



CANAAN

By Mohammed Saad Ali

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# CANAAN

By Mohammed Saad Ali  
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Yacub: Late twenties, tall and slender, looks older than he really is.

Rachel(Yacub's wife): Late twenties, with an innocent face.

Dina: Early twenties, immature look.

Setting: A small apartment on the corner of Knickerbocker ave. and Troutman st. in Bushwick, Brooklyn. The living room is the stage, not well kept, clothes and other clutter is scattered around, a single small couch, one chair and a small coffee table.

Time: Wednesday evening, December, present.

*Rachel and Dina are sitting on the couch talking; the radio is playing 'Fake Plastic Trees' by Radiohead in the background.*

DINA

How long has it been?

RACHEL

About six weeks.

DINA

Six weeks! And you're telling me now. Have you told Yacub?

RACHEL

No, I'm sorry. It's just that, with things as difficult as they are right now, and Yacub is having trouble finding work again; and this new apartment, God I hate this place.

DINA

Yeah I know it's really small. When are you going to tell him?

RACHEL

I'm not sure.

DINA

Well you're going to have to soon.

RACHEL

I know Dina, I know.

DINA

Man this is heavy; I'm going to be an aunt!

RACHEL

Yeah, Dina I'm going to need your help.

DINA

Yeah, yeah, of course; like what?

RACHEL

Well, you're going to have to get a job.

DINA

But, what about my finals?

RACHEL

I don't mean immediately.

DINA

What about my classes?

RACHEL

Don't be selfish Dina. We're all are going to have to work together.

DINA

I'm not selfish. Can't you ask your aunts or uncles to help out?

RACHEL

I became dead to them when I married Yacub.

DINA

Damn those Jews can hold a grudge.

RACHEL

You have no idea. We're on our on here.

DINA

Yeah I know.

RACHEL

I had a dream the other night. Do you want--

*Rachel is interrupted by the door being unlocked, Yacub enters, looks worn down.*

YACUB

Hey.

RACHEL &

Hey.

DINA

*(Yacub sits down and begins to take off his shoes.)*

YACUB

Turn the volume down.

*(He is ignored)*

I said turn the volume DOWN.

RACHEL

Alright, relax.

DINA

I brought McDonald's.

YACUB

Again, can't you find anything else?

RACHEL

Any luck today?

YACUB

No, the same 'we'll get back to you' bullshit. I thought you were going to do the laundry today.

RACHEL

I wasn't feeling well and Dina is busy with her finals.

YACUB

What's the matter with you? You weren't feeling well the other day also.

RACHEL

It's nothing, I was just feeling a little weak, I'll do the laundry tomorrow.

*The Beatles song "I Saw Her Standing There" begins to play on the radio. Dina is about to turn it off.*

YACUB

Wait I like this song.

DINA

You just said to turn the volume down--

YACUB

And now I'm telling you to leave it.

DINA

Fine.

*(Offhandedly)*

It's a stupid old song anyways.

YACUB

What did you say?

DINA

I said it's a stupid old song anyways.

YACUB

Shut up, I don't remember asking for your fucking opinion.

DINA

What the fuck is your problem?

YACUB

You want to know what my problem is?

DINA

Not really but go ahead entertain me.

RACHEL

*(Coming in between them)*

Go take a shower, I'll warm up your dinner.

YACUB

I'm going to have to teach you to watch your mouth.

DINA

Fuck off.

YACUB

What the fuck did you say?

RACHEL

Nothing! She didn't say anything. Just go take a shower, cool off, and by the time you're done, dinner will be warmed up, OK.

*(He exits)*

Do you have to instigate?

DINA

I didn't do a damn thing.

RACHEL

Alright, alright. You know he has a lot on his mind right now. Just try to stay out of his way, ok.

DINA

Fine, I don't know what you saw in him.

RACHEL

He's *your* brother. Besides, this, this isn't him; it's all the weight on his mind. Do you remember when my parents died?

DINA

Yeah, it was around the same time my dad died.

RACHEL

A little while after. He and you and your mother, were all I had left, you guys saved my life. My own relatives didn't give a damn after awhile. They just wanted me to marry their friends sons. Any way, we were only twenty-one at the time. A few weeks later, spring was beginning and he took me to the botanical gardens and we walked and talked about flowers and poetry. While all around us roses and daisies and tulips and honeysuckles were coming back to life. And then after a while we sat down on a bench far away from everybody and he shared a poem with me, I can't remember all of it, but I still remember some of the lines: "Is the rose naked or is that her only dress?" then "Is there anything in the world sadder than a train standing in the rain?" Then I cried in his arms for what seemed like a very long time and after I was done crying I was in love with him.

DINA

Who wrote that?

RACHEL

Lorco or Nerudo or something like that, I can't remember exactly. Just please, for me, don't start anything.

DINA

Fine. But don't you think it's kind of fucked up that we're the ones who always have to bite our tongues, our mothers did it their whole lives and now we have to. My mouth is full of blood because of it and it's getting harder and harder to keep doing it.

RACHEL

I know, Dina, I know. Could you please take the food and warm it up for a bit, Yacub will be out the shower soon.

*(Dina takes the food into the kitchen. "I Cover the Waterfront" by John Lee Hooker begins to play on the radio. Rachel gently sways to the music and picks up some of the mess around the room. Dina re-enters and places the food on the table)*

DINA

You were going to tell me about your dream.

RACHEL

I dreamt I was in the desert, it was completely black except for a thin crescent moon, which was shining brighter than it should--

*(Yacub enters, sits down on the chairs and begins to eat his dinner. Rachel turns down the volume of the radio)*

How's the weather outside?

YACUB

Cold as shit.

*Dina continues to clean the apartment, moving on and off stage in the background.*



RACHEL

Oh yeah? Don't worry you're home now, relax, tomorrow is another day and I'm sure you'll find something.

YACUB

Probably not.

RACHEL

Don't think like that, you'll find something--

YACUB

There isn't much work out there.

RACHEL

Don't be so negative all the time, I know you'll--

*(Yacub raises his hand in an dismissive gesture)*

*(Silence)*

YACUB

How are you feeling?

RACHEL

Better.

*(Silence)*

YACUB

What did you do today?

RACHEL

Nothing much, just stayed home all day

YACUB

Day dreaming all day again? All you ever seem to do.

RACHEL

I was thinking that I could start working again. My friend Ayesha said that there are some spots open in the supermarket where she works.

YACUB

That sounds like a good idea. But is this goin' to be like the last times, when after a few weeks you start complaining about how tired you are. Or maybe this time it'll be the neighborhood again, or rude customers, or your co-workers are all creeps or they're mean to you.

*(silence)*

RACHEL

Is that necessary?