

# Otherwise Known as Woman

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### ***Characters:***

- *A woman in her thirties*
- *A baby boy-the woman's son*
- *Puppeteer-a man in his forties*
- *The dandy-and Effete man*
- *The Sniper*
- *The fat lazy man*
- *A male Nurse*
- *The Assistant*
- *The Official*
- *The Interrogator*
- *A voice*

### ***Place:***

*Any space closed in on its own dark secrets and untold scandals.*

### ***Time:***

*Indefinite.*



# Act One

## Scene One

Faint light right stage. All else is dark. A soft spot light rises to reveal the Accusation bench in the corner of courtroom. The bench is surrounded with strong iron bars set close one to the other. The light rises to the head of each of the accused gradually revealing their faces turned towards a raised platform where a puppet (*judge*) is seated. The light is intensified and rests on the doll's rigid face before it moves gradually to left stage to show a woman in tatters and uncombed hair holding a baby in one hand and brushing her tears with the other. Suddenly all lights go out and as suddenly the stage is strongly lit.

*The Woman:* Hush baby, be quiet. Today the judge will bring us justice, you and me and do right by us.

*The Sniper:* (in a soft voice) What silly talk.

What right. She thinks the judge is going to bring out a rabbit from his hat and give it to her.

It would be better if she accepted her fate for the sake of her loony son.

**The Puppeteer:** *(laughing)* She does not stop her emotional blackmail. Wherever she goes she speaks on his behalf. Stupid woman and her cheap ways. Now she is begging this old man justice to lighten the burden of her ignorance, that he may feel pity for her son and throw her a meaty bone.

**The Dandy:** *(in hushed tones)* Do not talk that way about her friends. She is the only woman in the womb of this exile. Do not gang up against her. She has enough trouble as it is. I do not deny that she sees

me little more than an ant, but  
I do love that little boy of hers.  
Poor thing!

**The Puppeteer:** (nervously) Shut up you insect.  
How do you want her to see you,  
you are only a harmful fly. You  
wouldn't even attract an old ugly  
hag.

**The Sniper:** (waking up) When it comes to a  
woman as beautiful as this one it  
is the men who should talk. Men  
only you cricket. (Laughs loudly)

**The fat man:** What is so funny brothers? Who  
laughs in such a stupid incarcer-  
ating suffocating box? I have  
not laughed in a very long time.  
Tell me what are you laughing  
about?

**The Puppeteer:** Good morning energy! You should  
work as a night guard. You are al-  
ways so alert! (Everyone laughs)

**The fat man:** Excellent idea sir, but I want to know first what you've been laughing at.

**The Puppeteer:** Tell me wise one, have you ever seen a cricket in love with a bee queen? (laughing loudly)

**The fat man:** What? Is that a joke or a riddle?  
(Everyone laughs)

**The Voice:** Court in session!  
(All become quiet. Light falls on woman standing left stage)

**The Woman:** Your justice. I have come to you today that you may hear my complaint and punish those bums and do me right.

(The judge's head that is attached to several threads moves towards The Woman as though he is listening)

**The Sniper:** (laughing loudly) what rights are

you talking about my beauty? It is over and done with. You are mine from the moment I got you signing that little paper. Remember?

**The Woman:** Do not believe him your honor. I beg you. He wanted to take me by force and bared my breasts, but I refused and fought back and scratched his face and spat on him in defense of my poor son. When I gave birth to him he was weak. They told me that love alone does not insure the strength of a child. They asked me about his father and did not believe me when I said that he is lost and is looking for us. I see him coming closer every night, with every breeze and wake up every day on the dream that he has returned and we are together a happy complete

family as we had been. Ah! How his love weighs my chest heavily and wears me down.

**The Sniper:** I shall enslave him, by which I mean I shall adopt him, I can easily feed five hundred children you know.

**The Puppeteer:** (rising suddenly to smack the Sniper on his neck) Shut up you filth. What ever money you have is from the crumbs you get serving me. Do not talk to the court until I tell you. Have you forgotten yourself? I shall feed you to my little mouse if you repeat this? Understood?

