't know, we really don't.

IRMA

Jacqueline and her family went to Cuba, before they stopped letting people out. Of course, Max begged Lucien to go with them--

ADOLPHE

Irma, don't--

IRMA

I'm just explaining, because Lucien had the piano business, his money was all in those pianos, he couldn't just leave but if he had gone to Cuba when they begged him--

ADOLPHE

I can't rehash this again, I can't--

Somehow in these lines, Patrick disappears, and we are just with Irma and Adolphe, in the past.

IRMA

Because they begged him, Jacqueline begged him--

ADOLPHE

Irma--

IRMA

Max said he could get them visas, Max said he could--

ADOLPHE

Irma please.

IRMA

If they had gone to Cuba, they'd be celebrating Pierre's-- you know it's his fourteenth birthday today-- they'd be celebrating at... maybe at the beach! Maybe at the beach!

ADOLPHE

Please stop, darling. Please.

IRMA

Maybe in the ocean! Doesn't that sound marvelous? To turn fourteen in the ocean, in Cuba? Then they could all get together, the whole family, all the cousins and have birthday cake with Pierre. In Havana.

ADOLPHE

Even when they all lived in Paris they didn't celebrate birthdays together.

IRMA

Sometimes they did.

ADOLPHE

They never did. They fought too much. And I assure you: if they were in Havana, they would be fighting still.

IRMA

You don't know that.

ADOLPHE

I know.

IRMA

It was an idea.

ADOLPHE

It's a fantasy.

IRMA

So what?

ADOLPHE

Alright.

IRMA

They won't forget to celebrate his birthday, will they?

ADOLPHE

I know as much as you.

IRMA

But what are they doing for his birthday?

ADOLPHE

I don't know!

IRMA

But how are they celebrating?

ADOLPHE

I don't know how they're celebrating!

IRMA

Fine! Forget it.

ADOLPHE

I don't know where they are!

IRMA

I said, forget it.

ADOLPHE

For all I know--

IRMA

Forget! It!

Irma gets up, puts something away, and begins to exit, when Adolphe speaks.

ADOLPHE

They are in a small apartment, somewhere in the mountains.

Irma stops to listen.

After they were arrested, they spent a few nights in Paris, then they got away and went to the mountains. Somewhere safe. That's where they are.

IRMA

In the mountains.

ADOLPHE

Yes. It's very beautiful where they are. And Lucien's found work tuning pianos.

IRMA

He has?

ADOLPHE

Yes. He tunes pianos. There's a music school nearby, so he has a lot of work. And the school even has a few Salomon pianos, so he goes to work, he tunes the pianos, he sees our name and thinks of us, and all our stores all over France.

IRMA

Twenty-two stores, Adolphe.

ADOLPHE

Twenty-two stores. And as he tunes them, he thinks about how one day, he will teach his son to run the stores, then Pierre will take over and the stores will go on forever.

IRMA

They will.

ADOLPHE

And Eva has taken in some sewing, so between the two of them, they're getting by. It's cold in the mountains, but they're fine. And the children are in school, they're doing well, even Colette.

IRMA

Ok, that I don't believe. Colette's sweet but... (*unspoken: not that bright*).

ADOLPHE

Well, she's taking her studies seriously, for once. And this morning Pierre woke in their apartment in the mountains and turned fourteen. Eva saved her rations to bake him a cake, it isn't very sweet, there isn't much sugar, but he has a cake, and Lucien bought him a Swiss Army knife so that when he's in the woods hiking with his friends if he needs to cut through a rope or whatever boys do at that age, he will have a little knife in his pocket he can take out.

IRMA

And Robert is... Robert is alright too.

ADOLPHE

He's alright. He's... working for France. Making buttons.

IRMA

Buttons?

ADOLPHE

When the war is over, France will give him a medal.

IRMA

They already gave him a medal, for the Great War.

ADOLPHE

Well now he will have two. And our children will come home, we'll all be together, and everyone will get along beautifully.

Quick beat. They both laugh.

IRMA

That's funny.

ADOLPHE

It's your fantasy...

IRMA

No, they'll come home, after about ten minutes they'll start arguing, and I'll yell, "Robert! Please! You haven't seen your brother in four years!"

ADOLPHE

He'll accuse you of always taking Lucien's side.

IRMA

I do not.

ADOLPHE

He'll accuse you, anyway.

IRMA

I don't always take Lucien's side.

ADOLPHE

And Jacqueline will encourage Colette not to take a second piece of cake, Colette will start to cry, Eva will ask what happened and she'll say Aunt Jacqueline called me fat, and Eva will say don't you call my daughter fat don't you dare and Jacqueline will say I never said she was fat I just know she's been unhappy with her weight I was trying to encourage her, then Eva will storm off and you'll have to console Jacqueline because she'll be quite upset and she'll say I try and I try but no matter what I do it's never right it's never enough I give up. And that's how the reunion will go.

Beat.

IRMA

I can't wait.

Later that night.

In the transition, Marcelle and Charles throw a sheet over the sofa, add a pillow, then exit.

While this happens, Elodie pours a glass of wine for herself, comes downstage, looks out the window into the street, takes a long drink, finishes what's left in the glass, leaves it on the side table, then exits.

