



# TOURIST OR TERRORIST

*In Israel or Palestine?*

**ELLIE KLIPP**

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## ***In Israel or Palestine?***

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Dr. Susan M. Michael  
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**Integrates Bible data to add to the feel of authenticity. Has the making of a good film.**

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Educator and Author

**This spy saga left me thinking, “This *must* have really happened!”**

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# Prologue

*Rome: Saturday, 1 p.m. (Week 1)*

Her hand shook as she handed her identification and boarding pass to the security agent. She felt nauseous. Between the travel and the stress of the assignment, her resistance must be down. Or could it be—?

Not now. She had always been so careful. With the uncertainty of her profession, commitment was impractical. She had accepted that, hadn't allowed reason to be overturned by emotion.

Yet beneath her discipline, somewhere in the depths of her being, a stubbornly irrepressible primitive stab of joy made her heart leap. Could there be life—new life—deep within her, pulsing, developing, growing, *being*?

She put a flat open hand on her abdomen and pressed inward as if to quell not only the nausea but also the wonder.

It was probably indigestion, she scolded herself. She shouldn't have eaten breakfast. The sausage had disagreed with her.

When the agent handed back her boarding pass, she squared her shoulders. Another few minutes and she would be on her way home. She would freshen up in the ladies' room and go to her gate.

If she was still nauseated tomorrow, she would see a doctor. He'd probably say she simply had the flu.



# 1

*Jerusalem: Saturday, 10 p.m.*

He lay on his stomach, the muscles of his back delineated by pale moonlight coming through the open window. The familiar ringtone jolted him out of a dark reverie. He shook his head, the set of his mouth signaling dread, as he reached for his cell phone. “What have you got?” he demanded.

“Hello? Ari Yannai?”

It was not the voice he was expecting. “Speaking,” he answered impatiently. “What is it?”

“I’m sorry to call so late.”

He could hear the woman’s indecision, her confidence ebbing away. He spoke more gently, “Go ahead. What is it?”

“I—I met a woman in the international airport in Rome. She asked me to call you, to bring you a note.”

“What was her name?” Ari interrupted sharply.

“Adina.”

“Adina!” the man echoed with repressed vehemence. “When did you speak with her?”

“Earlier today, after lunch. I was in the ladies room. I thought it was empty, but then I heard a moan. It was almost boarding time so—”

“Never mind that. Tell me about Adina. She gave you a note and asked you to call me?”

“Yes,” the woman answered. “She insisted I call tonight, no matter how late.”

“Where are you?”

“At the King David Hotel. The girls and I are—”

“What girls?”

“My daughters, Cora and Jane.”

“And you are—?”

“Kathryn Gerstein.”

“Okay, Mrs. Gerstein, I’ll come to your hotel right now.”

“Now? Mr. Yannai, it’s late. It’s been a long day. We took a group taxi, a sheroot, from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Then another taxi to the hotel.”

“I want to hear everything about Adina,” Ari persisted. “I’ll meet you in the lounge in fifteen minutes.”

Ari froze momentarily as he ended the call, his eyes fixed in a blank stare on the far wall of the bedroom. With a sharp shake of his head, he punched a speed dial on his cell and spoke in urgent Hebrew. Then he grabbed a pair of slacks from the back of a chair, buttoning his shirt as he ran down the stairs. As he reached the corner an ancient compact braked to a stop in front of him. Ari opened the passenger door and slid into the seat. “Let’s go, Nathan.”

The driver, older, with a pale complexion and a cautious air, nodded silently and shifted gears. He stopped in front of the King David.

Ari hurried into the hotel and strode through the lobby to the door of the lounge. As he paused to survey the room, his eyes stopped on the woman at a corner table. American. Thirty-something, slender. A crossed leg protruded from under the table, a low-heeled shoe dangling from one toe. She seemed tired, projecting a bored innocence, waiting. But her eyes did not fit the picture. Her glance flitted around the room not absently, but with intense focus, settling on him as he crossed the room. Her concentration reminded Ari of a ten-year-old boy with a bug on a pin.

He approached her table with a disarming grin. “Mrs. Gerstein?”

She extended her hand. “You must be Mr. Yannai. Please sit down.”

He sat. “You have a note for me?”