**The Sniper:** (holding his head down) Sorry sir. But it is a silly case and I do not wish for your Excellency to waste your time. I have seen you busy with the puppets since the early morning. But do for-

give me master. I only wanted not to disturb you. Your wishes are my command.

**The Puppeteer:** Oh you slimy cunning thing. You want to play with my head like the wind plays with the boughs of the orange trees on my land. I said you must not talk until I give you permission to do so. I was actually busy with a new work for this fat retard who does not stop yawning.

**The fat man:** (still yawning and wiping his eyes from sleep) Who called me? I heard my name ringing in this goddamned basket.

**The Sniper:** (in a low voice) Keep your voice down. It is him. You are talking in the presence of the judge.

**The fat man:** Ahem! Yes your honor. I heard your sweet voice calling me.

**The Puppeteer:** You useless ball of rolling fat. What do you have to say to this woman who stands here a victim, in the presence of the Court?

**The fat man:** Order me to speak and I shall. I don't want any problems ruining my slumber and my mood. I have stayed up late last night with women ten times as beautiful and sexier. God bless you sir.

**The Puppeteer:(in a low voice)** Say that you can employ her as a maid if you run out of pretty maids. The glitter of gold will make her pant like a mangy bitch and will run to serve you.

**The fat man: (yawning)** Yes, your honor, **(the head of the puppet moves in the direction of The fat man)** I shall practice my chivalry and take her in as a maid...then what???

**(He asks The Puppet-**

eer in hushed tones and his eyes close, overcome by sleep)

**The Puppeteer:** You shall always be dumb. I shall break your head against the bars. I ordered you to drink one barrel of wine and yet today I see you are filled up with liquor, like the oil tanks in your field.

**The fat man:** Sorry sir, I shall not repeat this.

**The Puppeteer:** Shut up...it's finished. It seems that the judge is convinced by your slurry drunken words.

**The fat man:** (yawning) Yes, he has not used his hammer this time.

**The Puppeteer:** Go back to sleep you thick corpse. Tomorrow we have a lot of work. I have a plan that took me half an hour to come up with. You have to execute that plan to a fault. Otherwise I shall cut

your head off your heavy body.  
Understood?

**The Woman:** (passionately) Your honor... I was in the market trying to buy medicine for this poor little one when these fleas caught me. This sniper threw himself on me. This one eyed man with a heart as dark as the blindness behind his eye- band, wanted me by force and he tore the clothes off my back in full daylight, in front of people who were afraid to approach him because of his weapons and his men. The Puppeteer then showed up. He had a foreign pipe between his lips. I asked him to protect me, to save me from the dirty hands of this scum. He just smiled a faint yellow smile and pulled a thin thread connected to the sniper. He gave an order to step

forward and immediately he dug his teeth in my flesh and consumed my body, my son who was crying and hiding behind what was left of my naked flesh. This half man then approached me from behind and started eating away at my behind cutting it to pieces like a rabid dog let loose on a rotting piece of meat. This fat man stood looking from afar silently holding a wordless conversation with The Puppeteer which I could not understand and hope was eaten up on my way here bleeding an illusion. If my man was with me he would have protected me and my blood and covered my burning flesh over with clothes. He would have held me close and patted away my helplessness. They wanted me by force in the absence of my

man. Even my neighbors stood there, looking on. **(She starts to cry and wail in loud tones over her silent baby)**. Your honor, I don't want anything but a dignified life with my child away from those wolves. I want him to be like other children all over the world. I want to hold him to my bosom and be able to feed him when he is weaned.

**The Dandy:** **(swarming and writhing)** I shall bring you little one milk. Even tobacco if you want, but say that you will stay with me under my humble roof.

**The Woman:** **(screaming)** Impossible!!! Are there no men left that I should fall into your arms and feed my child off your poisons? You shameless bum??!

**(The child screams suddenly. They all turn to the**

sound. His mother rocks him with tears streaming down her face. A halo of light rests on the sniper's face as he addresses the judge)

**The Sniper:** Your honor I saw this poor creature as a haven and a refuge. I have no wife, no lover and when I found her without someone to look after her; I thought my misery was over. The matter does not need force. She's a woman living under siege. Why should I want to get her by force? She can run away.