Just before Elodie exits, Molly enters with her toiletry bag, sits on the sofa, and reads. From down the hall, we see light coming from under a door, and hear the off-stage voices of Marcelle and Charles having a heated discussion. They sound animated, though we cannot make out the words, until Marcelle says "shhhh, enough" and they are quiet.

Then Daniel enters, in pajama pants. No more blood on his face, though he moves tentatively. He forgot Molly was there.

DANIEL

Excuse me.

MOLLY

Oh it's ok.

DANIEL

I was just, getting some water. I didn't mean to disturb you.

MOLLY

You're not. I'm just, reading.

Daniel tries to look.

It's... embarrassing.

DANIEL

Ernest Hemingway? Why is that embarrassing?

MOLLY

For an American, to come to Paris and read *A Moveable Feast*? It's a cliché.

DANIEL

Uh, don't, uh-- Don't tell?

MOLLY

Don't tell?

DANIEL

That I was, just now, uhm... standing, listening.

MOLLY

Oh, I won't. I do that, too, when my parents are fighting. Or, talking. I didn't mean to say your parents were...

DANIEL

I think it's universal.

MOLLY

Yeah.

What are they-- are they fighting?

Daniel makes a sign with his hand for "sort of."

About?

DANIEL

Me. Mostly.

Quick beat

MOLLY

Does it hurt?

DANIEL

A little.

MOLLY

It does?

DANIEL

Just a little. But don't tell my mother?

MOLLY

Maybe-- do you have, uhm, a steak or something?

DANIEL

A steak?

MOLLY

Isn't that what they do in movies? After a fight?

DANIEL

Oh yeah! I've seen that in movies.

MOLLY

Right?

DANIEL
Does it work?

MOLLY
It works in movies.

DANIEL
I'm ok.

MOLLY
It's happened before, to you?

DANIEL
Not like this.

MOLLY
But it's happened?

Daniel shrugs.

What was the--

DANIEL
So you're here for a year?

MOLLY
What? Oh, yeah.

DANIEL
To learn French?

MOLLY
I know French, I--

DANIEL
Yes, you speak well.

MOLLY
Thank you. But I want to get better.

DANIEL
Why?

MOLLY
I don't know. I also... wanted to leave school for a while?

I kind of had a uh, a pretty bad break up last semester?
And I needed some, uhm, distance.

DANIEL

Oh.

He sounds like a real jerk.

MOLLY

Oh, no he...

DANIEL

He must be a real--

MOLLY

No. It was a she.

DANIEL

Oh.

Beat

MOLLY

I'm sorry, that's totally a lie, I don't know why I said
that. It's a he, it's definitely a he.

DANIEL

Ok.

MOLLY

I just... I'm not the kind of person who, who makes
decisions because some guy broke my heart, but then I made
this big decision because some guy broke my heart and I'm
kind of embarrassed. By myself-- can I start over? I came
to France because I wanted to learn French.

DANIEL

So you're not a lesbian?

MOLLY

No. No. Not that-- I mean, if I met the right girl, I try
to be openminded...

DANIEL

So you're maybe a lesbian?

MOLLY

Sorry. I need to just-- no. I am not a lesbian.

DANIEL

I'm gonna get some water.

MOLLY

Uh huh.

Daniel exits into the kitchen. Molly could not hate herself more than she does at this moment.

Daniel returns with two glasses, and hands one to Molly.

MOLLY

Oh. Thank you.

DANIEL

You're welcome.

MOLLY

Thanks.

Daniel isn't going anywhere, it seems. He takes a sip of his water. Unsure of what to do, Molly takes a sip of hers. He stands before her, while she sits on the couch, drinking the water. Daniel seems less uncomfortable by the silence. Molly searches for something to say.

MOLLY

It's so nice of your parents, to host me. And your sister seems... sweet.

DANIEL

Well she's very brilliant. She's a very brilliant person.

MOLLY

How long have you two lived here?

DANIEL

In this apartment? Our whole lives.

MOLLY

Oh wow, so you never-- you always lived with your parents?

DANIEL

Oh, no. I left for school, but when I started teaching in Sarcelles, my parents didn't want me to live there, but I couldn't afford my own place here, so--

MOLLY

Why didn't they want you to live in...

DANIEL

They thought it was dangerous.

MOLLY

Is it?

DANIEL

It's ok. You know, some people moved away, but, that's their choice.

MOLLY

Why did they move?

DANIEL

It's complicated.

MOLLY

What happened?

DANIEL

Well. There's been, you know, attacks before and, but then last year, maybe you heard about the shooting at Charlie Hebdo, the newspaper? And then they went to this Kosher Supermarket in Paris and killed four Jews who were, just shopping for groceries. So the people took to the streets to march for peace, millions of people. But Netanyahu came and told all the Jews to come to Israel, but then Manuel Valls got up and he said--

MOLLY

Who?

DANIEL

Our Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, he said something like, if 100,000 Frenchmen of Spanish origin left, France would still be France but if 100,000 French Jews left, France would no longer be France. The French Republic would be judged a failure. And, I mean, 100,000 Jews definitely did not leave last year, only around eight thousand? Which is

the most in a single year to leave France in a long time. So. It's a thing. But some of the people who moved away were teachers, so the school needs teachers cause the kids can't really go to public school anymore, but... and I like the students. They're really cool.

