

***TRAVELS WITH MOHAMED***

*A Play in One Act*

By

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## CHARACTERS

NATALIE STEIN: Mid 30s. Successful small business owner; would-be musician. Single. Lives in New York City.

HEATHER STEIN: Late 30s. Single mother from Amarillo, Texas. Natalie's older sister.

MOHAMED NAZIR: Mid 30s. Native Moroccan tour driver whose uncle owns his SUV. Fancies himself "modern."

NOURI AKHTER: Early 20s. Educated, married tour guide with a newborn daughter.

"GIGI" BROCHET: 50s. Odd Frenchman who manages the riad in Marrakesh.

OSAMA & GIGI 2: Moroccan men who can be played by same actor who plays Gigi.

## SETTING

A road trip through Morocco—from Marrakesh to Fez and many points in between.

## TIME

Several days in the present time.

### SCENE I: Morning in Marrakesh

(Large screens serve as the stage's backdrop and much of the scenery, depicting multimedia images, ancillary characters and the like— videos, maps, photos, etc., show the locations the characters will visit and travel through in and around Morocco: From the beautiful riad accommodation in Marrakesh; to the “old city” medina; to the High Atlas Mountains; to the Sahara Desert; and more. The screens and what they project are integral to showcasing this once-in-a-lifetime road trip, as well as depicting which day of the trip they're on to denote the passage of time. Some of the onscreen characters emit sounds, as well.)

(The screen says: MORNING IN MARRAKESH. Inside the riad, the stunning courtyard is decorated with colorful carpets, high ceilings and hidden lounge spaces filled with luxurious couches, cushions and low-lying tables. It's a beautiful space of Moorish doorways and Islamic design.)

(NATALIE and HEATHER enter the courtyard, ready for their day of sightseeing. They had breakfast inside their suite, and are now headed to meet GIGI in the courtyard that doubles as a lobby.)

(NATALIE and HEATHER are overwhelmed by the gorgeous architecture and accouterments inside this spectacular building. They don't watch where they're going; they just look around and gape and drool and nearly trip over the furniture. Unbeknownst to them, GIGI is watching and smiling. He's seen this all before.)

NATALIE

I could stay here forever.

HEATHER

I know. It's incredible. I want to hunker down, forget my life and just live here. But I wouldn't go outside. I mean, I would if I had to ...

NATALIE

It's soooooo beautiful.

HEATHER

I know! I wonder if I can re-do my house like this. Can you imagine? ‘Amarillo Arab.’ People would freak.

NATALIE

I can totally get away with ‘Moorish Manhattan.’

HEATHER

Absolutely.

NATALIE

It's just stunning.

HEATHER

You said it, Sister. I almost don't know what to do with all the stimulation. It's been so long, if you catch my drift.

(GIGI clears his throat to announce his presence. He speaks English with a French accent, but his accent is tinged with something else and is hard to place. He is an unusual person, like many of the expats who make their homes in Morocco. What brings—and keeps—they here?)

GIGI

Good morning, Natalie.

(having trouble with Heather's name, which makes her and Natalie crack up every time he says it)

Heather.

(NATALIE and HEATHER stop looking around, pleasantly surprised by the presence of GIGI, who commands their attention away from the gorgeousness of the riad.)

GIGI – CON'T.

I trust you did enjoy your breakfast?

NATALIE

It was delicious. Thank you.

HEATHER

Oh my god!

(NATALIE shoots HEATHER a look.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

(an annoyed apology)

Oh my gosh. ... What was that dip? It was like olive oil, but it wasn't olive oil, right?

GIGI

I believe you refer to the Argan oil?

HEATHER

Is that what it is? So good. So goddamned good.

(off Natalie, who shoots her a look)

Sorry ...

(GIGI shakes his head as if to say it's not a problem, but NATALIE rolls her eyes as an apology for her sister.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

(to Natalie)

I said sorry.

NATALIE

(ignoring her)

Isn't that in Moroccan Oil?

GIGI

Excuse me?

NATALIE

Argan. For the hair?

HEATHER

Is that that stuff you send me?

NATALIE

Uh huh.

HEATHER

Moroccan Oil is *amazing* for the hair.

GIGI

Oh, yes. That is correct. How do you know of this?

NATALIE

It's very popular in the States. Maybe Europe, too? I'm pretty sure it has Argan oil in it.

HEATHER

And you can eat it? Heaven on freaking earth. I want it with every meal. That's all I'm saying.

NATALIE

That's all she's saying, Gigi.

GIGI

Yes, it is used in many ways. It is from the Argan tree, which is indigenous to Morocco.

HEATHER

Good to know, because I want it with everything.

GIGI

I believe it is, as you say, for the hair care, for the moisturizer of the skin, with the food ...

HEATHER

(to Natalie)

We are bringing a shit ton of that home. No joke.

(NATALIE shoots HEATHER another look. On the verge of exasperation.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Come on! New discoveries. Isn't that why we're here?

NATALIE

Yes. That is why we're here.

GIGI

I am glad you enjoyed your breakfast. Your guide will be here shortly. And we will escort you to your car, which is awaiting you outside the medina. Do you have anything else you might need to carry with you?

NATALIE

I think we're all set.

HEATHER

(whispers to Natalie)

You have cash, right?

(NATALIE nods.)

GIGI

You will be away for most of the day, but we will be here when you return. Tonight's meal will be taken here, inside the riad, correct?

NATALIE

Correct.

GIGI

And you would like me to reserve space at the hammam?

NATALIE

At the one you told us about? In the medina?

HEATHER

Translation: The *Western* one, right?

GIGI

Yes, where we send all of our guests. They will know just how to take care of you. I do not think you will be happy at any of the local hammams.

HEATHER

Yeah, we shouldn't go too native. It's still early.

NATALIE

(to Gigi)

I think that's best.

GIGI

*D'accord.*

NATALIE

Thank you, Gigi.

(NOURI enters and joins them in the courtyard.)

GIGI

Oh, hello, Nouri. Bonjour.

NOURI

Bonjour, Monsieur Brochet.

GIGI

Ladies, this is Nouri. He will be your guide today for your excursion to the High Atlas Mountains.

(HEATHER approaches NOURI with a warm, outstretched, Texan hand.)

HEATHER

Hello. How are you?

GIGI

This is Heaaatthhher.

NOURI

(taking her hand)

Hello, Heattthher ... my name is Nouri.

GIGI

And Natalie.

(NATALIE nods and smiles at NOURI.)

NOURI

Good morning. My name is Nouri, and today I will be showing you the mighty High Atlas Mountains. We will be setting off shortly. Do you have the appropriate footwear as described in your voyage itinerary?

(They all look at NATALIE and HEATHER's feet—NATALIE wears boots and HEATHER wears sneakers.)

HEATHER

Should be OK. Right?

NOURI

(unsure but diplomatic)

You will be fine. Shall we depart?

(NOURI and GIGI lead the women outside the riad and the screens depict the incredible labyrinth that is the medina. The group walks through the alleys, which are too narrow for cars, but are a lifeblood of their own, replete with souks, shoppers, children and animals populating the innards of the "old city" portion of Marrakesh. It's an incredible scene, reminiscent of a medieval bazaar.)

NOURI – CON'T.

Did you enjoy your first day in Marrakesh?

NATALIE

It was magnificent.

NOURI

I expect your guide did take you to see the Koutoubia Mosque?

NATALIE

*Oui! C'est tres magnifique.*

HEATHER

We walked a lot.

NOURI

And the Majorelle Garden as well as the Saadian Tombs?

NATALIE

*Oui, oui. Fantastique.*

HEATHER

I'm not used to it. I thought we would be driven more.



NOURI

And, of course, our very well cared for, preserved Jewish Quarter? The *Mellah*? It was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is in the process of being restored to its original state.

NATALIE

Uh huh.

HEATHER

All the greatest hits!

NOURI

There still are more than two-thousand Jewish Moroccans living there. Although many left to live in Israel in the last century. At that time there were a quarter of a million people living in the *Mellah*. Can you imagine it?

GIGI

Yes, Nouri, Natalie and Heatthheer went to Jemaa el-Fnaa, too. Of course.

NOURI

Of course. Were you enjoying your voyage there?

HEATHER

Snake charmers, psychics and dancing boys all in one place? What's not to enjoy?

NATALIE

I would love to go back at night ...

HEATHER

No. Way. Once in daylight was enough.

NATALIE

But Gigi says it's a bad idea ...

HEATHER

Thank god.

(NATALIE turns to shoot HEATHER yet another look.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

(a horrible correction)

Thank gosh?

GIGI

I advised the ladies against it. As you know, Nouri, as delightful as the square is, with its various entertainments, it can be a bit dangerous in the evening.

NOURI

Yes, Marrakesh is a wondrous, ancient city. I am honored that it is my home. But there are some places respectable women do not wish to be in the evening. Particularly when unaccompanied.

GIGI

Of course, if you like I can arrange ...

HEATHER

(interrupting)

No, no, no. That's OK. We don't need to go back. We're all set.

(Once again, NATALIE and HEATHER strain their necks to look and see everything that's in their paths. It's truly wondrous—smells, colors and so much to absorb. It's dizzying. NOURI and GIGI are patient as they lead the women along.)

(The LOCALS stare at the women—two Western women traveling alone is not the most common sight—and some CHILDREN point at them and laugh. NATALIE smiles at the kids but HEATHER is unnerved.)

(A YOUNG MAN onscreen whistles at them. HEATHER recoils and holds her bag close against her body.)

ONSCREEN MAN

English? French? You are boss! You are boss!

(GIGI shoos the YOUNG MAN away and he disappears.)

(Finally, the group arrives at the edge of the medina wall, where MOHAMED waits for them. He stands beside his SUV, smoking a cigarette. He cuts a dashing figure, wearing blue jeans and a black leather jacket and dark sunglasses. TWO MEN and a BOY, depicted onscreen, stand near him. MOHAMED tosses them some coins, which they catch then they run away. MOHAMED extinguishes his cigarette and opens the back seat car door for NATALIE and HEATHER.)

NOURI

(making an introduction)

This is Mohamed. He will be your driver during your voyage.

(MOHAMED doesn't say anything—he just nods—as he helps HEATHER into the back seat of the SUV.)

HEATHER

Hi.

(sort of imitating Gigi; maybe that's how her name should be said in Morocco)

I'm Heeatthher.

NATALIE

(to Gigi)

Why did he pay those men?

GIGI

It is custom. He cannot leave the car alone or he will be, how do you say?

NATALIE

Vandalized?

GIGI

Yes. *C'est bien ca.*

(MOHAMED helps NATALIE into the car and they share a look and a moment. GIGI waves them off.)

GIGI

*Au revoir. Appreciez!* I will take care of booking your evening activities. Not to worry.

(MOHAMED drives off, GIGI heads back into the medina toward the riad and the screens change to depict Marrakesh as it recedes into the background and the car drives beyond the city limits.)

(Some traditional Moroccan/Berber MUSIC—the call and response of *Amassakoul*, aka “The Traveler”, by Tinariwen, perhaps—accompanies their drive and, as they did back at the riad, NATALIE and HEATHER strain their necks outside the windows of the SUV to see everything that surrounds and lies ahead of them. A short time later, the car approaches the foothills of the High Atlas Mountains.)

**SCENE TWO: Continuing.**

(The group arrives at its destination and the MUSIC FADES. MOHAMED helps the women out of the car then lights a cigarette and stands off to the side. NOURI joins them from his passenger side and leads them away from the car. NATALIE and MOHAMED glance at each other but don't hold the look long.)

(The screens show a rustic mountain landscape with no paved roads, electricity or running water. It is cold, and the mountains are snow-capped. NOURI brings the women to the entrance of a hiking trail.)

(HEATHER pulls her guidebook out of her bag and begins to thumb through it.)

NOURI

Yes, we are here at the base of the majestic High Atlas Mountains. Do you know any facts about the majestic High Atlas Mountains?

(NATALIE shakes her head no and HEATHER tries to find that chapter in her book.)

NOURI – CON'T.

(he has memorized his spiel)

Welcome to the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco, home of the Berber peoples. Are you familiar with the Berber peoples?

HEATHER

They're all over the guidebook.

NATALIE

It's another name for Bedouins, right? Nomads?

NOURI

Yes, that is correct. The Berber is the oldest inhabitant of Morocco. Many of the peoples you will meet in Morocco are from the Berber descent.

HEATHER

Are you a Berber, Nouri?

(to Natalie)

It sounds English.

(adopts a faux British accent)

Nouri might be a *Berber*.

(NOURI laughs, so NATALIE joins in. A little.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

It has an English tinge, doesn't it? We will sell no *Berber* before its time ...

NATALIE

I hate to break it to you, but Orson Welles wasn't British.

HEATHER

He wasn't?

NATALIE

Wisconsin.

HEATHER

Huh. Well, he would have said it like that if he knew any Berbers. Don't you think?

(NOURI clears his throat in an effort to win back their attention.)

NOURI

Yes, the Berber peoples were here long before the Europeans. In particular, the Romans and the French. And the Berbers outlasted every one! The word itself means free peoples. And, as you will see, today they are still free and live as they have done so for many centuries. Before any ... *interferences*. After a short walk, you will have a moment to enjoy the authentic Berber peoples' cuisine. Do you know of the tagine?