**Everybody in one voice:** And you think you are the haven? You are a refuge?!

**The Sniper:** Yes, her place is with me under my roof. In her I find my strength and the point of my existence.

**The Puppeteer:** Don't believe him your honor. He is helpless to take any step without a gesture from me. I order him even while he sleeps and eats

or he's with the other puppets. I have many of them, and he is just an ugly puppet who does not obey my orders always, but I shall bring him to account and stop maintaining him.

**The Dandy:** Yes, yes, your honor. He speaks the truth. But I feel some blood line tying me to this woman. Her soul is mine, but I am modest in the company of such valor and am happy to share her with them.

**The fat man:** (laughing loudly) I have no comment. I don't have anything to say. I want to catch tonight's dream before it starts. I wish you a happy evening your honor. The best of all just judges.

(He snores)

(The Woman wipes her tears, while the hungry child continues to cry. She bares her breast

and nurses him rocking him with one hand)

**The Sniper:** What beautiful ivory skin, what lovely roundness, She smells like fresh wild berries. She is mine and no one shall share her with me.

**The Puppeteer:** Shut up you one eyed monster. She is mine alone whether you like it or not.

**The Dandy:** Why should she not fall to me?

**The Puppeteer:**(laughing loudly) For you? Why don't you go fuck a goose? I said she's mine. I won't repeat it. She is mine and therefore she is yours.

**The Sniper:** She is mine first.

**The Dandy:** She is mine gentlemen.

(Voices rise and fall of men fighting while The Woman suckles her child and weeps. The lighting fades gradually, until all is dark then lights turn on suddenly and brightly. The accused

stop fighting, they look on with wide eyes. The Woman covers her breast under what is left of her clothes and looks on in amazement)

*The male nurse:* (in the usual uniform and a nylon blue cap) Why what on earth are you doing this late hour? What is that thing in your midst?!

Mmmm, I see, it's a puppet. I have always suspected you for a long time. I have always thought you were disguising yourselves in the outfits of madmen. I have recorded your awful game, and shall give it to the interrogator to hear after I take you to his prison, you terrorists. The asylum is no place for you.

*Everybody:* You are sending us to another prison?

*The nurse:* (laughing sarcastically) A prison with a difference.

(Total darkness, and fear fills  
the eyes of the accused while  
looking at the nurse)

**Curtain.**

## Act Two

### Scene One

A man in a suit with a pipe between his lips, smoking calmly, sits at a desk. The man's assistant stands in front of the desk.

*The Assistant:* But sir, the prison cells are full.

*The Official:* (lowering his head. Thinking)  
Then put the accused all in one cell and put The Woman alone in another.

*The Assistant:* We only have one empty cell. The others are all occupied.

*The Official:* Fine, then put them all in the empty cell until we prepare solitary cells and continue our investigation with each separately.

*The Assistant:* As you wish sir. (Exits leaving the official turning round the desk. Lighting his pipe and staring at it.)

(Light goes out gradually until it disappears and a room in red brick is revealed left stage. The accused stand with The Woman with the baby in her arms)

**Man1:** (Puppeteer) Did you see where your crazy idea got us you mad-man. Damn! there is nothing to eat or drink here. We shall sleep with the mice and roaches. You like staying in this luxury?

**Man2:** (The Sniper) It was not my idea alone...this genius (pointing to The Dandy) shares the honor with me. It is not a prison cell. Wish it were a prison cell, this is a tomb with the smell of ghosts ...even death fears it.

**Man3:** (The Dandy) I did not agree with you. The idea just dragged us to it, for the promise of getting rid of the boredom we suffered. Damn you, devil.

**Man4:** (*The fat man*) Shut up, I want to sleep. In this hell nothing is worth anything except sleep.

**Man1:** Sleep O great leader, only God knows how long we will be kept here. O God! What have we done to ourselves? For the sake of a game we find ourselves in this god forsaken cell, and are called terrorists?

**Man2:** Shhhhh be careful. You never know whose listening. They will interrogate us and find out that we are no more than some madmen out of the loony bin. There are papers to prove that you know?