MOLLY

What do you teach?

DANIEL

Can't you tell?

MOLLY

Uhm, I don't know. Jewish stuff?

DANIEL

No. It's-- it's a Jewish school, everyone is Jewish.

MOLLY

Oh.

DANIEL

Math. I teach math.

MOLLY

Really?

DANIEL

Yes, why, do I not seem geeky enough to be a math teacher?

MOLLY

No, you do, it's just--

DANIEL

Oh. So I'm geeky? Thank you.

MOLLY

Sorry. I didn't mean it like that.

DANIEL

I'm just teasing.

MOLLY

Oh. Ok.

How, how did you get to be so religious?

DANIEL

I'm not so religious.

MOLLY

I mean, you teach in a Jewish school, you wear...

Molly indicates his kippah.

DANIEL

Uh huh.

MOLLY

It's... interesting. To me.

DANIEL

Laughing

Ok.

MOLLY

What?

DANIEL

Nothing.

MOLLY

What? Why are you, laughing at me?

DANIEL

I'm not.

MOLLY

You are.

DANIEL

Look, I really respect you Molly, I do. But I can tell you think I'm, uh, pretty ridiculous, actually, to say the least, so--

MOLLY

I never said you were ridiculous!

DANIEL

But I can tell that's what you think, so--

MOLLY

You have no idea what I think.

DANIEL

Ok.

MOLLY

You don't, you don't even know me. You have no idea how I feel.

DANIEL

Then how do you feel?

MOLLY

You have no idea. And you have no right to assume...

DANIEL

So tell me: how do you feel?

MOLLY

About what?

DANIEL

About people like me. About religious Jews. About Jews.

MOLLY

I feel... Don't turn this around on me, I was asking *you*--

DANIEL

Ok.

MOLLY

Because I'm, I'm *of* Jewish extraction, ok, so I don't--

DANIEL

Of Jewish extraction. Wow.

MOLLY

I am.

DANIEL

No, I-- I believe you it's just, such a disdainful way of referring to yourself but--

MOLLY

Excuse me?

DANIEL

I said, it's a disdainful way of referring to yourself.

MOLLY

It's not. It's accurate.

DANIEL

Right. Ok.

Hey, I'm gonna go to bed now.

MOLLY

Did I-- are you upset?

DANIEL

Yeah. A little. Yeah.

MOLLY

Ok... I don't-- ok.

DANIEL

I-- I actually have a fair amount of, uh, experience with people like you, in my life.

MOLLY

Oh do you?

DANIEL

I do. And in my experience, people who say things like, of Jewish extraction, are actually *more* dogmatic about religion than religious people, so I try to avoid the subject with those who clearly have disdain for-- me.

MOLLY

Uhm. Wow. Ok. Well, I'd say it sounds like you actually have disdain for me, but...

DANIEL

I don't.

MOLLY

Well that's not how it sounds to me.

DANIEL

Ok.

MOLLY

Ok. Well. Good night, Daniel.

Beat

I upset you.

DANIEL

Yes. You did.

MOLLY

I apologize.

DANIEL

Ok.

MOLLY

That was not my intention. I apologize. Genuinely.

DANIEL

Maybe, you know, maybe it's people like you who've made it impossible for me to feel proud of who I am.

MOLLY

Maybe it is.

DANIEL

It's people like you who take territory that isn't yours--

MOLLY

I haven't taken any territory--

DANIEL

And build settlements--

MOLLY

Molly--

DANIEL

And force people off land that is rightfully--

MOLLY

Molly!

DANIEL

What?

MOLLY

I don't want to talk about Israel.

DANIEL

MOLLY

Ok. Then why are you standing here.

DANIEL

I was just trying to get to know you.

MOLLY

And I was trying to get to know you. I came to you, very genuinely, with an open-- and then you turned it around and made all these assumptions when you don't, you don't even know me.

DANIEL

I'm sorry.

MOLLY

I was just asking how you became religious. That was all I wanted to know. If you didn't want to tell me, you don't have to, but you don't have to be, uhm...

DANIEL

I'm sorry.

MOLLY

Ok.

Beat

DANIEL

I guess it was a few years ago now, there was one winter, it didn't snow. It just did not snow. And people kept talking about climate change and global warming, so it was on my mind, but also, I love winter. And to be in Paris when it snows... it doesn't get old, at least, not to me. But this one winter, no snow. December, January, February. Nothing. Finally, it's the first week of March, I'm walking to the subway... I feel flurries. It was too warm for anything to stick, but still-- flurries. And I felt... grateful: to be alive, to have grown up at a time when I really got to experience winter. I wanted to say thank you, but who do you thank for the snow? So I went to synagogue, and I prayed, and, I liked it, so I kept going. And I'm-- I'm still figuring out how I feel about, you know, God but, I believe in the Earth. That feels close enough.

A beat. They are both thinking about kissing the other person, but unsure if that's unseemly.

You think I'm ridiculous?

MOLLY

No. I don't.

