

LOT'S WIFE

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CHARACTERS

Lot
Lot's Wife
Geula, 16, their third daughter
Shira, 13, their fourth daughter
Abram (also called Avram and Abraham)
Sarah (Abram's wife)
God
Ashonael, an angel (male actor)
Yael, an angel (female actor)
Horab, 18, a citizen of Sodom
Innkeeper (can be played by the actor playing God)

Dedicated to the Women's Studies Group of Temple Beth Shalom
and to Karen, who never looked back, and who
survived.

LOT'S HOUSE

(Lot's house. LOT'S WIFE is cleaning out candlesticks)

SHIRA (entering)

We need more wine in the secret room.

LOT'S WIFE

You know where daddy keeps it.

SHIRA

No way I'm going up there. It's like crawling with spiders. Let Geula get it.

LOT'S WIFE

Where is she? It's almost sunset.

SHIRA

Probably off with her boyfriend.

LOT'S WIFE

(LOT'S WIFE stops what she's doing) Boyfriend?

SHIRA

Whoops. Geula's gonna kill me.

LOT'S WIFE

Geula has a boyfriend? Who is he?

SHIRA

His name is Horab. She wanted to tell you herself.

LOT'S WIFE

Horab?

(GEULA enters)

GEULA

Sorry, mama.

LOT'S WIFE

You have duties here, you know. We have to light candles tonight.

GEULA

Uh-huh. Look, mama, there's someone outside I want you to meet.

LOT'S WIFE
Your boyfriend?

GEULA
(*To SHIRA*) You little brat. You promised.

SHIRA
'cause you threatened me.

LOT'S WIFE
Never mind about your sister. Who is this boy?

GEULA
He's right outside, mama. I asked him to wait until I prepared you.

LOT'S WIFE
Prepared me?

GEULA
His name is Horab. Oh God, you have to get rid of those candlesticks or he's going to start asking questions.

(GEULA throws a tablecloth over the candlesticks)

LOT'S WIFE
Listen to me, young lady. I have no intention –

(HORAB enters)

HORAB
I'm sorry, I thought I heard you call me

GEULA
That's okay. I was just about to. Mom, this is Horab.

LOT'S WIFE
Hello. Welcome to our home.

HORAB
Thank you. Geula's told me so much about you. And of course, everyone knows your husband.

LOT'S WIFE
Please have a seat. Can I get you something to drink?

HORAB

Oh, no thank you. I have to run back to work.

LOT'S WIFE:

Oh, and what do you do?

HORAB:

My dad owns the tavern. His name is Amorah. Do you know him?

LOT'S WIFE:

No, sorry. I never go there.

SHIRA:

Daddy does.

GEULA:

How would you know, termite.

SHIRA:

Alana's father is always there and sometimes she has to bring him home and she saw daddy there.

LOT'S WIFE:

Hush, Shira. (To HORAB) So your father owns a tavern?

HORAB:

Yeah. And I work there for him.

LOT'S WIFE:

I see. And is this what you plan on doing?

GEULA:

Ma.

LOT'S WIFE:

I'm just asking.

GEULA:

It's like every friend I bring home has to pass a test.

SHIRA:

Friend?

GEULA:

Ma, will you send this little cockroach to her room.

LOT'S WIFE:

It's no test. You're out late at nights, I just want to know.

HORAB:

I understand. Lot of rough people in this town.

LOT'S WIFE:

I wasn't saying that.

GEULA:

No, ma, but what's a person supposed to think when you ask all those questions.

SHIRA:

(Mocking) What's a person supposed to think when you leave your shawl behind the barley silo?

GEULA:

(Chasing her) You little brat. I'm going to kill you.

SHIRA:

Mama!

(GEULA chases SHIRA around LOT'S WIFE)

LOT'S WIFE:

Geula, stop it. (To HORAB) Of course I know you're not like them. My daughter would never be friends with them.

HORAB:

Of course. Although I have to tell you, Mrs. Lot, that it's hard to do anything in this town unless, you know...

LOT'S WIFE:

I don't understand.