**Man1:** What interrogation are you talking about? Our turn will come and our bones will char in this rot, idiot before we asked anything!

**The Woman:** (*crying*) O dear, what fate awaits

this poor little one. His veins will dry out in this rotting room.

**Man2:** (in a low voice) Keep your voices down; I can hear footsteps coming towards us.

(Footsteps are heard approaching, the door opens and a man in military uniform enters)

**The Guard:** What are you doing at this hour new comers. Is the service we provide here not up to your standards?

**Man3:** Not in the least sir. I have had a great stay under the wing of your shelter. Do you know when will the interrogation start??

**The Guard:** (laughing) Soon enough, soon. Now I do not want to hear a sound except perhaps the sound of a needle I may drop... to bed with you terrorists. (Exits laughing away)

(Light is removed from the defendants and follows the guard until he exists completely).

## Scene Two

(The Woman is asleep with her baby in her lap. Man4 restlessly moving to keep away the flies and trying to find a comfortable position to sleep in)

**Man1:** (Standing with his head to the wall deep in thought) Do you know what is the thing that starts small and grows every day??

**Man2:** The bee in our neighbor's garden. It would swarm over the roof on Thursdays and Fridays. And when my daughter has to drink her milk without honey she would say "my bee is handicapped, she only gives birth to one drop of honey every day". She does not know that stingi-

ness has affected the bees just as the wasps drink up half the salary.

**Man1:** When you arrive in our alley, your turn into a hawk with sharp talons and dig your beak into the necks of children pretending it's a game to amuse them.

**Man2:** To say that this thing is dangerous sucks up the innocence of our children even as their blood is sucked. They said it was just a puppet. Why not then make it a water melon that is sown into the ground as a little seed and ends up a huge fruit!!!

**Man3:** (*The Dandy*) Why can it not be the cause that is born small and grows in the heads of the officials?

**Man1:** No comrades it is that illusory thing which led us to that other

place. Two rooms and a small hall and a pigeon nestling on the only window we had. My boy... when the stars are clear in the sky, multiplies his wishes. He loved painting. Every night he drew a new hope on the walls. He painted and my pocket suffered, No longer able to carry coins.

His first wish, then the second... a fountain pen and a ruler. He met his day in merriment when he woke to find his wish sitting on the bed-shelf. We lived in peace and the moon would rise upon us as it did for other people in their small rooms. My boy grew up and his paintings grew with him and covered his room's walls. He drew a car, then a striped suit. The fog would fill my eyes if he was late, and on my brow, the clouds would rise over

the moons of yesterday, whenever the promises of hope were delayed. I found my head resting in my wife's lap and she was consoling me in my nightmare ridden sleep. He was clever, and ahead of his years. He was not satisfied with school and the leather bag. I woke up one day and found two men at the door in strange gear. My son was with them. They said we shall take him oh sheikh. You can no longer take care of his needs. He had a broad smile on his lips. They did not give me time to say goodbye. They took him and left. We waited a long time for him. His mother could not bear to be without him and disappeared under a heap full of dust. I found myself going there, pretending I was mad before I forgot what was left of

my sanity while at home, alone;  
did you know now what this thing  
you were talking about is??

**Man2:**

It is the same as what drove me here when my wife said I was mad. When the butterflies sleep at night, the cough wakes up in the chests of my daughters. I worked in a train station. They said the train was old and weary of waiting. We shall exchange the station with a factory which needed the labor of young strong men. I sat as tens of others sat. I was wilting every day when I saw the cough choking my daughters and stealing their breath away. I sold the house and my mother's old furniture. I even sold the bedroom for we had no need of such things. Disease had invaded our lives and taken over our space. My wife had no mercy

for me. She liked that man with a tarbush and the fat dangling belly and the golden liras. She was beautiful. Her lips like apples, their taste like pistachios. She threw at me a fine accusation. She said I was mad. She said I raped my girls. Do you believe such nonsense gentlemen. Have you ever seen a father raping his own flesh and blood? In the heart of a white night I found myself there.