DANIEL

Laughing

I feel a little ridiculous. Talking about the snow, and--

MOLLY

Well you shouldn't.

DANIEL

I shouldn't?

MOLLY

No. It's actually... (*unspoken: lovely*)

They're now much closer to kissing, and that's just the moment Charles walks into the living room. Molly and Daniel turn away from each other, as if they've been caught doing something wrong. Charles immediately reads the situation correctly but acts like there's no tension in the room.

DANIEL

Oh. I was just getting... water.

CHARLES

Ok. How are you feeling?

DANIEL

I'm ok.

CHARLES

Ok. I'll, I'll take a look in the morning.

DANIEL

Ok. Thanks.

CHARLES

Yep.

Charles exits into the kitchen.

DANIEL

You must be tired.

MOLLY

Yeah.

DANIEL

Ok, well, have a good-- water.

Daniel exits. Molly turns out the light.

In the dark, we hear a male voice say, in English, "And now, we rise to recite the Prayer for the French Republic."

Underneath his voice, we hear a man saying the same thing, in French ("Et maintenant, on se leve pour reciter la Priere Pour La Republique Francaise.")

*The following two columns show what's being said in French and English, but what is in **bold** is what we hear.*

Each "Amen" is said in unison by the entire company.

Dieu Éternel, Maître du monde, ta Providence embrasse les cieux et la terre, la force et la puissance t'appartiennent: par toi seul, tout s'élève, et tout s'affermit. De ta
demeure sainte, ô Seigneur, bénis et protège

O Lord, Master of the world, your Providence embraces the heavens and the earth, strength and power belong to you: by you alone, everything rises and everything grows stronger. From your **holy dwelling, O Lord, bless and protect**

LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE ET
LE PEUPLE FRANÇAIS. --
Amen!

**THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AND THE
FRENCH PEOPLE. --
Amen!**

Que la France vive heureuse et prospère; qu'elle soit forte et grande par l'union et la concorde. -- Amen!

May France live happily and prosperously; may it be strong and great by union and harmony-- Amen!

Que les rayons de ta lumière éclairent ceux qui

May the rays of Your light enlighten those who preside

président aux destinées de
notre pays et font régner
l'ordre et la justice. --
Amen!

**over the destinies of our
nation and cause order and
justice to reign. --
Amen!**

Que la France jouisse d'une
paix durable et conserve
son rang glorieux au milieu
des nations. -- Amen!

**May France enjoy a lasting
peace and preserve her
glorious rank among the
nations. -- Amen!**

Que la France reste fidèle
à sa noble Tradition et
défende toujours le droit
et la liberté. -- Amen!

**May France remain faithful
to her noble Tradition and
always defend law and
freedom-- Amen!**

Accueille favorablement nos
vœux; que les paroles de
nos lèvres et les
sentiments de notre cœur
trouvent grâce **devant Toi,
ô Seigneur, notre créateur
et notre libérateur. --
Amen!**

**Look favorably upon our
vows; that the words of
our lips and the
feelings of our hearts
find grace** before you, our
O Lord, our creator
and our deliverer--
Amen!

The next morning.

*The stage is empty. Marcelle enters through the
front door. She wears leggings, her hair pulled
back, having gone for a run earlier. She's cooled
down, and carries some bread and a pastry box.
She puts them on the table, then walks offstage,
knocks on Elodie's door and opens it.*

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

Elodie? It's time to get up.

ELODIE

(o.s.)

I'm sleeping.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

It's almost noon, we don't sleep all day.

Elodie.

Elodie!

ELODIE
(o.s.)

Five minutes!

MARCELLE
(o.s.)

Five minutes. But then I want you up and out of bed, ok?

Ok?

ELODIE
(o.s.)

Okayyyyyy!

Marcelle returns to the living room to open the pastry box, when she notices the empty wine glass on the side table.

MARCELLE
Elodie? Is this your wine glass you left here?

Elodie?

ELODIE
(o.s.)

Stop!

MARCELLE
Do you have a personal maid I don't know about?

Elodie storms in, fresh from bed, in pajamas. She takes the wine glass, storms into the kitchen, then returns without the glass.

ELODIE
Happy?

MARCELLE
So who has the honor now of putting it in the dishwasher? You leave it in the sink and now, what, the magic dishwashing fairy will take care of it? I work hard all week, while you lie around doing God knows what-- Do I look like a magic dishwashing fairy to you?

On "sink" Elodie storms back into the kitchen, forcefully puts the wine glass in the dishwasher, then returns.

ELODIE

No. You look like a bitch.

MARCELLE

Yes I'm a bitch for not wanting to clean up after you.

ELODIE

I was gonna clean it up, relax! It was bothering you so much?

MARCELLE

Yes! It's my house! I like it neat, Farida is not here on the weekends, even if she were she's not your personal maid.

ELODIE

I cleaned it up can you not yell this early in the--

MARCELLE

Early? I already ran five kilometers! And shopped! Responded to fifty emails--

ELODIE

Can you not yell.

MARCELLE

You want to leave your wine glasses out all over the place, get your own apartment. You want to live in *my* home, clean up after yourself.

ELODIE

Got. It.

Elodie tries to exit.

MARCELLE

And you don't sleep the whole day away!

