

There and Back Again

A play by Gadi and Yehonadav Sedaka

Translated from Hebrew by Yehonadav Sedaka

About the play:

"There and Back Again" is a thrilling and deeply moving drama inspired by the true story of Israeli pilots and soldiers captured in Egypt during the 1970 War of Attrition, leading up to the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Amidst the harsh conditions of captivity—facing isolation, interrogations, and the constant struggle to survive—the prisoners find a glimmer of hope through a shared project: translating the classic masterpiece *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. The story of these POWs, set in Cairo's infamous Abbasia prison, is a testament to the triumph of the human spirit. A story of brotherhood, courage, and endless hope.

Characters:

Amos Sadan – A 45-year-old senior Israeli Airforce Pilot.

Jonathan Sela – A 19-year-old Israeli Airforce Pilot.

Izzy (Isaac) – A 24-year-old Israeli canteen worker.

Saul – a 35-year-old Israeli reserve tanker.

Captain Aziz – An Egyptian interrogator.

Hassan – An Egyptian prison guard.

John Bloomberg – A Jewish American officer.

Gollum – An imaginary character from “The Hobbit”

Act One

Prologue

(We see a POW (Jonathan) lying in a dark cell, reading a book.)

Narrator:

“You asked me once if I had told you everything there was to know about my adventures. And while I can honestly say I've told you the truth, I may not have told you all of it.”

(The vision disappears. We hear radio chatter and engine noises from inside a cockpit)

Robin: MiG at 12 o'clock, locking on!

Jonathan: Copy that. Dropping altitude, closing in.

(The sound of a missile being fired, then an explosion.)

Robin: Target down. Let's head back to base.

Jonathan: Negative! There's another! It's getting away!

(We hear white noise. Robin says something but we can't quite make out.)

Jonathan: Full throttle! 600 knots!

(More white noise and beeping, Robin yells something but it's impossible to make out.)

Jonathan: I've got a lock on him!

(beeping grows urgent)

Robin: (Now clear, urgently) They've got us on radar! It's a trap! Break left! Break left!

Jonathan: Breaking left!

Robin: Missile incoming! Low! 2 o'clock!

Jonathan: I don't have the speed! Eject! Eject!

(Loud explosion)

Scene 1

(Abbasia Prison in Egypt, 1970. Four prisoners are brought onstage, blindfolded and shackled. Two of them are wearing scorched flight suits (Amos and Jonathan) , the other two are in tattered military fatigues—one of them (Saul) visibly injured, barely able to stand due to the pain. Hassan, a hardened Egyptian prison guard from leads the prisoners in. His roughness and direct manner are clear in both his behavior and appearance. Captain Aziz, the Egyptian POW interrogator, observes everything silently.)

Hassan: Imshi Lakudam! Imshi! [Move forward! Move it!]

Amos: Who's here with me?

Hassan: Saker Fumak! [Shut your mouth!]

Jonathan: I'm here. Right behind you.

Hassan: Wala Kilme! (He strikes Jonathan) Imshi Lakudam! [Quiet! Move forward!]

Amos: Jonathan?

Jonathan: Yes, sir.

Amos: Where's Robin?

Hassan: Uskut! Saker niak! Uskut ya kalb! [Silence! Shut up, dog! Move forward!]

Wakef! Utilak Wakef! Uskut! [Stand still! I told you to stand still!
Shut up!]

Izzy: Ismach Li- [Sorry-]

Hassan: Wala Kilme! [Shut up!]

Izzy: Naem ya sayed [Yes, sir.]

Hassan: Batifhem Arabi? [You understand Arabic?]

Izzy: Shwaye [A little.]

Hassan: Fasitilehum. Inzel ala igrek [Tell them to kneel. Get down
on your knees]

Izzy: Guys, down on your knees.

(Saul struggles to kneel because of his injury)

Hassan: Inta kaman, ala igrek! [You too—on your knees!]

(Izzy pulls Saul down by the chain, Saul collapses on the floor in agony)

Hassan: Hala uskutu. Wala kilme. (Now shut up. Not a word.)

Izzy: Not a word.

Hassan: Rasak Lal'ard! (Heads on the floor!)

Izzy: Heads down on the floor!

[The prisoners put their heads down]

Hassan: Hadret Ezabet Captain Abdul Aziz Amin Saleh Al-Hindi! Unsot!

Ya sayedi! Hal kilab tacht umrak! [The officer Captain Abdul Aziz Amin Saleh Al-Hindi! Sir, the dogs are ready for you!]

(Aziz gestures for Hassan to leave. Hassan exits but stays close, they're both eavesdropping.)

Amos: Is he gone?

Jonathan: Looks like it.

Amos: Who's here with us?

Izzy: I'm here.

Amos: Who are you?

Izzy: Izzy Tzadik, Private, ID number...

Amos: You're not from the squadron.

Izzy: No.

Amos: Where are you from?

Izzy: I'm a canteen worker.

Amos: What are you doing here?

Izzy: **Izzy:** Still trying to figure that out. Some genius in the office thought it'd be a great idea to send the canteen guy to Sinai.

Amos: Jonathan, where's Robin?

Jonathan: I don't know.

Amos: You didn't eject together?

Jonathan: I blacked out when I ejected.

Amos: Maybe he managed to drift away with his parachute, and our guys rescued him?

(Saul moans in pain.)

Jonathan: There's someone else here.

Amos: A pilot? Robin?

Jonathan: (feeling Saul's clothes) No, not a pilot. Feels like infantry. He's unconscious.

Amos: Izzy, tell them he needs a doctor.

Izzy: Tell who, exactly?

Jonathan: That idiot. Tell him to get a doctor.

Izzy: But he's not here.

Amos: So call him.

Izzy: I'm not eager to see him again.

Jonathan: This guy's going to die.

Amos: Call him.

Izzy: Fine.

Jonathan: Go on!

Izzy: I don't even know his name.

Jonathan: Try "Mohammad."

Izzy: Not every Arab is named Mohammad.

Jonathan: Just call him!

Izzy: (softly) Mohammad... Mohammad...

Jonathan: Hey! Mister! Mister! Sergeant! Mohammad! Mahmoud! Come here! Right now! Mister Ahmad! Mister Mahmoud!

Amos: Someone needs a doctor in here!

(Hassan re-enters.)

Hassan: Uskut! [Silence!]

Jonathan: Someone here needs a doctor!

Hassan: Saker Fumak! [Shut your mouth!]

Amos: Tell him he needs a doctor.

Izzy: Ya khadrat siyadtak, hada ayez dactor. [Sir, this man needs a doctor.]

Aziz: Hassan!

Hassan: Naem ya sidi. [Yes, sir.]

Aziz: Alnusu mayet, hudu asbitar. Alzabet alkbir hudu atahkik. Azrir al handak, walwukah, hudu ahurtu atle. [Take the injured one to the hospital. Take the senior officer for interrogation. Take the other two to their cells]

Hassan: Hader! [Yes, sir!]

Scene 2 – Amos’s Interrogation

(Hassan brings Amos into the interrogation room. Amos is still blindfolded and has his hands tied behind his back. Captain Aziz is seated, ready to question him.)

Aziz: Name?

Amos: Amos.

Aziz: Amos what?

Amos: Sadan.

Aziz: Rank?

Amos: Lieutenant Colonel.

Aziz: What’s your squadron?

Amos: (pauses) According to the Geneva Convention, a prisoner of war is only required to give their name, rank, and military ID number.

Aziz: That’s right. I guess we have your name and rank, all that’s left is your ID.

Amos: 323661.

Aziz: That’s nice. Now listen carefully. As a Lieutenant Colonel in the Israeli Air Force, I have no doubt that you took part in the air raids on our airfields in 1967, just three years ago, during what your people call the Six-Day War? You did a fine job — destroyed our planes, decimated the Egyptian Air Force and broke our national morale. But look how fate

plays tricks on us: you are now a prisoner of the very people you've been bombing for the past three years. (pauses) I've got plenty of questions for you. You better cooperate or Hassan here will make things much more unpleasant. So, let's try again—which squadron are you from?

Amos: Under the Geneva Convention, I'm not obligated to answer that.

Aziz: Fine! The Geneva Convention, yes. Well, just so you know, Hassan here has never been to Geneva. Maybe you can tell him a bit about it, broaden his horizons. Hassan, hudo min hon kasro! [take him away!]

