

Two Angels

A drama by

D. Richard Tucker

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TWO ANGELS
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SYNOPSIS: Dayla joins the Liberation movement in order to fight the oppressors, but quickly becomes drawn into the covert operations of the revolutionaries. When her friend Jessa is selected to become a suicide bomber, will Dayla embrace the tenets of the movement or reject their radical philosophy?

Cast of Characters

MARIAH, F, (24), supporter of the insurgency, holding pent up anger

DAYLA , F, (19), a young girl who feels oppressed by her father's control

JESSA, F, (21), volunteering to be a suicide bomber

DISPATCHER, M, (30 - 40), cold and calculating, rarely loses his temper, focused, but not malevolent, totally dedicated to the mission

HOLLOWAY, M, (45), Dayla's father, conservative family man, runs a laundromat

LAMAR, M, (25), wants to be a Dispatcher someday.

Also plays

COLLABORATOR, M, non-speaking role (can also be played by stage hand).

Time: the present

Setting: An unnamed country. All locations are represented by a few pieces of furniture.

ACT I	Scene 1	The secret location of a cell of insurgents
	Scene 2	The insurgents' location
	Scene 3	The Holloway household
	Scene 4	The insurgents' location
	Scene 5	The insurgents' location
	Scene 6	The insurgents' location
ACT II	Scene 1	The Women's prison
	Scene 2	The insurgents' new location
	Scene 3	The Holloway household
	Scene 4	The insurgents' new location
	Scene 5	The insurgents' new location
	Scene 6	A sidewalk café

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ACT I
Scene 1

A dimly lit room, furnished by a couple chairs and a table, perhaps a card table with folding chairs, or an old table with chairs that are so worn they wouldn't be found at a Goodwill store. MARIAH enters, followed by JESSA and DAYLA. MARIAH is dressed in a long skirt and a long-sleeved light colored blouse. JESSA and DAYLA are dressed in jeans and contemporary blouses. MARIAH turns on the lights, perhaps a bare bulb hanging from overhead.

MARIAH

Go ahead – sit down. The dispatcher will be here in a moment.

DAYLA

What's his name?

MARIAH

You don't need to know. You'll know him only as "the dispatcher."

DAYLA

Why?

MARIAH

It's safer that way. If the authorities ask you, you won't know who he is.

JESSA

Why would the authorities want-

MARIAH

Don't worry, we have procedures to deal with that sort of thing.

DAYLA

And if the authorities find out?

MARIAH

We can move this whole place in twenty minutes. By the time they get here, we'll be long gone.

The DISPATCHER enters.

DISPATCHER

(to DAYLA)

Ladies...welcome. What's your name?

DAYLA

Dayla.

DISPATCHER

What brings you here?

DAYLA

I want some training, you know, military training – to help with the Liberation.

DISPATCHER

You're very young.

DAYLA

I'm nineteen.

DISPATCHER

That's young.

DAYLA

The Brothers of Holiness have boys in training – boys that are only fifteen and sixteen.

DISPATCHER

Then perhaps you should join the Brothers of Holiness. You could be a senior member.

DAYLA

I can't.

DISPATCHER

Why not?

DAYLA

You know why. They don't take women.

DISPATCHER

Do they take girls?

DAYLA

I'm not a girl!

DISPATCHER

No, you're not. You're very brave, Dayla. You'll make a good soldier for the Liberation.

(to JESSA)

And then you must be Jessa.

JESSA

Yes.

DISPATCHER

It's very good to meet you. Mariah has told me all about you. It is an honor for us to have you here.

JESSA

Well, I um...

DISPATCHER

You are at the beginning of a noble journey. You will be a hero of the people. Your name will proudly be spoken by children for generations to come. You'll be a queen of patriots and we will forever be indebted to you for your role in our fight against the Adversaries and the forging of the path to freedom.

JESSA

I just want to help-

DISPATCHER

You will do so much more than that. You'll be an inspiration for all of us. Your portrait will be painted on murals throughout the city, and across the countryside.....
And the Adversaries will know that the purity of our young women is a weapon against their oppressive ways. Dayla-

DAYLA

Yes?

DISPATCHER

We'll work with you to teach you everything you need to know to become freedom fighters. Dayla, you'll learn about our organization and operations, how to use weapons, how to collect intelligence about Adversary activities, and how to protect your people from their oppressors. Jessa, your role will be different.

(to DAYLA)

Jessa, has come to us, having decided to become a living martyr. Pay close attention to the example she sets – she has a prominent role in the Liberation.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Listen closely to Mariah. She's very wise and can coach you in the ways of the Liberation. What happens here is not to be disclosed to others. Don't discuss this with your friends or your families - not everyone is sympathetic to our cause. Some of our own people collaborate with the authorities. They bring about the imprisonment and even deaths of many of our freedom fighters, so be careful not to discuss this with anyone, even if you think they are trustworthy.

JESSA

Really?

MARIAH

Some of our own countrymen would turn us over to the Adversaries.

DISPATCHER

They kill our young men and disgrace our women, and yet, some of our own – neighbors, colleagues, family members – would betray us. Do you have any questions?

(pause)

Are you sure you want to fight with us against the Adversaries?

DAYLA

Of course.

DISPATCHER

Then be careful of anyone who might oppose us. Tonight, three of our brothers have been placed in the general population in the Central Prison. They've been in isolation for two weeks, most likely tortured. You know how they got there? The man who runs the pharmacy on 23rd Street - he turned them in. One of our own countrymen went to the authorities and reported them.

MARIAH

Now they'll be in prison for at least ten years, assuming they don't die while they're in there.

DISPATCHER

We have ways of dealing with betrayal, though. We won't look the other way when there are traitors in our midst. What do you think should happen to someone who does this?

DAYLA

The traitor?

DISPATCHER

Yes.

JESSA

.....I don't know.

DISPATCHER

You want military training, don't you, Dayla?

DAYLA

Yes.

DISPATCHER produces a hand gun.

DISPATCHER

Have you ever fired one of these?

DAYLA

No.

DISPATCHER hands the gun to DAYLA.

DISPATCHER

You will.

DISPATCHER exits quickly while DAYLA examines the gun.

MARIAH

Do either of you have any special skills?

DAYLA

(pause)

No...um, I know about laundry. My father runs a Laundromat.

MARIAH

And you, Jessa?

JESSA

....I can sing...and play the guitar.

DAYLA

And how will that help?

JESSA

Oh, I don't know – maybe if the soldiers of the Liberation are feeling a little blue, I can cheer them up with a rousing chorus of “You Are My Sunshine.”

(awkward pause)

Umm...I'm sorry, I just...I do that. When I'm nervous I crack jokes, you know, to ...alleviate the tension.

MARIAH

Be careful – a flippant remark may be interpreted as disrespect.

JESSA

Yes.

DISPATCHER returns with a COLLABORATOR, who has his hands bound behind his back, and a sack tied over his head, hiding his identity. DISPATCHER pushes COLLABORATOR to the ground and kicks him.

DISPATCHER

This is the man who betrayed our brothers. This is the snake who sided with the Adversaries and took the freedom of his own countrymen.

DISPATCHER kicks him again.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Notice he doesn't cry out. Perhaps he feels deep guilt for the sad predicament of the three men who are now imprisoned because of him.

DISPATCHER kicks him again.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Or perhaps he feels unbearable shame for his treason against our people.

DISPATCHER kicks him again.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Or perhaps his tongue is too swollen from the blood and broken teeth that fill his shattered face from the retribution delivered to a traitor by the sons of those he betrayed. But he won't suffer much longer.

DISPATCHER takes the gun from DAYLA, cocks it, and holds out the gun to JESSA.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Do you wish to dispatch this traitor?

JESSA stares at the COLLABORATOR and shakes her head.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Dayla?

DISPATCHER holds out the gun to
DAYLA.

DAYLA

I don't know how to use it.

DISPATCHER

You'll learn soon enough.

DISPATCHER points gun at
COLLABORATOR's head.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

This is the destiny of those who stand in our way. This is the fate of those who oppose
us.

Immediate Blackout. SOUND: Gunshot.

Scene 2

The cell of insurgents, represented by a table
and two chairs. On the table is a pistol and
stacks of flyers and papers. DAYLA,
dressed in jeans and a contemporary blouse,
is folding the flyers. LAMAR enters
carrying a box.

LAMAR

Hey.

DAYLA turns, grabbing the pistol and
rapidly takes a combat stance, two hands on
the gun, pointing it at LAMAR, who stops
suddenly.

LAMAR (cont'd)

(pause)

Not bad. Now bend a little more at the knees. And your feet are too far apart – you'll
lose your balance. They should be about shoulder's width apart.

DAYLA adjusts.

LAMAR (cont'd)

Better?

DAYLA nods.

LAMAR (cont'd)

Number one?

DAYLA

Hips at forty-five degrees.

LAMAR

Number two.

DAYLA

One foot forward, one foot back.

LAMAR

And number three?

DAYLA

Shoulders forward, both hands on -

LAMAR suddenly snatches DAYLA's wrist with one hand and thrusts the box at DAYLA pushing her off her feet.

DAYLA (cont'd)

Hey!

The box falls and papers fall out across the floor. In an instant, DAYLA is sitting on the floor, looking up at LAMAR who has the pistol pointed at her.

LAMAR

But don't let your target get too close, or he just might turn the tables on you.

DAYLA

That wasn't nice, Lamar!

LAMAR puts the pistol on the table.

LAMAR

If I'd been an Adversary soldier, you'd be dead.

DAYLA

You shouldn't have pushed me.

LAMAR

(sorts through the papers on the table)

Hey, when the Dispatcher isn't here, I'm in charge. Clean up that mess.

DAYLA begins to pick up papers from the floor.

LAMAR (cont'd)

One day I'm going to be a dispatcher, too. Of course, if you don't learn how to handle that gun, you won't live long enough to see that happen.

JESSA enters carrying another box.

JESSA

So, you made it back alive, huh?

LAMAR

What?

JESSA

Why'd you go running off like that?

LAMAR

I didn't run.

JESSA

Oh, really? I thought you were just in a big hurry to get that box of flyers back here.

LAMAR

No.

JESSA

My mistake. What happened to that old lady?

LAMAR

What?

JESSA

The one you were talking to – looked like she fell over.

LAMAR

Yeah – she did.

JESSA kneels, helping DAYLA pick up flyers.

JESSA

(to DAYLA)

She fell pretty hard. Almost like she'd been pushed.