“Yes. It’s just some scribbles and numbers, but Adina was so insistent about it.” The woman smiled stiffly, puzzled. “Maybe it has romantic significance?”

“Maybe,” Ari grinned obligingly. “I care very much for Adina. I’d appreciate it if you’d tell me everything you remember about meeting her, every detail.”

He looked at the note for a moment before slipping it into his shirt pocket, shrugging nonchalantly. Then he smiled at the woman, boyish charm belying the early grey at his temples.

“I hardly know what to say,” the woman began. “I hope Adina is all right.”

He held her eyes as she spoke. Her accent was standard West Coast. He watched for little mannerisms—the way she fingered her water glass, the tilt of her head as she talked.

“On the way from Paris to Tel Aviv, there was a lay-over in Rome,” she explained. “I left my girls—they’re seven and twelve—sitting by our carry-on bags and went to freshen up. It was quiet in the ladies’ room. I assumed I was alone. Then I heard a low moan. I walked the length of the stalls. The doors were open and I could see they were all empty. Until the last one, where a young woman stood against the wall.”

“Describe her,” Ari interjected.

“Five four, a hundred and ten pounds, brown hair—darker than mine. Hazel eyes. She had a clear olive complexion with a few freckles across the bridge of her nose.” The woman frowned, concentrating. “And one mole, small but dark, on her jaw line.”

“Very observant,” he commented.

The woman pushed a stray lock of hair away from her eyes. The gesture appeared artless, her demeanor that of a tired stranger trying to fulfill a somewhat irritating obligation in a polite but expeditious manner. She made a good show of it, Ari admitted, but he wasn’t buying the act.

“So?” he prodded, palms upward.

“I thought she was going to faint. I said I’d get help, but she didn’t want me to,” Mrs. Gerstein answered. “Her accent sounded Israeli so I asked if she was on the flight to Tel Aviv, my flight.” The woman frowned. “She answered by asking why I was going to Israel.”

“And you said?”

“Vacation.”

“Had you been here before?” Ari questioned.

“Yes, first when I was seven—Jane’s age. With my dad.”

“Your father?” Ari echoed. “What did he do?”

“He worked for the State Department. He often had short overseas assignments. After the Six Day War in 1967 he brought us along—my mom, brother, and me.”

“I see. And other times?” the man continued.

“One other time. Aaron and I visited for for two weeks three years ago.”

“And Aaron is?”

“My husband. Was. He’s deceased.”

“Sorry,” Ari murmured shortly. His face tightened. “Let’s get back to Adina.”

Mrs. Gerstein shrugged. “Funny, she asked the same questions you did. Then all of a sudden she handed me that note.”

“What did she tell you?” Ari concentrated on the woman’s eyes.

“She said, ‘When you get to Jerusalem, call Ari Yannai. Give him the note.’”

The American cleared her throat and her voice became hoarse with emotion. “Adina was sort of shivering, but she insisted she’d be fine. It was boarding time and the girls were alone. I had to hurry. So Adina told me your number.”

“Is that all?”

Mrs. Gerstein hesitated. “She said, ‘Tell Ari I love him.’ Then I left.”

Despite all his training, Ari winced.

“Have you heard from her? Is she all right?” the woman added.

“I haven’t—heard—from her,” he answered stonily. “What did you do then?”



“I ran to the girls and we gathered our bags and rushed to the plane. We went through customs in Tel Aviv, caught the sheroot to Jerusalem, and found our hotel. I had to get the girls settled. Then I called you.”

“You spoke to no one of this?”

“No.” Her eyes darkened. “Why?”

The man stretched languidly and chuckled softly. “Adina can be very theatrical. We’re old friends and we often play practical jokes on each other. This time I’m afraid she got carried away and subjected you, an innocent bystander, to unwarranted anxiety.”

“A practical joke?” the American objected. “Adina wasn’t joking.”

“She’s a good actress,” Ari responded glibly. “I, uh—I’m an airline pilot, you see, and I’m scheduled to lay-over in Rome Tuesday evening. Adina’s not answering her phone. She just wants to make me worry so I’ll rush to her flat as soon as I land. Trust me, she’ll be waiting with a bottle of wine, laughing.”

Mrs. Gerstein leaned back from the table, aghast. For a moment the woman was silent, her gaze distant as if replaying the incident in her mind. Then her face hardened. “What about the note? What’s that all about?”