(Hassan takes Amos out)

Scene 3 – Jonathan’s Interrogation

(Hassan brings Jonathan into the interrogation room, still blindfolded.)

Aziz: Name?

Jonathan: Jonathan.

Aziz: Jonathan what?

Jonathan: Jonathan Sela.

Aziz: Rank?

Jonathan: Lieutenant.

Aziz: You fly phantoms, don’t you? Now that’s a powerful jet. What’s the name of your squadron commander?

Jonathan: The... Geneva convention, I...

Aziz: Listen carefully. You’re a young guy. A kid, actually. A kid who knows how to fly a Phantom jet and drop bombs from it, but still just a kid. If you cooperate with me, you’ll return home while you’re still young, with your whole life ahead of you. But if you don’t cooperate, you’ll return home dead—in a coffin. Your commander Amos, for example, chose to come back in a coffin. Now, what’s it going to be?

Jonathan: I’ll tell you everything I know.

Aziz: Good. What’s the name of your Phantom squadron commander?

Jonathan: (pauses) Tshernichovsky.

Aziz: Tshernichovsky what?

Jonathan: Shaul Tshernichovsky.

Aziz: What's the name of your intelligence officer?

Jonathan: Dizengoff.

Aziz: Dizengoff what?

Jonathan: Meir Dizengoff.

Aziz: What's the name of your co-pilot who was with you on the plane?

Jonathan: (pauses) Jabotinsky.

Aziz: Jabotinsky what?

Jonathan: Ze'ev Jabotinsky.

Aziz: You know, I've never been to Tel Aviv. Not yet anyway. But I know it like the back of my hand, and I know that you're just giving me names of streets in Tel Aviv. What's next, king David? Your commander will pay for this. Farid, kassro! [Farid, beat him!]

(Sounds of someone being beaten offstage.)

Jonathan: No, wait!

Aziz: What's the name of your co-pilot?

Jonathan: Tell him to stop!

Aziz: What's his name?

Jonathan: Robin! (crying)

Aziz: (to Farid) Bas! [Stop!]

(The beating stops.)

Aziz: Robin. That's right. What's his last name?

Jonathan: Robin Sadan.

Aziz: (surprised) Robin Sadan? ...Related to Amos Sadan? (examines Jonathan) ...His brother? (pauses) Why didn't you tell him Robin is dead? (Jonathan remains silent.)

Aziz: How were you hit?

Jonathan: A missile hit our tail.

Aziz: You couldn't dodge it? (pauses) ...You did.

Jonathan: We evaded the first missile, but then you sent another one... and it was a direct hit.

Aziz: Why couldn't you evade the second missile?

Jonathan: We lost speed...

Aziz: (after a long pause) Hudo min hon. [Take him away.]

Scene 4 – John's Visit

(John, a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, enters Aziz's office)

John: Captain Aziz?

Aziz: Yes.

John: My name is John Bloomberg. I'm a member of the American committee for renewing diplomatic relations between the United States and Egypt.

Aziz: And what does a diplomat have to do in Abbasia Prison?

John: I wanted to know what the visiting hours are to see the prisoners.

Aziz: There are no visiting hours.

John: Captain, the National Security Advisor for the United States, Mr. Henry Kissinger, asked me to inquire about the wellbeing of the Israeli prisoners held by your government.

Aziz: So you already checked on your prisoners in Vietnam?

John: Mr. Kissinger is concerned about the prisoners of our allies, too.

Aziz: Are you Jewish, Mr. Bloomberg?

John: Excuse me, Captain! I request to see the conditions in which the prisoners are being held.

Aziz: That is impossible.

John: Your own interior minister gave me an official permit to enter this prison. (John hands over the permit)

Aziz: Mr. Bloomberg, the matter of the Israeli prisoners is my sole responsibility. I report directly to our President Anwar Sadat.

John: Washington will not take it kindly if no one is allowed to visit the prisoners.

Aziz: I'm busy, Mr. Bloomberg. I've called for a belly dancer and some musicians. We're throwing a surprise party for the prisoners this evening, so if you'll excuse me!

Scene 5 – Izzy’s Interrogation

(Hassan brings Izzy, still blindfolded, to Aziz for interrogation.)

Hassan: Hada bitkalem Arabi [This one speaks Arabic.]

Aziz: Btitkalem Arabi? [You speak Arabic?]

Izzy: Shwaya, ya'ani... I speak a little Arabic, 50-50.

Aziz: Izayi btitkalem Arabi? [How do you know Arabic?]

Izzy: From my grandmother—Siti. [My grandmother.]

Aziz: Sitak min wen? [Where is your grandmother from?]

Izzy: She’s from Yemen.

Aziz: Weismaha eh, sitac? [And what’s her name?]

Izzy: Aziza. Like "Aziz," but for a girl...

Aziz: (Laughs, then gets serious.) Name?

Izzy: Isaac. My friends call me Izzy.

Aziz: We’re not your friends.

Izzy: Isaac Tzadik.

Aziz: Why are you here, Mr. Isaac?

Izzy: I work in the canteen. I sell candy to soldiers. Snacks, chocolates, wafers, stuff like that.

Aziz: How much does a wafer cost?

Izzy: Plain or coated?

Aziz: Plain.

Izzy: A plain wafer is 40 agorot. A coated wafer is 50 agorot. Ice pop: 1 lira. Coated ice cream: 1.5 lira... (Aziz gives Hassan a signal)

Hassan: Bas! [That's Enough!]

Aziz: So, you're a canteen worker.

Izzy: Yes, thank God, a canteen worker.

Aziz: Where's your dog tag?

Izzy: I left it in the mobile canteen. Your guys caught me just as I was stepping out to take a leak.

Aziz: I'm asking you again: why are you without your dog tag?

Izzy: What do you mean?

Aziz: You're wearing a paratrooper's uniform, red paratrooper boots, and a paratrooper's red beret on your shoulder. You're speaking Arabic, traveling alone with a canteen near the border. Why? To mark targets for your air force to bomb!

Izzy: I swear to you, I'm just a canteen worker. I got the paratrooper's shirt from a friend in the supply room. We wear these uniforms to impress the female soldiers who come to the canteen. Even the boots—they were given to me as a favor.

Aziz: What kind of favor?

Izzy: A favor, you know... a deal, like something under the table... all these uniforms, it's all nonsense.

Aziz: Nonsense?

Izzy: Nonsense, bullshit, showing off.

Aziz: Showing off?

Izzy: Yes, it's all just talk.

Aziz: So your army is built on favors, showing off, nonsense, bullshit and talk?

Izzy: I think you're on to something.

Aziz: You're from the Mossad.

Izzy: What do you mean Mossad? Guys, believe me, I'm just a canteen worker.

Aziz: We found bombing instructions for your air force in your pocket.

(Pulls out a piece of paper)

Izzy: What's that?

Aziz: It's all here. Locations, markings for bombings...

Izzy: You found this in my pocket?

Aziz: Just tell me, which of our posts do you call "Jerusalem"?

Izzy: I have no idea what you're talking about!

Aziz: Hassan will refresh your memory. (Hassan drags Izzy toward the back room.)

Izzy: No! Please, believe me, I'll tell you everything. At least show me the paper! I swear to you, I'll tell you everything I know.

Aziz: (Signals Hassan to wait, and gives the paper to Izzy) Here, near the post you called "Jerusalem," there are initials. What does this mean?

Izzy: Beitar Jerusalem versus Hapoel Tel Aviv? (starts giggling) It's football! It's just a betting slip, these are football clubs!

Aziz: Football? (to Hassan) Hudo min hon! [Get him out of here!]

Scene 6 – Saul’s Interrogation

(Hospital, night. Saul is lying on a dirty hospital bed, suffering from a severe leg injury. His leg is heavily bandaged, bleeding, suspended, and he is connected to an IV.)

Aziz: They still haven’t removed the shrapnel from your leg?

Saul: Not yet.

Aziz: No doctor has come to treat you?

Saul: No doctor, no nurse. They just gave me an IV with painkillers.

Aziz: Oh, that’s nice—painkillers. We’ll get you a doctor soon.

Saul: Thank you.

Aziz: (reads the name on the board above the bed) Captain Saul
Magid?

Saul: Yes.

Aziz: Where are you from?

Saul: Tel Aviv.

Aziz: I meant, which post are you from?

Saul: I don’t belong to any post.