LAMAR

What?

JESSA

Hmm?

LAMAR

Are you talking to me?

JESSA

No.

LAMAR

Are you? Are you talking to me?

JESSA

No, Lamar.

LAMAR exits in a huff.

DAYLA

Don't pay attention to him – Lamar is a pig.

JESSA

And you, Dayla, are a good judge of character.

DAYLA

What happened?

JESSA

Lamar had his manliness questioned by the old lady down by the meat market.

DAYLA

What?

JESSA

We got the flyers and were headed back here when we passed that lady. She came out of her house and started yelling at Lamar, calling him a terrorist. So I just walked a little faster, but Lamar couldn't stand it, just had to go over and have it out with her. So she starts yelling louder and Lamar tries to get her to shut up and then finally, he pushes her - head over heels into the flower bed. And then he gets scared, the butcher comes out of

JESSA (cont'd)

his shop and yells at him, and so Lamar goes running off, still holding the box of flyers, really fast like he was going to win the three hundred meter office supply high hurdles.

DAYLA

He's such a pig.

JESSA

(mocking)

“Are you talking to me? Are you talking to me?”

DAYLA

No, stupid, we were talking about you.

JESSA.

Because if we were talking to you, that would be second person singular, whereas we were talking *about* you which is third person *pig*-ular.

DAYLA

You're funny, Jessa.

JESSA

He's such a baby. He showed her who's boss – not gonna let an eighty year-old woman get out of line. You've got to punish them, you know, and if you don't catch them in the act, they'll never learn.

DAYLA

Just because she called him a “terrorist.”

JESSA

Lamar... a terrorist, ha.

DAYLA

He's just an annoyance.

JESSA

Yeah, he's just like my husband – all full of himself.

DAYLA

I didn't know you were married.

JESSA

Yes.

DAYLA

So what's it like to married, Jessa?

JESSA

Hm..... Why are you here, Dayla?

DAYLA

Oh, I don't know. My dad's been on my case since my mom died. Won't let me do anything. Wants to keep me in the "traditional female role." I wanted to go to college, but he won't allow it. Wants me to stick around the house. He doesn't realize how tough it is having only one parent. My mom understood me.

JESSA

It's probably hard on him, without her.

DAYLA

I guess.

JESSA

So you joined the Liberation?

DAYLA

I thought it might be a way to do something more than cook and clean. Plus my dad hates the movement. If he knew I was here, he'd throw a fit. This way, maybe I can make a name for myself, do something special.

DISPATCHER enters.

DISPATCHER

Where's Lamar?

JESSA

He just left.

DISPATCHER

Would you go get him for me, Dayla?

DAYLA

Sure.

DAYLA exits.

DISPATCHER

How are you, Jessa?

JESSA

I'm fine.

DISPATCHER

Are you feeling more comfortable, you know, about Wednesday?

JESSA

Yes. I'm very excited about it.

DISPATCHER

Good. Have you told anyone....about....

JESSA

No – no one.

DISPATCHER

That's best. They'll soon learn of your bravery, but if you tell them now, someone may try to interfere.

DAYLA

I haven't told anyone.

DISPATCHER

Good. You've seen all the posters on the wall outside the marketplace?

DAYLA

Yes... those are the martyrs?

DISPATCHER

Soon, your face will adorn that wall, as well.

LAMAR enters.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

(glaring at LAMAR)

What happened?

LAMAR

What?

DISPATCHER

Down the street, on your way back from the printers?

LAMAR

Umm...nothing.

DISPATCHER

What happened to Mrs. Stephenson?

LAMAR

Who?

DISPATCHER

I heard she was assaulted – pushed down by some young punk.

LAMAR

She called me a terrorist!

DISPATCHER

So?

LAMAR

But, she.....she...

DISPATCHER

Look, I don't care what she calls you. She can call you names, she can insult your family, or call your mother an Adversary whore – I don't care. Don't ever do anything like that again.

LAMAR

But she needs to show respect-

DISPATCHER

Respect is given where respect is due, Lamar. There is nothing that old woman can do to you, and yet you've lashed out and upset the neighborhood.

LAMAR

But she-

DISPATCHER back-hands LAMAR across the face, sending him sprawling.

DISPATCHER

These are our people. They don't all agree with us, but we have to live among them, and we can't have them turn against us. Watch yourself, save your anger for the Adversaries. Pushing around an old woman doesn't help our cause. Do you understand?

LAMAR

I'm going to tell my brother.

DISPATCHER

Do that – it saves me the trouble.

LAMAR

But he will-

DISPATCHER

No he won't. The reason your brother is on the Leadership Council is because he knows the importance of our mission. Believe me, Lamar, if your brother thought you were a liability to our cause, he would kill you himself.

LAMAR

He wouldn't –

DISPATCHER

Nothing stands in the way of our mission, Lamar – not brothers or sisters or anybody. Watch your step. Do I make myself clear?

LAMAR nods.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Do I?

LAMAR

Yes.

MARIAH enters and watches from the distance.

DISPATCHER

Go down to the corner market and tell Prescott what happened. He'll give you a bag of groceries. Take them to the old lady and apologize. She may call you more names, she may cower in the corner. Whatever she does, just apologize and leave. And never go near her again after that.

LAMAR

Okay.

DISPATCHER

Is that clear?

LAMAR

Yes.

LAMAR exits.

DISPATCHER

(to MARIAH)

Keep your eye on him. He may be a problem.

MARIAH nods as the lights go down.

Scene 3

The Holloway family kitchen, represented by a kitchen table and a couple chairs. HOLLOWAY sits at the table with a plate of food, eating. DAYLA enters, carrying a basket of laundry and passes behind him.

HOLLOWAY
Where were you?

DAYLA
In the basement. Doing laundry.

HOLLOWAY
Why didn't you answer me?

DAYLA
I didn't hear you.

HOLLOWAY
I went to the stairs and called you. You didn't answer.

DAYLA
I just got in. Then I went to the basement. To get the laundry.

DAYLA puts down the laundry basket and begins folding the laundry, placing the folded clothes on the table or the other chair.

HOLLOWAY
So you weren't here.

DAYLA
I was at the library.

HOLLOWAY
So when I asked you "Where were you?" the correct answer would have been "At the library."

DAYLA
I guess.

HOLLOWAY
Were you alone?

No. DAYLA

I don't like you to go alone. HOLLOWAY

I didn't. DAYLA

People will talk. HOLLOWAY

I wasn't alone. DAYLA

You know how much trouble that causes. HOLLOWAY

I was with a friend. DAYLA

A boy? HOLLOWAY

No. DAYLA

I won't have you going out with a boy. HOLLOWAY

I wasn't. I was with a woman. DAYLA

Who? HOLLOWAY

Her name is Jessa. She's a friend of mine. DAYLA

Where did you meet her? HOLLOWAY

At the library. DAYLA

HOLLOWAY

I thought you said you went with her to the library.

DAYLA

I did.

HOLLOWAY

But you met her at the library.

DAYLA

I met her at another time. Then we went together today.

HOLLOWAY

Where does she live?

DAYLA

You don't believe anything I tell you.

HOLLOWAY

Why should I?

DAYLA

I didn't do anything wrong.

HOLLOWAY stares at DAYLA for a moment, uncertain of her story, but having run out of questions.

HOLLOWAY

I had to fix my own dinner.

DAYLA

I left it in the oven for you.

HOLLOWAY

A man shouldn't have to fix his own dinner. It's your duty to prepare my meals. A man should come home and have supper on the table.

DAYLA

Yes, Daddy.

HOLLOWAY

A man shouldn't have to work all day and then come home and fix his own supper.

DAYLA

Yes, Daddy.

HOLLOWAY

And the laundry should have been done long ago.

DAYLA

I shouldn't even have to do laundry! You run the laundromat – we should be washing our clothes there!

HOLLOWAY

We own a washing machine and people know we are well off because we own a washing machine. And a woman's job is to do her family's laundry. We are fortunate enough to do laundry at home, and so we will. I won't be seen at work washing my family's clothes.

DAYLA

Whatever.

HOLLOWAY

You're an arrogant girl, Dayla.

(pause, still eating)

Have you seen your cousin Frederick lately?

DAYLA

No.

HOLLOWAY

Have you heard anything about him...around?

DAYLA

No. Why?

HOLLOWAY

I heard someone at the laundromat talking about him.

DAYLA

Saying what?

HOLLOWAY

I think maybe he was being recruited by the Liberation.

DAYLA

Really? That doesn't sound...I don't know.

HOLLOWAY

He's a lonely child, not many friends.

DAYLA

But he's only sixteen.

HOLLOWAY

That's old enough. They believe that at fifteen, a boy is old enough to decide on his own.

DAYLA

I don't think he's the kind to-

HOLLOWAY

He's exactly the kind. They prey on the insecure, the uncertain. They look for boys like him.

DAYLA

For what?

HOLLOWAY

Revolutionaries. Freedom Fighters. Suicide bombers. They find a kid who doesn't have.... you know, who's not too sure of himself, and then they talk him up, tell him he's special, convince him that blowing himself up is a noble thing to do. Then he starts to believe them and the next thing you know, he's a tragedy.

DAYLA

Have you said anything to Uncle Tyler?

HOLLOWAY

No. I didn't want to worry him unless I know for sure. If something is going on, I want to stop it right away – for Tyler's sake. If something happened to Frederick, I know it would break his heart.

DAYLA

Well, maybe if he would spend more time with his son, he would know what Frederick's doing.

HOLLOWAY

Don't talk like that about your uncle.

DAYLA

It's true. He's not a very good father.

HOLLOWAY

Watch it. He's a busy man. It's a big responsibility to run a body shop.

DAYLA

It's not so time-consuming that he couldn't take a second wife.

HOLLOWAY

He's an important man. He can have four wives if he wants.

DAYLA

And why you can't even have one?

HOLLOWAY

I had a very good wife.

DAYLA

And she's gone now, so why don't you marry again?

HOLLOWAY

Because no woman will have me, seeing how my daughter has destroyed her father's reputation.

HOLLOWAY gets up to and picks up his dishes and exits. DAYLA, having finished folding the laundry, removes the basket and exits. HOLLOWAY enters with a cup of coffee and sits. DAYLA enters, having removed the laundry.

DAYLA

I'm sure Frederick would be better adjusted if his father spent more time with him.

DAYLA exits.

HOLLOWAY

His father lives with his second wife. Frederick prefers to live with his own mother. That's the son's choice.