ELODIE

Oh my god what do you care?

MARCELLE

Because. We're not doing that anymore. We are not-- you will sit down, I just got you some-- and you will eat something.

ELODIE

I'm. Not. Hungry.

MARCELLE

I. Don't. Care.

ELODIE

I'm not hungry! I'm 28 years old I know when I'm hungry, I'm not hungry!

MARCELLE

Then you will sit with Molly while she eats. Where is she?

ELODIE

How the fuck should I know?

MARCELLE

Elodie.

Marcelle walks a few steps toward the bathroom and returns.

She's still in the bathroom.

ELODIE

Ok.

MARCELLE

She was in the bathroom when I left.

ELODIE

Are you keeping tabs?

MARCELLE

No I'm not keeping tabs, thank you.

A brand new tone, genuinely warm
These are fresh, would you like one?

ELODIE

Still angry

No thank you.

MARCELLE
Elodie.

ELODIE
Ok sure, thank you.

Marcelle opens the box, puts a croissant on a plate, and motions for Elodie to sit. She sits. Marcelle sits too, then waits for Elodie to eat.

MARCELLE
Your father walked in on Molly and your brother last night.

ELODIE
Uch! Really?

MARCELLE
Mmm hmmm.

ELODIE
Where?

MARCELLE
Right there.

ELODIE
Daniel had sex in our living room?

MARCELLE
What? No!

ELODIE
Then what...

MARCELLE
They were in there, in the dark. On the couch together.

ELODIE
What do you mean, together, like--

MARCELLE
On the couch. Sitting very close together.

ELODIE
Were they doing anything?

MARCELLE

I don't know.

ELODIE

Mom. When two people are sitting together, and somebody else enters the room, you don't say that they walked in on them. That's not, that's not how that works.

MARCELLE

You don't find it a little uncomfortable, this cousin you've never met, the first night she's here and suddenly she's putting the moves on your brother?

ELODIE

Was she putting the moves on him?

MARCELLE

I don't know. Maybe.

Elodie gives up with her mother. She puts her face in her hands, breathes deeply, and then slides her hands down her face.

Sweetie?

ELODIE

Yes Mom.

MARCELLE

I need your help.

ELODIE

With what?

MARCELLE

Don't say it like that.

ELODIE

Fakely Sweet

With what?

MARCELLE

Forget it.

ELODIE

What!

MARCELLE

Talk to your brother.

ELODIE

What am I supposed to do?

MARCELLE

He worships you.

ELODIE

Um, ok.

MARCELLE

Even just a baseball cap, something to cover his-- if you could get him to-- explain that, that it's okay-- in a dangerous world, self-preservation is not incidental--

ELODIE

You should just say something if you feel so strongly.

MARCELLE

I have. Believe me I have. You know I have. He doesn't listen. He would listen to you.

ELODIE

I doubt that.

MARCELLE

Will you at least-- will you think about it? Elodie?

ELODIE

Yeah, I'll think about it.

MARCELLE

It would mean a lot to me.

ELODIE

Ok.

MARCELLE

Aren't you hungry?

ELODIE

No.

MARCELLE

No?

ELODIE

No.

MARCELLE

But you had a lot to drink last night?

Elodie wants to scream. Instead she starts laughing.

ELODIE

Mom. I had two glasses of wine.

MARCELLE

The bottle was empty.

ELODIE

Because there were five of us. We shared one bottle of wine. As a family. Eating dinner. What are you even talking about?

MARCELLE

I don't like you drinking.

ELODIE

I had two glasses of wine! I do not have a drinking problem! I had two--

MARCELLE

I didn't say you had a drinking problem, all I said--

ELODIE

Two. *With* dinner. Two glasses of wine does not make someone an alcoholic!

MARCELLE

I never said you were an alcoholic--

ELODIE

A manic depressive episode is not the same thing as alcoholism, I would think you of all people would know that--

MARCELLE

An episode doesn't last two years Elodie!

ELODIE

It can!

MARCELLE

When left untreated! When not properly treated! But when you drink all night and then sleep all day, that's not--

ELODIE

I HAD TWO GLASSES OF WINE! WITH DINNER! That does not qualify as drinking all night! When two people are talking, you don't say you walked in on them. And when a person has a glass of wine with dinner, you don't say they're an alcoholic.

MARCELLE

Not a glass. Two. Two. Two glasses.

ELODIE

OH MY GOD! You sound INSANE right now.

MARCELLE

Fine. I'm insane. You're right Elodie. You know what? Why don't you go back to bed. It's only noon, after all, you're missing out on at least another six good hours of sleep before--

Molly emerges from the bathroom, dressed, with her toiletry bag. She didn't wash her hair. She goes to her suitcase.

MOLLY

Excuse me.

Marcelle stares at Elodie. She is not in the mood to entertain some stranger right now. Even though she went out and bought croissants. Molly puts her toiletries down. She doesn't know what to do with herself. She wants to pretend to look busy, as she senses tension, but she really has nothing to put away or take out.

MARCELLE

Have you eaten?

MOLLY

Oh, no, not yet.

MARCELLE

We have bread, croissants, there's cereal...

MOLLY

Can I, could I have a croissant?