Aziz: Our commando caught you near the Milano post.

Saul: I was on my way to the post, it’s my first time in Sinai. You caught me before I even got through the gate. I had just come for reserve duty.

Aziz: Where’s your reserve duty notice?

Saul: I didn't get one—I volunteered on my own.

Aziz: You volunteered for reserve duty on your own?

Saul: I had a fight with my wife, so I came down to Sinai. I needed a change of scenery.

Aziz: A change of scenery? Wouldn't it be easier to change your wife?

Saul: (They both laugh) Maybe you're right.

Aziz: A doctor will come to treat you soon, though sometimes it takes a while here.

Saul: Thank you.

Aziz: In the meantime, I still need you to tell me a bit about your post, a little about the front lines. How many fighters, tanks, armored vehicles...

Saul: I already told you, I'm not attached to that post...

Aziz: Fine. Now you'll be transferred to Hassan's care, and there, you won't need any painkillers.

Saul: But I just told you... I don't know anything, it's my first time in Sinai!

Aziz: Talk to Doctor Hassan.

Scene 7 – Isolation

(Jonathan is alone in his dark cell. He's almost naked, wearing only underwear and a blindfold. He still has his hands tied behind his back. He's dreaming about being rescued – we see silhouettes of IDF soldiers climbing the jail fence.)

Jonathan: I'm cold... I'm cold... Mom... It's so cold... Hey1 I'm over here! You've come to rescue me... Shoot the shackles. Please, I don't care if I'll catch a bullet, just please get me out of here! ... Mom... tell them... please... I'm so cold...

Scene 8 – John is back

(John meets Aziz on the balcony)

John: Captain Aziz, I have a permit to see how the captives are doing from your president, Anwar Sadat. (hands Aziz a letter)

Aziz: How many people did you bribe along the way?

John: I demand to see the prisoners immediately.

Aziz: Farid!

Farid: (offstage) Aiwa! [yes sir!]

Aziz: Hudo indi canteen, abu-football. [Take him to the canteen guy, Abu-football]

Farid: (offstage) Hader! [Understood!]

Scene 9 – A visit

(Jonathan is in his cell. The door opens, Hassan enters, and Jonathan recoils. Hassan pulls him to his feet, unties his hands, and removes his blindfold. He gives Jonathan clean clothes and a metal plate with some dry bread.)

Hassan: Kol! [Eat!]

(Hassan exits and stands in the background. Jonathan approaches the food. Aziz enters, and Jonathan recoils, leaving the food.)

Aziz: I've been thinking about the problem you had with the Phantom jet. Such a sophisticated plane loses speed from just one sharp turn, and then it can't dodge two missiles in a row. Why do you think that happens?

Jonathan: I just finished flight school. I'm not an expert, I don't understand these things.

Aziz: Neither do I. But my Russian friends from the KGB told me there's an Israeli flight instructor who flies back and forth to America, to the Phantom factory in St. Louis, trying to come up with a solution for this issue.

Jonathan: I don't know what's the solution.

Aziz: Who's your flight instructor?

Jonathan: ...Motaleh.

Aziz: Motaleh what?

Jonathan: Motaleh Spiegler.

Hassan: (Signals to Aziz) Al Americani Ge [The American is here.]

Aziz: Dahalo [Let him in.]

(Aziz exits, John enters.)

Hassan: Yha welcam. [You're welcome]

(Hassan exits, slamming the door behind him.)

John: Hello! Jonathan? My name is John Bloomberg, I'm here on behalf of the United States government.

(Jonathan looks at him with suspicion. John takes out his ID.)

Here's my ID, and my U.S. Army officer's badge.

(Jonathan reads it, then approaches and hugs him.)

Jonathan: Am I getting released?

John: How are you?

Jonathan: Let's get out of here first.

John: I need you to tell me how you're doing.

Jonathan: When are you getting us out of here?

John: Now that they've declared a ceasefire...

Jonathan: There's a ceasefire?

John: Yes, definitely.

Jonathan: So when are we being released?

John: That's not clear yet.

Jonathan: Aren't you organizing a prisoner exchange?

John: There's no negotiation yet.

Jonathan: What are you waiting for?

John: President Sadat announced that he has no intention of releasing the prisoners... (pause) for now.

Jonathan: How long does he plan on keeping us here?

John: We're working on it. At the pace things are moving, it could take a year, maybe even more. We're working on it. I see your cell is clean and well-lit, all things considered.

Jonathan: It's clean and lit just for you! I'm kept here in the dark, with my hands, feet, and eyes tied.

John: That's abuse.

Jonathan: You'd better get us out of here.

John: That will certainly happen...

Jonathan: I'm done. I'm falling apart. I'm wetting my pants. I can't hold on anymore. I have nothing left.

John: I'll demand they improve your conditions.

Jonathan: I don't want conditions, I want to go home.

John: I understand.

Jonathan: ...How's my mother?

John: The censors here didn't allow me to bring you a letter from her. She's very worried about you, especially since Robin, your co-pilot, is still missing. The newspapers are full of stories about you, they talked about you at the U.N. Everyone is waiting for you to come home.

(Hassan enters)

Hassan: Captain American... (Hassan signals that the visit is over)

John: Just a moment! Anyway I managed to bring you a small Red Cross care package—soap, a toothbrush, some cookies, and two books in Russian. I know you speak Russian, and they wouldn't let me bring any other books.

Jonathan: You're leaving?

John: Yes, I'm sorry I have to go. But you stay strong Jonathan, you hear me? It may take time, but you need to stay strong.

Jonathan: Tell my mom... actually, don't tell her anything. It'll just make her cry.

(John is about to leave.)

Jonathan: Tell her I love her.

(John exits.)

(Hassan picks up the red cross package and opens it. He goes through it and takes all the good stuff, throwing the books on the floor.)

Hassan: Shukran. [thank you.]

(Hassan exits. Jonathan is left alone with the books. He picks one up.)

Jonathan: The Hobbit... by J.R.R. Tolkien. There and Back Again...

(He starts reading the first line in Russian, then translates it to English.)

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat. (Jonathan takes a bite of his food) ...It was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort."

(laughs)

Scene 10 – Procedure

(John finds Aziz)

John: Why does someone kept in isolation need to have his hands, feet, and eyes tied?

Aziz: That's our procedure.

John: It's inhumane.

Aziz: Someone who drops bombs from the sky on the heads of the Egyptian people shouldn't expect humane treatment from us.

John: Yesterday, the BBC showed footage of Egyptian prisoners being held in Israel. They sleep four to a room, they get regular meals, they watch live broadcasts of the Soccer World Cup from Mexico, and they were even taken on sightseeing tours around Israel.

Aziz: That's just the Israelis' way of mocking us and our simplicity.

John: Egypt has a lot to gain from diplomatic relations with the United States. And a lot to lose if there aren't any.

Aziz: Are you done threatening me, Mr. Bloomberg?

John: I'm going to give my president a full report on what's happening here. And you'll hear from your own president soon enough.

Act Two

Scene 11 – The Commune

(The stage transforms into a shared room—a sort of communal living space with four beds. Amos is thrown in, blindfolded but his hands and feet are free. He has already changed into clean clothes. After a few seconds he dares to take his blindfold off. At first, he can see nothing due to the bright light. A moment later, Jonathan is thrown in to the room similarly)

Amos: Jonathan!

(Jonathan is still in shock, he doesn't respond.)

Amos: Jonathan!

Jonathan: Sir?

Amos: How are you?

Jonathan: Amos...

Amos: It's okay. We're together now. It's okay.

Jonathan: (crying on Amos's shoulder) They interrogated me... and tortured me...

Amos: They did it to me too. It's okay. Now we're together. Jonathan... did you hear anything about Robin?

Jonathan: Someone from the Red Cross came to see me and told me he's missing.

Amos: Maybe the Egyptians caught him, and they're not telling us that they have him...

Jonathan: I hope so.

(A door opens and Izzy, blindfolded, is thrown into the room.)

Izzy: God fucking damn it.

Amos: You... the canteen worker. Izzy!

Izzy: (startled) Yes.

Amos: (takes Izzy's blindfold off) Amos.

Jonathan: Jonathan.

Izzy: When they dressed me up all fancy, I thought I was getting out of here.

Amos: Not so fast.

Izzy: How long have we been here?

Amos: About six months.

Izzy: Lost six months my life...