DAYLA enters with a plate and sits down to eat.

DAYLA

(pause, while eating)

Did you talk to Christopher's family?

HOLLOWAY

No.

DAYLA

Why not?

HOLLOWAY

There's no reason.

DAYLA

But... Daddy. We want to get married.

HOLLOWAY

Dayla....

DAYLA

Please.

HOLLOWAY

Dayla....

DAYLA

Daddy, this is very important – please talk to them.

HOLLOWAY

(pause)

Okay.

DAYLA

Thanks, Daddy. I love Christopher. I want to marry him.

HOLLOWAY

It's always about what you want.

DAYLA

You just don't want me to get married.

HOLLOWAY

You'd never understand, Dayla. You have no respect for family or tradition or religion – you're a belligerent girl. Your mother, God rest her soul, would lie awake at night, crying, because her daughter was so rebellious.

DAYLA

You just don't want me to be happy!

HOLLOWAY gets up to go.

HOLLOWAY

I just want you to grow up. And think about something besides your own pleasure.

HOLLOWAY exits. Lights fade out.

Scene 4

Lights up on the Insurgents' cell. Draped over one of the chairs is a camouflage uniform jacket and a yellow scarf. On the table is a wooden box, the size of a cigar box. DAYLA, dressed in jeans and a contemporary blouse, picks up a plastic bag of metal nuts and opens it, pouring it into the box. LAMAR enters, carrying a guitar case.

LAMAR

You should have finished this by now.

DAYLA

I don't even know why I'm doing it.

LAMAR

You're building a bomb, dummy.

DAYLA

I don't know anything about-

LAMAR

You don't have to. We have an engineer who'll come in tonight and put it together. We just need you to stack the nuts in the box.

(looking into the box)

Look, you can't just pour the nuts in here, you have to stack them in rows.

DAYLA

What nuts?

LAMAR

(showing her one)

These.

DAYLA

I thought those were bolts.

LAMAR

No, bolts are the things these go on. The bolt goes through a hole and then this nut is screwed on to it to hold it in place.

DAYLA

I thought that was a screw.

LAMAR

You don't know much about hardware, either.

DAYLA

Then where are the bolts?

LAMAR

We don't need bolts, just nuts.

DAYLA

I don't –

LAMAR

Look, the nuts need to be stacked in rows inside the box - neat, tight little rows – so you get as many in there as possible. Behind the box, we'll put the explosive, so when it blows up, these nuts will fly through the air in all directions.

DAYLA

We're going to kill people with nuts?

LAMAR

At seventy-six meters a second, they're pretty deadly.

DAYLA

What about the guitar?

LAMAR

We don't need that, just the case.

DAYLA

What do I do with it?

LAMAR

I don't know, ask Jessa. It's her guitar.

LAMAR exits. DAYLA returns to arranging the nuts in the box. JESSA enters, now wearing a long skirt and a long-sleeved traditional blouse, carrying a sheet of paper and a pen.

JESSA

Hello, Dayla.

DAYLA

Hi, Jessa. What's that?

JESSA

My speech. I wrote it last night, but we're going to do the video now, so I want to go over it one last time.

JESSA sits at the table and reads over the speech.

DAYLA

Let me help you get ready.

DAYLA takes a brush from her handbag and walks behind JESSA and begins to brush JESSA's hair.

DAYLA (cont'd)

Don't let me disturb you.

JESSA

It's okay.

JESSA reads while DAYLA brushes, and DAYLA continues to interrupt JESSA's concentration.

DAYLA

Jessa, what made you decide to become a martyr?

JESSA

Oh, I just want to serve my people. This seems to be the best way. And you know what they say" "Always leave the party early - that way people will miss you."

JESSA laughs nervously, but DAYLA does not.

DAYLA

Aren't you scared?

JESSA

Sure, but I'm also tired of the Adversary occupation. I think we should be free to go where we want, do what we want. I'm tired of being put down by the Adversaries.

DAYLA

Do you know any Adversary people?

JESSA

No. I used to. When I was little, my mother took me with her when she went to the hairdresser. The lady there was an Adversary. She would always give me candy.

DAYLA

Do you want to kill her?

JESSA

I wouldn't kill her. I'll kill others. Of course, if she thinks we should be pushed around like a herd of cows, then she deserves to die.

(pause)

Why are you here, Dayla?

DAYLA

I saw this TV show about the Adversaries, how they hurt people. There was this evil Adversary man and he paid money to get a young boy – one of our people – and then he cut the boy's throat and used his blood in a ceremony. I don't know if it's true or not, but it made me hate him. I look around...the reason we have to live where we do, and why we can't get good jobs like the Adversaries do, how they won't let us go through town without checking our identification on every street corner.....I just thought, maybe I can help – learn to shoot a gun, protect my people. That's what I want. Jessa, what's it like to be married?

JESSA

It's okay.

DAYLA

It must be nice to have a husband.

JESSA

Mm.

DAYLA

(pause)

What's it like ...you know... to have a man touch you.

JESSA

(pause)

You'll know ...when the time comes.

DAYLA

There's a boy I want to marry. His name is Christopher. I saw him one day, when I went to the grocery store. He got off the bus, just as I was getting on and just looking at him - it took my breath away. He is so beautiful. He walks with a limp, because one of his legs is longer than the other, but he's still beautiful. I asked the bus driver who he was, and then I told my dad. I want to marry him, and my dad is going to talk to his family to make the arrangements.

JESSA

I hope you two will be happy together.

DAYLA

I just wonder, you know, sometimes I daydream, about what it would be like to have a man of my own, to love me, to hold me...someone to lie next to me and run his fingers through my hair, and look into my eyes and kiss me. It must be nice to be kissed.

JESSA

Mm.

DAYLA

(pause)

Jessa, what's it like to make love?

JESSA

You'll know ...when the time comes.

DAYLA

Why can't you tell me?

JESSA

Some things are better left to experience.

DAYLA

Please tell me.

JESSA

Dayla-

DAYLA

Please.

JESSA

Dayla, the act of love making is-

DAYLA

Is it like the most wonderful thing you've ever experienced? I've read some books – from the Outside Culture – and it sounds like it must be glorious. Two people coming together and having feelings that they've never had before. Is that right? Is that what it's like.

JESSA

It's highly over-rated.

DAYLA

Really? Doesn't it make you tremble with excitement?

JESSA

It's not very exciting to have a hairy man lying on top of you, sweating, and panting in your ear.

DAYLA

But doesn't it feel good, good to know that he is so excited by your beauty...and your body?

JESSA

.....I've never told anyone this, Dayla, so you must not tell anyone else. My husband has a magazine – he keeps it in his dresser – a magazine from the Outside Culture models and movie actresses, some in their swim suits. When he wants to make love, he gets out his magazine and thumbs through it. Then he puts it away and turns out the lights. Then he starts to touch me.

DAYLA

But doesn't he-

JESSA

It isn't fun. It doesn't feel good. I bite my lip and hope that it ends soon.

DAYLA

I'm sorry.

JESSA

Marriage isn't what you think it is. At least, it isn't what I thought it would be.

MARIAH, wearing the conservative dress of long skirt and blouse, enters with a cup of coffee.

MARIAH

Jessa, I brought you some coffee.

JESSA

Oh, thank you.

MARIAH

Do you want cream or sugar?

JESSA

Actually, Mariah, I don't drink coffee. It hurts my stomach.

MARIAH

I'm sorry. Would you like some tea?

JESSA

Tea would be nice, yes, please.

MARIAH

I'll get some. Dayla, would you help Jessa put on the uniform jacket? For the video.

DAYLA

Sure.

MARIAH exits. DAYLA stops brushing and picks up the camouflage jacket from the chair. JESSA stands up as DAYLA helps her put it on.

DAYLA (cont'd)

You are the most beautiful soldier there ever was.

JESSA

I'm not a soldier.

DAYLA

But you are. You're a hero. You're very brave.

JESSA

I don't think so.

DAYLA

A freedom fighter must be brave.

JESSA

I'm just a girl with a guitar case. On my way to heaven.

DAYLA

What's heaven like?

JESSA

I don't know for sure. I just know that it is filled with happiness. And beauty. And everything that has ever hurt you will be gone and you won't cry or be sad or worry ever again.

MARIAH enters, carrying a cup of tea and an automatic rifle. She hands the cup of tea to JESSA.

MARIAH

You look beautiful, Jessa.

JESSA

Thank you.

MARIAH

You did a great job with her hair, Dayla. Here – let's put on the scarf.

MARIAH picks up the yellow scarf and ties it on JESSA's head like a head band.

MARIAH (cont'd)

This is the color of the revolution. It represents sunlight, which exposes the truth in a dark world and symbolizes our quest for freedom, coming out of the darkness, into the light of day.

(finishing)

There. You look lovely, little sister.

JESSA

Thank you.

MARIAH

It is an honor to be here with you - You are the living martyr, a warrior of the people.

MARIAH stands back to admire JESSA.

JESSA

(pause)

Mariah.....will it hurt?

MARIAH

What?

JESSA

You know....

MARIAH

Don't worry. There are two angels watching over you, every step of the way. And, in an instant, which you press the detonator, they will swoop down from the sky, and take you up to heaven. You won't feel a thing - you won't even hear the bomb go off. You'll be in heaven before it even happens.

DAYLA

Can we see these angels?

MARIAH

No, Dayla. They don't want to be seen, but when Jessa presses the button, they'll reveal themselves and take her away.

JESSA

What's heaven like?

MARIAH

I think heaven is different for everybody. It's made up of all the good things you like. Heaven, for me, would be a grassy meadow, near a stream, where I can sit in the sunlight, but not be too hot, and feel a breeze across my cheeks, but never be cold, and the fragrance of a different flower would fill the air every day.

JESSA

Will there be other people there?

MARIAH

Of course – all the people you love will be there. And I will have a husband who will love me and care for me. And we will spend our days eating fruit and chocolates and drinking fine wine.

DAYLA

But alcohol is forbidden.

MARIAH

Not in heaven. In heaven you can have all the things that you weren't allowed to have here.

MARIAH picks up the rifle and hands it to JESSA.

MARIAH (cont'd)

Here, you need to hold this in the video.

JESSA

I don't know how to-

MARIAH

It's okay, it's only for show.

JESSA puts down her teacup and awkwardly handles the rifle.

DAYLA

Can you have children in heaven?

MARIAH

If you wish.

JESSA

Don't you have to be punished for all your sins?