MARCELLE

Please. Why don't you join Elodie. She was just about to eat.

Molly comes over to the table, stands before the box and takes one. She puts it on a plate.

MOLLY

They're warm.

MARCELLE

Yes, they're fresh.

Molly takes a bite.

MOLLY

Oh my Gooooood.

She chews very slowly, almost in disbelief.

Where did you get these?

MARCELLE

Down the street.

MOLLY

I love this country.

Sorry, I just, I have never had anything this, uhm, good before? In my entire life?

MARCELLE

To Elodie

Well then.

Elodie finally rips off a small piece of the croissant and eats it. She glares at Marcelle, who exits down the hall to the bathroom.

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

Elodie. I'm opening the window, in case you want to take a shower. It's all steamed up.

MOLLY

Oh. I'm sor-- I'm sorry.

Marcelle doesn't return. Molly gets up and goes to find her.

MOLLY

(o.s.)

Is there anything I can...

MARCELLE

(o.s.)

No. I just opened the window.

MOLLY

(o.s.)

I, I guess I was in there longer than I... I'm sorry.

Molly returns to the table and tries to sit down noiselessly.

MOLLY

(whispered)

I am so embarrassed.

Elodie says nothing.

My French mother doesn't let me take long showers, so...

Do you think she's mad, that I was in the bathroom too long?

ELODIE

Yes.

MOLLY

Really?

ELODIE

Yes.

MOLLY

Oh.

The front door opens. Charles and Daniel enter.

DANIEL

Hey.

MOLLY

Hi.

Hearing them, Marcelle enters.

MARCELLE

How were services?

DANIEL

Very nice.

MOLLY

Oh, you went to--

MARCELLE

If you want lunch, help yourself but I just got some croissants--

DANIEL

Ok, thanks.

MARCELLE

Charles? Are you hungry?

He doesn't respond.

Charles?

Charles shakes his head no.

Are you ok? Are you--

Again, he shakes his head no.

CHARLES

I think I-- I need to sit.

MARCELLE

Charles?

CHARLES

I can't... I can't get oxygen.

ELODIE

Are you having a panic attack?

CHARLES

Nodding yes

I...

Marcelle seats him in a chair.

MARCELLE

Breathe. Just breathe. In through your nose, out through your mouth. In through your nose. Out through your--

She turns to Daniel.

What happened?

DANIEL

Nothing. We were just walking. He was quiet, but--

CHARLES

I can't do this anymore.

MARCELLE

Just breathe.

CHARLES

I can't, I can't do this anymore.

MARCELLE

Do what, honey?

CHARLES

Live. Here. I can't live here anymore. I can't do it.

MARCELLE

What? Oh. Ok well this can wait.

CHARLES

I'm done waiting.

MARCELLE

Just breathe. Just--

CHARLES

I want to move.

MARCELLE

In through your nose--

CHARLES

I want to move.

MARCELLE

Charles I'm not really in the mood for this again--

ELODIE

Mom, he's trying to express something. Don't shut him down.

CHARLESS

You're never in the mood, but now, I'm in the mood.

MARCELLE

You want to move?

CHARLES

I want to move.

MARCELLE

And where would you like to go?

CHARLES

Israel.

MARCELLE

Israel.

CHARLES

Yes.

MARCELLE

Ok. Great choice. Do you speak Hebrew?

CHARLES

I'll learn.

MARCELLE

You'll learn. Sounds easy. Do you have a job lined up?

ELODIE

You don't have to be so snotty--

CHARLES

I'll find one.

MARCELLE

What luck! A new job in a foreign language--

ELODIE

Mom!

CHARLES

I can't do this anymore. Ok? I cannot-- I walked beside our son this morning, all the way to shul... the looks he got, the way some people looked at him--

MARCELLE

And we have been over this, a thousand times. If he did not, so overtly, display his religious identity, this would not be a problem--

DANIEL

I don't want to wear some stupid baseball cap--

MARCELLE

Yes God forbid you take any precautions--

CHARLES

It's not about a baseball cap, Marcelle. The issue is not how Daniel dresses, don't you see? He could cover up, he could never leave the house again, it wouldn't change the fact that this is how people feel. We know it. We know it because when given the chance, they express it. Our son's been attacked twice now. He can't walk down the street without people staring at him, glaring at him, menacingly--

MARCELLE

Maybe they were staring because his face is swollen. Did you think about that?

CHARLES

I don't think that's the case--

MARCELLE

Because if I saw that on the street, I'd stare too.

ELODIE

Mom! Listen to what Dad is saying! Can you just listen?

CHARLES

I walked with my son, down the streets of Paris, to shul. And I saw the faces. And then we sat, and prayed. They read the torah, they read the Haftorah, and then the Rabbi asked us to rise, so we could say the Prayer for the French Republic. A prayer which I have said-- how many times? But it never hit me-- until today, the weight of it. Every week they say it, every week for two hundred years, through Dreyfus, through Vichy, every generation, even when... and frankly, I'm tired of praying for someone else to protect me. I'm tired of it. And, to be totally honest, I don't think it's working--

MARCELLE

That's because you don't believe in praying, you don't believe in God, what are you talking about--

CHARLES

I'm talking about the prayer I said this morning.