Jonathan: At least we've got beds... with mattresses.

Izzy: Oh yeah, luxury prison life. Who'd want to leave? What's in these packages?

Jonathan: From the Red Cross.

Izzy: The Red Cross? What, did they leave us a little gift basket? ...

Wait, no way—cigarettes! Jackpot! Hold on - no matches? Amos, got a light? Seriously, what kind of idiots send cigarettes without matches?

(The door opens.)

Izzy: (startled) They're coming!

(Saul's hospital bed is brought inside by Hassan. Saul still wears his filthy uniforms and has his leg suspended and covered with a blanket. The rest of the prisoners recoil from Hassan, but Amos overcomes the hesitation.)

Amos: Hassan, uh... Izzy, translate for him: Is there another prisoner here, named Robin?

Izzy: Fi uchra wachad min hina hon, ismo Robin? [Is there another one here named Robin?]

Amos: Ahui [My brother]

Hassan: Ahuk? ...Baarfesh [Your brother? ...I don't know]

Jonathan: Ask him if there's any negotiation.

Izzy: Fi Haki? Fi Mufawadat? [Is there any talk? Any negotiations?]

Hassan: La. Mafish. [No. Nothing.]

Izzy: No negotiations, no nothing. They've forgotten all about us.

(Hassan exits.)

Amos: (Turns to Saul) Hello... (reads from the plaque on the bed) Saul? I'm Amos. This is Jonathan, and if you need something sweet, we've got

a canteen worker here. Say hi, Izzy.

Izzy: Hi there. Got a light by any chance?

(Saul doesn't respond)

Amos: Are you okay?

Jonathan: There's a package here for you.

Amos: From the Red Cross.

Jonathan: Want me to open it for you? There are wafers, cigarettes, some toothpaste inside...

(Saul still doesn't respond.)

Izzy: What's up, Hassan got your tongue?

Amos: Maybe you'd like some water?

(Pause, they leave him alone.)

Jonathan: Do you maybe want to hear a story? I can read you something.

Izzy: What, did they sneak you a Playboy in that package?

Jonathan: It's a book. I got it in the package the American gave me when I was in isolation. Take it, read it, it's a great book. Maybe it'll cheer you up.

Izzy: What book is this?

Jonathan: The Hobbit. But it's in Russian. The censors here wouldn't let them send us the original version in English. Do you speak Russian?

Izzy: Of course I speak Russian... I just need subtitles.

Amos: What's a Hobbit?

Jonathan: A Hobbit is like a short person.

Izzy: Short, like a dwarf?

Jonathan: No, no, dwarves are something else in this story.

Amos: What do you mean a dwarf?

Izzy: A dwarf is a short person.

Amos: Thank you, Izzy. (laughs) So John gave you a book about dwarves?

Jonathan: About a group of dwarves and a Hobbit.

Izzy: My mother read me a story like this once.

Jonathan: Which one?

Izzy: Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.

Jonathan: Alright, forget it.

Amos: Maybe you could read us a passage from the book?

Jonathan: It's in Russian.

Amos: So translate it back for us. Or are you busy? Got somewhere important to be? A meeting, maybe?

Jonathan: My meeting just got canceled...

Amos: Then read us something nice.

Jonathan: (opens the book and begins to read) Alright, but listen up! ...

It's a story about a Hobbit named Bilbo, and one day, a group of dwarves

show up at his house and try to convince him to go on an adventure with them. But Bilbo isn't the adventurous type. He has this line—

"Adventures make you late for dinner."

Izzy: He's got a point.

Jonathan: So to convince him to come along on the adventure, the dwarves sing him a song.

Izzy: Go ahead, read it.

Jonathan: (opens the book and translates on-the-go back to English)

"Far over the misty mountains cold

To dungeons deep and caverns old

We must away, ere break of day,

To claim our long-forgotten gold.

...The dragon's ire more fierce than fire

Laid low their towers and houses frail."

Izzy: Oh, so there's a dragon. Now we're talking, some action.

Jonathan: The dragon took the dwarves' home, so they ask Bilbo the Hobbit to help them beat the dragon so they can get their home back.

Saul: It's beautiful.

Amos: You think it's beautiful, Saul?

Saul: Can you do me a favor?

Amos: Of course.

Saul: Kill me.

Amos: What?

Saul: I don't want to be here. Just kill me, I want to die.

Izzy: What kind of talk is that?

Jonathan: You're just a little depressed.

Izzy: It'll pass. I'm depressed too.

Jonathan: We're going to go home, everything will be fine.

Saul: None of us are going home.

Izzy: Come on, snap out of it.

Jonathan: Of course we're going home.

Saul: I'm dead. We're all going to die here.

(Everyone's affected by Saul's mood. They know he's probably right.

They each sit silently on their beds until Jonathan decides to read another passage.)

Jonathan: (pauses) *"As the dwarves sang the hobbit felt the love of beautiful things moving through him, a fierce and a jealous love, the desire of the hearts of dwarves. He wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick. He thought of a plundering dragon settling on his quiet hill and kindling it all to flames. He..."*

uh... he was shaking?

Amos: Do you mean “trembling”?

Jonathan: No... that doesn’t sound right...

Saul: He shuddered.

Jonathan: Yes... "He shuddered."

Amos: Moving, huh?

Izzy: A little. Like they say in Russia - I shed a tear.

Amos: You like books, Saul?

Saul: I have a master’s degree in English literature.

Amos: We’ve got ourselves a scholar. We’ll translate the whole book!

Izzy: Don’t get carried away.

Jonathan: Actually, that’s a great idea!

Amos: Master’s in English literature...

Jonathan: (pointing to Amos) Bachelor’s in Aeronautics.

Amos: (pointing to Jonathan) And a Russian speaker.

Izzy: And I can translate it into Arabic, for our dear friend Hassan. (they laugh a bit)

Saul: But what happens in the end? Do they beat the dragon? Do they make it home?

Scene 12

(Night. Everyone is asleep. Saul is delirious with a fever.)

Saul: (mumbling) Naomi... I love you... Naomi... I don't want to go to reserves, but I have no choice... Naomi, I don't want to wake up the kids...

Jonathan: (wakes up) Hey... (tries to get Saul to respond and wake up, but Saul is burning with fever) Can you hear me?

Saul: I don't know anything... Captain Saul Magid, I don't know anything...

Amos: (wakes up) What's going on?

Jonathan: He's burning up with fever.

Amos: He's delirious. Wet a towel and put it on his head. Saul, can you hear me?

Saul: I don't know anything. Naomi, please tell them I don't know anything.

(Izzy wakes up in a panic and joins them)

(They unwrap the bandages and are horrified by what they see.)

Jonathan: The fever's from the infection in his legs!

Izzy: Oh my God...

Amos: This is bad. (to Saul) Listen to me, can you hear me?

Saul: I don't know anything. Please.

Amos: They didn't treat him. They didn't remove the shrapnel from his leg!

Saul: I'm new here. It's my first time in Sinai, I don't know anything.

Amos: Listen to me. You've got an infection. We have to get the shrapnel out of your leg, or you could die from the infection.

Saul: I don't want to die. I don't want to die!

Izzy: But how are we going to get the shrapnel out?

Amos: (getting ready for surgery, rolling up his sleeves, washing his hands in the dirty sink) We'll do it.

Izzy: How?

Jonathan: If we don't get it out, he'll die here.

Izzy: But we need a surgeon, we need anesthetic—he'll die just from the pain.

Saul: I don't want to die. Tell them, Naomi, I'm new here-

Amos: We need a knife, or something like a knife.

Jonathan: There's a spoon in the package we got.

Izzy: You're going to perform surgery with a spoon?

Amos: If we don't get the shrapnel out, he'll die. Hold him down.

Izzy: This is going to hurt.

Jonathan: Put your hand over his mouth.

(Izzy covers Saul's mouth, Jonathan holds him down, and Amos starts removing the shrapnel. Saul writhes in pain, Izzy releases his grip on Saul's mouth.)

Saul: (crying and screaming to the heavens) I told you! I don't know anything!

Jonathan: Why did you let him go?

Amos: We have to keep going. Hold him tight-

(The door opens and everyone takes a step back. Aziz and Hassan enter.)

Amos: If you don't treat him, he's going to die.