HEATHER

Oh yeah! We are way excited to eat the tagine, Nouri. Very freaking excited.

(to Natalie)

Did you read that Rachael Ray article I sent you?

(NATALIE can barely make eye contact with her sister at this point.)

NOURI

Yes. Many of the meals you will take in Morocco will feature a tagine. It is a traditional Berber stew, made with meats and vegetables and is very tasty. It is a staple of the diet of the ...

(imitating Heather's faux British accent)

*Berber* peoples ...

NATALIE

Well played, Nouri. Very well played.

HEATHER

What about Argan oil? We had some for breakfast and it was delicious.

NOURI

Yes, it is very good.

HEATHER

I know! We love it. Right, Nat?

NOURI

I am very happy when guests of our country like our customs and ways. And foods. On our voyage back to Marrakesh, you will see women collecting the nuts from the Argan tree. They work very hard. As they have for centuries, before your country was even born!

HEATHER

Can we buy some?

NOURI

Yes, there will be many opportunities for you to purchase the Argan oil. All across the majestic country of Morocco.

(HEATHER looks at NATALIE and celebrates for a moment.)

HEATHER

I hope it's not too expensive.

(NATALIE shakes her head—not to worry.)

NOURI

Come.

(NOURI leads the women up the mountain trail, which, as projected on the screens, is a bit treacherous with the incline, rocks and snow. It is clear that HEATHER wore the wrong footwear, and although she doesn't make a fuss, she is slowing them down and annoying NATALIE. But not NOURI, who is a skilled guide, used to this and very patient.)

(Making it harder still to watch where they are going are the incredible sights along the way—from critters running about to Berber children playing with rudimentary toys, such as homemade kites and sticks and makeshift balls. It's the land that time forgot, with the exception of tourists trekking through every once in a while.)

NOURI – CON'T.

(re: the children)

You have children, yes?

HEATHER

Joseph. My son. He goes to RCC. It's a community college. But he's very smart.

(NOURI has no idea what that means.)

NOURI

Of course. Just the one?

HEATHER

It was hard enough getting by with just the one!

NOURI

I have a daughter. One year old this March. *Inshallah*, we will be blessed with many more children. I do not even mind if we have more daughters.

HEATHER

Aren't babies the best? I miss when Joseph was a baby.

(NOURI whips out his flip phone to show HEATHER a photo of his daughter.)

NOURI

Her name is Lalle. It means 'term of respect.'

HEATHER

She's beautiful.

NOURI

Yes. Thank you. I think so, too. I hope she will grow to be a good person.

(NOURI shows NATALIE, too.)

NATALIE

Adorable. Of course she will, with a father like you.

NOURI

Thank you, Madam. And you have children, yes?

NATALIE

No.

NOURI

That is not possible.

HEATHER

Oh, it possible, Nouri. Lots of losers in the tri-state area, let me tell you. You should see some of the jackwagons she's gone out with.

NOURI

Jackwagons?

NATALIE

Never mind ...

NOURI

What is the tri-state? Is that England? Or France? Where do you come from?

HEATHER

The U.S. New York.

NOURI

Yes! I love the U.S. You are from the U.S.?

HEATHER

Yes, and you do? You like America?

NOURI

Of course! Baseball, apple pie and O-bama! O-bama!

NATALIE

Have you been?

NOURI

*Inshallah*, one day I will voyage to the U.S. I have not yet traveled outside Morocco. But, one day ... I have been very busy with my studies and now, with my new family. *Inshallah*, I will travel there soon ... my favorite singer is from the U.S., and I would like to go to his house in, how do you say, Caleeforneea?

NATALIE

California. That's right.

HEATHER

Who is it? The singer?

NOURI

Oh, yes. I am sure you have heard from him. He is Michael Claxon. He lived in the Ranch Neverland.

(NATALIE and HEATHER look at each other—who?)



HEATHER

Michael *Claxon*?

NOURI

Yes, you know. *Billie Jean. Beat It.*

(doing a dance move and a Michael Jackson-falsetto-influenced *yee hee*)

*Thriller*. Michael Claxon is my all-time favorite singer. Even in Morocco!

HEATHER

Don't you mean Jackson?

NOURI

No. Claxon.

(spelling it out for them)

C-l-a-x-o-n.

HEATHER

It's Jackson. And he's dead. You know that, right?

NOURI

Yes, of course I know he has died. But his name is Claxon. Look.

(Again, NOURI takes his flip-phone out of his jacket pocket and types in the name to show to HEATHER.)

HEATHER

You get cell service here?

(NOURI shows HEATHER his phone.)

HEATHER — CON'T.

You just typed the letters like a text.

(to Natalie)

There's no Wi-Fi here!

NATALIE

I think Nouri's making a joke. Right, Nouri? You're pulling our leg?

NOURI

What is that pull your leg? Is it the same as shoe in mouth?

NATALIE

You mean foot in mouth?

NOURI

Yes, yes! Another guest from the U.S. taught me that last year. We do not get too many guests here from the U.S. Most come from Europe. *France*. Michael Claxon!

(NOURI cracks up laughing, and HEATHER and NATALIE soon join in. He got them.)

NOURI — CON'T.

I got you. I got you bad. Get it? Bad? *Yee hee*.

(NOURI does another Michael Jackson dance move and falsetto.)

NATALIE

We have to hand it to you.

HEATHER

That was excellent, Nouri. As in a very high, *Berber* level excellence.

NOURI

(imitating them)

I know!

(All three of them crack up and walk on.)

NOURI – CON'T.

I like Beyonce, too. I am in her Beyhive.

(A moment later, they arrive at a spare stone house where NATALIE and HEATHER are to have lunch.)

**SCENE THREE: Continuing.**

(NOURI leads NATALIE and a nervous HEATHER into a dank, cold room inside the decrepit building and shows them to their seats. A smaller, danker room is next door, separated by a wall.)

(Before them is a table. An elderly server, OSAMA, hunchbacked and fragile, makes his way from the smaller room into the larger one and serves the women tea. He speaks no English but, with his actions and demeanor, is extremely deferential.)

NOURI

*Sahit, Osama.*

(HEATHER makes a face and mouths the name "Osama" to her sister.)

NOURI – CON'T.

(to the women)

Yes, your luncheon will be served shortly. It will include a tagine made here in this authentic Berber home. I hope you will enjoy it. I will return when you have completed your luncheon.

HEATHER

You're not staying?

NOURI

Oh, no, no. Please. You must enjoy your luncheon. I will take mine next door with Mohamed.

HEATHER

Well that sucks.

NATALIE

Enjoy your lunch, Nouri.

NOURI

*Yes. Bon appetit.*

(OSAMA brings out dish after dish after dish and serves NATALIE and HEATHER.)

NOURI – CON'T.

And do not worry. I am just there in case you require my services.

NATALIE

Where is Mohamed?

NOURI

He is driving up the mountain. It is too dangerous for him to drive with our guests—we do not want you in harm's way—which is why we walk and he makes his drive. Thank you. Please. Enjoy your authentic Moroccan cuisine.

(NOURI disappears into the smaller room and OSAMA serves the last of the dishes. Soon, MOHAMED joins NOURI in the smaller room and they take a seat at the small table.)

HEATHER

Thank you.

NATALIE

*Sahit.*

HEATHER

Right, right. *Sahit.*

(OSAMA recedes into the background, leaving NATALIE and HEATHER to dine alone. When he is gone, he serves NOURI and MOHAMED lunch next door ...)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Osama and Mohamed. Did you ever?

NATALIE

They're common names.

HEATHER

I know. But, still ... is Nouri not allowed to eat with us?

NATALIE

Yeah, I don't think so.

HEATHER

Is it because we're *ladies*?

NATALIE

I think it's because we're guests.

HEATHER

So weird. Did this happen in Egypt, and those other ...  
(whispers)

*Muslim* countries you've been to?

NATALIE

Uh huh.

HEATHER

Thanks for bringing me, Nat. I mean, I never would have come here otherwise. Not in a million years. *Morocco!*

NATALIE

Yeah, I've always wanted to come. I'm glad you could join.

HEATHER

Are you kidding? It's the trip of a lifetime. And very generous of my kid sister. As usual.

NATALIE

It's my pleasure. Seriously. And it's great having an opportunity to practice my French.

HEATHER

Yeah, well, Ellen's husband—you remember Tom? He told me we were going to get murdered by ISIS. *Beheaded* ... which is the only reason I suggested we go to the Bahamas instead.

NATALIE

Well, we don't have to worry about that here.

HEATHER

You try telling that to that jackass ... sorry, I have to remember not to curse.

NATALIE

Good idea.

HEATHER

Or be so vulgar, apparently ...

NATALIE

Sorry, I didn't mean to ...

HEATHER

Nat, I'm from Texas, OK? I know you've forgotten, but I can't help it if I have a big personality.

NATALIE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything. It's just ... *sensitive* here. You know?

HEATHER

I know. I got it. Just because I've never been out of the country doesn't mean I'm an ugly American.

NATALIE

(imitating Gigi; trying to be light)

Heathheer, I know you aren't an ugly American ...

HEATHER

I'm sorry I don't have as much *exotic* travel experience as you. That I'm not as *fabulous* or successful as you.

NATALIE

Come on. You're overreacting.

HEATHER

I am not a moron.

NATALIE

I am well aware of the fact that you are not a moron. I pride myself on not hanging out with morons. I stopped doing that in junior high. Remember? When you yelled at me for telling that awful girl she could be friends with us. What was her name?

HEATHER

Julie Papp.

NATALIE

That's right. Julie Papp.

HEATHER

She was the worst.

NATALIE

Which is why you called her ...

HEATHER

Julie Papp Smear. Hey, if the name fits ... She still shops at Fiesta Mart. And she always asks about you. How's Natalie? Still so successful in the big city? La-di-da, la-di-freaking-da ...

(HEATHER lifts the covers off the dishes.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Mmmmm ... what do we have here? Might you be a delicious tagine?

(to Natalie, reaching for her plate)

Here.

(NATALIE hands HEATHER a plate and HEATHER loads it with the tagine.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

It smells good.

(NATALIE takes the plate and waits for HEATHER to serve herself. Then they dig in. What had been great excitement and anticipation, however, is a letdown. They take a few bites, trying to find the dish better than it is. But their disappointment is hard to hide. Still, HEATHER tries to hide it.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

It's not terrible.

NATALIE

It's awful.

HEATHER

I like it.

NATALIE

You're so full of shit.

HEATHER

Watch your mouth, American woman. The *Muslim* men might hear you. Osama ...

NATALIE

Yeah, well ...

HEATHER

What about that guide yesterday, huh? With all that Jewish stuff?

NATALIE

That was weird.

HEATHER

(another whisper)

And then Nouri again today? Do you think they know we're Jewish?

NATALIE

Maybe. I mean, the name Stein isn't exactly a mystery.

HEATHER

Did you know all that stuff about the windows? What was it again? Which go in?

NATALIE

The Jewish Quarter is walled off but the windows face the street; they look outward. In Islamic architecture, the windows face inside, into the courtyard. It's insular.

HEATHER

Tells you a lot, huh?

(NATALIE shrugs and HEATHER peers into some other dishes. She doesn't much like what she sees.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

What's that?

NATALIE

(whispers)

I don't know, but we have to eat it.

HEATHER

Sometimes it really sucks having to have manners.

(HEATHER half-heartedly doles out some more food, but it looks and tastes pretty bad.)

NATALIE

Berbers, man.

HEATHER

I know. Right? This is nothing like I expected.

NATALIE

The tagine?

HEATHER

Everything. I would not do well here. Can you imagine coming to as a toddler, at like, three years old, and waking up to find you're a Berber? I mean, *shit*.

NATALIE

If it's all you know ...

HEATHER

Might as well be in Korea or someplace. Or Saudi Arabia. No driving—ever. And covered and shit all the time? An Emperor Penguin.

NATALIE

A what?



HEATHER

Didn't you see that movie, what was it? Flight of the royally screwed penguins or something like that?

NATALIE

*March of the Penguins?*

HEATHER

Oh yeah. *March*. Brutal. I told myself, if I ever get reincarnated and come to to find myself reborn as an Emperor penguin, I am so going to off myself. Just dive into that icy cold water and sink like a stone. Not going to live like that.

NATALIE

So, let me make sure I have this straight: Berbers, North Koreans, I'm assuming, and Saudi Arabians ...

HEATHER

Saudi Arabian women. The men can drive, right? Make that all Arabian women while we're at it.

NATALIE

And Emperor Penguins. Not gonna do it. Correct?

HEATHER

*Cannot*. Siberians, too. And Somalians. With the pirates? That Tom Hanks movie scared the shit out of me. Make sure they're on the list.

NATALIE

Duly noted.

HEATHER

Feel free to add some places yourself ...

NATALIE

To the Siberians and Somalis?

HEATHER

Go on.

NATALIE

(thinking)

OK, Appalachia ... and Amish country.

HEATHER

That's America!

NATALIE

So? I would never come back from Rumspringa.

HEATHER

What's that?

NATALIE

Oh, it's the best. There's a great documentary you should see ...

HEATHER

Like I have time to watch a documentary ...

NATALIE

It's the Amish gap year. I don't know how old they are, but they're teenagers, I think, and they get to go out and sow some oats. Most come back and dedicate themselves to ... the *community*, I guess ... but some never return. Oh, and Antarctica. I can't take the cold. Make sure that's on the list.