MARCELLE

Since when do you put stock in prayers?

CHARLES

That's what I'm saying! They're-- they're stabbing Jews in Strasbourg. They're stabbing Jews in Marseille. They're--

MARCELLE

Uh, they're stabbing Jews in Israel, too.

CHARLES

Yes but in Israel, you can walk into a synagogue and pray. Without menacing eyes following your every move.

MARCELLE

But you don't go to pray! You go to sit with Daniel, if he didn't go, you wouldn't go so what are you talking about--

CHARLES

In Israel, our son could walk down the street, in Haifa, in Tel Aviv, and not fear for his life.

DANIEL

I don't fear for my life.

CHARLES

Well I do. I'm tired of seeing armed guards outside every

school, every synagogue. I'm tired of it. Why are we not safe here? Why are we in danger?

MARCELLE

So your solution is to move to Israel? Honey, do you need me to buy you a newspaper? You feel unsafe, so you want to move to Israel?

CHARLES

At least in Israel, we're all unsafe. We're equally unsafe.

MARCELLE

I think we're pretty equally unsafe right here in Paris. Did you forget about the Bataclan? About--

CHARLES

No I did not forget about the Bataclan, but, it's not the same, the-- the terrorists may hate the French, but they hate us most of all. And they hate us on the right, and they hate us on the left. They hate us here.

MARCELLE

News flash: they hate us everywhere. They don't hate us less in other countries, in fact--

CHARLES

It's getting worse. I mean, it hit me today, so hard-- we need an armed guard with a machine gun to stand watch so we can go inside our peaceful sanctuary and beg God to keep us safe in our own country? There's something so discomfiting about that. Don't you see? And it's getting worse. The writing is on the wall-- I. Can't. Do it anymore. I can't. I want to move to Israel.

MARCELLE

Ok. Well, I don't.

CHARLES

I, I... you're not hearing me.

MARCELLE

What am I not hearing?

CHARLES

I won't live here anymore. I am moving to Israel. I want us to move to Israel.

Beat

MOLLY

Uhmmm.

I would just say uhm... before you make any decisions, if I could maybe share some information, or articles, because-- I know it can be sensitive, words get tossed around which isn't always helpful-- settlements, and human rights violations, and uhm, I'm not sure what the word is in French, maybe it's the same-- apartheid? But when you listen to the stories, of what's happening over there, it can change how you think about things, I know it did for me, so. I'm just putting that out there. In case that's helpful.

Beat

ELODIE

Yes that's very helpful. Thank you Molly.

MOLLY

Sure.

ELODIE

I had no *idea* Israel's occupation of Palestine was so problematic. Thank you so much for that.

MOLLY

Ok.

ELODIE

Did you guys have any idea Israel was such a problematic nation?

DANIEL

Elodie.

ELODIE

I'm curious, how'd you come to learn so much about this?

DANIEL

Ok, ok, enough.

ELODIE

I'm just asking a question.

MOLLY

I, I educated myself. I read.

ELODIE

You read.

MOLLY

I read.

ELODIE

Books, articles?

MOLLY

Yes.

CHARLES

Let's quit while we're ahead, shall we?

ELODIE

No it's just so interesting to me because I'm also a student of history, I'm curious.

MARCELLE

You're not curious.

ELODIE

Did you happen to read said articles on your laptop?

CHARLES

You made your point.
You made your point.

MARCELLE

Oh No. No laptop today
No laptop.

ELODIE

Because as I'm sure you already know, laptops are full of *coltan*, the mining of which has wreaked utter devastation on African environments.

MARCELLE

If I have to hear about *coltan* one more time, no one cares about *coltan*!

ELODIE

That's the problem! We don't care who has to DIE so we can play Candy Crush! Which is just like Molly!

DANIEL

You own a phone! You own a laptop!

ELODIE

No I'm just trying to understand, when you first learned about Israeli occupation, were you in your little pink bedroom on the Upper East Side?

MOLLY

If, if you're asking if I am aware of the flaws, the major flaws of my own country: yes, I'm very aware.

ELODIE

You're aware! She's aware! We can all relax, she's aware!

MOLLY

And I don't disagree, the history of America is, horrifying, but it's not--

ELODIE

But but but but but. But the difference is, you want us to think twice about where we live but you feel totally justified living in a country that does the kinds of things America does, when the reality is YOU are an occupier, dear. YOU. Midtown Manhattan is not your motherland so tell me, if you're so concerned with occupation, why don't YOU leave YOUR occupied lands?

MARCELLE

Why don't you leave? I'm so sorry Molly.

MOLLY

But, all countries have done wrong, are you suggesting none of us should ever stand up against injustice? America shouldn't have fought during World War II?

ELODIE

There it is! I was *wondering* how long I'd have to wait for the Israeli-Nazi comparisons, but it's right on time!

CHARLES

I think you've made your point.

ELODIE

No I've had it with this shit. I will not be lectured to about what we should do, so we feel safe, by someone who gets to sleep as soundly as she does every night in her bedroom built over a pile of other people's blood and guts. And I will not just sit here, mealy mouthed while she's

just *putting it out there* for us, like we're morons, when she's got more blood on her hands than anyone.