MARIAH

Not you, little sister. As you enter martyrdom, all is forgiven – everything you've done is completely wiped away. When you get to heaven, God will simply ask, "How many of the Adversaries did you kill for me?" You'll be perfect then – All will be forgiven.Okay, meet me in the conference room in five minutes. They're setting up the lights now.

MARIAH kisses JESSA on the cheek and exits.

DAYLA

I didn't know she was your sister.

JESSA

She's not.

DAYLA

But she called you-

JESSA

She just does that.

DAYLA

She knows a lot about being a martyr.

JESSA

She was once.

DAYLA

A martyr?

JESSA

She didn't ... I mean, she wanted to, but she couldn't.

DAYLA

Why not

JESSA

Her mother got sick and Mariah had to take care of her younger brother. When he grows up, she might decide again to be a martyr, if peace hasn't come to us by then.

DAYLA

Jessa, what about your guitar?

JESSA

Will you take it to my sister? I'd like very much for her to have it.

DAYLA

Sure. Where should I-

JESSA

She lives in the South district, near the train station – I'll give you the address.

DAYLA

Do you talk to her about....you know...your husband...?

JESSA

She's very busy. She's a mother, you know. Mothers are always busy.

DAYLA

Don't you want to be a mother someday?

JESSA

She has a baby girl – one year old – named Brianna. She's a beautiful baby, full of love and joy, always smiling. She's a very happy child.

DAYLA

You don't have much happiness, do you, Jessa?

JESSA

What?

DAYLA

Does your husband hurt you?

(pause)

Does he?

(getting no response)

Those marks on your neck, and I saw bruises on your arm, the first day we met.

JESSA

Don't be in such a hurry to get married, Dayla. Your husband can do anything with you that he wants...and if you tell somebody else about it, they won't believe you.

DAYLA

Is that why you want to go to heaven so much?

JESSA

Everybody wants to go to heaven. Don't you?

JESSA exits. Blackout.

Scene 5

The conference room in the cell of insurgents, represented by a couple chairs and a spot light. The DISPATCHER is in a conversation with LAMAR who holds a video camera and has a digital camera hanging from his neck on a strap.

LAMAR

But why the ten-fifteen bus? The exam is over at eleven o'clock, so when all the cadets would be through, and then they get on the eleven-fifteen bus.

DISPATCHER

What time does the exam start?

LAMAR

Eight o'clock.

DISPATCHER

When can the cadets leave?

LAMAR

As soon as they're done.

DISPATCHER

So a lot of cadets will be done before eleven o'clock. In fact, the smartest cadets will be finished before ten o'clock.

LAMAR

So?

DISPATCHER

They'll want to leave sooner - they'll get on the bus at ten-fifteen.

LAMAR

But there will be more at eleven.

DISPATCHER

If you had to choose who is going to guarding the checkpoint, would you rather have smart policemen or dumb policemen.

LAMAR

Dumb ones.

DISPATCHER

And police cadets who take a full three hours to complete a fourteen page multiple choice test can't be very smart.

LAMAR

The smart guys finish first.

DISPATCHER

And they're the ones we want.

MARIAH enters with JESSA who is wearing the camouflage jacket with belts of ammunition draped over her shoulders, a yellow head band, and carrying the rifle and her speech.

DISPATCHER

You look wonderful, Jessa.

JESSA

Thank you.

DISPATCHER

We are very proud of you, of the commitment you've made, and tomorrow, you will be a hero. May I see your speech?

JESSA hands the DISPATCHER the sheet of paper. The DISPATCHER reads it over quickly, as LAMAR positions the spot light. MARIAH moves JESSA into position for the filming.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

This is very good, very nice. Lamar will film your speech and we'll edit the video tonight. Tomorrow afternoon, we'll release it to the TV stations. We'll also take some photos of you. One of them will be used to make a poster, honoring your mission. We'll put them up all around the city, and later we'll have a mural painted in your honor. You can be very proud of your decision.

JESSA

It's an honor for me.

DISPATCHER

So, are you ready?

JESSA

I think so.

DISPATCHER

No need to feel nervous – if you aren't happy with the video, we can shoot it again. You can stop and start as much as you like - it's okay.

JESSA

All right.

DISPATCHER

Mariah, will you get the lights?

The DISPATCHER steps back and MARIAH dims the lights. LAMAR takes up a position with the camera, possibly in the audience. JESSA is now in the spot light.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Is the camera on?

LAMAR

Yes.

DISPATCHER

Jessa, you can start any time you like.

JESSA

Now?

DISPATCHER

Whenever you're comfortable.

JESSA

(pause, deep breath, pause, reading)

I am the living martyr, Jessa Potter, and my journey is one of choice, not coercion. What I do, I do in the name of God Almighty and the freedom of my Homeland. I say goodbye to my mother, my father, my family. May God hold them-

LAMAR

(interrupting)

Hold it just a minute.

DISPATCHER

What's the matter?

LAMAR moves into the light.

LAMAR

There's something wrong with the camera.

The DISPATCHER moves in to inspect.
MARIAH brings up the lights.

LAMAR (cont'd)

It's not recording.

The DISPATCHER takes the camera and
begins trouble-shooting. MARIAH moves
to JESSA.

DISPATCHER

You can relax, this will just be a minute.

(to LAMAR)

Shut it down and start it up again.

LAMAR takes the camera back and begins
to adjust.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

I'm sorry. This is just a slight delay.

JESSA

It's okay.

DISPATCHER

We'll just wait a minute and see if it clears up.

LAMAR continues to work the camera.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Any luck?

LAMAR

No, it's still stuck.

DISPATCHER

Okay, take the camera down to Garrison at the computer store. See if he can get it to work.

LAMAR starts to leave but the
DISPATCHER calls him back.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Here! Give me the other camera – I can take the photos while you're gone.

LAMAR gives the still camera to the
DISPATCHER and hurries off.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Jessa, I'm going to take some pictures, to be used for your poster, depicting your mission. I'll save some for your family – often the parents make a little shrine in their homes, and your parents may like to do that.

MARIAH steps forward and takes the paper
from JESSA.

MARIAH

I'll hold your speech for you

DISPATCHER

Just hold the rifle, like you're a soldier.

JESSA

Should I smile?

DISPATCHER

If you want. Or you can look fierce, like a warrior. I'll take several pictures, so we can choose the best one.

The DISPATCHER clicks a photo.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Good.

The DISPATCHER continues to take photos
during his instructions to JESSA.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Tomorrow morning, Mariah will go with you to the bus stop at the corner of Springview and 8th Avenue. There, you two will get on the number twenty-three bus at ten-o-seven. You'll take your guitar case with you. It's been outfitted with a bomb. The two of you will sit in opposite seats, somewhere close to the middle of the bus. At ten-fifteen, the bus will come to the stop on Yeager Boulevard, where the Law Enforcement Academy is. There Mariah will get off the bus, and a lot of police cadets will get on, probably twenty or thirty of them.

JESSA

Alright.

DISPATCHER

(takes the last photo)

There that's enough – you can relax now.

MARIAH steps forward and takes the rifle.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

At the next stop, you will rise to get off. On your head will be your yellow headband, but it will be covered by a dark scarf. When you move into the center of the aisle, use your left hand to take off the scarf, so those around you can see it, and

(motions)

hold the guitar case up, above the backs of the seats. Then all you have to do is push the button attached to the handle of the guitar case, and your mission is complete. Is that clear?

JESSA

Yes.

DISPATCHER

Good.

SOUND: Cell phone. The DISPATCHER checks his phone.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

I'm sorry, I have to take this.

The DISPATCHER exits.

JESSA

Mariah?

MARIAH

Yes?

JESSA

Will I be scared...when the time comes?

MARIAH

Maybe, but you don't have to be. Just remember this is your wedding to Freedom, to Peace. If you start to feel nervous, just say to yourself "This is my wedding – I am the bride." Then think happy thoughts about heaven and it will calm you.

JESSA

And my two angels will come down and carry me away.

MARIAH

They're just waiting for you to press the button.

JESSA

I'm glad you're going with me.

MARIAH

Relax, little sister, this is a happy time – you're doing the will of God.

JESSA

I'm not sure I understand what he said about the guitar case.

MARIAH

Oh, it's simple, hold it above the level of the seats, so the bomb will have the most impact. You just I'll go get it. It'll be easier if I show you.

LAMAR enters.

LAMAR

Where's the dispatcher?

JESSA

He got a phone call.

The DISPATCHER enters.

DISPATCHER

What did he say?

LAMAR

Something's wrong with the firmware or something. He said he'll take care of it and bring it by in a couple hours.

DISPATCHER

Okay. Jessa, you can take that off. It'll be a while before we can do the video.

JESSA begins taking off outfit.

I got a call about the next mission.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Yeah?

LAMAR

During the Festival.

DISPATCHER

How?

LAMAR

We'll work out the details tomorrow.

DISPATCHER

Okay.

LAMAR

The DISPATCHER exits. JESSA is has difficulty removing the uniform and ammunition belts.

Oh. Here, let me help you with that.

LAMAR (cont'd)

LAMAR helps JESSA out of the ammunition belt.

You look really pretty dressed like this.

LAMAR (cont'd)

Thank you.

JESSA

JESSA takes off the camouflage jacket.

You're a very lovely woman, Jessa, a very brave woman.

LAMAR

Thanks.

JESSA

I thought, you know, since tomorrow is your mission, maybe you'd like to go out tonight, you know, to celebrate.

LAMAR

JESSA

I'm a married woman, Lamar, I can't be seen with another man.

LAMAR

We don't have to go out in public. You could come over to my apartment.

JESSA

I'm... I don't know.

LAMAR

I just thought...maybe you'd like to spend your last night with a man.

JESSA

I have a husband.

LAMAR takes off JESSA's headband.

LAMAR

A man who respects you, for your commitment to the cause. Someone who finds you attractive and ...courageous.

JESSA

What would we do?

LAMAR

I have a bottle of vodka. I bought it from a tourist.

JESSA

That's forbidden.

LAMAR

But God will forgive you tomorrow, when you complete your mission.

JESSA

I'm not ...I-

LAMAR

And maybe we could spend some time together, close together. Just you and me.

JESSA

That's also forbidden.

LAMAR

And also forgiven. When you enter Heaven, everything will be forgiven, no matter what it is.

JESSA

What about you? Will you be forgiven?

LAMAR

Don't worry about me – I'll take my chances.

JESSA

(turning to go)

I need to find Mariah.

JESSA exits quickly.