HEATHER

Duly noted.

(NATALIE stops eating, defeated.)

NATALIE

I can't believe I'm going to starve in the country Rachael Ray calls 'an astonishing food scene.'

HEATHER

That's Fez. Not Berber land over here. You think they have any beer? A Bud Light would really help wash down *the tagine*.

(NATALIE just looks at her. No way do they have beer.)

NATALIE

So that driver's pretty cute, huh?

HEATHER

What?

NATALIE

With the leather jacket? He's like an Arab Steve McQueen. A rocking, Moroccan James Dean. I wonder how that works.

HEATHER

What do you mean, how that works?

NATALIE

Well, he's really cute, right? He's got his own car and drives people all over the place. Lots of Western ladies and overnights in the Sahara ...

HEATHER

What in the world are you saying?

NATALIE

Nothing. Never mind.

HEATHER

What?

(leaning in close, whispering)

You want to have a ... *a thing* with him?

NATALIE

No, no! I'm just saying.

HEATHER

Ew!

NATALIE

What do you mean *ew*? Forget it. I never said it.

HEATHER

You think women hit on him? Or *hook up* with him?

NATALIE

Probably. He's so ... they're so ...

HEATHER

What?

NATALIE

*Subservient.*

HEATHER

Natalie!

NATALIE

What? Men say it all the time. Or think it. And take advantage of it.

HEATHER

You really think they seduce the *Arab* driver? He is Arab, right? You need to be careful. I read a blog that said Muslim men try to get Western women to pay their way to Mecca.

NATALIE

Look, people come here, they have a little money, they want a little adventure ... they're like Charlotte Rampling in that Haiti movie? Did you see that?

HEATHER

Like I've had time in the last two decades to watch a movie.

NATALIE

You saw the Tom Hanks one.

HEATHER

On cable! And it's not some weird, artsy movie about sex with Haitians. It's Tom Hanks, for Christ's sake. Just one thing. Please. All I ask.

NATALIE

I can't believe we're having this conversation.

HEATHER

Not before Fez, OK?

NATALIE

What? I'm not going to do anything, H. I'm just kidding.

HEATHER

That would be so awkward. And then what happens? I have to sit in a car with you people for, like, days, knowing you just had sex.

NATALIE

I am not going to sleep with ... with our *Muslim* driver, OK?

HEATHER

Just not before Fez. After Fez, do what you like. I can survive the drive to the airport. And I thought he was Arab? Is that like Latino and Hispanic? I never know the difference.

NATALIE

Heather, listen to me. It's not going to happen. OK? And what makes you think he would even sleep with me?

HEATHER

He's a man.

NATALIE

A *Muslim* man ...

HEATHER

A Moroccan James Dean, right? Go for it. I'm a big girl. You do what you want.

(back to whispers)

You know, the guidebook says Morocco is a top destination for *sexual tourism*. I wonder if that's why Gigi's here.

NATALIE

Of course that's why Gigi's here. But that's not why we're here.

HEATHER

No? So all that stuff about the French, the architecture and all that bullshit? That was true?

NATALIE

Oh my god! Yes. Totally true. Having a *fling* never crossed my mind. Not once.

HEATHER

Maybe *I* should hit that.

NATALIE

What?!?

HEATHER

I could do it if I wanted to, couldn't I? I'm a hip, happening MILF, right?

NATALIE

You said it, Sister. Go hit that.

HEATHER

Although he is ...

(looking around herself then whispering)

*Muslim*. Or Arab. Mom and Dad would freak.

NATALIE

Well, then I suppose it's a good thing they're dead. And even if they weren't, I doubt you'd tell them. Just ... forget I said anything, OK?

HEATHER

How can I? Just not before Fez. That's my one request. Oh, and we have to ask him about Casablanca. I am not leaving here without taking a selfie at Rick's Café.

NATALIE

Should we ask before or after I—or you—fuck him in the Sahara?

(HEATHER tastes another dish and thinks about it a moment.)

HEATHER

Up to you. Here, try this one. It isn't awful.

(NATALIE takes a bite and makes a face.)

NATALIE

God, this sucks.

HEATHER

I know. Very disappointed. That breakfast, though ...

NATALIE

Yeah, maybe we just need to stay away from Berber food.

HEATHER

Yeah, forget about the Berber, Baby. What about tipping?

(HEATHER consults her guidebook.)

NATALIE

No, lunch is included. It's part of the package.

HEATHER

Oh, OK. Great. I thought so. It's just ... you know how things can add up.

NATALIE

Don't worry about it. I got this. We're all set. You're doing me a favor coming here, OK?

HEATHER

OK. I'm glad we didn't go to the Bahamas.

NATALIE

I would never come here alone. Not in a million years.

**SCENE FOUR. Continuing.**

(NOURI and MOHAMED sit together in the small, adjacent room, drinking tea and finishing their lunches. MOHAMED smokes a cigarette.)

NOURI

And, of course, they loved my Michael Claxon joke.

(MOHAMED snickers.)

NOURI – CON'T.

They did! I have yet to have a guest not enjoy my Michael Claxon joke. It makes them laugh every time.

MOHAMED

If you say so.

NOURI

You do not believe me?

(MOHAMED chuckles again.)

NOURI – CON'T.

I promise you they laughed and laughed. And they believed!

MOHAMED

OK! OK!

NOURI

Do you know where they are from?

(a big secret)

America!

(MOHAMED barely reacts.)

NOURI – CON'T.

And they are sisters. The Stein sisters. From America.

(NOURI giggles and they share a laugh.)

NOURI – CON'T.

I do not believe there are any husbands.

(Again, MOHAMED doesn't respond. He just listens.)

NOURI – CON'T.

Do you think they are pretty?

(MOHAMED half nods and NOURI laughs. He thinks so, too.)

NOURI – CON'T.

I think you will have fun with them on the voyage. They seem like nice people. Better than the French, at least.

MOHAMED

Everyone is better than the French.

NOURI

That is true. It is a shame I am not coming with you to the desert. You will enjoy yourself.

MOHAMED

And get a nice tip?

NOURI

*Inshallah*. They are Americans! They are rich and generous.

MOHAMED

And ...

NOURI

And what, Moha?

MOHAMED

You forgot guilty ...

NOURI

If they are here, they are ... still, it is difficult to tell if ...

MOHAMED

Yes ...

NOURI

They appear to be ...

MOHAMED

I agree.

NOURI

But it is impossible to know.



MOHAMED

That is true.

NOURI

The younger one is never married. No children. The other has a grown son.

(Again, MOHAMED cocks his eyebrow and takes in this information.)

NOURI – CON'T.

What do you think is her age?

MOHAMED

Which is the younger one?

NOURI

Natalie. Do you think she is your age?

(MOHAMED shrugs.)

NOURI – CON'T.

And no children! She must be lonely. I cannot imagine my life without my wife and Lalle. It would be very sad.

(NOURI catches himself.)

NOURI – CON'T.

You will take a wife soon, Moha. *Inshallah*. I apologize.

MOHAMED

For what do you apologize?

NOURI

I did not mean to imply ... I know you and Naseem mutually decided to part ...

MOHAMED

I ended it with Naseem.

NOURI

Of course you did. And she didn't deserve you, Moha. Everybody knows that. So, shall I get the guests? Are you ready?

MOHAMED

Yes. I am ready.

(NOURI rises.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

Nouri?

NOURI

Yes?

MOHAMED

It is custom, yes, but not everyone should be married.

NOURI

I did not mean any disrespect.

MOHAMED

I choose my life. I am happy in my life. Naseem was not for me.

NOURI

Yes, Moha. I am sorry. Please forgive me. May I? Get the guests? You have my most sincere apology.

(MOHAMED nods and NOURI heads to the room where NATALIE and HEATHER are finishing their lunches. MOHAMED stubs out his cigarette and rises, too.)

MOHAMED

I will get Ali.

(NOURI pauses.)

NOURI

Ali?

MOHAMED

The car.

NOURI

I do not understand.

MOHAMED

I never told you he is called Ali?

NOURI

The car? No.

MOHAMED

I am Mohamed.

NOURI

Yes?

MOHAMED

And he is Ali. We are a one-two punch.

NOURI

You gave a name to your car? A boxer's name?

MOHAMED

A Muslim boxer's name. The Greatest.

NOURI

You are a strange man, Moha. And I think you have made a mistake.

MOHAMED

What mistake?

NOURI

Is not his name *Mustafa* Ali?

MOHAMED

Get the American guests, Nouri.

(NOURI cracks up. OSAMA returns and walks with NOURI into the room with the women and starts clearing dishes. NATALIE tries to make eye contact to thank OSAMA, but he just looks away, smiles and nods as he cleans up.)

NOURI

I trust you did enjoy your luncheon?

HEATHER

Oh yeah. It was awesome.

NATALIE

Thank you.

NOURI

Yes, very well. Now we will return down the trail and travel back to Marrakesh. I hope you enjoyed this excursion in the High Atlas Mountains. Soon, we will reunite with Mohamed.

(HEATHER makes eyes at NATALIE at the mention of MOHAMED's name. They rise from their seats and follow NOURI out of the hut.)

NOURI  
(to Osama)

*Sahit.*

(OSAMA nods, bows and scrapes.)

NATALIE

*Sahit.*

HEATHER

*Sahit, Osama.*

(NATALIE looks at HEATHER, impressed and still surprised to say the name Osama, and they share a small laugh.)

(They follow NOURI back onto the trail. Again, traditional Moroccan Berber MUSIC begins to play.)

(After a few moments, the group joins MOHAMED, who waits by his SUV. Again, he stands smoking. They hop inside the SUV and head back to Marrakesh.)

(The scenery outside is stunning: high grassy plains and the sun, which was high in the sky, is just beginning to set, casting quite a glow.)

**SCENE FIVE. Continuing.**

(MOHAMED drives the group back to Marrakesh. They are quiet for a while, listening to MUSIC and enjoying the ride and stunning landscape. NOURI is in the passenger seat while HEATHER and NATALIE are in the back.)

(After a few moments, NOURI turns down the music and turns to the women, who are sitting in the back seat.)

Do you like jokes?  
NOURI

Jokes?  
HEATHER

Yes, to laugh?  
NOURI

Who doesn't? Just ask the schmucks on Natalie's dating profile.  
HEATHER

What is schmucks? That is a funny word.  
NOURI

I know, right? Do you get OK Cupid here?  
HEATHER

(NATALIE playfully slaps her to cut it out.)

What is that? OK Cupid?  
NOURI

It's for single people to meet each other and date. Everyone loves to laugh, and go from jeans to black tie just like that!  
HEATHER

Don't listen to her.  
NATALIE

It's why the good lord invented the internet, so people could meet online and never have to meet in person.  
HEATHER

I do not understand. What does Allah have to do with the internet?  
NOURI

NATALIE  
You have a joke, Nouri?

NOURI  
Yes. So, to laugh. Ready?

HEATHER  
Shoot.

NOURI  
How does a Muslim close the door?

(NATALIE and HEATHER look at each other—huh? Muslim jokes?)

NOURI – CON'T.  
(cracking himself up)  
Islams it. Understand? Islams the door?

(NOURI dies laughing and his laughter makes HEATHER, NATALIE and even MOHAMED laugh, too. But MOHAMED laughs just a little.)

NATALIE  
That's funny, Nouri.

NOURI  
I have another. Ready?

HEATHER  
Ready!

NOURI  
What does a Muslim train conductor say? Do you know it?

HEATHER  
No clue.

NOURI  
Natalie?

NATALIE  
*Je ne sais pas.*

NOURI  
Allah board! Get it??? Allah board! On a train!

(Once again, NATALIE, HEATHER and NOURI crack up. The women mainly because NOURI is so cute and hilarious, but MOHAMED because he thinks the jokes are seriously funny. But he doesn't laugh too hard; he tries to downplay his participation.)

I've got one!

HEATHER

No you don't! No she doesn't.

NATALIE

I have *clean* jokes.

HEATHER

You don't know the meaning of the word!

NATALIE

I do, too. I have a kid, remember? I only know clean jokes.

HEATHER

(NATALIE shakes her head and braces herself.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Ready?

NOURI  
(so excited)

Ready!

HEATHER

Mohamed?

MOHAMED

Ready.

HEATHER

Why is the beach wet?

NOURI

I do not know! Moha, do you know it?

MOHAMED

I do not.

NOURI

Why? Why is the beach wet?

HEATHER

Because the sea weed. Get it?

NOURI

(cracking up)

Yes, yes!

NATALIE

You do?

NOURI

No! I do not! But it sounds funny!

HEATHER

Mohamed, do you get it?

(MOHAMED just shrugs.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Wee is another word for ...

NATALIE

If you have to explain ...

HEATHER

OK, I have another one I think they'll get.

(sings to the tune of "That's Amore")

When an eel bites your knee as you swim in the sea, *that's a morey* ... get it? A morey eel?

(NOURI slaps his knee with his hands even though he has no idea what's so funny. HEATHER cracks up, too, particularly because NOURI is laughing so hard and having a great time.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

It's a kind of eel. Like a fish.

NATALIE

I've got one.

NOURI

You do? Please tell us! We are ready!

NATALIE

Why is six afraid of seven?



Why? WHY???

NOURI

Because seven ate nine.

NATALIE

(NOURI nearly blows a gasket he's laughing so hard.)