Ari shrugged eloquently. “Adina likes to tease me with mysterious notes.”

The woman sat up straighter. “I don’t believe you, Mr. Yannai. Adina was not playing a game. Something was terribly wrong. If you can help her— Well, I’ve delivered the message.”

She rose to sweep past him. He stood and put out a restraining arm, then let her go. He followed her into the lobby, watching thoughtfully as she disappeared into an elevator.

*Western Europe: Sunday, 4 p.m.*

Moshe, Adina’s katsa or field supervisor, had followed standard procedure. He did not interfere with the Israeli consular representative who met with the Italian authorities to handle the matter of the death of an Israeli national on Italian soil. The dead woman was

identified by her passport as Rivka Mizrachi. Neither the Israeli consular official nor the Italian police lieutenant investigating the murder had any reason to suspect the passport was Mossad special issue for one Adina Shagal.

A cleaning woman at the international airport had noticed a closed toilet door, last in a row of identical doors. She became curious when the occupant of the last stall did not emerge in the time it took her to wipe down the counters, polish the mirrors, and mop the floor. She knocked lightly on the locked door, with a tentative, “Signora?” When she heard no response, she knocked more insistently. When there was still no answer, the cleaning woman bent her corpulent frame to peer under the stall door. Seeing the form slumped on the floor, she left her mop and pail and scurried, white faced, to the maintenance office.

The news she sputtered prompted a call to the airport medical aid station and sent a maintenance man running to the restroom. He blocked the entrance with a yellow out-of-service sandwich board and went to work on the locked stall door, removing the hinges and lifting it out of the way. By the time the aid team arrived, the woman had been moved to the center of the tile floor. One look convinced the emergency medical technicians that it was too late to help the woman. Regardless, they commenced lifesaving routines, administering CPR long after they were certain there was no hope.

When the EMTs finally admitted defeat, they placed the body on a gurney, covered it with a sheet, and wheeled it as inconspicuously as possible to the nearest service elevator, where they turned it over to a waiting ambulance crew. Then they retreated to the aid station and began to write their reports.

As there was no sign of foul play, the airport cleaning crew rushed in with horrified efficiency to disinfect the restroom. Within half an hour all clues as to what had transpired in that restroom had been dissolved in a solution of biocide and foaming cleanser.

The ambulance crew dutifully delivered the woman’s body to the local morgue where an overworked coroner began a routine examination. The autopsy included a detailed analysis of the

woman's stomach contents at the time of death, showing she had eaten a breakfast of potato cakes, German sausage, and some kind of sugary goo, possibly a chewy candy. The coroner found no evidence of cardiac abnormality yet the cause of death appeared to be an overdose of digoxin, a heart regulator.

It was murder.

The toxicologist explained to the Italian police lieutenant that prescription heart medicine containing digoxin is prepared as a tablet weighing about one hundred milligrams, but only one eighth of one milligram of the tablet is digoxin. A mere pinch of pure digoxin powder—say ten to twenty milligrams—would cause headache, shakiness, nausea, then cardiac arrhythmia and death. The pathologist speculated that a pinch of the deadly powder had been encapsulated in the sugary gel found in the woman's stomach. Fat from the German sausage had retarded the action of stomach acids in dissolving the gel. This meant that the poison had probably been ingested between nine and ten thirty that morning.

A check of flight records showed that the woman had boarded a flight from Frankfurt to Rome at 11:10 a.m..

The Israeli consular official made arrangements to transport the body to Israel and wrote his report. His regular routine had suffered from the necessity of liaising with the Italian police. He was more than content to leave the continued investigation of the murder of Rivka Mizrachi in the hands of the authorities.

The Italian police only too happily consigned the matter to their German colleagues as the poison had been ingested on German soil, while the German police investigator who received the report relegated it to the bottom of his assignment pile. After all, the body had been found in Rome and there was only the speculation of the Italian pathologist to link the murderer to Germany.

That suited Moshe just fine as he preferred to unravel the enigma of the murder of Adina Shagal (a.k.a. Rivka Mizrachi) without police interference.

**What does computer hacking have to do with a mysterious briefcase? And how do the suspicious activities of an American tourist in Israel highlight the question, "Whose land is this?"**

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BAR CODE**