**Man3:** (sitting up) She must be a Scorpio. Your wife. I know that they are wild. They are beautiful and nothing works with them but the stings of a scorpion.

**Man2:** I don't remember that I asked her ever. I don't think she herself would know. The smell of cough and the dampness of the

walls was all that occupied us.

**Man1:** My wife is a Virgo... they say it is a classical sign and people born under it will sacrifice a lot for their partners. She gave me her kidney, when my kidney became too salty and refused to work as a result of what I ate at work to keep hunger at bay. I promised that I would return it to her with a golden necklace. She died waiting for that gift. **(He cries silently)**

**Man3:** Yes, you are right comrade. No doubt you were lucky to have had such a wife.

**Man2:** What about Aries?

**Man3:** An excitable sign.

**Man1:** And Sagittarius?

**Man3:** The neigh of horses.

**Man1:** And the Fish Pisces?

**Man3:** The laughter of a shade.

**Man1:** (laughing loudly) Does anything still laugh in this day and age?  
That's all nonsense.

**Man3:** You can think what you want, I personally believe. She was born under the sign of Aquarius...

**Man1+ Man2: (in one voice)** Who your wife?

**Man3:** I wished her to be my wife.

**Man1+ Man2: (in one voice)** Your wife?!

**Man3:** No. I loved her even though she was stubborn and narcissistic. I spent three years with her in the gardens between the vendors of corn and frangipane. My town was full of colored lanterns and the flight of sea gulls over the waves of the sea was breathtaking. We had many dreams as large as the sky and I did not bear her a single penny.

When I finally found her I had lost my job in the mill of a friend of my father's who put his son in charge when he failed school. He had forgotten that he shared food with my father in their youth. People said:

What goes comes in another form. Two happinesses are too painful. Besides good fortune is in the hands of God alone.

**Man1+ Man2: (in one voice)** Indeed. Praised be God.

**Man3:** I had a pure sister as fresh as the petal of a jasmine flower. My mother left her to me when she drank of death's cup and turned her face on me. She told me she hoped I would not shame her in front of her groom. I agreed with my love to leave for a couple of years and that the time would fly

like the batting of an eye lid. After four years, I returned to find my city a wasteland. The children were no longer children and the young women no longer young. Even the streets and the fountains and the buildings lost their freshness and became pale. Preachers doing the devil's work in the land. Vampire bats who love the smell of blood, and beards that stole the beating of our hearts. Fires and the hissing of bombs and consciences eaten up by mite.

Even my beloved had married another and had a child. The shock almost killed me. I returned carrying the rings and the dowry and my dreams and found her under the roof of another man who paid her more than just pure love. I was angry and lost my head. I found my-

self raising something heavy to her head. She looked at me with those eyes I often desired. I would swim in the waves of their color or hours. My hands became heavy and fell upon her head. She fell like the rocks of a mountain piled up over the years. I almost cried between her hands. She said, I missed you my little crazy boy. My life without you is arid without a single green bough **(Suddenly his facial expression changes)** I screamed in her face and the heat of blood covered my eyes and my pores and every seed that loved her. I called her a cheap whore. I found people around me in halos. Then they called the ambulance for pity. She whispered in my ear that punishment will be lighter in my case. So I found myself amongst

people who were half lucid half mad. A very thin line separating them from ordinary people. I have chosen to be called a madman. For the wisdom of the age lies with madmen. They boast the best poets and scholars.

**Man2:** She is an unfaithful traitor and does not deserve a tear from you.

**Man1:** A shameless whore.

**Man3:** No please do not berate her. I still love her. I even love her unfaithfulness. He who betrays is always stronger. I do not regret the years of my life when I see hope and purity in the eyes of my nephews. It is then I forget the days of estrangement and labor.

**Man4:** **(Waking up with tears in his eyes):** You talk about a small lonely thing that grows until it bursts?

I think I know it friends.

Everyone in one voice: It is misery.