I get it! I get that one! Moha, do you get it?

NOURI

(MOHAMED nods and smiles a small smile as NOURI pats his shoulder.)

Because seven ate nine! Very clever, Natalie. Very clever!

NOURI – CON'T.

(HEATHER is annoyed her jokes didn't go over as well as NATALIE's.)

I have one.

MOHAMED

(EVERYONE is pleasantly surprised that MOHAMED is now participating and has a joke to tell.)

You do?

NATALIE

Tell it! Tell it!

NOURI

Why do not lady goats swim?

MOHAMED

Oh, I love this one!

NOURI

No clue.

HEATHER

It is so funny!

NOURI

Do you know why?

MOHAMED  
(turns to Natalie)

(NATALIE shakes her head no.)

MOHAMED — CON'T.

Because their husbands will not let them.

HEATHER

I don't get it.

NOURI

Because their husbands are fanatics!

(NOURI simulates a beard hanging off his chin. Neither he nor Mohamed has a beard.)

HEATHER

(to Natalie)

Huh?

NATALIE

Because goats have beards?

NOURI

Yes, yes! They are fanatics with the beards!

(EVERYONE CRACKS UP for different reasons and the MUSIC comes back on as they continue on their road trip. They talk, laugh and chat with each other for a few moments as the landscape passes by and soon they see OLDER WOMEN depicted on the screens—on their hands and knees—picking up nuts off the ground.)

NOURI – CON'T.

And now you will see there are the women who pick up the Argan nuts.

(HEATHER and NATALIE watch the women whiz by past the car windows. MOHAMED keeps looking at NATALIE in the back seat but she doesn't hold his gaze.)

HEATHER

Why only women?

NOURI

Yes, the men are in the cafes or the mosque.

NATALIE

Of course they are ...

NOURI

Which reminds me: What do you call a Muslim woman with an opinion?

(waits a beat)

Anything you want. She has already been stoned to death!

(NOURI cracks up but MOHAMED, NATALIE and HEATHER don't laugh. NOURI quickly collects himself.)

NOURI – CON'T.

Yes, you are right. That is not funny.

MOHAMED

No, it is not. This is Morocco, not the Middle East. We are not savages here.

(NOURI turns back around and they spend the last few minutes of the ride in silence until they arrive back in the medina, where GIGI waits for them. MOHAMED pulls up the SUV and helps the women out of the car. He then hands a few coins to some men and children who have gathered around—so they won't trash his car.)

GIGI

Good afternoon, Natalie. Heaaathhher. How was your excursion?

(MOHAMED stands next to NATALIE.)

NATALIE

It was terrific. Thank you! These guys are great.

(NATALIE fiddles with her bag, trying to find her wallet and get some money out in order to tip NOURI and MOHAMED. It takes her a while to figure out the currency.)

GIGI

Yes, they are the best team in Marrakesh.

(The Muslim CALL TO PRAYER rings throughout the medina, and GIGI looks at MOHAMED and NOURI. It rings for the remainder of this scene, serving as a sort of soundtrack.)

GIGI – CON'T.

(softly)

Go if you must.

(NOURI exaggerates his “no” response, but MOHAMED is subtle, just shaking his head no, he doesn't have to run off to the mosque to pray.)

GIGI – CON'T.

(to Natalie and Heather)

Have you had a chance to decide on the visit to Casablanca?

HEATHER

(to Mohamed)

Yeah, so, we were thinking we'd like to try to go to Rick's Café before flying out. After Fez. Is that possible?

MOHAMED

What is Rick's Café?

HEATHER

It's from *Casablanca*. The movie. You don't know it? Seriously?

(MOHAMED has no clue.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

No one has ever asked you to go there before?

NOURI

(to Mohamed)

That is the film with Jeffrey Bogart! And Siegfried Bergman.

HEATHER

Nice try, Nouri.

(NOURI cracks up.)

NATALIE

It's not even real. There is no café. It was shot on a sound stage in Burbank.

HEATHER

It is so real. It's in the guidebook. And we're going. Right, Mohamed?

MOHAMED

Of course I will take you.

HEATHER

I just want one picture in front of it. Two seconds and then off we go, to the airport.

(NATALIE finally seems to get a grip on the tip, and she steps forward to hand NOURI some cash. He gratefully accepts it.)

NATALIE

Sorry there isn't a better way to do this.

NOURI

*Sahit, sahit.* It is much appreciated, Madam.

GIGI

But never expected.

(NATALIE approaches MOHAMED but he holds up his hands.)

GIGI – CON'T.

You can take care of Moha's gratuity at the end of your trip. If you believe he has earned it.

NATALIE

Oh, OK. Sorry.

GIGI

Are you ladies ready for your dinner this evening?

HEATHER

Yes, I'm starving!

GIGI

And then you will go to the hammam, as discussed.

NATALIE

Thank you, Gigi.

GIGI

(to Mohamed)

So, tomorrow morning?

MOHAMED

Yes.

GIGI

Goodnight.

(GIGI waves MOHAMED and NOURI away.)

NOURI

Enjoy the rest of your visit to beautiful Morocco, Ladies. I hope you did enjoy your voyage to the majestic High Atlas Mountains.

NATALIE

We absolutely did. Thank you so much.

HEATHER

It was awesome.

NATALIE

We won't see you again, Nouri?

NOURI

I am afraid not. I will stay in Marrakesh with my wife and daughter. *Inshallah*, there will soon be another child. I do not even mind if it is another daughter. But Mohamed will be with you the rest of your way. Please enjoy your visit and remember what you heard about the winner of the Middle Eastern beauty contest.

HEATHER

What's that?

NOURI

You have not heard of any winner of the beauty contest for Middle Eastern women?

HEATHER

No.

NOURI

Neither has anyone else! Ever! Goodbye!

(NOURI cracks up for the last time and climbs back into the SUV with MOHAMED and they head on their way. NOURI waves goodbye to the women as he makes his departure.)

(NATALIE and HEATHER wave after them and then head with GIGI back to the riad. A group of KIDS onscreen approach—they want to gape at the Western women and ask for money—but GIGI shoos them away.)

GIGI

Was everything today up to your expectations?

HEATHER

Yeah, it was great. Except the tagine. I thought it was supposed to be delicious?

GIGI

I am afraid they make a different tagine for tourists than they make for themselves.

HEATHER

Why? I want the good tagine.

GIGI

They do not think you can take the spice.

HEATHER

But I totally can. I'm from Texas. We love spice—ever heard of jalapeño? Shit! What a bummer.

GIGI

(to Natalie)

They were good to you?

NATALIE

Of course. They were great.

GIGI

Good. Perhaps you will review us on TripAdvisor and Yelp? If you are so inclined, of course.

NATALIE

*Bien sur!*

HEATHER

*Bien sir!*

**SCENE SIX: Later that night.**

(NATALIE and HEATHER sit on a bench in a waiting area inside the hammam/sauna wrapped in towels. Their conversation is accompanied by the occasional sound of whooshing water as their fellow hammam-goers receive treatments in the rooms beyond where they sit.)

NATALIE

I can't believe you're wearing a bathing suit.

HEATHER

I can't believe you're not!

NATALIE

Why would I?

HEATHER

You have no idea what germs are in these places.

NATALIE

Do you wear a bathing suit to get a massage? At home?

HEATHER

No.

NATALIE

Why not?

HEATHER

Because I don't get massages at home, that's why. I live in Amarillo, remember? And, besides, I don't want some strange woman rubbing me all over the place. Do you?

NATALIE

Oh yeah! I want the full-on-yet-tamped-down-for-Westerners version of the traditional hammam experience. I can't believe you don't. What happened to new discoveries?

HEATHER

Suit yourself. How do you even know you're supposed to be stark raving naked?

NATALIE

Because it's a bathhouse. You're meant to *bathe*. In the traditional hammam, everyone is naked the whole time. For hours. Oh, and you'll probably have more than one woman's hands on you. There might be two, or even three.



HEATHER

You're the worst. Thank god we're not being traditional. And how does that even work?  
Aren't ...

(whispering)

*Muslim* women supposed to be covered all the time?

NATALIE

Not at the hammam. Which is why they stay as long as they can. It's a respite for them.

HEATHER

But the men and women are separate, right?

NATALIE

Uh huh.

HEATHER

Then why did we see those guys when we came in?

NATALIE

This one's Western. I guess it's unisex.

HEATHER

But they won't come in here?

NATALIE

I don't know. I don't think so.

HEATHER

Then it's doubly good I wore my bathing suit. Just in case.

NATALIE

Since when are you such a prude?

HEATHER

I am not a prude.

NATALIE

You are, too. What happened to the crazy drunk girl who flashed her tits all over South Padre on spring break?

HEATHER

Oh, please ...

NATALIE

Was that you? Or maybe I confused you with Julie Papp Smear.

HEATHER

Very funny. I was a kid. I wasn't a mother then.

NATALIE

Oh, please. That's how you became a mother at 19 ... sorry ...

HEATHER

Very nice. I love being reminded that my kid sister thinks I'm white trash.

NATALIE

I said sorry.

HEATHER

I just don't need a bunch of strangers ogling and rubbing strange hands all over me, OK? Can't I be comfortable? Why won't you let me be comfortable?

NATALIE

It's just not the same experience if you have clothes on.

HEATHER

It's a bathing suit. And so what? I'll have my own experience, thank you very much. So, you're really naked under there?

NATALIE

It's a spa.

HEATHER

(imitating her)

It's a spa. Well la-di-freaking-da. You're so brave.

NATALIE

I am not. I just contain multitudes. That's what I do. I see vastness.

HEATHER

Oh, pardon me. Pardon me for your multitudes ...

(A GIANT WHOOSH can be heard in the room nearby, which startles HEATHER.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

God, why is it so violent?

NATALIE

It's just water. They throw buckets over you.

HEATHER

Why did we come here again?

NATALIE

To the hammam or to Morocco?

HEATHER

Both at this point.

NATALIE

Are you seriously not having a good time?

HEATHER

No, I am. I mean ... it's just, different. Really, really different.

NATALIE

What did you expect?

HEATHER

I don't know. Better food, I guess. And some women. Do you realize we haven't had any contact with women since we've been here? It's all men.

(whispering)

And I don't trust them. They're only being nice because they have to be. Because we're tourists and have money.

NATALIE

That's ridiculous. They're nice because they're nice people. And I hate to break it to you, but you're about to get very close to some native Moroccan women. Very, very close.

(Another GIANT WHOOSH, which causes NATALIE to crack up, but HEATHER still looks a little afraid.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Seriously, what are you afraid of? Think of it as purification. Let's cleanse ourselves of the last few years, OK? Mom. Dad. The accident. Isn't that why we're here?

HEATHER

New discoveries.

NATALIE

Look, Gigi wouldn't send me or Heatthhhhhher anywhere harmful, right? This, *tour*, it's all custom and private—for us. Nothing to worry about. That's why we spent all this money, right?

HEATHER

It's why *you* spent all this money ...

NATALIE

Whatever. It's to be careful and cared for.

HEATHER

And not get killed by ISIS.

NATALIE

Exactly.

HEATHER

OK.

NATALIE

OK. ... Had I known you'd turned into such a prude I would have brought Julie Papp Smear instead.

HEATHER

She'd have loved it; she's as big a jackwagon as you.

(HEATHER elbows NATALIE as the WOMEN who will be providing their treatments appear onscreen ready to take them to their slabs. They make a motion that HEATHER and NATALIE should lose their towels.)

(NATALIE drops hers without a second thought and enters the steam room offstage. HEATHER waits a moment then lets her towel drop, too, revealing her full-coverage, one-piece bathing suit. Still, she covers her chest and groin with her hands as she follows NATALIE off stage to the treatment room.)

(A moment later, another giant WHOOSH and the sound of HEATHER screaming.)

**SCENE SEVEN: The next morning.**

(The screen says: DAY THREE: MARRAKESH.)

(NATALIE goofs around with some LOCAL KIDS depicted onscreen as HEATHER stands nervously beside her and MOHAMED packs the SUV. GIGI speaks confidentially with MOHAMED.)

GIGI

So, directly to the pass, Aït Benhaddou and then the riad. Got it?

MOHAMED

Oui, Monsieur Brochet.

GIGI

I know you like to show people *your country* but, look at me, Moha. That's it, OK? No off road or unnecessary stops. They get what they paid for. *Comprenez-tu?*

MOHAMED

*Je comprende.*

(GIGI turns to NATALIE and HEATHER.)

GIGI

I hope you have enjoyed your stay with us.

NATALIE

It's so hard to leave.

GIGI

It will be here when you return.

HEATHER

*Sahit* for everything.

GIGI

And, remember, if it is possible to write a nice review ...

NATALIE

Of course. It goes without saying.

GIGI

*Merci.*

NATALIE

(to Heather)

Do you mind if I sit up front? I felt a little sick back there yesterday.

(HEATHER makes eyes at her sister, heads for the back seat and teases ...)

HEATHER

Somebody's going to Mecca ...

GIGI

Mohamed? Ready?

MOHAMED

Yes. Please.

(MOHAMED holds out a hand and helps HEATHER into the back seat of the SUV. NATALIE takes her seat in the passenger side.)

GIGI

It was very nice to meet you both. Natalie. Heattthheerr. Enjoy the rest of your trip. Mohamed will take good care of you from now on.