Aziz: (Ignoring Amos) Hello, Saul. I read about you in the paper today. Would you believe it? (pulls out a newspaper and reads from it) "Saul Magid, 38 years old. Married with two children, served as a battalion commander on the Egyptian front for about six months before he was captured..." Six months?! There's a mistake here, isn't there? You told

me yourself that you arrived in Sinai the day you were captured! Look at today's media, you just can't trust them! "In his service as a reservist battalion commander, Saul led an active armored battalion." You're going to die, Saul. I want to send you for surgery, but I need you to tell me the truth. Then maybe, just maybe, you'll get to see once again... (reading from the newspaper again) "7 years old Amalia, and 3 years old Yarden". What do you say? (pause) Hudo min hon. [Take him away.]

(Hassan rolls Saul out on his bed) And there's some good news too! The Israeli national football team scored their first goal ever in the Football World Cup in Mexico! 1-1 against Sweden. Want to know who scored this historic goal? (checks the newspaper) The one and only: Motaleh Spiegler. Jonathan, I know you're a fan. Goodnight, gentlemen. (exits)

Scene 13

(Night, the three prisoners are sleeping. We hear Jonathan's flashback to the prologue)

Robin: MiG at 12 o'clock, locking on!

Jonathan: Copy that. Dropping altitude, closing in.

(The sound of a missile being fired, then an explosion.)

Robin: Target down. Let's head back to base.

Jonathan: Negative! There's another! It's getting away!

(We hear white noise. Robin says something but we can't quite make out.)

Jonathan: Full throttle! 600 knots!

(More white noise and beeping, Robin yells something but it's impossible to make out.)

Jonathan: I've got a lock on him!

(beeping grows urgent)

Robin: *(Now clear, urgently)* They've got us on radar! It's a trap! Break left! Break left!

Jonathan: Breaking left!

Robin: Missile incoming! Low! 2 o'clock!

Jonathan: I don't have the speed! Eject! Eject!

(The sound fades out)

(Gollum enters. He finds the book "The Hobbit" near sleeping Jonathan, he opens it and starts reading)

Gollum: *(reading from the book)* "Bilbo shouted and fell, rolled off into the blackness, bumped his head on hard rock and remembered nothing more."

Jonathan: (Wakes up into this dream) Who are you?

Gollum: Who am I? "Deep down by the dark water lived old Gollum, as dark as darkness." But who are you?

Jonathan: I'm a Hobbit... Bilbo... I lost the dwarves. If only I could get away from here...

Gollum: Get away? There's only one way out of here. You must answer the questions. Perhaps it likes riddles?

Jonathan: Riddles?

Gollum: If Gollum asks a riddle and Bilbo doesn't answer... we eats him. But if Bilbo answers them all, maybe we shows him the way out, yes?

Jonathan: Yes.

Gollum: A riddle:

"Voiceless it cries,

Wingless flutters,

Toothless bites,

Mouthless mutters."

What is it?

Jonathan: The wind...

Gollum: The wind, Jonathan! Don't you miss feeling the wind on your face?

(Suddenly, Hassan and Aziz enter. Jonathan snaps back from the dream into the harsh reality – he's in an interrogation room, laying on a table. Hassan is operating electrodes to inflict pain on uncooperative prisoners.)

Aziz: Who taught you how to fly the Phantom jets?

Jonathan: What?

Aziz: Jonathan, who's your flight instructor?

Jonathan: I can't tell you.

Aziz: (to Hassan) Idi lo. [Give it to him]

(Hassan pulls a lever, which sends an electric shock through Jonathan's body. Jonathan writhes in pain for a bit and then suddenly returns to the dream state.)

Gollum: Well done, Jonathan! You're like a box without hinges, key, or lid, yet golden treasure inside is hid. What's that?

Jonathan: An egg!

Gollum: *(laughing)* Correct! But don't crack...

(The electric shock stops, Jonathan snaps back to reality.)

Aziz: Jonathan! Do you think if you get out of here alive one day, after staying silent, they'll cheer for you? They'll despise you for being captive, for crying in your cell, for breaking. Nobody likes prisoners. Nobody. No matter what you do, they'll always call you a loser. A nobody. Nothing.

Jonathan: I don't care.

Aziz: (to Hassan) Idi lo. [Give it to him]

(Hassan pulls the lever and the electric shock begins again. Transition back to the dream.)

Gollum: This reminds me of another riddle.

"Alive without breath,

As cold as death,

Never thirsty, ever drinking,

All in mail, never clinking."

What is it?

(The electric shock stops, back to the interrogation.)

Jonathan: *I'm not talking... I'm not talking...*

Aziz: Jonathan, who are you trying to protect? This flight instructor is sitting comfortably in your base, flirting with the female soldiers at the canteen, while you're rotting in prison. He doesn't even care about you, and you won't even give me his name? Who taught you to fly the Phantom?

Jonathan: I'm not talking! It's a fish! The answer is a fish! Fish don't talk!

(laughs)

Aziz: Huto al acher! [Turn it up!] *(losing his temper, Aziz increases the power to the maximum and pulls the lever himself)*

(The electric shock begins again, but now we transition to a dark part of the dream – the stage is almost completely blacked out)

Gollum:

"It cannot be seen, cannot be heard,

Cannot be smelt, cannot be felt,

It lies behind stars and under hills,

And empty holes it fills,

It comes first and follows after,

Ends life, kills laughter."

What is it?

Jonathan: Darkness...

Hassan: Abdul Aziz! Katalto! [You killed him!]

(Hassan struggles to pull Aziz away from the lever. The electric shock ends, we're back to reality. For a moment it's not clear if Jonathan is alive. Hassan picks up Jonathan's head, checking if he's alive.)

Aziz: Ayesh, ya Hassan? [Is he alive, Hassan?]

(pause, then Jonathan takes a huge breath in)

Hassan: *(relieved)* Ayesh. [He's alive]

(Aziz leaves Jonathan alone for a moment, panting, taking a moment to calm down. He thanks Hassan. He sits down, exhausted, and wipes the sweat from Jonathan's forehead.)

Aziz: *(to Hassan)* Thank you, Hassan. Leave us alone. *(Hassan exits.)*
Your people have a saying— "whatever you're no given, you must take".
And I know how to take, Jonathan. *(pause)* How does it feel? Flying up there in the sky, above the clouds, like a bird... do you feel... invincible?
(pause) How many people died in your last bombing run? You don't even know. But there's one death you do know about. Remind me, what was his name?

Gollum: ...Jonathan, Where's Robin? ...Where's Robin?

Jonathan: Robin.

Aziz: Robin... Like the bird... But even birds fall when their time comes.

Robin Sadan. Tell me about him.

Gollum:

This thing all things devours:

Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;

Gnaws iron, bites steel;

Grinds hard stones to meal;

Slays king, ruins town,

And beats high mountain down.

Aziz: Jonathan, tell me about him.

Jonathan: It was a direct hit. We had to eject, but Robin... he didn't make it. He was killed. We couldn't turn the plane around... we couldn't make it home... in time. *(to Gollum)* The answer is time... Time devours all...

Gollum: That's right, Jonathan. It's time. All your answers are correct.

Now we'll show you the way out.

Aziz: He was your friend?

Gollum: Yes...

Jonathan: Yes.

Aziz: And this flight instructor, who learned how to fly the Phantom jets, who taught you and Robin and all the other pilots how to fly the Phantom, is he also your friend?

Gollum: Yes...

Jonathan: Yes.

Aziz: I understand. If I had to give up the name of someone close to me, it wouldn't be easy. But for you, it's easier, because he's far away—what can I possibly do to him? Why are you so worried? (*pause, realization*)
...Unless he's not that far away? Maybe he's right here with us in Abbasia Prison, and that's why you're protecting him? Is Amos your flight instructor?

Scene 14

(Aziz, Hassan and Itamar are in the interrogation room)

Aziz: A letter came from your wife. Do you want to read it?

Amos: This trick won't work on me.

Aziz: *(starts reading from the letter)* "Amos, my dear, Amos, my love..."

The sentimentality of your women. "...Yesterday, they took me to the delivery room..."

Amos: *(pauses, realizing the letter is real)* Give it to me!

Aziz: I need answers, Amos. How long were you in St. Louis?

Amos: What would I be doing in St. Louis?

Aziz: You visited the McDonnell Douglas factory, where they build your Phantoms. You went there to suggest a solution to the issue your Phantom has—it can't evade two missiles in a row. Yes or no?