**(They all sing in one tearful voice on a background of sad music)**

*Mejana ya Mejana ya Mejana*

*They have descended upon our homes*

*Ooof they have deprived us of living in our homes.*

*You left me to the coward knowing and hiding*

*My hair is all gone white for our beloved are not with us*

*May God betray you, time of betrayal*

*Yaba, the wheels of fate have turned on me*

*Crying out for justice and to be noticed*

*God bless you children of this  
land*

*We are brothers why kill each  
other?*

*When the scorpion tail of Zion-  
ists follows to hunt us down.\**

**(The door of the box suddenly opens sending  
out a terrible screech.**

**Everyone stares at the new comer as though  
they had forgotten the looks of human be-  
ings. The guard appears frowning and shouts  
at them)**

**The Guard: Come on you scum! Come with  
me one after the other to the  
interrogation room.**

**Darkness.**

## Scene Three

(Man1, Man3, Man4 in the room and The Woman and her child)

**Man3:** This is the seventh day he's been gone comrades. It seems to be more amusing there than being in here waiting. I am longing for the day I shall be called.

**Man1:** I thought things were easier than this. What will they gain from interrogating a madman without say, who lived in a mental institution all those years?

**Man4:** Nothing if that guard would just leave us alone to practice our madness freely. He said we were terrorists. Do we look like terrorists? Terrorists who are afraid to ask for food? What they give us is barely enough for a bird. They threw us here

without family or friends to ask after us.

**Man3:** What's your story comrade??

**Man4:** I had no refuge but her bosom. My house fell over our heads years ago. They apologized that they did not mean it. That the missile went out of course. I found myself on the street alone between a night and a day. No son to mind me, no wife to keep away the loneliness. If I had not met you there, catching boredom in the nets of conversation I would have died from misery and loneliness.

**Man1:** Do you know what now friends is on my mind?

**Everyone in one voice:** What?

**Man1:** I feel as though I am reborn and have an urgent desire to carry on living a natural life among people

and streets. When I got to know you I was sure that there are days to come that are better than the ones we left behind. You have colored my tomorrows when my fate seemed darkest.

**Man3:** Me too I have regained hope that had escaped me years ago.

**Man4:** When I get out of here I shall paint my old kitchen and make lovely food as I used you. I shall plant my garden roses and lemon trees and shall make the fence higher and re-wire it.

**Man1:** I shall go back to watching the sun and minding its shades over the roof of my home. I shall go visiting with my friends in their shops and cafes and shall hide with me candy and sweets for the children of the alley.

**Man3:** I shall go back to writing poet-

ry in golden poems. I shall father a text for the needy and the barren and shall continue to love her until the last hair on my head has turned white, I shall wish that she achieves what I failed to achieve in the warmth of her family and children.

**Man1:** Have you forgotten something important?

**Man3:** No I have not forgotten my kind friend. I feel the tremors of the baby in the womb of its mother. The sound of her breath reaches me even out here. It must be my sister getting ready to bring home a lovely sister at last for her sons. **(His eyes sparkle with tears as he looks ahead overcome with joy)** When I get out of here I shall bring those toys and gifts and I shall not be separat-

ed from them except by death.

**Man4:** (looking at **The Woman**) And you my dear do you not want to come out of this tomb?

**The Woman:** (smiling looks at her baby tenderly) I shall love my son and care for him.

(All smile looking at the sleeping baby. The door opens suddenly and a body falls heavily on the floor. He is dressed in bloody, tattered clothes. He falls in a heap, unconscious. All look at him in wonder and panic. They step back and their bodies are glued to the walls in a mechanical movement)

**The Guard:** (shouting) Are you going to stand there like corpses hanging on a wall. Come on.... who's next?

(The light approaches the unconscious man on the floor. Weird, eerie music plays. Lights go out gradually)

**Darkness**

## Act Three

### Scene One

(The Woman asleep holding her son to her bosom, Man3 is tossing and turning trying to sleep. Man2 and Man3 are having a discussion.)

**Man3:** (to Man2) He was always smiling. This is the fourth night now he has not said a word.

**Man2:** (after a heavy pause) Let him sleep. Maybe he shall forget...

**Man3:** Sleep!!! Even sleep avoids him. He does not stop tossing and turning talking strangely and sweating profusely in his nightmares.