(MOHAMED hops into the driver's seat. GIGI waves goodbye and they're off.)

MOHAMED

I found your Rick's Café.

HEATHER

You did?

MOHAMED

We will have to leave at four a.m. instead of five if we are to go there before the airport.

HEATHER

Is that a problem?

NATALIE

Are you kidding?

HEATHER

What? It's only an hour.

MOHAMED

It is not a problem. If you would like to do it then we will do it. There just is often traffic around Casablanca by the time we will arrive in the morning.

NATALIE

We'll talk about it.

HEATHER

Not everything is your decision, Natalie.

NATALIE

Let's see how the rest of the trip goes, OK? That's a lot of extra time. For Mohamed and for us ...

(HEATHER sits back and sulks for a moment.)

MOHAMED

Today we travel to Skoura, where we will spend the night in the "Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs," as it is known. Before we reach Skoura, we will drive through the Tichka Pass, where we will have lunch. And then we will visit Aït Benhaddou, the "Door of the Desert," where many films are made. Do you know *Game of Thrones*?

HEATHER

Of course! It's why the good lord created HBO.

(MOHAMED makes to ask ...)

NATALIE

Don't ask ...

MOHAMED

*Game of Thrones* is filmed there. Aït Benhaddou is the "Hollywood of North Africa."

HEATHER

Really? Wow! What part of the show? Dany and the dragons?

MOHAMED

I do not know. I cannot afford to buy the program. But many films have been made there.

HEATHER

I love those crazy dragons.

NATALIE

Which films? Do you know?

MOHAMED

*Lawrence of Arabia, Gladiator, Babel, Kundun, The Last Temptation of Christ* ... it is all of human history.

(The screens depict pedestrians dressed in traditional Moroccan garb—the *djellaba*—walking along the side of the road.)

HEATHER  
What are those?

MOHAMED  
What?

HEATHER  
Those robes. They look like druids.

MOHAMED  
That is the *djellaba*.

NATALIE  
(practicing)  
*Djellaba?*

MOHAMED  
That is right. Excellent student.

HEATHER  
*Djellaba. Djellaba. Djellaba.* That is a *djellaba* funny name for an article of clothing.

NATALIE  
Don't mind her, Mohamed. She is why the good lord invented back seats.

MOHAMED  
I do not understand.

NATALIE  
Never mind. Do women wear them, too?

MOHAMED  
Yes. But the women's *djellabas* do not have a hood. That is the difference between them.

HEATHER  
Why are they different?

MOHAMED  
I do not know why. It is just the way it has been.

NATALIE  
I hate that answer.



MOHAMED

It is not my decision. It was decided many years ago, before I was born.

HEATHER

What about the hats?

NATALIE

The Fez?

MOHAMED

The *Abernousse*. That is the true name.

NATALIE

(practicing)

*Abernousse. Abernousse.*

(The screens show two men walking, arm in arm, on the road beside them.  
Both wear the *djellaba* and *abernousse*.)

HEATHER

Look! *Djellaba*!

MOHAMED

*Abernousse*!

(They all crack up at this new game they've invented. Kind of like I SPY,  
Moroccan style.)

HEATHER

We are totally getting *djellabas*. I'm getting one for Joseph, too.

NATALIE

Look out Remington Community College! Here comes the *djellaba* trend!

HEATHER

Can you imagine? People would freak.

(They drive along in silence for a moment or two.)

MOHAMED

Now comes the time we learn your Moroccan names.

HEATHER

Oh yeah?

MOHAMED

Yes. In country, you must answer to your true Arabic names. You first ...  
(poking fun at Gigi)

*Heathhhhheer ...*

NATALIE

Oh, no! Were we that obvious?

MOHAMED

(ever the diplomat)

I do not know to what you refer. But, *Heathheer*, you are Khadija, the Prophet Muhammad's first wife. She was known as the "Mother of the Believers," and the first person to convert to Islam.

HEATHER

Is that a hint? Do you want me to convert to Islam, Mohamed?

MOHAMED

Yes, yes ... I mean no, no, no. It is in fun only.

HEATHER

Did Khadija have dragons?

NATALIE

Who am I?

MOHAMED

You are Fatima, daughter of Muhammad and Khadija, who is loved and venerated by all Muslims everywhere.

(HEATHER leans forward and playfully slaps NATALIE's shoulder.)

HEATHER

Ha! I am your mother and you will obey me.

NATALIE

What happened to Fatima?

MOHAMED

She was born in Mecca, the messenger of Allah. She died young, just days after her beloved father, but her influence is still felt throughout Islam today.

NATALIE

What else?

MOHAMED

That is all that must be known ... because that is all I know.

HEATHER

That's a good reason.

NATALIE

Mohamed?

MOHAMED

Call me Moha, please.

NATALIE

Moha? Would you turn that music back on? What we listened to yesterday?

MOHAMED

You like it? The Berber music?

NATALIE

Yes. Very much.

MOHAMED

You are the boss.

(MOHAMED puts on the BERBER music and they listen and ride for a while. They all daydream a bit while listening to the wonderful sounds. After a few moments, in which a lot more time has passed than what's happened on stage, MOHAMED turns down the music.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

Now we are approaching my favorite place in all Morocco. Come. I will take your photograph here at the famed Tichka Pass.

(MOHAMED pulls over and they get out of the SUV. They are at a terrific vantage point at the Tichka Pass, which is the gateway through the Atlas Mountains. The screens depict the stunning scenery that surrounds them.)

(No different from any other tourist attraction, vendors man tables adorned with tchotchkes and trinkets and Fanta sodas for sale.)

(HEATHER and NATALIE follow MOHAMED's lead and walk out toward the ledge, overlooking the incredible valley that they just rode through to get here. MOHAMED readies his phone to take their picture, but before he does so, he notices some fellow travelers dressed in traditional garb.)

MOHAMED

*Say djellaba!*

(HEATHER and NATALIE crack up, then, in unison ...)

HEATHER/NATALIE

*Abernousse!*

(MOHAMED snaps their picture, which appears as a snapshot on the screens behind them, and then he escorts them to the nearby café, where they sit at a table.)

**SCENE EIGHT: Continuing.**

(The makeshift, roadside café could be beside any landmark anywhere in the world, but this one happens to be atop the Atlas Mountains. The plastic chairs and paper plates, however, don't set it apart from anywhere else.)

(NATALIE and HEATHER take their seats while MOHAMED enters the café to fetch their lunches. Some local MUSIC plays.)

HEATHER

So, Fatima. I've been thinking, how long do you think it will be before Mohamed asks for the money to go to Mecca?

NATALIE

Would you stop that, please?

HEATHER

And how much do you think it'll cost?

NATALIE

You're horrible.

HEATHER

I'm practical. Something to think about. He totally has a crush on you. Can't you tell?

(MOHAMED returns with plates of food, which he hands to NATALIE and HEATHER. He, however, doesn't eat. He just sips tea and lights a cigarette.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Aren't you hungry?

MOHAMED

I took breakfast before I arrived at the riad.

HEATHER

That was hours ago.

MOHAMED

Please. Eat. I will enjoy my Moroccan whisky.

HEATHER

You're drinking whisky???

NATALIE

He's teasing.

(Looking at the plates. NATALIE barely touches anything.)

HEATHER

Is that Argan oil?

MOHAMED

Yes. You know it?

HEATHER

Oh yeah!

(HEATHER devours the Argan oil, dipping pieces of pita into it. NATALIE takes a few bites, but it's clear she doesn't love the rest of the food.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

We love Argan oil.

MOHAMED

You will not be in short supply. It is found everywhere in Morocco.

HEATHER

Music to our ears.

MOHAMED

Fatima, are you not hungry?

NATALIE

I'm OK. I just don't feel ... *perfect*.

MOHAMED

Do you not like the food?

NATALIE

No, it's not that ... I just ... is there a bathroom here?

MOHAMED

Yes, but it is not a European toilet. Is that a problem?

HEATHER

What does that mean?

MOHAMED

It is a hole in the ground. I know that is not the favorite of Americans. You are more comfortable with, how do you say? Modern conveniences.

NATALIE

Usually, it's no big deal, but ... I just don't feel great.

MOHAMED

If you can wait an hour, I know where we can find one. Is this possible?

NATALIE

Yes. Thank you.

MOHAMED

What foods do you like?

NATALIE

In Morocco?

MOHAMED

In anywhere?

NATALIE

All kinds. Normally.

MOHAMED

Do you like pizza?

HEATHER

We love pizza.

MOHAMED

Then we will have pizza.

HEATHER

We will? Here?

MOHAMED

No, later in the trip we will take the Berber pizza. It is my favorite. At the best restaurant in all of Morocco. Just after the Sahara.

HEATHER

How exciting.

MOHAMED

It is very tasty. I know you will enjoy it.

NATALIE

Sounds great. I hope my appetite comes back by then.

MOHAMED

To feel sick every now and again, it is life, as we Moroccans say. It is OK.

HEATHER

Mohamed, why is this your favorite place?

MOHAMED

This place?

HEATHER

Yes.

MOHAMED

You are a good listener.

HEATHER

Thank you. So, why?

MOHAMED

Oh, you wish me to answer?

HEATHER

Yes. That's why I asked.

MOHAMED

Oh, sorry. Most guests do not ask questions of me. Personally. Thank you. I like Tichka Pass because it is a bridge. Where we came from, Marrakesh, that is tamed ... a modern Morocco. But where we are going, once we travel over the pass, it is into the wild. The desert. The past.

NATALIE

Have you seen the whole country?

MOHAMED

Yes. From the ocean to the desert to the mountains to the sea. And everywhere in between.

NATALIE

And this, here, is your favorite?

MOHAMED

Yes, Fatima. It is here. I will get you more Argan oil and bread. You must eat.

(MOHAMED rises and leaves them, but not before sharing a look and a smile with NATALIE. When he is out of ear shot, HEATHER sings ...)



HEATHER

Somebody's going to Mecca!

NATALIE

You are the absolute worst. You know that?

HEATHER

What? It's true. Fatima ... favored daughter ...

NATALIE

You're the wife! Oh my god, I can't believe I'm having this conversation with you.

HEATHER

I believe you mean *oh my gosh* ...

(MOHAMED returns with another plate, which he sets before  
HEATHER.)

HEATHER

*Sahit*, Mohamed.

MOHAMED

Impressive, Khadija.

HEATHER

I know!

NATALIE

So, Mohamed, have you ever been out of Morocco? Traveled abroad anywhere?

MOHAMED

I went once. To Belgium.

HEATHER

Belgium?

MOHAMED

Yes, with a friend. We went and visited people we know ...  
(an admission)

Drank beer.

HEATHER

You did?

MOHAMED  
 Yes.

HEATHER  
 Did you like it?

MOHAMED  
 Very much. But I should not drink it so much. It does not agree with me.

HEATHER  
 Was that the first time you drank alcohol?

MOHAMED  
 No. I drink beer every once in a while. All Moroccan ... Muslim ... men do. They just do not let you see them do it.

HEATHER  
 Really? Wow.  
 (to Natalie)  
 I can't wait to tell Tom. Ellen's husband.

NATALIE  
 The ISIS guy?

HEATHER  
 He always says a stiff drink might calm them down.

NATALIE  
 Asshole. Sorry, Mohamed.

MOHAMED  
 It is OK. But you know what? We drink Moroccan whisky most of all.

HEATHER  
 What the hell is Moroccan whisky???

MOHAMED/NATALIE  
 Tea.

HEATHER  
 Jinx.

MOHAMED  
 What is this jinx?

NATALIE

Nothing. It's silly.

MOHAMED

You think I will not understand?

NATALIE

No, it's not that. It's just a silly thing people say when they say the same thing at the same time.

MOHAMED

(soft chuckle)

Oh, I like it. *Jinx*.

HEATHER

Mohamed?

MOHAMED

Call me Moha, please. That is what my friends say.

HEATHER

OK, Moha. Why did you choose Belgium? To visit.

MOHAMED

My family has friends there. My uncle, he bought me the SUV, for touring. So before we start the business, I took a journey to Belgium. With my friend from Marrakesh.

HEATHER

So you stayed with friends? In Belgium?

MOHAMED

Yes.

HEATHER

Where?

MOHAMED

Are you asking if we stayed in Molenbeek?

NATALIE

(too quickly)

No!

HEATHER

I don't know what that is ...

MOHAMED

Molenbeek is where many Muslims live in Brussels. It is where some bad people have carried out attacks.

HEATHER

Oh, right ...

(practicing)

Molenbeek.

MOHAMED

I have friends there. There are many good people there.

NATALIE

Of course there are. She didn't mean ...

MOHAMED

Those others have nothing to do with me. Or Morocco.

NATALIE

We know that.

HEATHER

How long were you there?

MOHAMED

Four days. Then back to Marrakesh.

NATALIE

Will you go again?

MOHAMED

*Inshallah*. But do you know where I would really like to visit?

HEATHER

Mecca?

MOHAMED

Yes, well of course, Mecca. *Inshallah*, I will go there one day. My sincerest wish is to bring my mother.

(HEATHER makes eyes at NATALIE but NATALIE ignores her. Or at least tries to.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

But more easily, I would like to travel to Germany.

NATALIE

Germany? Why Germany?

MOHAMED

I would like to drive the Autobahn. Very fast. I have, how do you say? The need for speed.

