

## **Who's That Shouting?: Jan McCoy**

As I leaned against the railing, gazing out over the soft blue of the Mediterranean, a tall man with a tanned face appeared beside me and introduced himself. I had noticed him earlier, our eyes meeting for an instant, that moment when two people recognise an immediate attraction. His deep voice intrigued me as we shared why we were on this ferry from Istanbul to Israel. He was returning home to Tel Aviv and I was travelling north from Haifa to live on Rosh Hannikra Kibbutz, on the Lebanese border. I was fascinated by his interesting stories of the 1967 war, and we spent the next day strolling the deck and dining together. He had an arrogance about him I would find in many Israeli people, almost fearlessness.

Later in the week he visited me at the kibbutz. It was pleasing to see him again.

'Let's go for a walk to the beach. I know the track.'

Night was falling as we wandered up the dirt road, chatting. Soon he turned onto a narrow path bordered by bushy scrub .

'Here,' he said, pointing the way.

We'd walked fifty metres from the road when I heard a vehicle skid to a halt. Doors banged and men shouted. I stopped and turned. Daniel kept walking.

'Daniel, who are they?'

'Don't worry about them.'

'Who are they?' I persisted. 'They're calling out to us. They've got searchlights. Shouldn't we stop?' I was worried.

Daniel didn't falter, walking faster now. The wide beams of the searchlights scoured the area, one stopping, focusing on us. Daniel still didn't stop. I froze, fearful. The shouting continued.

Then suddenly he stopped dead in his tracks. Was he, too, now afraid?

'What is he saying? I heard 'Polez:'

He said, 'Police. Stop, or we'll shoot.'

How irresponsible and disrespectful of him while a visitor at the kibbutz. An Israeli, he knew the dangers of being near the Lebanese border. It'd been closed for years. What if they'd shot? My fear increased.

One powerful searchlight shone directly on the path ahead. Shielding my eyes from the fierce glare, I walked towards it, meeting the officer at the road. Fear turned to calm. I was safe. My friend would be detained for questioning.

I bid him goodbye and stepped up into the truck which would take me to the safety of the kibbutz. I wouldn't see Daniel again.