**Man2:** (sitting with his head between his knees in awful silence)

**Man3:** is it to that extent he was cruel to you?

**Man2:** (Looking on dazed and heavily.

Then laughing loudly he breaks into one long heart rending howl)

**Man3:** Calm down my friend. They shall certainly get bored when they do not find what they are looking for.

**Man2:** (Raises his head. The tears have wet his torn shirt)

**Man3:** It is very hot tonight. I feel the heat in the floor burning my arse like the tongues of a fire.

**Man2:** (rising suddenly) It was hot. It was burning into my sinews and nerves bringing forth fountains of blood from the arteries.

**Man3:** What is it?!

**Man2:** That thing they put on my back until I passed out. I was a dead man with wide open eyes.

**Man3:** (in shock stares in his face) What?!

**Man2:** His eyes were balls of fire like the devil's and their hands. **(He wails loudly)**

**Man3:** What's with their hands?

**Man2:** Extremely strong and loaded with anger. Such anger that can block the very rays of the sun. Anger heavy with chains and iron shackles. But I hate killing and killers and burn with wrath when I see a little child in pain.

**Man3:** Who? Who's the interrogator?

**Man2:** The angel of death in the clothes of an interrogator and his men. **(looking solemnly in the direction of an imaginary horizon)** When they put it between my legs I felt as though a ghoul was squeezing out my heart in his hands and biting on it with his teeth. Oh I am very tired my friend and my my heart beats are not alright. **(He**

falls between Man3's hands crying like a child uttering unclear words)

(Man 4 awakens with a start and jolts to his feet mumbling incomprehensibly)

**Man3:** (bringing him a dirty glass of water holds him up in his arms) Drink my friend. You are feverish again no doubt. Don't be afraid. You are not alone. We are all beside you.

**Man4 :** (shivering) Where am I??

**Man3:** (addressing man2) He is like that since he arrived. His temperature rises continuously because of the wounds on his body. Water here is boiling hot because of the heat outside.

**Man4:** (screaming) I have seen her in my dream.

**Man3:** (pats his chest kindly) Don't be afraid. It is only a dream. Go back to sleep brother.

**Man4:** No.... I have seen the end. A war without features and a city vomiting up its breath.

**Man3:** (attempting to calm him down) Have you not seen a little girl carrying a doll between her eyes and a school boy happy with a meat sandwich??

**Man4:** (Angrily, and looking straight ahead) He is paralyzed and the girl is handicapped. I see the sun has lost an eye. The moon walking on one foot...Oh my God! Victory holds its head down and a river spitting blood and a sky without stars. A city where no human resides. A city occupied by ghosts and white shrouds and a herd of open graves waiting

for more. Those who are killed, dumping grounds and remnants of corpses.

**(He cries shivering)**

**Man3:** Calm down my friend. It is a dark time but it will pass. Sleep in peace my friend. I shall sit beside you and chase away the bad dreams.

**(He continues to weep on his friend's shoulder)**

**Man2:** (cries silently with his head between his knees)

**(Light goes out accompanied by faint sad music)**

## Scene Two

**(The interrogator sits right stage. Light moves to The Woman and her baby, the interrogator is solemn, and ugly. He looks at her tenderly)**

**Interrogator:** So that the reason why you went to the mental institute. Couldn't you find a better place to go to??

**The Woman:** My dear sir... life is hard and I am a woman on my own. I have no money and no friends. The wolves have sharp teeth. I have nothing but this little child and all I want is to see him grow in front of my eyes.

**Interrogator:** I can barely see a thin thread of truth in your eyes. Now I want you to tell me about the game.

**(Light recedes from The Woman and the interrogator and moves to a room left stage. The four men are seated in one row with space between one and the other. Their hair is long and their beards long and shaggy. Their clothes dirty and worn out and their faces are dark)**

**Man1:** (sarcastically) I have been accused of putting together the Hiroshima bomb when he found

no other accusation for me.

**Man2:** I was accused of intending to blow up the Great Wall of China.

**Man4:** **(laughing loudly)** My crime is new and original... I am supposed to have stolen sleep from the children's eyes and increasing their depression by forcing them to watch the news.