LAMAR

(calling after her)

Jessa.

LAMAR picks up the ammunition belt, the headband, and the jacket and exits.
Blackout.

Scene 6

The cell of insurgents, represented by a table and two chairs. The DISPATCHER is seated poring over some papers on the table. LAMAR enters looking through papers in a folder.

LAMAR

This says Thursday, the day before the festival...

DISPATCHER

Yes.

LAMAR

Why not during the festival?

DISPATCHER

Too much security. And there will actually be more soldiers there during the set up.

LAMAR

When?

DISPATCHER

Just after lunch. They'll take all morning to bring in the platforms, and then that afternoon, they'll assemble the stage. That's when they'll have the most people there.

LAMAR

(looking at the sketch on the table)

So...where do we start?

DISPATCHER

This is where they'll set up the stage. Behind it we have a very narrow street, almost an alley.

LAMAR

Coggins Road.

DISPATCHER

At the other end of Coggins Road is the fire station, where the emergency responders will be. They always hold the festival here, so that it will be closest to the emergency services. And a block farther down is the police precinct.

LAMAR

It seems crazy to do it with so many cops around.

DISPATCHER

That makes it more effective. We use two bombers. One will go up to the soldiers preparing the platforms and detonate – probably forty to fifty soldiers there. Once people hear the explosion, they'll start running to get away – straight down Coggins Road.

LAMAR

Okay.

DISPATCHER

And when the police and emergency responders hear it, they'll come, too - from the other side, creating a large mass of people right here at the road's entrance.

LAMAR

Okay.

DISPATCHER

We use a second bomber, to meet them – right where the two crowds collide.

LAMAR

That would be devastating.

DISPATCHER

The second bomber would need to be about here, which is just outside this sidewalk café. So, the two bombers go to the café, sit at a table outside, and wait until the soldiers are busy building the stage. They sit there, have a cup of coffee. If it takes too long, they can even order lunch. When the time is right, bomber number one detonates near the

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

soldiers. Then bomber number two gets up, walks to the alley entrance – maybe ten, twelve feet. When the crowds come together - boom, the second explosion takes out even more.

LAMAR

That's a good plan. And the festival will be practically empty the next day, because everyone will be afraid to go.

DISPATCHER

What time is it?

LAMAR

(checks watch)

Ten-fifteen.

SOUND: Buzzer. The DISPATCHER and LAMAR exchange glances. LAMAR quietly exits and the DISPATCHER puts away the papers, shoving them back into a folder, and then quickly exits in a different direction. After a moment, HOLLOWAY bursts in, followed by LAMAR.

LAMAR (cont'd)

I told you to wait out there.

HOLLOWAY

This is very important!

LAMAR

I said "wait!"

HOLLOWAY

Where is he?

LAMAR

Are you deaf?

HOLLOWAY

I want to talk to him!

LAMAR

No kidding, buddy, you made that clear the first time, but I can tell you, we don't know anything about your nephew.

I want to talk to your boss.

HOLLOWAY

DISPATCHER enters.

DISPATCHER

Is something wrong?

LAMAR

This stupid jerk-

DISPATCHER

Lamar! Respect, please.
(to HOLLOWAY)
What can I do for you?

HOLLOWAY

My name is Victor Holloway. I run the laundromat on 14th Avenue. I want to talk to you about my nephew, Frederick.

DISPATCHER

How can I help?

HOLLOWAY

I thought that Frederick may have come to you....for help.

DISPATCHER

Why?

HOLLOWAY

To volunteeras a ...a freedom fighter.

DISPATCHER

Well, this is hardly the place for that kind of business – we aren't involved in-

HOLLOWAY

You don't need to pretend – I know what you do here.

DISPATCHER

Do you? Mr. Holloway, rest assured that your nephew isn't here. In fact, we don't even know your nephew.

HOLLOWAY

I don't believe you.

DISPATCHER

(trying to get him to leave)
Look, if he drops by, I'll tell him you're looking for him.

HOLLOWAY

So you know him!

DISPATCHER

No, but from this point on, I will ask everyone who comes here if he is related to Victor Holloway, the man who runs the laundromat on 14th Avenue.

HOLLOWAY

I know who you are.

DISPATCHER

Really?

HOLLOWAY

You're a blood thirsty bastard who destroys lives in the name of freedom.

DISPATCHER

Could you be a little more specific?

HOLLOWAY

You executed Robert Napier on the front steps of City Hall three weeks ago.

DISPATCHER

Napier was a conspirator.

HOLLOWAY

You don't know that!

DISPATCHER

He confessed.

HOLLOWAY

After you kidnapped his eight year old son.

DISPATCHER

Some people are shy when it comes to talking about themselves. Sometimes they need encouragement.

HOLLOWAY

Then why, after he confessed, did you hang the young boy from the Ninth Street Bridge?

DISPATCHER

Because the football stadium was closed for renovation.

SOUND: Siren in the distance.

HOLLOWAY

You're nothing but a bully, pushing the lives of the innocent ahead of you in a futile wave of violence.

DISPATCHER

We are at war, Mr. Holloway.

HOLLOWAY

No, we're not! War is fought with soldiers and airplanes and artillery. You are just destroying people's lives.

DISPATCHER

We don't have soldiers... or airplanes, ...or tanks or helicopters or artillery. All we have are little birds of liberty, and where ever they light, freedom blossoms.

HOLLOWAY

Call it what you want, it's the same thing: Innocent people are murdered while some poor soul commits suicide.

DISPATCHER

That's how we fight this war.

HOLLOWAY

And you tell them that they're going to paradise, that God is pleased with them.

DISPATCHER

I don't say those things, Mr. Holloway. I'm not a religious man.

HOLLOWAY

Then how can you-

DISPATCHER

I don't. They choose to believe whatever suits them best, and I'm simply tolerant of their beliefs. My motivations are purely political.

HOLLOWAY

And evil. You pressure the unfortunate to kill themselves.

DISPATCHER

(losing his temper)

That's where you're wrong, old man. People come to me and ask to go on a mission. My job is to prepare the mission - to prep him, arm him, show him what to do. That's my job. His job is to blow up, and he does that willingly.

HOLLOWAY

Because you seduce them with your talk of patriotism and insurgency. You are killing off our young people.

DISPATCHER

Am I? What about you? Why do you think so many young people join our cause? Because their parents have suppressed their youth! You hold them prisoners in their own homes, refusing to let them socialize, or learn anything except your ancient traditions, which you shove down their throats. You're no better than this Adversary government which oppresses our people, refusing to give them good jobs, or a chance to buy a home, or go to college – these devils who check our paperwork every two city blocks or build walls and refuse to let us come and go as we choose.

HOLLOWAY

Well, maybe they'd give you a little more personal liberty, if you would just stop blowing them up.

DISPATCHER

(pause)

I think it's time for you to go.

SOUND: Siren in the distance.

HOLLOWAY

What if I tell the authorities about you? What if I tell them where these rebel rats are holed up? Where the political vermin is hiding? That's what I should do.

DISPATCHER

You are not my enemy, Mr. Holloway. If you were, you'd be dead already. I have no fight to pick with you, no reason to cause you harm...but I admonish you: If you interfere with my mission, if you obstruct our operations, if you conspire against us with the authorities...I will come get you. You'll be dragged out of your home in the middle of the night, and your house torched to the ground. Your children thrown out into the street to live like stray cats and you won't be there to protect them. And the next morning, your family will go to your laundromat on 14th Avenue and find your head rolling around inside one of your dryers.

HOLLOWAY

You're a very sick person!

DISPATCHER

I appreciate your concern for my health.

HOLLOWAY

You disgust me.

HOLLOWAY spits in the DISPATCHER's face.

DISPATCHER

(pause, without flinching)

You are fortunate, Mr. Holloway. You've been able to live under the Adversary occupation without dire consequences – inconvenient maybe, but you've been able to support your family and create a life for yourself. You haven't experienced the destruction of your family, your father... beaten to death by Adversary soldiers, your mother... molested by State Police, your brothers abducted and sent to labor camps. You're very lucky, Mr. Holloway. I envy you. I just wish you knew how fortunate you really are.

HOLLOWAY exits. LAMAR hands a handkerchief to the DISPATCHER who wipes the spittle from his face.

LAMAR

Will he tell?

DISPATCHER

He's just worried about his family.

LAMAR

Do you think he knows?

DISPATCHER

About?

LAMAR

Dayla.

DISPATCHER

(shaking his head)

The parents are always the last to know.

The DISPATCHER returns the handkerchief to LAMAR. MARIAH enters quickly, almost out of breath.

MARIAH

Get out! Get out now!

DISPATCHER

What's wrong?

MARIAH

The bomb didn't go off. They caught her!

DISPATCHER

(to LAMAR)

Quick, clear out the weapons and supplies. Put everything in the van.

(to MARIAH)

Call Marcus, tell him to get over here now. We need to be out of here in fifteen minutes.

Lights fade out on the bustle of activity.

END OF ACT I

TWO ANGELS

ACT II

Scene 1

The Womens' prison. DAYLA sits on a rough wooden bench, waiting, holding a small box of tea. After a moment, JESSA, wearing a prison uniform, enters, surprised to see DAYLA.

JESSA
Dayla?

DAYLA
(rising)
Hi.

After a brief pause, JESSA rushes to DAYLA, taking her hands and sobbing, happy to see her.

JESSA
Thank you...so much, Daylathanks for coming.

DAYLA
Are you okay?

JESSA
(nodding, wiping her eyes)
Please – sit.

DAYLA
I told them I was your sister. I was afraid they wouldn't let me see you.

JESSA
It's okay. They don't care. And you're closer to me than any sister.

DAYLA
Will the guards-

JESSA
No. They let this place run wild. They don't care as long as we're not on the outside.

DAYLA
I brought you some tea.

JESSA

Oh, thank you, Dayla, that's so sweet of you. We don't have tea in here – only coffee.

DAYLA

I know that makes your stomach hurt.

JESSA

You remember that?

DAYLA

Of course, Jessa, you just told me a week ago.

JESSA

It seems like much longer. Months...or years...a long time ago. Things aren't good here, Dayla.

DAYLA

Do theyyou know... mistreat you?

JESSA

They treat us like livestock or something. This place is a like a ghetto, only you can't leave. Did you see that big woman, when you came in, the one with the scar on her face?

DAYLA

Yes.

JESSA

Her name is Evelyn. She's like a bully or something. Everybody is afraid of her. She makes me do her laundry, or she'll beat me up. It's scary. The guards won't do anything. There aren't enough of them to keep everything in order.