(They share a mood-lightening laugh.)

HEATHER

What about the U.S.?

MOHAMED

What about the U.S.?

HEATHER

Would you like to go there?

MOHAMED

Of course, if I can visit Fatima and Khadija.

(His eyes are on NATALIE.)

HEATHER

We live very far apart.

MOHAMED

Where is that?

HEATHER

I live in Texas. Have you heard of Texas?

MOHAMED

Of course! George Bush.

NATALIE

Yeah, well, maybe not our best export, but ...

MOHAMED

I like George Bush. Very strong.

HEATHER

Me, too! Yes!

(HEATHER holds up her hand for MOHAMED to high five, which he does. NATALIE shakes her head. HEATHER sticks her tongue out at her sister.)

MOHAMED  
And where is Fatima?

HEATHER  
Fatima lives in New York City.

MOHAMED  
New York City? No!

HEATHER  
New York City, yes.

NATALIE  
Why do you respond that way?

MOHAMED  
The big city. *La Grande Pomme!*

HEATHER  
What?

NATALIE  
The Big Apple.

MOHAMED  
Yes. Fast city. Never sleeping city. You cannot drive there.

NATALIE  
You can drive ...

MOHAMED  
But you cannot go fast. And you live there?

NATALIE  
Yes.

MOHAMED  
With your husband?

HEATHER  
Funny you should say that, Mohamed. Our dear Fatima is not married. She is, as the saying goes, *available*.

MOHAMED  
How is that possible?

HEATHER  
Oh, it possible!

MOHAMED  
*Quelle catastrophe.* No children?

HEATHER  
Nope. No children. Just too much work and not enough pleasure. Unless you count massages ...

NATALIE  
OK, you can stop now, Mother Khadija.

HEATHER  
(to Mohamed)  
Are you married?

MOHAMED  
I am married to Ali. My new business.

HEATHER  
Tsk, tsk, tsk ... you're so alike.

MOHAMED  
(to Natalie)  
What do you do to live?

NATALIE  
You mean for work?

MOHAMED  
Yes.

NATALIE  
I have a shop. A small shop.

HEATHER  
A very successful and expensive shop. Antiques.

MOHAMED  
Antiques? Is that why you are here?

No. Not this trip.

NATALIE

She's also a musician.

HEATHER

*C'est vrai?*

MOHAMED

Yes, well ... the piano doesn't pay the bills.

NATALIE

You are a pianist?

MOHAMED

No, not anymore. I just play for me.

NATALIE

You still are young. You are talented.

MOHAMED

How would you know?

NATALIE

Oh, I know. You are Fatima, a role model for all women. One day, they will hear your songs.

MOHAMED

What about you? How is your business going? With your uncle?

HEATHER

It is OK. We only start a year ago so we are new. But I hope to be great success one day.

MOHAMED

What did you do before then?

HEATHER

Heather ...

NATALIE

It is OK. I was a football player. How you say soccer.

MOHAMED

Professional?

HEATHER



MOHAMED

Unfortunately, no. I did make some living for a while. But not enough. There is never enough living in Morocco ... But I was able to see much of my country.

HEATHER

I've never left America. Until now. I work at Fiesta Mart. It's a grocery store. I'm a manager. I've been doing it since I left college ... to have Joseph. It's not much, but it pays the bills. Mostly. So I know what you mean. Have you ever been married?

NATALIE

Heather!

MOHAMED

It is OK. I almost married once, but she decided to marry a wealthier man. And, as a man in Morocco, I am too old to not be married.

NATALIE

According to whom?

MOHAMED

According to my mother and my uncle!

NATALIE

Sounds like my family. Our parents.

(NATALIE looks at HEATHER but neither references their deaths.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

What about your father?

MOHAMED

I never knew my father. Just my uncle. He is like my father.

HEATHER

Like my son; he never knew his dad ... would you like to get married?

MOHAMED

Maybe. Some day. *Inshallah*.

HEATHER

*Inshallah!* Oh look, *djellaba!*

(MOHAMED and NATALIE turn to where HEATER is looking and crack up, then add ...)

NATALIE/MOHAMED

*Abernousse!*

MOHAMED

Jinx!

NATALIE

Well played, Mohamed. Excellent student.

MOHAMED

Please, call me Moha. OK, Fatima?

NATALIE

OK, Moha.

MOHAMED

Shall we go and find you a European toilet?

NATALIE

Yes, please! My kingdom for a European toilet!

(Up and off they go, back to the car and along on their trip.)

**SCENE NINE: Later that day.**

(MOHAMED lends a hand to NATALIE, who joins him at the top of Aït Benhaddou, the mud brick top of the ancient cliff city that was a former caravan route with incredible views. On the screens, images and silhouettes of camels can be seen in use, even to this day.)

You made it!

MOHAMED

Barely.

NATALIE

Here. Take some water.

MOHAMED

(MOHAMED hands NATALIE a bottle of water.)

*Sahit. Merci.* And thank you.

NATALIE

(NATALIE and MOHAMED take in the view. NATALIE sips the water and catches her breath.)

Don't you have any?

NATALIE – CON'T.  
(re: the water)

I am fine. Like a camel.

MOHAMED

It's really stunning up here.

NATALIE

Yes, it is. Do you think your sister has had her success?

MOHAMED

Oh, yes.

NATALIE

You think she found herself a suitable ...?

MOHAMED

Oh, I'm pretty sure.

NATALIE

MOHAMED

I think so, too. But she will pay too much here. I wish she would have listened to my advice and waited until Skoura.

NATALIE

I don't think she minds. She'd rather shop than climb. And it's my money she's spending ... not that it matters. Shit, forget I said that. Please.

MOHAMED

Said what?

(They continue looking at the view.)

NATALIE

It's really beautiful.

MOHAMED

It is too bad I cannot take you to Volubilis.

NATALIE

What's that?

MOHAMED

You did not select it on the itinerary.

NATALIE

I never heard of it.

MOHAMED

Volubilis is the ancient Roman city. At one time it was very prosperous. Very beautiful. When the French came they found the most magnificent mosaics, which had been untouched for a thousand years. Would you believe they were the floors of great houses? I would have liked to have shown them to you.

NATALIE

Is it too late to change our plans?

MOHAMED

I am afraid so.

NATALIE

When I return to Morocco, we will go to Vol ...

MOHAMED

Volubilis. *Inshallah*. And then there is the sea. And the ocean.

NATALIE

You will take us to see them someday.

MOHAMED

Yes. But Volubilis and here, Aït Benhaddou, you do not have such places in the United States.

NATALIE

We have our own versions of these places.

MOHAMED

Where are these places in America?

NATALIE

The Grand Canyon ...

MOHAMED

That is a natural wonder.

NATALIE

Yes, well, there are ancient cities and civilizations ... the Mayans.

MOHAMED

That is not your America.

NATALIE

No, well ... I'm not an archeologist or historian so I can't tell you exactly ...

MOHAMED

It is very difficult to maintain a culture, let alone a prosperity, over the centuries, Fatima. It will be a long time before America knows this. Or understands.

NATALIE

You can't blame us for being young.

MOHAMED

I am not blaming ...

NATALIE

We're like the puppy of the world.

MOHAMED

What is the meaning of that?

NATALIE

We are young and eager and think we're so ... *exceptional* ... that we know everything and what's good for everyone else. I understand that's how the world sees us sometimes.

MOHAMED

I do not see America that way ...

NATALIE

You don't?

MOHAMED

I see you trying to be good, to be strong, but that can put you in situations ... in places you don't know. That you can never understand.

NATALIE

Exactly. Like a lab, or a golden retriever.

MOHAMED

Not a mutt?

NATALIE

Probably a mutt. Look, Mohamed, I don't want to have to defend ...

MOHAMED

Moha ...

NATALIE

Moha, sorry ...

MOHAMED

I am not asking you to do anything, Fatima. I am just telling you about Morocco. About my country. It is small, yes. But it is not insignificant. Do you like this place?

NATALIE

Here? Yes. Very much so.

MOHAMED

It reminds me of music. Do you hear it?

(NATALIE listens but doesn't hear anything.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

If you listen closely, you will hear the wind play the music of the ages. There it is.

(NATALIE leans in and tries—really hard—to hear what he's talking about.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

For centuries, people from all over the ancient world traveled here. Where we now stand. They traded here. They ate meals and lived and died here. They were all the world's peoples and religions ...

(pointing)

There are two cemeteries still here from the ancient city. One is Muslim and the other is ... can you guess, Fatima?

NATALIE

Which religion?

MOHAMED

Yes.

NATALIE

Christian?

MOHAMED

Jewish.

NATALIE

Really?

(CAMELS are depicted onscreen, being led in by PEOPLE on the valley floor below in a scene that could have taken place millennia ago.)

MOHAMED

Yes. Can you picture it? Jews, Christians, Muslims, everyone. Can you see the centuries? And all the world's peoples, traveling through here day after day ...

NATALIE

This place. How you describe it. It's what music is for me.

MOHAMED

Yes.

NATALIE

I guess some would call it religion. The way it is here; the way it feels. The wind.

MOHAMED

I feel it that way, too, Fatima.

NATALIE

Yes, but you *practice* ... you are ...

MOHAMED

I have religion?

NATALIE

Yes. Don't you?

MOHAMED

I am not devout. I spent many years thinking of myself and my family, my neighbors, and I decide I am not devout. I have religion, as you say, yes. But that is not all I am. And you are more than music. Do you have religion?

NATALIE

No, I mean, yes ... We were the only Jewish people in our town. My parents had a store. It had been in our family for years ... Heather works there now ... but we kept religion to ourselves ... I have spirituality. I am spiritual, not religious. Necessarily.

MOHAMED

What does that mean?

(NATALIE closes her eyes and takes a moment to sway in the breeze.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

Listen and you will hear, and they will know we are with them. All these centuries later.

(MOHAMED closes his eyes and listens. Another breeze arrives and wafts over them. After a few moments, they both come to. They open their eyes, look at each other and smile. That was special.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

Perhaps we should collect Khadija?

NATALIE

Perhaps. God knows what she's up to.

(MOHAMED holds out his hand and NATALIE takes it.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Sorry.

MOHAMED

Not to be sorry. I am sure Allah knows precisely which *djellaba* Khadija has chosen for her wardrobe. Come, let's protect her from the modern-day traders and their high tourist prices.

NATALIE

It's called a rip-off, Moha.



MOHAMED  
(practices)

A rip-off?

NATALIE

Yes, very good. Excellent student.

MOHAMED  
(louder this time)

Rip-off!

(MOHAMED and NATALIE begin their descent as a strong breeze blows atop the mountain.)

MOHAMED/NATALIE  
(top of their lungs; echoing)

Rip-off!!!! JINX!

**SCENE TEN: A few days later.**

(The screen says, DAY SIX: SAHARA DESERT.)

(It's dusk at a desert camp in the Sahara. Lanterns and candles light the path of a narrow carpet in the sand, which leads the way from the main dining tent to smaller sleeping quarters.)

(NATALIE and HEATHER enter their sleeping tent in this oasis in the desert. They have just returned from a camel ride and both women have scarves wrapped around their heads like *hijabs*. HEATHER wears the *djellaba* she bought at Ait Benhaddou. They crack up as they enter the tent and start to unwrap their scarves. NATALIE tosses hers on her bed.)

HEATHER

I am so posting this right now. Don't I look so hot in my *djellaba*?

NATALIE

You said it, Sister.

(HEATHER retrieves her cellphone from her pocket and looks at the pictures they took of their camel ride, which are depicted onscreen.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

That was so amazing.

HEATHER

I know! Who was mine again?

NATALIE

Jimi Hendrix.

HEATHER

That's right.

NATALIE

And I rode Bob Marley.

HEATHER

So perfect. Joseph is going to die when he sees this.

NATALIE

Do your legs hurt?

HEATHER

A little.

NATALIE

Mine, too.

(SOMEONE knocks on their tent door. NATALIE goes to the door and has a few words with the knocker.)

NATALIE

OK, thanks, Abdul. We'll be right there.

(to Heather)

Dinner's ready.

HEATHER

Just let me post this real fast.

NATALIE

There's Wi-Fi?

HEATHER

Can you believe it? Now this is what I call glamping.

(HEATHER posts her photos and she and NATALIE head outside the tent to go to dinner. It's a bit darker than it was when they came in a few moments ago.)

(HEATHER walks on ahead but NATALIE stops.)

NATALIE

I forgot my scarf. I'll catch up.

(HEATHER continues on to the dining tent. NATALIE turns back to their quarters. A moment later, she catches sight of MOHAMED, prostrate on a mat, praying in the desert nearby. She is surprised by this image of him and stands motionless for a moment.)

(MOHAMED senses her and rises, looking up to meet her eyes. As soon as they make eye contact, NATALIE heads back to her tent and MOHAMED lowers himself back down to the ground in prayer.)

**SCENE ELEVEN. Later that night.**

(It is very dark outside and countless stars and a full moon illuminate the scene. Inside the dining tent, the MUSIC of a drum circle plays and there's a party going on.)

(MOHAMED stands alone by the entrance to the tent, smoking and listening to the revelry.)

(Soon, NATALIE and HEATHER exit the dining tent; HEATHER's a bit tipsy, clearly having had a fun time at dinner. She spills out with NATALIE close behind. This is the first time MOHAMED and NATALIE are seeing each other since she saw him praying earlier.)