**Man2:** What I hold inside is enough to blow up Hiroshima and Rome. Enough to burn down the wall of China and the hanging gardens of Babel and all Seven Wonders of the World.

**Man3:** I thought I was a sick man complaining to you.

**Man2:** Shut your mouth traitor. I saw you muttering your secret. Talking to yourself about the crime you are intending.

**Man3:** Me... you bloodthirsty devil. You be damned. Your eyes ooze black tar. You want to spread your poison among us. **(Man2 and Man3 are fighting fiercely)**

**Man1:** **(addressing man4)** You have stolen my child and killed my wife I shall cut your jugular vein with my teeth terrorist!

**Man4:** It was you who blew up my house and brought it down on the heads of my family **(They continue to fight and hurt each other badly)**

**Man3:** **(addressing Man1)** I shall cut off the air you breathe scum. They caught me puncturing the ozone layer. As of now I shall sell oxygen to whoever pays only, and shall pollute all that my hands fall unto, even your bronchia. Son of a bitch.

**(They fight on the floor and use whatever falls**

into their hands, pots, empty plates. The fighting scene continues until the light in the room disappears. The light moves to The Woman and the interrogator.)

**The Woman:** They were a few silly hours sir. We did not mean anything by it. We were killing our boredom and fooling around.

**The interrogator:** I want to know more about those hours before I can let you out of here.

(She talks to the interrogator in an unheard voice. He shakes his head listening carefully and taking down notes in a paper before him)

(The light moves to the room. The men are sitting after their fierce fighting all haggard and their clothes torn)

**Man2:** Will someone tell me, am I dead or alive?

**Man3:** I've forgotten the color of trees....

- Man4:** And the smell of the sea...
- Man2:** And the sight of dust...
- Man3:** and the taste of water...
- Man3:** and air
- Man2:** and the taste of women.
- Man1:** **(looking ahead in concentration)**  
Do you remember the day they brought us here??
- Man2:** Yes.... I remember it, puppeteer.  
**(laughs)**
- Man3:** There is no difference anyway.  
You are now a man without any value.
- Man2:** I am bored of sniping corpses with one eye. I would love to try something different. **(He looks at them slyly)**
- Man4:** Me too. Sleep is nothing more to me but a pastime now since

I started collecting sleep from the eyes of children.

**Man2:** No one sees us...

**Man1:** Hush I am the leader and I like giving orders. You shall take on the task of convincing her, one eyed monster. I shall arrange the time-table for you.

(They make a circle and whisper to each other in hushed conversation)

### Scene Three

(Complete darkness right stage a spot of light on the desk of the interrogator. The assistant is standing before the desk)

**Assistant:** I want to say something sir with your permission.

**Official:** Speak, I'm listening.

**Assistant:** Years have passed and the terrorists are still in the accusa-

tion bench.

**Official:** (coldly) Are they still in one cell with The Woman?

**Assistant:** (holding his head down) Unfortunately sir.

**Official:** Go and get them one by one and let us start with The Woman.

**Assistant:** Yes sir.

(Light over the room. The assistant stands by the open door in a posture of disgust holding his nose. His mouth open in astonishment. His face drawn and pale)

*(In the official's room)*

**Official:** So what have you done?? I see you have come back alone. Didn't I tell you to bring The Woman?

**Assistant:** I am afraid sir that... tha

**Official:** Speak up, what's the matter?

**Assistant:** I think we were a little late sir for those terrorists.

**Official:** (worried) What do you mean?

**Assistant:** There are strange things in that room sir...

**Official:** What strange things?!

**Assistant:** Yes sir, fetuses scattered on the floor without features and The Woman in a state of extreme fatigue. She cannot speak a word. Her son is dying of hunger and pain.

**Official:** (stands up from his desk in a state of panic) What are you saying?

**Assistant:** (shaking his head) As you heard sir.

**Official:** And the men.... where are the men?

**Assistant:** (with head held down) This is

the disaster sir..... they have  
run away.

**Official:** What???

**Final curtain.**

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\* Mawwal sung from Palestinian heritage.