DAYLA

Has your family come to see you?

JESSA doesn't respond.

DAYLA (cont'd)

What about your husband?

JESSA

(long pause, then crying)

Dayla.....you're my first visitor.

DAYLA

Oh, Jessa, I'm so sorry. Hasn't anybody else come?

JESSA

I got a letter – from my mother. She said they’re very disappointed. My husband is upset. He’s going to divorce me.

DAYLA

No!

JESSA

He’s looking for another wife – he doesn’t want me anymore.

DAYLA

Oh, Jessa.

JESSA

I don’t blame him. I’m stuck in here – I’m no good to him.

DAYLA

But if he loves you, he should stand by you.

JESSA

He says I can’t do anything right – not even blow myself up. It doesn’t matter, after I get out, he’d just throw me out on the street anyways. Who wants a criminal for a wife?

DAYLA

How long will you be here?

JESSA

The lawyer said I will probably be sentenced to seven years. When I get out, my life will be over. I’ll be almost thirty years old – no one will marry me, no one will hire me. I wish I were dead.

DAYLA

Don’t say that.

(pause)

What happened, Jessa? What went wrong?

JESSA

Nothing. nothing went wrong. Mariah and I got on the bus just like they planned. She sat on the left, I sat on the right with the guitar case. I was very nervous – I was glad to have her there. She would look over at me every once in a while and smile – it made me feel less anxious. When we got to the academy, Mariah got off. Then the cadets got on. I counted – twenty-seven of them, boisterous, happy, glad to be done with their exams. Some of them stared at me. I don’t think they thought anything was wrong, just boys, you know, checking out the women on the bus. I kept thinking to myself “This is my wedding, I am the bride,” over and over. Then the bus pulled away from the stop and I looked out and saw Mariah, walking away. I caught her eye, thinking this

JESSA (cont'd)

would be the last time I ever saw her. When we got to the next stop, I was ready. "This is my wedding, I am the bride." I got up and when I was in the aisle, I picked up the guitar case. The cadets were noisy, joking and shouting at each other. I stood up straight, and lifted up the guitar case. "This is my wedding, I am the bride." Just then, a young woman got on, holding her child, and as she paid the driver, the little boy she was holding looked at me. He was a pretty baby - he reminded me of my niece Brianna, such a happy baby. And just as I took off my scarf, the little boy smiled at me.

(pause)

I froze. I didn't know what to do. Suddenly all the noise stopped, and the cadets stared at me, at my yellow headband.....and I couldn't do it. I had my finger on the button, but.....that little boy, he didn't....he shouldn't have to.....

(long pause)

I couldn't push the button. I ran out the front of the bus. I even pushed the mother and little boy out of my way. I fell down the steps, I dropped the guitar case. I picked it up and ran down the street a ways, but the police surrounded me. I tried to detonate the bomb, but the fall from the bus must have broken the fuse. I stood there crying, pushing the button over and over, but nothing happened. They brought me here and questioned me for two days. They finally got tired of me. Nothing went wrong,except for me. No suicide. No bombing. Just a stupid girl running down the street.

DAYLA

Don't say that, Jessa.

JESSA

It's true. I'm a failure at everything. You can tell the others, I didn't tell. I didn't say anything that might...well, I didn't really know anything, anyhow. Were there any problems, after I got caught? Is everyone okay?

DAYLA

Yes, they-

JESSA

No, don't say anything more. If I don't know, I can't give away anything.

DAYLA

Is there anything else I can do for you?

JESSA

(pause)

Do you, pray, Dayla?

DAYLA

Sometimes.

Will you pray for me?

JESSA

DAYLA nods. JESSA pauses, then slowly she begins to grimace and breaks down, sobbing. DAYLA attempts to console her.

Oh, Dayla! I wish I were dead.

JESSA (cont'd)

DAYLA holds JESSA as the lights fade out.

Scene 2

The insurgents' new location. MARIAH stands in the spotlight, wearing the camouflage jacket, with ammunition belts wrapped over shoulders. On her head is a yellow scarf tied like a head band. In one hand she holds a rifle, in the other is a sheet of paper from which she reads. MARIAH is much more intense than before.

MARIAH

(reading)

May the blood of our enemies soak into the soil and bring about a bountiful harvest of freedom. This is the destiny of those who stand in our way. This is the fate of those who oppose us.

All right. That's very good.

DISPATCHER (offstage)

The lights come up. LAMAR enters, holding the video camera, having taped MARIAH's speech. DISPATCHER enters and takes rifle from MARIAH.

Are you all right?

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Yes.

MARIAH

Are you-

DISPATCHER

MARIAH

Yes, I'm sure. Have you found someone to help me?

DISPATCHER

No. We're checking. I think I may know a guy – we'll see.

MARIAH

And if we don't?

DISPATCHER

Then you'll have to do the mission alone. It won't be as big, but it will still be meaningful.

DAYLA enters and watches.

MARIAH

And the bomb?

DISPATCHER

A vest. Underneath a shawl.

MARIAH

I won't be here tomorrow – Peter's funeral.

DISPATCHER

I understand. We'll have everything ready for you on Thursday. Spend this time with your family. Are you sure you're okay?

MARIAH

You don't need to ask me anymore.

DISPATCHER exits. MARIAH begins to remove the ammunition belts. DAYLA steps in.

DAYLA

Let me help.

MARIAH

Thank you, Dayla.

DAYLA helps remove the belts, the headband, and the camouflage jacket.

DAYLA

Are you going on a mission?

MARIAH
The Festival.

DAYLA
I see.
(pause)
I thought that...you know....Jessa said you weren't going to be a martyr...because of your little brother.

MARIAH
My brother is dead.

DAYLA
Oh! I'm sorry, Mariah.

MARIAH
They killed him last night.

DAYLA
I'm so sorry.

MARIAH
Where were you?

DAYLA
I went to see Jessa. In prison.

MARIAH
How is she?

DAYLA
She's okay. She said she didn't tell the police about us.

MARIAH
That's good. It's too bad that the bomb didn't go off. I feel badly for her.

DAYLA
She was very upset, but it wasn't her fault.

MARIAH
It's strange that happened. Anthony wired it, and he's very meticulous. I'll have to talk to him about that. He must have been in a hurry.

DAYLA
It may have broken when it fell on the street.

What? MARIAH

She...umm... DAYLA

What happened? MARIAH

She...Jessa got scared and ran from the bus. The guitar case fell – maybe it broke the bomb. DAYLA

She ran from the bus? MARIAH

She saw a baby and couldn't do it. DAYLA

She is so weak. MARIAH

She tried to set off the bomb when the police took her, but it wouldn't explode. DAYLA

That girl has no spirit. MARIAH

That's not true. DAYLA

If she really wanted to fight for freedom, she would have completed her mission – like the martyr she swore that she was. MARIAH

She justlost her nerve. DAYLA

She's a failure. She'd be better off dead. MARIAH

Her family won't visit her. DAYLA

MARIAH

Of course not. If she weren't in jail, they'd disown her. She failed, Dayla. She's not a hero. She's just a sad little girl. Another soul crushed by the Adversaries.

DAYLA

Are the Adversaries responsible for this?

MARIAH

What? If they didn't cage us up like hamsters, we wouldn't long for freedom. If they didn't steal our homes, we wouldn't fight for a place to live. They are evil, Dayla, the devil's children and their only desire is our destruction. They're wicked snakes walking on two legs, ravaging our land and our people.

DAYLA

But what about the baby that Jessa saw on the bus? It was an Adversary baby.

MARIAH

It would be better off thrown in front of the same bus, or to have its head bashed on the sidewalk. It was an Adversary, and death is too good for it. If I blow my nose, the smudge I leave on the handkerchief has more value than a million Adversaries. They are ruthless, bloodthirsty, and they deserve to die.

DAYLA

(pause)

What happened to your brother?

MARIAH

They shot him. He was on the street, playing with some friends. Somebody threw a rock at the guard house, and the soldiers opened fire. Some men brought him to our house, his clothes soaked with blood, his face smeared with dirt. He was gone.

DAYLA

I'm sorry.

MARIAH

Four years ago, I sat in a café with my fiancé. His name was Sebastian. We had just ordered dinner. He was holding my hand and telling me a funny story when the soldiers came around the corner and shot him. I loved him, Dayla, more than anything. I used to say Sebastian carried my heart in the palm of his hand. And when he died, he kept my heart. I never got it back. All I have is an empty space in my chest, and now that Peter is gone, that space is not just empty – it's cold. A cold so harsh that it makes my bones hurt. The kind of cold that makes me think of nothing else...except how miserable life is.

DAYLA

You're a very strong woman, Mariah.

MARIAH

No. I'm not strong, Dayla. I'm lost. The only thing I can do now is go to heaven. Tomorrow I will bury my brotherand on Thursday, I will let fifty Adversary mothers know just how much it hurts to lose a loved one.

MARIAH exits as the lights fade out.

Scene 3

The Holloway family kitchen, represented by a kitchen table and a couple chairs. HOLLOWAY sits at the table with a plate of food, eating. Next to him is another plate for DAYLA.

HOLLOWAY

(calling out)
Dayla?

DAYLA (offstage)

Yes, Daddy.

HOLLOWAY

This is very good.

DAYLA (offstage)

Thank you.

HOLLOWAY

Hurry up before yours gets cold.

DAYLA (offstage)

Just a minute. I'm getting the bread out of the oven.

HOLLOWAY continues eating. After a moment, DAYLA enters, carrying a plate of freshly baked bread. DAYLA is dressed in the conservative attire of a long skirt and a long-sleeved blouse.

DAYLA (cont'd)

Try some of this.

DAYLA places a piece of bread on
HOLLOWAY's plate, and then sits.
HOLLOWAY bites into the bread.

HOLLOWAY

Mmmm. Very good. Almost as good as your mother's.

DAYLA

I'm glad you like it.

They eat for a moment.

DAYLA

How was your day? Anything exciting happen?

HOLLOWAY

No. Same as always. I had to replace a drive belt on a top-loader. It's a real pain. The front-loaders are much easier to work on.

DAYLA

I'm sorry.

HOLLOWAY

It's okay. That just goes with the job, you know. I'm just happy to have a good job.

They eat for a moment.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

So are you going to tell me?

DAYLA

What?

HOLLOWAY

Why you're dressed like that.

DAYLA

Don't you like it?