HEATHER

(a bit drunkenly)

There he is! There's Moha! Moha, why weren't you with us in there? It was so much fun. And that Abner is just the sweetest ...

NATALIE

Abdul.

HEATHER

Whatever. We had wine and food and ... the food wasn't terrible! Can you believe it? And the music ... I danced but Natalie didn't dance. I bet she would have if you had been there ...

(MOHAMED looks at NATALIE and she half smiles. The drum circle keeps playing but is now quieter and more subdued.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Have you been standing here all by yourself, drinking Moroccan whisky all night? Why didn't you come in? We missed you!

MOHAMED

I missed you, too, Khadija. I have been looking at the sky, and listening to you and Fatima having a good time.

HEATHER

We were, you know. They have wine. Who knew they made wine in Morocco? It isn't very good, but what are you going to do? It's life, right? As we Moroccans say ...

MOHAMED

That is correct. It is life.

HEATHER

Let's have a party. Want to go back in and get a drink? Let's get you a beer. You like beer. You drank it in Belgium. In Molenbeek! But you didn't do anything wrong and I won't tell anyone.

(HEATHER tries to pull MOHAMED inside the tent. NATALIE stops her.)

NATALIE

I think it's time we head back ...

HEATHER

No, no, no ... you stay here. With Moha. I'll go back inside and find *Abdul*. I want to dance some more!

NATALIE

I think you should call it a night, H.

HEATHER

Nah, one more drink ... you stay here with Mohamed. With Moha. He's such a nice guy. And soooooo cute.

(to Mohamed)

Do you know Steve McQueen?

NATALIE

Alright ...

HEATHER

Or James Dean? I wonder if they ever went to Mecca. You think anyone ever sent those guys to Mecca?

NATALIE

That's enough, Heather.

(to Mohamed)

See what happens when people drink too much? You're lucky you don't have that problem here.

(HEATHER heads back inside the dining tent. NATALIE stays with MOHAMED.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Sorry about that.

MOHAMED

She is having fun. That is good. I was hoping to show you the stars tonight. It is very clear.

(NATALIE look ups and sees that it's magnificent—no light pollution and stars for days, all across the sky.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

*Aimez-vous observer avec moi, Fatima?*

NATALIE

*J'aimerais bien.*

MOHAMED

Then please do.

(MOHAMED lights another cigarette.)

NATALIE

(re: his cigarette)

Can I have one?

MOHAMED

*Bien sur.* But these are harsh Moroccan cigarettes.

NATALIE

*Pas probleme.* I can take it.

(MOHAMED chuckles and offers her one from his pack, and she takes it. Then he lights a match and they huddle close to light it together. NATALIE takes a deep inhalation.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

I haven't had a cigarette in ages.

MOHAMED

You smoke?

NATALIE

I used to. When I lived in Texas.

MOHAMED

I do not know many women who smoke.

NATALIE

I do.

(They stand in silence for a while, smoking and taking in their surroundings.)

(Meanwhile, unbeknownst to NATALIE and MOHAMED, HEATHER and ABDUL slip out the back of the dining tent and run off into the desert. Their silhouettes can be seen kissing against the backdrop of the sky before they run off even farther away.)

(MOHAMED motions to the sky.)

MOHAMED

Do you see the sky like this in America?

NATALIE

In some places.

MOHAMED

*America ...*

NATALIE

*Morocco ...*

MOHAMED

Have you been enjoying your time in Morocco?

NATALIE

Yes. Very much so.

MOHAMED

I am glad.

NATALIE

In large part because of you.

MOHAMED

Thank you. I have been enjoying myself, too. In large part, as you say, because of you.

NATALIE

Do you really think you might come to America one day? I mean, could you?

MOHAMED

I do not see why I could not. Would you let me visit you if I did?

NATALIE

Of course.

MOHAMED

I would be a welcome guest in America?

NATALIE

(not so sure)

Of course.

MOHAMED

(not so sure)

Then it is possible. *Inshallah*.

NATALIE

*Inshallah*.

(NATALIE finishes her cigarette, puts it out in the sand and looks for a place to ditch it. MOHAMED holds out his hand to take the butt.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

No, I can't let you ...

MOHAMED

It is not a problem. I will take it for you.

NATALIE

You're the boss.

(NATALIE reluctantly hands him the butt, and then MOHAMED puts his other hand over hers and they stay like that for a moment.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Why do you have to live all the way over here?

MOHAMED

Why do you have to live all the way over there?

NATALIE

May I ask you something?

MOHAMED

Of course.

NATALIE

Is it awkward for you, I mean ... You are a Muslim man ...

MOHAMED

And you are an American woman ...



NATALIE

A Jewish-American woman.

(MOHAMED doesn't react.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

I'm not sure if you know that, or if it matters ... to you.

MOHAMED

You are Fatima and I am Moha.

NATALIE

No. I am Natalie and you are Mohamed.

MOHAMED

We are people. We are us. Why should anything else matter?

(NATALIE screws up some courage and kisses him on the cheek. She lingers there a moment and MOHAMED lets her. But that's all she does. And him. After another moment, he kisses her hands then gives them back to her. She starts to leave.)

NATALIE

I should go.

(MOHAMED doesn't say anything.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Goodnight, Moha.

MOHAMED

Stay longer, Fatima. *Natalie* ...

(NATALIE ponders this a moment, then decides to stay.)

NATALIE

OK.

(long beat)

But we are *not* going to Rick's Café, OK? That's asking way too much of you. So if my sister brings it up again, please do not say yes.

MOHAMED

As you like.

NATALIE

Thank you.

MOHAMED  
You are, as they say, the boss.

NATALIE  
I don't like that.

MOHAMED  
No?

NATALIE  
No.

MOHAMED  
Then I will say it no longer.

NATALIE  
I don't like it because it's not true. You know it's not true, right?

MOHAMED  
OK. But it is. Here. Like this.

(They continue gazing at the sky and, for a moment, each other. After a moment, NATALIE shivers.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.  
You are cold. I will take you to your tent.

NATALIE  
Thank you. Let me get Heather.

(NATALIE pops into the dining tent but re-emerges a moment later.)

NATALIE – CON'T.  
She must have gone back. How did we miss her?

(MOHAMED leads NATALIE back to the sleeping tent, but they arrive to find HEATHER isn't there, either. They both race out of the tent, a bit frantic, and run through the desert camp, searching.)

NATALIE – CONT.  
Heather! HEATHER!

MOHAMED  
ABDUL!?!?

NATALIE

HEATHER!!!!

(BLACK OUT.)

**SCENE TWELVE. The next morning.**

(The screen says: DAY SEVEN: SAHARA DESERT.)

(MOHAMED drives with NATALIE seated in the passenger seat. HEATHER doesn't appear to be with them.)

(The screens show the changing landscape of the sand of the Sahara bleeding into small towns as they head toward Fez. They drive along in silence until, all of a sudden, HEATHER wakes up from her nap, having been splayed across the back seat. She is seriously hung over.)

HEATHER

Are we there yet?

(Neither MOHAMED nor NATALIE answers her. HEATHER throws herself back down on the back seat.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Fine. Be that way.

(MOHAMED puts on some MUSIC. It plays for a moment or two and then NATALIE turns it down and turns to the back seat.)

NATALIE

Are you even sorry?

(HEATHER pops back up.)

HEATHER

I told you I was. God! What do you want from me?

NATALIE

I can't believe you went missing like that. Do you know how frantic I was?

HEATHER

Oh, please ...

NATALIE

We were really worried about you.

HEATHER

Oh, come on ... you were doing the same thing.

NATALIE

No, I wasn't. For the record. And I didn't go missing. Out in the middle of nowhere.

HEATHER

Moha, are we having that pizza for lunch? I'm starving.

MOHAMED

I am afraid we will not have the time.

NATALIE

(to Heather)

Mohamed wanted to take us for Berber pizza. His favorite. And now he can't because you were too busy throwing up all morning.

(to Mohamed)

Sorry, Moha.

MOHAMED

It is OK.

NATALIE

No, it's not.

MOHAMED

This trip is for you, not for me.

NATALIE

*Je suis desole. Je suis tres, tres desole.*

HEATHER

Would you spare us the goddamn French already? You sound ridiculous. And Mohamed said it's OK, so it's OK.

NATALIE

Are you kidding me right now?

HEATHER

What?

NATALIE

Just, don't talk to me. Everything you say ...

HEATHER

Everything I say what?!?

NATALIE

Do you know what it was like to go back there, and find you gone? I thought you were kidnapped or murdered. Raped! Do you have any idea where we are?

MOHAMED

She is OK. Unharmed.

NATALIE

Anything could have happened to you. For all we knew ...

MOHAMED

They are good people at the camp. No one could be hurt.

NATALIE

How do we know that?

MOHAMED

I am telling you.

NATALIE

Yeah, well. Tell that to Abdul. He's probably going to get fired.

MOHAMED

Abdul is a grown man. He made his own decision.

NATALIE

Is he going to get fired?

MOHAMED

I do not believe anyone will come to know of this. Do not worry.

HEATHER

Please! Nothing happened. We just made out a little. Give me a little credit.

MOHAMED

What does this mean, *credit*?

(NATALIE just shrugs and HEATHER hurls herself back down but then rises up again.)

HEATHER — CON'T.

You know what? Here's the irony. You're the prude, Natalie, you know that? Mohamed, did she even try to hook up with you last night?

MOHAMED

What is *hook up*?

HEATHER

I told her to wait till *after* Fez, but it seemed like last night was going to be the big night. Did it happen? Please tell me it finally happened.

NATALIE

Heather!

HEATHER

You didn't, did you? Oh my god! You can cut this freaking tension with a knife. I'm sitting back here for days—you with your *stomach ache* up in the front seat ... I'm sitting here, waiting for you to do it already. Will they or won't they? Will they or won't they? You're like a freaking sitcom ...

MOHAMED

(to Natalie)

What is that?

HEATHER

And you don't do it? Why? Is it because you can't bring yourself ...

(to Natalie, whispering, although obviously Mohamed can hear)

... *to have sex with a Muslim*? Is that it? My fancy pants, world-traveling sister?

NATALIE

HEATHER!

HEATHER

Is that the real reason?

NATALIE

So help me, Heather, I swear ...

HEATHER

For all your bleeding heart bullshit ...

NATALIE

(to Mohamed)

Please don't listen to her. She has no idea what she's saying. She's probably still drunk.

HEATHER

You know she likes you, Mohamed. But she's a phony. A big, fat phony. My sister. If your name was Mike or Matt or ..., well, then, you would have totally been laid by now. But because your name is MOHAMED! Admit it, Natalie. That's the reason, isn't it?

(This time, HEATHER dives down into the back seat for good. NATALIE and MOHAMED drive along in silence for some time.)

NATALIE

(ever so softly)

I'm so sorry. Please forgive me ... *us*. She doesn't speak for me.

HEATHER

(from the back seat)

Yes, I do!

(MOHAMED just keeps driving. He speaks after a few moments, professionally—he's all business—and he never makes eye contact with HEATHER or NATALIE.)

MOHAMED

We will soon arrive in Fez. I will take you to the riad, where you will have the weekend to yourselves before I pick you up for the airport. That will be at 5 a.m. I am sorry I cannot take you to Rick's Café. I must take you directly to your flight.

(MOHAMED turns up the music—his music—loud. NATALIE looks out the window ...)



**SCENE THIRTEEN. Two days later.**

(The screen says, DAY NINE: FEZ.)

(HEATHER and NATALIE stand together, but oh so angrily, on the viewing porch of the famed Chouara Tannery in Fez. The tannery, which dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and is depicted in panorama on the screens, is a remarkable place in an incredible setting—and with an unmistakable smell. The work is grueling, and HEATHER and NATALIE take in the scene in silence—mainly due to their anger toward each other as well as the moving scene of hardened workers in the pits before them. HEATHER holds her nose.)

NATALIE

Stop it. That's rude.

HEATHER

It smells like shit.

NATALIE

Imagine what it's like for them. If you can.

(HEATHER removes her hand from her nose.)

HEATHER

You've barely spoken to me in two days and you choose now? This?

(NATALIE walks away. HEATHER reaches for her, misses and follows her to the street outside the tannery. The screens shift to depict a typical Fez street, not unlike Marrakesh in the medina.)

NATALIE

You know what I want to know? What I would like to know, once and for all, is what I've done to make you hate me so much.

HEATHER

Oh spare me with the drama.

NATALIE

Seriously.

HEATHER

I don't hate you. Jesus.

NATALIE

You sure act like you do. You always have. Big time resentment. And I want to know why.

HEATHER

I don't hate you, Natalie.

NATALIE

What did I ever do to you? Besides leave home? And who can blame me for getting out of that shithole?

HEATHER

Thank you for calling my home a shithole.

NATALIE

You know what I mean. Things are never going to be right with us unless you tell me. Once and for all.

HEATHER

I don't know what you're talking about.

NATALIE

Yes, you do. Jesus Christ, Heather. Tell me.

HEATHER

Maybe there are things that are just too deep; that are impossible to get to the bottom of. That ever occur to you?

NATALIE

Is that where we are? Is that what you think?

HEATHER

You're asking me to go back to the beginning of time.