Amos: ...Yes.

Aziz: I'm listening.

Amos: I suggested adding a small engine beneath the plane, one that could quickly shift the aircraft right or left, allowing it to dodge the second missile, even at low speeds.

(Aziz tears the letter in half.)

Amos: Wait! ... All I suggested was a more powerful engine to make it

easier to avoid the second missile.

Aziz: *(hands him the letter)*

Amos: *(opens the letter)* It's empty... It's blank! You lied to me!

Aziz: No, Amos. You lied to me. *(pulls the real letter out of his pocket)*

The letter is here with me, and this is your last chance to get it. What's the modification you proposed for the Phantom to help it dodge the second missile?

Amos: I can't tell you that.

Aziz: You will talk, I can tell you that. This information could save thousands of Egyptian lives.

Amos: You're asking me to betray my friends.

Aziz: And you're asking me to abandon my people, my family, my son, who just enlisted. One day, he might face you in battle, and maybe you'll bomb him with one of your Phantoms. Do you understand that I *need* this information, Amos? I will stop at nothing.

Amos: you'll never get it.

Aziz: Fine, then you're going back to Hassan's care.

Scene 15

(Jonathan and Izzy are in the communal cell)

Jonathan: Are you writing, Izzy?

Izzy: Yeah, go on!

Jonathan: Thorin, King of the Dwarves, held a spear in his hand.

Izzy: Where did you get the word "spear"?

Jonathan: This word means a spear.

Izzy: Why a spear? Maybe they meant a javelin? Or a lance?

Jonathan: What does a lance have to do with this? What's the difference anyway, between a spear, a javelin, and a lance?

Izzy: I'll explain it to you. A spear is a spear, a javelin is a javelin, and a lance is a lance! And next time if you don't know something, just ask! I'm changing it to a javelin.

Jonathan: You're lucky I don't have a javelin, a lance, or a spear right here.

(The door opens, they recoil. Saul enters walking on crutches, he has a cast on his wounded leg. He clearly received hospital treatment and feels better.)

Izzy: Look at him, good as new!

(They go to hug Saul. At the same time, Amos enters - returning from the interrogation, all beat up. He doesn't see Saul at first.)

Jonathan: Amos! Are you okay?

Amos: Yeah, yeah.

Izzy: What happened?

Amos: They roughed me up a bit during the interrogation...

Izzy: We need to tell the American they're still torturing us.

Amos: It won't matter.

Jonathan: Then give something to Aziz.

Amos: I can't.

Jonathan: Give him some minor details.

Amos: I can't.

Saul: He'll interrogate you again.

Amos: Hello, Saul.

Saul: Hey. So what will you do?

Amos: Nothing.

Saul: You'll go on with the interrogations? *(pause, no answer)* He'll keep torturing you.

Amos: He will.

Saul: And you won't give him anything? No matter the cost?

Amos: No. But I see they treated your leg.

(A heavy, tense pause between Amos and Saul. Jonathan tries to change the subject.)

Jonathan: We were just about to show Saul how far we got with the translation of the book.

Amos: Did you get to the dragon?

Jonathan: Almost.

Amos: Then keep going.

Jonathan: *"Bilbo and the dwarves made their weary way to the Mountain. They were alone in the perilous waste without hope of further help. None of them had much spirit left ...But somehow, just as-*"

Saul: Amos! When the Egyptians caught me there in Sinai, we fell into an ambush. They started shooting at our vehicle, the driver was killed on the spot. I was injured and jumped out of the vehicle. I tried to run, but I couldn't. My leg was completely shattered, so I just lay there on the sand. Then they pounced on me. Five or six armed Egyptian soldiers. They all started beating me. They were merciless. And then I saw that

one of them dropped a grenade, and I thought to myself at that moment that I should just jump on that grenade and take them all out with me, while they were standing over me. But I was scared. Do you understand that? Look at me! I was scared. Afterward, they brought me here, and I was mad at myself for not jumping on the grenade—I was ashamed for surviving. I wanted to die. But now... now all I want is to go home to my wife and kids. You understand? I want to live.

Amos: We all want to go home.

Saul: Then you need to give him something in the interrogation.

Amos: I can't. If I give him a thread, he'll unravel everything.

Saul: So what are you suggesting? That we should all die here in the interrogation?

Amos: *(pause)* Jonathan, keep reading.

Jonathan: *"But somehow, just when the dwarves were most despairing, Bilbo felt a strange lightening of the heart. "Come, come!" he said.*

"Where there's life there's hope!". (pause)

(The door opens, the four prisoners recoil. Hassan and John enter, carrying a package. John is ecstatic seeing everyone)

John: Excellent! Excellent! (*shakes everyone's hand*) Congratulations on the new place. What a wonderful place! Izzy, Saul, Jonathan, look at this new room. Looks like a five-star-hotel! Amos! Congratulations!

Amos: My wife?

John: Twins. Healthy and well.

Izzy: Wow!

Jonathan: Congratulations!

Izzy: I hope you'll get to see them soon.

(pause)

Saul: Congratulations, Amos.

Amos: Thank you, Saul. (To John) ...And Robin?

John: Still missing. I'm sorry.

Jonathan: What about the negotiations?

John: We're working on it.

Saul: So no negotiations yet?!

Izzy: We're growing old here already!

Jonathan: When are you getting us out of here?

Izzy: What are you waiting for?

Hassan: Uskutu! [Shut up!] Please, John.

John: Thank you, Hassan... Gentlemen! Let's look at the bright side.

First of all, I've brought you something for the holidays—Rosh

Hashanah, Yom Kippur... prayer shawls, prayer books, and yarmulkes.

And I'm happy to announce that Aziz and I have agreed that from today, you will have... a radio!

Izzy: (excited) We'll be able to hear news from home!

(They turn on the radio. We hear an Egyptian voice threatening Israel in broken English)

Radio, Voice of Cairo: "Death awaits you, Israel. morning or evening.

And if the night comes, it will dress you in its black robe. Death will leap at the Zionists from every corner."

Izzy: What's this? (trying to change stations unsuccessfully) Can't we change the station?

(They turn off the radio.)

John: Because of the censorship, it only receives one station... Voice of Cairo. They're broadcasting this stuff to Israel, so we thought it would be nice for you too. Sorry, guys... Shana Tova. Happy new year. *(John and Hassan exit.)*

Izzy: Come on, guys. Who here ever took a comms course?

Jonathan: Just a basic course, nothing serious. Let me see.

(Izzy approaches the radio.)

Amos: Don't touch it!

Izzy: Don't you want to have a normal radio?

Amos: They sealed it so they'd know if we tampered with it.

Izzy: Oh come on, These seals? They're nothing! Back on base, I'd break open those seals all the time!

Saul: Maybe there's a listening device inside?

Izzy: A listening device? Fine! Even if there is, (yells into the radio) Yilan Abuk![fuck you!] Come on, let me open it!

Amos: You're not going to risk all of us!

Izzy: When did you become such a coward?

Amos: Izzy!

Izzy: I've been dealing with car radios since I was four. What's the big deal? There's a tuner inside, it's just two plates that touch— I'll move them one millimeter, and we'll have our home right here!

Amos: You'll break the seal.

Izzy: You don't trust me?

Saul: Enough, Izzy. We'll all pay for it!

Izzy: Let me open it!

Amos: You're not allowed to touch that radio. That's an order!

Izzy: I'm tired of all of you!

(Hassan enters, signaling for Amos to come with him. Everyone understands that he's going back to the investigation. He starts walking towards Hassan, Jonathan tries to stop him)

Jonathan: Amos... you need to make it home, Amos.

Amos: It's ok, Jonathan.

Jonathan: No, you don't understand... Amos, you have to come back home alive.

Saul: Your wife just gave birth, think about your twins, they need you.

Amos: They're the ones I'm thinking about.

(Amos follows Hassan out, while we hear the narrator:)

Narration: *"Bilbo entered first into the dark depths under the mountain. He was altogether alone. He began feeling an intense heat radiating from the depths of the mountain. There he lay, a vast red-golden dragon, fast asleep."*

(Scene continues, it's night. Jonathan is walking around helplessly, Saul is reading. Izzy decides to take the radio to his bed and starts prying the seal open.)

Izzy: *(to himself)* "An order," huh...

Saul: Izzy, what are you doing?

Izzy: Shh... quiet.