HOLLOWAY

Yes, it looks very nice on you, but that's..... you know, that's not what you normally wear.

DAYLA

I just thought you might prefer it. You might like it better if I complied with the traditional fashions, rather than ...the more modern attire.

HOLLOWAY

Those blue jeans you wear – too much like the Outside Culture. This is much more modest. You look more like what a woman should look like.

DAYLA

Thanks, Daddy.

HOLLOWAY

It's good that you do that, you know. Maybe people won't talk so much. I have friends that say...well, it's not important. You look very nice like that.

DAYLA

Well, I can wear this more often if you like.

HOLLOWAY

I would like that.

DAYLA

If it makes you happy, I will.

HOLLOWAY

Good. I like that.

DAYLA

(pause)

Daddy.....did you talk to Christopher's family?

HOLLOWAY

Oh....yes, I talked with his father.

DAYLA

(pause, waiting for more)

And what did he say?

HOLLOWAY

He said you were okay, maybe it would work.

DAYLA

Oh, that's good news.

HOLLOWAY

He wasn't very excited, you know, but his boy is crippled, so what kind of girl can a crippled boy get?

DAYLA

So we can get married then? When can we have the wedding?

HOLLOWAY

(pause)

You really want to marry this kid, huh?

DAYLA

Yes, Daddy, I love him.

HOLLOWAY

You don't think it would be better to wait? For somebody else?

DAYLA

No, Daddy, Christopher is the one I want. I don't want to wait any longer – I'm nearly twenty.

HOLLOWAY

Well, you know it's um.....it's just that...

DAYLA

Please, Daddy, please let us get married.

(pause)

Please?

HOLLOWAY

I'm sorry Dayla, but it's ...I don't think it will work.

DAYLA

Why not?

HOLLOWAY

His dad wants a dowry.

DAYLA

So? Can't you give him a dowry?

HOLLOWAY

I shouldn't have to.

DAYLA

But I love him, Daddy.

HOLLOWAY

I understand, Dayla, but his father wants money, lots of money. I offered to take the boy into the business – teach him how to run a laundromat, but he insists on being paid.

DAYLA

Then pay him, Daddy.

HOLLOWAY

I don't have that much money, Dayla, and even if I did, I should have to pay a crippled boy to marry my daughter.

DAYLA

But it's only important that Christopher and I be together.

HOLLOWAY

Apparently his family thinks that togetherness comes at a price.

DAYLA

Daddy, please!

HOLLOWAY

I wanted you to get married, Dayla, but this just isn't going to work out. I'm sorry, I can't do it.

DAYLA

You don't love me! You don't love me at all!

HOLLOWAY

Of course I do.

DAYLA

Then why won't you let me get married? You hate me!

HOLLOWAY

Dayla, you just don't understand these things. Life is much more complicated than your little ...romantic daydreams.

DAYLA

You hate me, don't you? I can't do anything right. I tried cooking you a nice meal. I dressed like this just for you. But you treat me like a stray dog! You won't let me get married, you won't let me go to college – you hardly let me out of the house. How long are you going to punish me?

DAYLA storms out.

HOLLOWAY

Dayla....some day you'll understand.

HOLLOWAY continues eating. SOUND:
Phone rings twice in the next room.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

Dayla! Get the phone.

Eventually phone stops ringing. After a moment, DAYLA enters with a cordless phone and hands it to HOLLOWAY.

DAYLA

It's Uncle Tyler.

HOLLOWAY takes the phone as DAYLA exits with his dinner plate.

HOLLOWAY

Yes.....no, he's not here.....

(tries to be consoling but obviously worried)

Tyler, I'm sure it's okay. He's probably out with friends or something. I'm sure there's a good explanation..... Look, I'll come over now and help you look for him.....yes, I sure we're just worrying over nothing, okay, but if it makes you feel better, we can form a search party or something.No problem, I'll be there in twenty minutes.....Okay.

HOLLOWAY places the phone down on the table. DAYLA returns and begins clearing the table.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

Have you heard from your cousin Frederick lately?

DAYLA shakes her head.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

Do you know where he might be?

DAYLA shakes her head.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

He didn't come home for supper. I'm going over to your Uncle's. We're going to go look for him. I might get in late.

HOLLOWAY gathers his things and prepares to leave.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

You stay here. I don't want you going anywhere tonight. And no one comes over, understand?

DAYLA nods. HOLLOWAY exits.
SOUND: Phone rings. DAYLA answers.

DAYLA

Hello?..... Yes..... Oh, thanks for calling back. The reason I asked, is because I have something that belongs to her.....her guitar.....Yes, I wanted to get it to you, would that be all right?

(pause)

What happened?..... Oh my god.....With a – how did she get a razor blade? I'm sorry, that's...that's....I'm very sorry.....for your loss.....Um, what about-

(the caller has hung up)

..the guitar?

Blackout.

Scene 4

The insurgent's secret location. A spot light shines on DAYLA is still dressed in conservative attire, but over it she wears camouflage jacket and a yellow headband, and holds an automatic rifle.

DAYLA

I am the living martyr, Dayla Holloway, and my journey is one of choice, not coercion. What I do, I do in the name of God Almighty and the freedom of my homeland. I say goodbye to my father, my family, my friends. The next time you see me, I shall be in Heaven. It is with great joy that I undertake this mission, to clear out the oppressors from my homeland, to destroy those who would enslave us, to conquer the unjust. As my spirit rises to Paradise, may the blood of our enemies soak into the soil and bring about a bountiful harvest of freedom. This is the destiny of those who stand in our way. This is the fate of those who oppose us.

DISPATCHER (in the dark)

That's good.

As the lights come up, we see LAMAR standing to one side holding the video camera. The DISPATCHER approaches DAYLA.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

That's very good. I've never had anyone memorize their speech before. It's very effective.

DAYLA
Thanks. I wanted to do a good job.

DISPATCHER
Go ahead and take that off.

DAYLA begins removing her jacket and headband, and hands them to LAMAR. MARIAH enters wearing a vest outfitted with explosives, and carrying a second vest for DAYLA.

MARIAH
Here, try this on.

DAYLA
Is this it?

MARIAH
Yes.

DISPATCHER
Mariah, show her how to hold the detonator.

MARIAH helps DAYLA with the vest and pulls out a cable with a detonator button.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)
(to LAMAR)
Go get the file.

LAMAR exits.

DISPATCHER
(handing her the detonator button)
This is the detonator – when you press this button, it will explode.

DAYLA
Whoa, I don't want to set it off.

MARIAH
It's okay, it's not connected right now.

DISPATCHER

Tomorrow, you'll be wearing a shawl or coat over the vest – it depends on the weather. We'll run the wire through the coat pocket or underneath the shawl, so you can have it close to your hand.

LAMAR returns with a folder and hands it to the DISPATCHER.

MARIAH

Does it feel alright – comfortable?

DAYLA

It's okay.

MARIAH adjusts the vest on DAYLA.

DISPATCHER

Let me show you what will happen.

The DISPATCHER removes a sketch from the folder and reviews it with DAYLA and MARIAH.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

This is the cafe at Coggins Road. Next to it, the festival grounds. Tomorrow at lunch time, you'll go there and have coffee at one of the sidewalk tables.

DAYLA

Outside?

DISPATCHER

Right. The soldiers will break for lunch, then return to assemble the stage platforms, here. Once it looks like they've returned, give them about ten minutes or so to get busy. Then, Mariah, you will walk over to the soldiers and detonate. At that point, Dayla, a lot of commotion will take place. People will run away from the festival grounds, down Coggins Road, and others will be coming to the site, up the same street. There should be a lot of people coming together about here.

(points on map)

When Mariah detonates, you get up from your table and walk to the edge of the street. Pick a table close to the road to make it easier. When the intersection starts to get crowded, go ahead and press your button. You'll want a big crowd in front of you.

LAMAR

The explosives are mounted mainly on your chest.

DISPATCHER

Exactly. So, you'll want to facing the group of soldiers, Mariah, and Dayla - you need to face the largest part of the crowd. Any questions?

DAYLA

When will the explosives be, umm....

LAMAR

We have an engineer who'll set up your vests before you leave in the morning.

MARIAH

We'll also be wearing yellow scarves on our heads.

DISPATCHER

Right, but you'll wear a headscarf over it.

DAYLA

Oh.

LAMAR

It'll make you look kind of frumpy.

DISPATCHER

Anyone who sees you will just think you're very devout. Right before you press the button, you'll pull off your headscarf, revealing the yellow headband.

DAYLA

Okay.

MARIAH

There's a room for us upstairs. I'm going to spend the night there. Are you going home?

DAYLA

No.

DISPATCHER

Then you can spend the night with Mariah, if you like.

DAYLA

All right.

The DISPATCHER exits.

LAMAR

Let me help you out of that.

LAMAR begins unfastening the vest.

MARIAH

I'm going to put mine away, Lamar.

LAMAR

Okay.

MARIAH exits.

DAYLA

Did you hear about Jessa?

LAMAR

Yeah. Bummer, huh?

DAYLA

I feel bad for her.

LAMAR

Yeah, but if she'd been stronger, none of that would have happened.

DAYLA

I guess.

LAMAR removes the vest.

DAYLA (cont'd)

Thanks.

LAMAR

No sweat. So you're not going home tonight?

DAYLA

No.

LAMAR

Do you want to go do something?

DAYLA

Like what?

LAMAR

Whatever you want – it's your last night.

DAYLA

It wouldn't look good to be seen with you.

LAMAR

We could go back to my apartment. Nobody will know.

DAYLA

That wouldn't be right.

LAMAR

It's okay, nobody will know.

DAYLA

God will know.

LAMAR

He'll forgive you tomorrow.

DAYLA

I ... I don't know.

LAMAR

I just thought you might want to spend the night with someone who likes you, respects you.

DAYLA

Do you still have that bottle of vodka?

LAMAR

How did you-

DAYLA

Word gets around.

LAMAR

Umm...yeah. And maybe we could spend some time together, close together. Just you and me.

(pause)

What do you think?

DAYLA

Have you ever kissed a girl, Lamar?

LAMAR

Umm...Sure...yeah, lots of times.

DAYLA pulls a surprised LAMAR close and kisses him deeply as the lights fade out.

Scene 5

The insurgent's location, represented by a table and two chairs. On the table is a thermos and two cups. The DISPATCHER is seated, reviewing some paper work. LAMAR enters, carrying a paper bag.

DISPATCHER

What time is it?

LAMAR

(checking his watch)

Twelve-thirty-six. They should be there by now.