NATALIE

So we're ... *unsalvageable*? I don't believe that. Nothing is unsalvageable. It's not. What? What!?

(Long beat as HEATHER decides whether to go further.)

HEATHER

I didn't sleep with *the help*, Natalie. I didn't have sex with Abdul.

NATALIE

I know. That's what you said.

HEATHER  
Do you believe me?

NATALIE  
(beat)  
Of course I believe you. Not that it matters what I think. But ...

HEATHER  
But you do, right?

NATALIE  
Yes. I do. I promise.

HEATHER  
Look, I got carried away. I was having fun. I was enjoying myself for the first time in a long time. It felt good. God, I shouldn't have to explain myself ...

NATALIE  
You don't. But what you said to Mohamed ...

HEATHER  
I know; it was awful. I was angry. At you.

NATALIE  
Why?

HEATHER  
Look, I will apologize and hope he forgives me. OK?

NATALIE  
Like you care what I think.

HEATHER  
(long beat)  
Do you think he'll be fired?

NATALIE  
Mohamed?

HEATHER  
Abdul.

NATALIE  
I hope not. I can't imagine there are tons of jobs in the middle of the Sahara.  
(motioning to the tannery)  
So, should we go back?

HEATHER

I can't handle that place right now. I want to go home.

NATALIE

The riad?

HEATHER

I just want to go home.

NATALIE

OK. Let's go.

(NATALIE and HEATHER turn to go, but NATALIE quickly realizes she doesn't know which is the right way. HEATHER looks to NATALIE, not yet realizing NATALIE's lost.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Wait a minute. Which way is it?

HEATHER

What?

NATALIE

Isn't it right down there? Or over there?

HEATHER

Don't tell me you don't know. Shit, Natalie.

NATALIE

I think it's that way.

HEATHER

I told you we should have gotten a guide. Why didn't we get a guide?

NATALIE

No, no ... it's right down the road and then we turn right. Right?

(An older LOCAL MAN approaches and motions with his hands that they should follow him—he knows the way. He doesn't speak English but he seems to know where they want to go.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

That's OK. We're fine. No, thank you. No, *sahit*.

(But THE MAN keeps motioning: This way. Come with me.)

HEATHER

How does he know where we're going?

NATALIE

Please ... everyone in Fez—in Morocco!—knows who we are, and where we're staying. We kind of stick out.

HEATHER

What do you mean?

NATALIE

It's fine.

HEATHER

I don't like this.

(to the man)

No *sahit!* No *sahit!!!*

(The MAN keeps motioning and they reluctantly start to follow. He wends his way down the narrow passageways and HEATHER and NATALIE follow along, albeit a few steps behind. Still, he keeps urging them on. Also on the screens, CHILDREN begin to follow, too, waving and encouraging them to follow.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Is this right? This doesn't look right.

NATALIE

I think it's right.

HEATHER

You *think* it's right??? Where is he taking us?

NATALIE

Look, it's broad daylight and we're only a few streets away. We'll be OK.

HEATHER

What's he going to want?

NATALIE

I don't know.

HEATHER

I don't like this, Natalie. What the fuck?

(HEATHER stops walking but the MAN and the CHILDREN keep waving them on. They've attracted quite a crowd.)

NATALIE

The Dar Roumana, right, Sir? You know the way? Dar Roumana?

(The MAN nods and keeps waving them on. The CHILDREN's laughter and cheering grow louder and the situation is reaching a fever pitch.)

HEATHER

Dar Roumana! Dar Roumana!!!

(THE CHILDREN chant.)

CHILDREN

Dar Roumana! Dar Roumana! Dar Roumana!!!

NATALIE

Yes, this is right.

HEATHER

It is?

NATALIE

I remember this souk. Remember this souk?

(HEATHER warily takes a couple of steps forward and breathes a sigh of relief when she does, in fact, recognize the souk.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

We're right down there. See? No problem. We're almost there.

(In a moment, the screens change to depict the entrance to Dar Roumana, their riad in Fez. The CHILDREN CHEER. NATALIE reaches into her pocket for some change, which she hands to the MAN. He looks at what he gave her and gesticulates that he wants more. The CHILDREN BOO and hold out their hands, too. NATALIE searches her pockets but doesn't have any more change. She looks to HEATHER.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Give him some coins.

HEATHER

I don't have any coins. I only have bills.

NATALIE

Give him something. Do you have five dirham?

HEATHER

I don't want to take out my wallet.

(NATALIE approaches HEATHER and grabs her wallet. She pulls out a bill and hands it to the man. He looks at it, still not satisfied, but accepts it and walks away with a harrumph.)

NATALIE

I'll pay you back. Jesus, H.

(to the man)

*Sahit, Sir. Sahit.*

(The CHILDREN yell, too, and NATALIE takes a few more bills and tosses the money to them. The CHILDREN scramble for the money and pile on top of each other to get it.)

HEATHER

That's MY MONEY!

(HEATHER takes her wallet back from NATALIE and the CHILDREN scatter. HEATHER looks shaken.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

I want to go.

NATALIE

(watching after the children)

Huh?

HEATHER

I'm tired. I want to lie down. I don't want to do anything more.

NATALIE

OK.

HEATHER

I don't want to go out again. I want to eat dinner in the riad tonight.

NATALIE

Yes, of course. Whatever you want.

HEATHER

Tomorrow, we go home.

NATALIE

Yes. Tomorrow.

HEATHER

I'm tired, Nat.

NATALIE

I'm tired, too. Tomorrow, we'll go home.

(HEATHER walks inside the riad and NATALIE follows her, still a bit shaken from being lost. Before she disappears inside, though, she takes one last look around, and wonders where everyone has gone.)



**SCENE FOURTEEN. Very early the next day.**

(The screen says: DAY TEN: FEZ. 4 A.M.)

(GIGI #2 leads NATALIE and HEATHER under the dark of night through the medina.)

GIGI #2

I am sorry for the hour. But Mohamed must pick up new clients in Marrakesh this evening.

HEATHER

He's driving there *today*?

GIGI #2

Yes, after you reach the airport he will drive back to Marrakesh to begin a new trip.

(They reach the outskirts of the medina and find MOHAMED, who awaits them by his SUV. Today, he is dressed in traditional garb. In fact, he's wearing a *djellaba*. It takes a while to recognize him; we've only ever seen him in jeans and a leather jacket.)

(GIGI#2 greets MOHAMED, who opens the back door to place their luggage and doesn't help them inside the car. But, in a switch, NATALIE gets in the back seat and HEATHER, acknowledging what her sister has done, hops in the passenger side. MOHAMED finishes packing and, without a word, gets in the car and starts the engine. In a moment, he drives away. No one speaks, until a short time later, and when he does, MOHAMED is all business.)

MOHAMED

I have shipped your Argan oil to New York and, how you say, *Amarillo*, and there is a European toilet on the way to the airport if you have need.

NATALIE

No. I feel better. Thank you, Mohamed.

MOHAMED

I am glad. And how are you, Heather? Are you feeling better this morning?

HEATHER

I am. Thank you.

MOHAMED

That is good.

HEATHER

(screwing up her courage)

Mohamed? I am so sorry. So, so, so, so sorry. I hope you can forgive me.

MOHAMED

It is not necessary.

HEATHER

But I ...

MOHAMED

It is OK. Please. I would rather not to talk about it.

(They drive on in silence a while longer.)

HEATHER

Have you heard anything about Abdul?

(MOHAMED shakes his head no ...)

NATALIE

Moha, will you turn on some music? Please?

MOHAMED

You are the boss.

(MOHAMED cranks the music, and the incredible sounds fill the air. They drive on, each of them lost in their own daydreams. A lot of time passes and slowly the sun comes up and the landscape changes to reflect their arrival in Casablanca. MOHAMED maneuvers the car down city streets, clearly looking for something, then pulls over and unexpectedly stops the car.)

NATALIE

Where are we?

MOHAMED

We are at Rick's Café. But we only have a few moments so hurry and let me take your photo.

HEATHER

Really? This is it?

(HEATHER bounces out of the car and hands MOHAMED her phone.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Moha, you are the greatest human being who ever lived.

(HEATHER stands before the sign, which is depicted on screen, and urges NATALIE to join her, which she reluctantly does. MOHAMED takes their photo, which appears onscreen. HEATHER has a great big smile while NATALIE looks sad and half asleep.)

MOHAMED

OK, let us go.

HEATHER

Thank you. That was so sweet.

(They hop back inside, drive for a while and, a short time later, they arrive at the airport.)

(MOHAMED parks the car then heads to the back of the SUV to retrieve their luggage. HEATHER and NATALIE meet him there and take their bags.)

NATALIE

That was really nice of you.

MOHAMED

It is not a problem.

(NATALIE takes her bag from him.)

NATALIE

I got it. We'll take it from here.

MOHAMED

No, no. I will escort you to your flight. It is my duty.

NATALIE

It's OK. I don't want to see you in there. I'd rather say goodbye here. With Ali.

(NATALIE places a hand on MOHAMED's truck, which softens him somewhat.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

And you need to get back to Marrakesh.

(HEATHER digs something out of her bag. It's a *djellaba* she bought at Ait Bennhaddou. She folds it in her hands and offers it to MOHAMED.)

HEATHER

Moha, I would like you to give this to your mother. It's a gift from both of us, and we would like her to wear it to Mecca when you take her there.

(MOHAMED, touched, takes the *djellaba* from HEATHER in grateful acceptance.)

MOHAMED

This is very kind of you. *Sahit*.

HEATHER

We hope you get there someday.

MOHAMED

We will. *Inshallah*.

HEATHER/NATALIE

(softly)

*Inshallah*.

MOHAMED

(very soft)

Jinx.

HEATHER

I know it doesn't seem like it with all the awful things I said the other day, but I consider you my friend. I really do. And I hope you consider me your friend, too.

MOHAMED

We all have our bad moments. But we are good people.

HEATHER

Yes. It's life, as we Moroccans say. And I won't ever let people say bad things about ... They don't know you. But I do.

(MOHAMED nods.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

And my sister and I are going to give you the greatest goddamn reviews TripAdvisor and Yelp have even seen, OK? I know that doesn't make up for ... but I hope it's OK.

(HEATHER leans forward and gives MOHAMED a hug. It starts out awkwardly but ends well and sincere.)

HEATHER – CON'T.

Admit it. We're the best time you've ever had on one of these trips, right? And not just because we're not French.

MOHAMED

Khadija, I cannot and will not argue with you.

HEATHER

Good. So don't.

NATALIE

(to Heather)

I'll be right there.

HEATHER

Goodbye, Moha.

MOHAMED

Goodbye, Khadija.

(HEATHER walks away, leaving NATALIE with MOHAMED.)

NATALIE

Can we keep in touch? Please?

MOHAMED

Of course, Fatima. I will *friend* you. Is that not why the good lord invented the Facebook?

NATALIE

It is, you know. It really is.

MOHAMED

But first, I would like you and Khadija to have something.

(MOHAMED moves to the driver's side of his car and withdraws two CDs. NATALIE follows him there.)

MOHAMED – CON'T.

It is the music of our voyage.

NATALIE

Oh, Moha. That's so sweet. Thank you.

MOHAMED

Will you listen to it?

NATALIE

Of course. And I'll think of you.

MOHAMED

As I will think of you. And wish ...

NATALIE

Me, too.

MOHAMED

So ... what will you do when you get home? To America?

NATALIE

Oh, I don't know. I guess I'll sit down, rest a while ... and then I think I'll play my piano.

MOHAMED

You will?

NATALIE

What can I say? I've been inspired.

MOHAMED

That is a good plan.

NATALIE

I think so, too.

MOHAMED

Are you sure I cannot escort you inside?

NATALIE

No, I mean, yes. It's OK. We should go. Thank you for everything. *Sahit*.

(NATALIE carefully takes an envelope from her pocket and hands it to MOHAMED.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

I'm sorry there isn't a better way to do this, but ...

MOHAMED

No, no, no. I do not want this from you. I do not want anything from you.

NATALIE

Moha, you just spent precious days of your life indulging the crazy, foolish, sometimes mean but well-intentioned, all-too-human Stein sisters from Amarillo. And you and Ali did a masterful job. So take it. Please. You more than earned it.

(MOHAMED reluctantly takes the envelope and holds it in his hands.  
NATALIE steps forward and kisses him on the lips. The kiss lasts a little, albeit chaste, while.)

NATALIE – CON'T.

Will I see you in America one day?

MOHAMED

*Inshallah*. It is possible I will see you back in Morocco?

NATALIE

It is definitely possible.

MOHAMED

And then I might take you to Volubilis and to the ocean and the sea? And we can visit all of history and still be friends in the present?

NATALIE

I would like that.

MOHAMED

So it is possible.

NATALIE

Everything is possible, Mohamed.

MOHAMED

Moha.

NATALIE

Moha.

MOHAMED

Natalie. So, I will see you again.

NATALIE

Yes. You will. God willing.

(NATALIE takes her bag and walks away, toward the airport terminal where HEATHER waits for her. MOHAMED watches her go.)

MOHAMED  
(to himself)

*Inshallah ...*

(After a few moments, MOHAMED hops inside Ali and starts the engine. When NATALIE reaches HEATHER, she turns and waves. But MOHAMED doesn't see her; he has already driven away. NATALIE and HEATHER enter the airport.)

(The LIGHTS FADE and go out.)

END OF PLAY