DANIEL

She does not have blood on her hands!

ELODIE

Look at those bloody fucking hands! And you're still living on the Upper East Side, aren't you? Aren't you! Aren't you!

MARCELLE

Molly, I'm so sorry, Elodie suffers from manic depression.

ELODIE

Oh thanks Mom! Yes, Molly, this is gonna shock you but I have a mental health problem. I'm sure you had *no idea* there was anything wrong with me.

MARCELLE

Elodie go to your room.

ELODIE

I'm not seven.

MOLLY

No it's-- I actually wanted to see some museums today, so--

MARCELLE

You do not need to go--

MOLLY

No it's totally fine, I'll be back, uhm--

DANIEL

Molly--

MOLLY

I'll be back later.

DANIEL

You really don't have to go. Molly.

MOLLY

No, it's ok, it's ok. This is what happens. All I did was try to point out some injustice *might* be taking place, and your immediate response is to deflect, and call me a hypocrite. Just for speaking. What are you so afraid of?

As Molly exits, and Daniel follows her out:

ELODIE

Don't talk to me about injustice, I'm the Queen of standing up against injustice! The queen!

MARCELLE

Yeah, you're the queen alright.

ELODIE

All I do is stand up against injustice!

MARCELLE

Where? In your bed? On your computer? To your five little friends no one cares about?

ELODIE

I will never understand how you are a person people seek for compassionate treatment--

MARCELLE

Elodie you have said enough for one day, ok? You've used up your word count.

ELODIE

You don't get to dictate my word count--

CHARLES

Your mother's right. It's enough out of you.

ELODIE

Jesus Christ!

Daniel returns.

MARCELLE

Is Molly ok?

DANIEL

Uh, not really. You really, uh, did not need to take it that far.

ELODIE

Oh I'm sorry, were you enjoying that guest lecture on Israeli policy?

DANIEL

That's not the point, she's a guest and now she's...

ELODIE

I don't know, when my guests start saying--

MARCELLE

Elodie! Elodie! Enough.

ELODIE

Fine. Mom thinks you fucked Molly in the living room last night, although even if you did I think after that anti-Zionist display the rose is off that bloom, also Mom says you worship me so I should tell you to wear a baseball cap but personally I think you should dress however the fuck you want.

MARCELLE

Elodie! Elodie!
Enough!
I never said that.

Thank you Elodie.

DANIEL

For the love of God will everyone please stop telling me how to dress!

MARCELLE

Charles. Do something.

CHARLES

I am. I did.

MARCELLE

What?

CHARLES

I want to move to Israel, I said--

MARCELLE

I meant do something now, here, now.

CHARLES

That's what I'm trying to do!

MARCELLE

Very good, well I'm done talking about Israel for today.

CHARLES

Well I'm not.

ELODIE

Why are people in this family only allowed to talk if you agree with what they have to say?

CHARLES

Can I just--

MARCELLE

I'm done responding to you.

ELODIE

You silence anyone
who isn't saying
something you
want to hear--

MARCELLE

Everyone ignore
Elodie!

CHARLES

Can I--

CHARLES

I'm trying to speak!!!

ELODIE

Dad is trying to speak.

MARCELLE

So who's stopping you?

CHARLES, ELODIE

You!

MARCELLE

Well I can't listen to more of your, I walked down the street, I heard a prayer, I want to leave. I can't listen to that, ok? Our lives are here. They're here. We live here. You have a practice, I run a department. We have a home. Our children live here. All our friends. My father-- and his needs are only growing, and we all know my brother is never going to step up and take responsibility for the overseeing of his care, which means, I need to be here. So let's say you decided, in a burst of romanticism, that you had to live by the sea, and we should move to Normandy, or Biarritz, or Antibes-- we couldn't do it. We're too young to retire and we're too old to start over, even in our own country. We have too many obligations. So it's not just impractical, it's impossible, and frankly--

CHARLES

I'm scared.

Beat

I'm scared, Marcelle. You lay everything out, you lay it out so rationally, and I hear every word you're saying, but, I'm scared. We are Jews. We are Jews. The only reason we're still on this planet is because we learned to get out of dangerous situations before they got the better of us. Something is happening in the world, and it's happening in our country too-- I can feel it. I feel it when I walk with Daniel, I feel it when I read the left wing editorials, I feel it watching Le Pen and her base, all stirred up. Something is happening, and when that thing comes, I don't want to have to pray so my own country will protect me from it.

On the other side of the stage, Irma runs on, no longer wearing a star, holding a piece of paper.

IRMA

Adolphe! Adolphe! My god, Adolphe!

CHARLES

Is it rational? Maybe not.

IRMA

Adolphe?

CHARLES

Is it practical? Absolutely not.

IRMA

Adolphe!

Adolphe enters.

ADOLPHE

What is it? What?

CHARLES

But my heart--

IRMA

It's news.

CHARLES

My gut.

IRMA

Lucien!

CHARLES

Every bone in my body, every inch of my core--

IRMA

And Pierre!

CHARLES

Is telling me the same thing:

MARCELLE

And what is that?

IRMA

They're coming home!

Beat

CHARLES

Run.

Blackout