(Izzy makes scratching noises trying to open the radio seal)

Saul: You're going to wake up the whole prison.

Izzy: It's fine. Go back to sleep.

Saul: It's dangerous. *(Izzy ignores him)* Izzy! Stop!

Izzy: Don't worry. *(He manages to unlock it.)* Here you go!

Saul: You opened it?

Izzy: What did you think? *(His face drops.)* There's no tuner. The bastards took out the station tuner.

Saul: Genius. Now close it up. Put the seals back in place.

(Izzy gently closes it, puts it back in place, but he looks troubled. He goes to his package, rummages through it, and gets an idea. He pulls out a toothpaste tube and gets back to work on the radio.)

Saul: Izzy.

Izzy: Quiet.

Saul: You're going to get us in trouble.

Izzy: Then I'll get us in trouble.

Saul: Leave the radio alone.

Izzy: Leave me alone.

Saul: Because of you, we'll end up back in isolation.

Izzy: Don't worry, you're not going back there.

Saul: What are you implying?

Izzy: I'm not implying, I'm saying it—you've already given them everything.

Saul: Shut your mouth.

Izzy: Too bad you didn't shut yours.

Saul: I did what I had to do to get home. I didn't come here to die with scum like you.

Izzy: At least I didn't sell out my country for a bandage.

Saul: Shut up! (Throws his crutch at Izzy)

Jonathan: Both of you, shut up!

Izzy: Nobody here gets to give me orders, nobody!

(Amos is thrown back into the room, drugged and in bad shape.)

Jonathan: Amos! (They're dragging him to his bed)

Izzy: ...What did they do to him?

Jonathan: Amos, Amos!

Amos: I saw the dragon. He's huge... but I can beat him.

Jonathan: He's hallucinating.

Izzy: He's completely out of it...

Saul: What did they give him?

Izzy: They're drugging him... they're going to drug all of us! (*shocked, he can't take it anymore and has a nervous breakdown. Yelling at the door*) Hassan!!! I'm going to kill you!!! Bring Aziz too, I'll take you both down!

Saul: Izzy! Stop! Please! I'm begging you! Please!

Izzy: We're not getting out of here alive. We're never getting out of here. I want to go home, I want to go home. Nobody cares about us. They've forgotten all about us. We're going to die here. I want to go home.

(Izzy completely breaks down, Saul tries to comfort him.)

Saul: You're missing conductivity.

Izzy: What?

Saul: I once took a comms course. You need something smoother to make the connection more consistent. Something like aluminum foil.

Izzy: Where am I going to get aluminum foil?

Saul: From the wafers.

Izzy: The wafers?

Saul: The foil wrapping from the wafers they sent us. I've got wafers in my package, go get them.

(Saul and Izzy work on the radio in the background.)

Jonathan: Amos... you... you have to give them something... Amos...

you might die here...

Amos: I don't want to die... I want to fly! Defeat the dragon. I have wings too! But not like the dragon's. I have wings like a bird! That no one can hit... I have wings... like... like the new plane... we'll get... when we get home.

Jonathan: Wings..? What kind of wings does the new plane have?

Amos: Shhh... winglets... little wings on top of the wings... so we can dodge two missiles in a row...

Jonathan: *(laughs)*... That's smart. Amos... winglets... that way we won't lose speed. That's brilliant.

Amos: It was your idea... Robin.

Jonathan: Robin?

Amos: *(to Jonathan)* Robin, I want you to fly with Jonathan. It's his first combat mission. You'll be his co-pilot. Help him. Watch over him, okay?

(no answer) ...Robin? (pause, starts crying) I'm sorry, Robin... I didn't mean for you to get hurt... I miss you. You were supposed to fly with me. We were supposed to watch out for each other...

(Izzy and Saul tinker with the radio, trying to find a different radio station.

We hear static noises, Arabic voices, Egyptian music, speeches, etc.

Suddenly, they hear a snippet of a familiar song.)

Radio: " Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo..." *(then static)*

(All the prisoners except Amos raise their heads and stare at the radio in

shock.)

Izzy: The reception... the signal is weak. We need to lift it up.

(Saul and Izzy try to raise the radio as high as they can.)

Radio: "... Here comes the sun, and I say

It's alright..." (static)

(Saul and Izzy lift each other and create a human tower. As they reach the highest point, the reception comes in full, and they're ecstatic, singing and dancing along loudly. Jonathan is trying to comfort the exhausted Amos)

Saul: You hear that, Amos?

Radio: " ...Sun, sun, sun, here it comes

Sun, sun, sun, here it comes."

(Hassan enters, ready to take Amos for interrogation. Saul immediately turns off the radio.)

Jonathan: Wait! ...Hassan, I want to speak to Aziz. Take me instead.

Aziz needs me. *(notices Aziz watching them from the balcony)* You don't need Amos anymore. I know what you're looking for. Take me!

Aziz: (To Hassan) Hato. [Bring him.]

(Jonathan exits with Hassan for interrogation.)

(Izzy and Saul tend to Amos. Nighttime, Jonathan returns from the interrogation. He checks on Amos and then sits back on the bed.)

Act Three

Scene 16

(Time passes - It's now the morning of Yom Kippur 1973. Saul takes off his cast, his leg is now healthy. Izzy pulls out tallitot (prayer shawls) and yarmulkes from the packages and hands them around. Amos is the last to rise, now feeling better. Slowly, everyone stands and begins to sing a Hebrew Yom Kippur morning prayer)

All: *"Avinu Malkeinu, hanenu vaanenu ki eib banu maasim*

Ase imanu tsdaka vahesed vehoshienu"

[Our Father, our King, be gracious to us and answer us for we have no meritorious deeds. deal charitably and kindly with us and deliver us.]

Izzy: Gmar Chatima Tova. Hopefully we'll do the next Yom Kippur at home. Remember guys, Mincha prayer at four, Ne'ila at five. Don't go anywhere, okay?

(A squadron of MiG jets crosses the sky.)

Amos: What's happening out there?

Saul: They have a holiday today too.

Izzy: Yeah, Hassan told me it's Ramadan now.

Jonathan: Ramadan and Yom Kippur at the same time?

Izzy: Yeah. Sometimes they overlap.

Saul: Let's call Hassan, we can fast together.

(Another squadron of MiGs flies overhead.)

Izzy: Maybe they're doing an air show for Ramadan?

Amos: That's the sound of planes going out on a mission.

Saul: Maybe it's just a drill?

Amos: Too many MiGs in the air for a drill.

Jonathan: They're flying northeast.

Saul: Toward Israel.

Amos: Turn on the radio.

Izzy: Nope, nope, nope... it's Yom Kippur.

Jonathan: Just to hear that everything's okay.

Amos: We need to hear what's going on.

Jonathan: We'll just turn it on for a second, make sure everything's fine, and then turn it off.

Izzy: Fine do whatever you want, I'm not hearing or seeing anything.

(They turn on the radio, it's on Voice of Cairo.)

Voice of Cairo Radio: Our advice to you has always been to leave the Zionist hell. Our advice has always been to leave the imperialist base called Israel. Thousands of you took our advice and left Israel, and now you must follow in their footsteps.

Amos: Try to find an Israeli station.

(They switch, only white noise is heard.)

Saul: No broadcast.

Izzy: Of course there's no broadcast, it's Yom Kippur.

Jonathan: So everything's fine.

Amos: Switch back to Voice of Cairo for a second.

Izzy: Guys come on.

Amos: Just for a second, Izzy.

(Saul changes the frequency back.)

Voice of Cairo Radio: People of Israel, our planes are bombing your cities at this moment. Fierce battles are raging on all fronts. In the south, east, and north, Moshe Dayan's forces are retreating in panic under the pressure of the Arab strike forces.

Amos: That sounds like war.

Jonathan: A war on Yom Kippur?

Saul: Don't believe a word of it. The usual propaganda.

Amos: Switch back to an Israeli station for a moment.

(They switch back)

Radio: This is Kol Yisrael broadcasting from Jerusalem on Networks A and B. Good afternoon, and Gmar Chatima Tova. The time is three o'clock.

(Everyone is surprised to hear a broadcast in the middle of Yom Kippur, they gather around the radio.)

Radio: The IDF spokesman reports that around two o'clock, Egyptian and Syrian forces launched an attack in the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Our forces are engaging the attackers.