DISPATCHER

What did you get?

LAMAR reaches into the bag and hands the DISPATCHER a sandwich.

LAMAR

The usual.

LAMAR pulls out another sandwich, places it on the table and then reaches in again and produces two wrapped pickles.

LAMAR (cont'd)

Pickle?

DISPATCHER

No.

LAMAR

They're good.

DISPATCHER

I don't like pickles.

LAMAR

Really?

LAMAR begins eating pickle.

LAMAR (cont'd)

They're good for you.

DISPATCHER

No thanks.

LAMAR

Go ahead and try it.

LAMAR waves second pickle at the DISPATCHER, who glares at him.
LAMAR sheepishly puts the pickle on the table.

DISPATCHER

I've been going over Mariah's duties. We're going to have to split them up between you and me.

The DISPATCHER hands LAMAR a sheet of paper.

LAMAR

Aren't we getting a replacement?

DISPATCHER

May be in a week or two.

LAMAR

(perusing list)
Laundry? I have to do the laundry?

DISPATCHER

Somebody has to.

LAMAR

But that's woman's work.

DISPATCHER

And it has to be done.

LAMAR

Geez!

(pause)
Can I have your pickle?

The DISPATCHER glares at LAMAR, who picks up second pickle and begins eating. The DISPATCHER opens thermos and pours coffee into a cup.

Do you think she'll do it?

LAMAR

Dayla?

DISPATCHER

Yeah.

LAMAR

Maybe, maybe not. That's why Mariah's going first. If Dayla chickens out, we'll still have the first explosion. Coffee?

DISPATCHER

No.

LAMAR

You don't like coffee?

DISPATCHER

Sure, just not your coffee.

LAMAR

What's wrong with my coffee?

DISPATCHER

It's too hot. I get blisters on my tongue just thinking about it.

LAMAR

The DISPATCHER hears a noise and freezes, signaling to LAMAR. The DISPATCHER draws a pistol, and they quietly rise and move in opposite directions, into the shadows. After a moment, HOLLOWAY enters slowly, disheveled and tired, having been up all night.

Hello?

HOLLOWAY

DISPATCHER

Mr. Holloway. You shouldn't be here.

HOLLOWAY

I apologize. Ium.....I don't want to offend you, butI need your help.

LAMAR

Why would we help you?

DISPATCHER

Lamar.

HOLLOWAY

I would have come earlier, but I didn't realize you'd moved. My nephew Frederick....he's missing.

LAMAR

He's not here.

HOLLOWAY

Please, you have to know something. His father is worried sick. You have to-

DISPATCHER

Why do you think he's with us?

HOLLOWAY

That's just the kind of kid he is – he doesn't fit in with the others. He's the kind of boy who would choose to be a suicide bomber.

DISPATCHER

If that's his choice –

HOLLOWAY

But it's not! He just doesn't know better. He's very impressionable. If you told him that he was special or that he had a divine calling, he would believe you.

DISPATCHER

Why would we tell him that?

HOLLOWAY

That's what people like you - I'm sorry. I mean no offense... I'm just worried about Frederick.

DISPATCHER

He's not here, Mr. Holloway.

LAMAR

Maybe you should go see the Brothers of Holiness.

HOLLOWAY

He's not with them. Please, would you tell me where he is?

LAMAR

We don't know.

HOLLOWAY

You have to know - you have to tell me. I need to know where he is.

DISPATCHER

I told you –

HOLLOWAY

Please! Someone has convinced him to do something drastic. And you, you people, youI do not mean to I just want to know the whereabouts of my nephew.

DISPATCHER

I think we've made it clear, Mr. Holloway, we don't –

HOLLOWAY

But you have to! You can't just take our children from us! You use our babies as weapons for your misguided political –

LAMAR

Watch it, old man!

DISPATCHER

Mr. Holloway, you need to leave – and don't come back.

HOLLOWAY

I need to find my nephew! You've taken him from me!

LAMAR

We don't have your nephew!

HOLLOWAY

We spend our lives raising our children, trying to guide them and teach them how to live, and you radicals steal them away!

DISPATCHER

We don't take your children.

LAMAR

And if you're such a good parent, you'd know about Dayla.

HOLLOWAY

(pause)

My daughter?

LAMAR realizes he said the wrong thing
and clams up.

DISPATCHER

Mr. Holloway, you need to leave now.

HOLLOWAY

You have my daughter?

DISPATCHER

No, we don't have your daughter.

HOLLOWAY

Where is she?

DISPATCHER

She's not here.

HOLLOWAY

Please, tell me.

DISPATCHER

Mr. Holloway-

HOLLOWAY

(to LAMAR)

Is she? Is she one of your suicide bombers?

LAMAR

You need to go.

HOLLOWAY

(sobbing, breaking down)

Please, no, please, Dayla..she is.....oh, no, my god, please...

DISPATCHER

Holloway.

HOLLOWAY

(crying)
Where is she? Tell me, please...

HOLLOWAY falls to the floor in front of
LAMAR, clutching him.

DISPATCHER

Holloway!

HOLLOWAY

I beg you, tell me – where is my Dayla?

LAMAR

Mr. Holloway-

HOLLOWAY

I have to know – please, tell me!

LAMAR

(shaken, to DISPATCHER)
We've gotta-

DISPATCHER

Shut up, Lamar.

LAMAR

But look at him.

HOLLOWAY

She's my only child!

DISPATCHER

Mr. Holloway, would you-

HOLLOWAY

Where is Dayla?!!

LAMAR

Come on, we can't let him-

DISPATCHER

Shut up, Lamar.

LAMAR

But she's his only kid.

HOLLOWAY

Please!

LAMAR

Look, Mariah will go through with it. It's no big deal.

DISPATCHER

Get out of here, old man!

HOLLOWAY

I'm begging you - please give me back my girl.

LAMAR

But we-

DISPATCHER

(points gun at LAMAR)
Shut up, Lamar!

HOLLOWAY

Where is Dayla?!!

LAMAR

She's at the festiv-

The DISPATCHER shoots LAMAR, who falls dead. HOLLOWAY stands looking at LAMAR's body in horror.

DISPATCHER

(pause)
Mr. Holloway, have a seat.

HOLLOWAY

(quietly, in shock)
Did he say...the Festival?

DISPATCHER

I didn't hear him say anything. Now please, sit.

HOLLOWAY

(more controlled)
But....is Dayla at the-

The DISPATCHER points pistol at HOLLOWAY.

DISPATCHER

Sit down, Holloway! Understand?

HOLLOWAY nods and sits.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

You're going to sit there, quietly. If you like, we can have a conversation, or you can be totally silent. In any case, you are going to sit there for an hour, and when that hour is over, you will get up calmly, and leave, forgetting that this ever happened. Understand?

HOLLOWAY nods.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

What time is it?

HOLLOWAY

(checks his watch)

Twelve-forty-five.

(nodding toward LAMAR's corpse)

He said -

DISPATCHER

What he said doesn't matter. Here – have a sandwich.

The DISPATCHER tosses the sandwich in front of HOLLOWAY and then refills his cup from the thermos.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

I'm sorry, but Lamar ate all the pickles. Go ahead – eat.

HOLLOWAY

(still in shock)

No...thank you.

The DISPATCHER sits and placing the pistol on the table, unwraps a sandwich, and takes a bite.

DISPATCHER

You know, you said some pretty rude things to me the last time we met.

HOLLOWAY

I'm sorry.

DISPATCHER

Some parents are honored to have a martyr for a child.

HOLLOWAY does not respond.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Do you know Gretchen Ridgeway?

HOLLOWAY shakes his head, uninterested.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Gretchen Ridgeway once bragged that three of her sons had served the Liberation as martyrs – three sons. And she proudly proclaimed that she had six more sons at home just waiting to die for the cause. Not all parents find us so despicable.

HOLLOWAY does not respond.

DISPATCHER finishes his last sip, and refills his cup.

DISPATCHER

I think, Mr. Holloway, your problem is simply that you don't know how to hate those who hurt you. You choose to ignore them, rather than face the problem head on.

HOLLOWAY

There's enough hatred in the world without me adding to it.

DISPATCHER

So does that mean you love peace, or that you are just too weak to stand up for yourself?

HOLLOWAY

I think that hatred clouds the mind.

DISPATCHER

Or maybe it just makes everything more clear. Coffee?

HOLLOWAY nods and the DISPATCHER pours coffee from the thermos into the other cup on the table. HOLLOWAY puts the cup to his lips, but notices it's too hot to drink.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

When I was a kid, my older brother Robert was in a bad car accident. In the hospital for months. The doctors were able patch him up, but he needed a new heart. The hospital contacted a family on the north side of the city, an Adversary school teacher whose daughter had drowned in a boating accident. They asked for the girl's heart, and told the parents that it was for my brother, one of our people, not an Adversary. You know what

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

that Adversary school teacher said? Do you? Do you know what this Adversary father said when they asked him for his daughter's heart?

HOLLOWAY does not respond.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

He said"yes." This Adversary father gave my brother his daughter's heart. I've never forgotten that. Or course, Robert didn't either. My parents wouldn't let him visit this Adversary family, but he told me that one day he would. Robert was going to meet the people whose daughter saved his life. So, on his eighteenth birthday, Robert took the bus to the Northend. The girl's father was now an elementary school principal. He was very surprised to see Robert, but he met with him, showed him around the school, took him to lunch in the cafeteria with the students. Then when they had eaten, Robert stood up and thanked him for this amazing gift. And as the principal shook his hand, he asked Robert if he could, one more time, hear his daughter's heartbeat. Robert let the principal put an ear to his chest, to hear the beat of his daughter's heart. The man listened for a moment, and then with tears streaming down his face, he looked into Robert's eyes and thanked him...for reuniting him with his daughter once again. At that moment, Robert detonated the bomb in his backpack, killing himself, and the principal, and twenty-six third graders.

(pause)

Robert taught me a valuable lesson that day.

(pause)

Do you know what he taught me?

HOLLOWAY does not respond.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

What time is it?

HOLLOWAY starts to look at his watch, but then quickly tosses the cup of coffee into the DISPATCHER's face. The DISPATCHER yells and grabs his face, and HOLLOWAY pushes over the table, sending the gun flying.

DISPATCHER (cont'd)

Damn it!

HOLLOWAY quickly runs off as the lights fade out.

To read the rest of this script, you may contact the author for a full copy. Please contact him at WriteDaveTucker@yahoo.com.