Due to Syrian air force activity in the Golan Heights area, sirens are sounding throughout the country. This is not a drill. *(Pause)* In an emergency meeting of the government, it was reported—*(sirens sound)* "Pot of Meat, Pot of Meat."

Amos: Mobilization codes...

(Sound fades into battlefield sounds and narration)

Narrator: *"Fire leaped from the dragon's jaws. The trees by the shores shone like copper and like blood, and there was mourning and weeping where but a little time ago the songs of mirth to come had been sung."*

(Izzy sings the Ne'ila prayer which marks the end of Yom Kippur)

Izzy: *"El Nora Alila, metsa lanu mehila bishat ha ne'ila."* [Great god, let us find our forgiveness at the last hour]

(Aziz and Hassan enter with a plate of sweets.)

Aziz: Hello, guys. Hope you had an easy fast. Heard the news? This morning, my son's commando unit attacked the Milano outpost on the Suez canal's banks. The white flags your friends waved blocked our view of the horizon. A complete collapse of the Zionist state. A crushing defeat. It's over!

Amos: What's over?

Aziz: Your Zionist dream is over.

Jonathan: You sound like that guy on the radio.

Aziz: I know him. He likes to exaggerate... but I bring you news straight from the battlefield. Your army is shattered, the entire Bar-Lev Line has fallen into our hands, our tanks are racing through Sinai, and they won't stop until they reach Tel Aviv. *(pause)* You don't believe me? Look out the window. Climb up there, I'll allow it.

Izzy: *(climbs, looks beyond the bars)* Wow... what is this? Israeli soldiers... dozens of them!

Aziz: Hundreds! Prisoners. Israeli soldiers. Fighters, tank commanders, battalion leaders... Phantom pilots. I guess they didn't have time to install your new winglets, Amos.

Amos: ...What?

Aziz: Winglets? The little wings on top of the Phantom's wings, so it can dodge the second missile.

Amos: Who told you about that?

(Aziz is silent.)

Amos: Who told you?! *(pause)* ...The only one who knew about that was... Robin... my brother...

Do you have him? Answer me! Is he still alive?

(Amos charges at Aziz, Hassan blocks him, and Jonathan tries to pull him back.)

Jonathan: No Amos, stop! Robin is not alive.

Amos: You blacked out when you ejected. Maybe they captured him alive while you were parachuting!

Jonathan: I saw him crash with the plane. He's dead.

Amos: *(pause)* Why didn't you tell me?

Jonathan: We were fighting two MiGs. After we shot down the first one, the second started to run. I began chasing it, and Robin yelled at me, "Jonathan, it's dangerous! Jonathan! Let's get out of here! Let's go back!" But I just wanted to take down another MiG. I ignored his warnings.

Amos: He was there to watch over you...

Jonathan: He died because of me.

Amos: *(pause, realizing Robin is dead)* Then who told them about the winglets?

Jonathan: The winglets don't matter.

Amos: You have no idea what you're talking about.

Jonathan: I wanted them to stop torturing you.

Amos: You're a fool...

Jonathan: I wanted you to go home, to your wife, to your kids...

Amos: A fool...

Jonathan: I wanted you to live.

Amos: You lied to me.

Jonathan: Thanks to me, they stopped interrogating you.

Aziz: *(to Hassan)* Hudo. [Take him].

(Hassan begins to lead Amos out.)

Amos: They won't stop. They can't stop.

Jonathan: But you promised me... *(looks at Aziz)* You gave me your word!

Aziz: I'm sorry, Jonathan. It's bigger than both of us.

(Hassan, Aziz, and Amos exit.)

(Flashback of the prologue recording, this time without white noise, and the dialogue is heard in full. During this time Jonathan slowly collapses on the floor)

Robin: Target down. Let's head back to base.

Jonathan: Negative! There's another! It's getting away!

Robin: Leave it, Jonathan. Return to base.

Jonathan: I have to take it down. Full throttle! 600 knots!

Robin: Jonathan! Return to base! I told you to return! It's dangerous!

Jonathan: I've got a lock on him!

(beeping grows urgent)

Robin: They've got us on radar! It's a trap! Break left! Break left!

Jonathan: Breaking left!

(sound fades out into narration)

Narration: *"A black arrow sped straight from the string, straight for the belly of the dragon. In it smote and vanished, so fierce was its flight. With a shriek that deafened men, felled trees and split stone, the dragon shot spouting into the air, turned over and crashed down from on high in ruin."*

Radio: It seems that in their meeting today, the Egyptians have expressed a willingness to provide Israel a list of all wounded prisoners of war, and on a later date a full list of all prisoners of war.

Saul and Izzy: Jonathan! The prisoner exchange negotiations have started! There's a negotiation! Jonathan! Get up! (*Jonathan doesn't respond.*)

Scene 17

(Aziz enters the second-floor balcony, stands there grieving. John enters and meets him there)

John: Captain Aziz, I would like to extend my condolences, on behalf of myself, the president, and the entire American people, for the loss of your son. Unfortunately...

Aziz: That's life, and you have to learn to deal with it.

John: Captain, I gave your Chief of Staff the list of all 8,372 Egyptian prisoners held by Israel. It's very important for us to receive the updated list of all 242 Israeli prisoners you have in custody.

Aziz: The list I provided is up to date.

John: Lieutenant Colonel Amos Sadan is not on the list.

Aziz: That's life, and you have to learn to deal with it.

Scene 18

(Hassan enters the communal room, handing Jonathan, Saul and Izzy their personal belongings and uniforms that were taken from them when they were captured. He leaves Amos's package on the floor.)

Hassan: Dubo radco! [Pack your things!]

Izzy: Huh?

Saul: What's he saying?

Izzy: He wants us to pack our things.

Saul: Why?

Hassan: Bukra ifrag. [Tomorrow you'll be released.]

Izzy: Walla? [Really?]

Saul: What's he saying?

Hassan: Walla Ya Izzy.[Yes, Izzy, really.]

Izzy: He says we're being released.

Saul: Walla? [Really?]

Hassan: Walla. [Really.]

Izzy: We're being released! We're being released!

Saul: I don't believe it!

Izzy and Saul: We're being released!

Jonathan: Hassan! Where's Amos?

Hassan: *Baarfesh.* [I don't know]

Jonathan: We're not leaving here without Amos!

Hassan: Dol Hagato. [These are his] *(leaves the box and exits.)*

Jonathan: His flight suit... and a notebook. This is the last chapter of *The Hobbit*... he translated it.

(Lighting changes, Amos's figure appears in the background. Jonathan dives into the story, experiencing the dialogue from the book as a farewell to Amos.)

Jonathan: *(reading)* "At the end of the battle, Thorin, the leader of the dwarves, lay wounded with many wounds. He looked up as Bilbo came beside him."

Amos: *(with a sad smile)* "Farewell, Bilbo. I wish to part in friendship from you. I take back my words and deeds."

Jonathan: *(full of sorrow)* "Farewell. This is a bitter adventure, if it must end so; and not a mountain of gold can amend it."

Amos: *"There is more in you of good than you know, gentle hobbit.*

Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. You wanted to buy peace and quiet. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world. But sad or merry, I must leave it now. Farewell." (exits)

(Jonathan breaks down. Izzy and Saul try to comfort him, but he refuses consolation, lying still. Izzy and Saul pack their belongings.)

Scene 19

(The scene continues – Aziz and Hassan enter)

Aziz: The bus outside will take you to the airport, where you'll board a Red Cross plane that will fly you to Tel Aviv. *(Pause, then to Jonathan)*
Jonathan, I gave you my word. Hassan, bring him in.

(Hassan brings Amos into the room)

Saul: Amos...

Izzy: Amos!

Jonathan: You're alive...

Amos: *(to Jonathan)* We're all alive. *(he helps Jonathan up, and they hug)* *(To Aziz)* Thank you, Captain. *(they shake hands)*

(Aziz turns to leave.)

Amos: Goodbye.

Aziz: Goodbye.

(Aziz and Hassan exit.)

Amos: Three and a half years... So we're going home?

Izzy: Let's go!

(They hug, each grabs their package, and they walk to the front of the stage. A voice-over is heard.)

Narrator:

“Roads go ever ever on,

Under cloud and under star,

Yet feet that wandering have gone

Turn at last to home afar.

Eyes that fire and sword have seen

And horror in the halls of stone

Look at last on meadows green

And trees and hills they long have known.”

(curtain)

(The end)