HORAB:

The Council. They run the town, let's face it. And they haven't done such a bad job, really. They come into the tavern all the time. Granted, they can be a little --

SHIRA:

Soft in the head.

LOT'S WIFE:

Hush, Shira.

HORAB:

I thought her name was Asherah.

LOT'S WIFE:

Uh, yes. Shira is a nickname.

HORAB:

Oh. Anyway, the Council, they mean well.

LOT'S WIFE:

Mean well?

GEULA:

Ma, don't start.

HORAB:

They want to make sure the town doesn't get overrun with certain types. Maybe they go overboard from time to time.

LOT'S WIFE:

Certain types?

HORAB:

You know who I mean. Like the Habiru, for instance. They –

LOT'S WIFE:

We are Habiru, young man.

HORAB:

I know you *were*. You live here now. You're different.

LOT'S WIFE:

How different are we from that family from the hills above Zoar who came here last month and were --

HORAB:

Those hicks? See, that's exactly my point. People that backward deserve what they get.

LOT'S WIFE:

Deserve?

GEULA:

Yeah, ma. They smelled like a herd of goats, they didn't use money, it was embarrassing.

SHIRA:

You're embarrassing.

LOT'S WIFE:

They were from the hills. That's how people live there. You were born there, young lady, don't you forget --

GEULA:

Thank God you and dad had the good sense to leave.

HORAB:

Thank God? Gilly, we talked about that.

GEULA:

Sorry, it's a habit.

LOT'S WIFE:

Gilly? Why does he call you Gilly?

GEULA:

Geula is so old fashioned, ma, really.

LOT'S WIFE:

It was my grandmother's name. And what's wrong with thanking God?

HORAB:

Nothing, if it's the right god. See, that's what was wrong with those hicks. We were just having a little fun with them and they start in with --

LOT'S WIFE:

“We”?

HORAB:

Yeah. Half the town was there. We were just having fun with them. They were visitors here, they shouldn't be criticizing everything, telling us how ticked off their god is gonna be. No, not their god, just God, like there are no others and he's so big he doesn't need a name. All that self-righteous, superior stuff. You want to know why they got it? That's why. At least you folks have

tried to fit in.

LOT'S WIFE:

Have we?

GEULA:

(Between her teeth) Ma, please.

HORAB:

You even named one of your daughters Asherah, after our fertility goddess.

SHIRA:

Daddy named me that. I think it's dumb.

HORAB:

You eldest, Gesamene, married one of our men. So did your next. See, we appreciate that.

LOT'S WIFE:

Has daddy met this young man?

GEULA:

No.

LOT'S WIFE:

Oh. Well, he should be back soon. He's at the market.

SHIRA:

With the pigs.

GEULA:

(Making a lunge for her) I'll kill you.

SHIRA:

(Dashing behind her mother) What? What did I say? I meant with the swineherd. Mama, save me.

LOT'S WIFE:

Geula, stop it this instant. (To HORAB) So, can I get you something to drink while we're waiting?

HORAB:

I'd love to meet him, but as I said, I have to get back to work. I just wanted to get a chance to say hello.

LOT'S WIFE:

Well, it was nice to meet you.

HORAB:

Thanks, Mrs. Lot. Same here. I really like your daughter, I want you to know that. (To GEULA) So, Gilly, see you tonight?

LOT'S WIFE:

Geula has other duties tonight.

GEULA:

Ma. (To HORAB) Sure. I'll be a little late. On Fridays we have a family dinner. But I'll see you.

HORAB:

Great. Goodbye, Mrs. Lot.

(HORAB exits)

LOT'S WIFE:

You can't go out tonight.

GEULA:

Who says?

SHIRA:

God says.

GEULA:

Please (as in give me a break).

LOT'S WIFE:

God does say. And even if you could, you can't go out with that boy.

GEULA:

Why not?

LOT'S WIFE:

Because he's one of them. He mocks God. Isn't it bad enough that I lost Gesamene and Roni to these people, I will not lose you as well.

GEULA:

Then who am I going to marry? There are almost none of our

people here, and no one who would have me.

SHIRA:

I don't blame them.

LOT'S WIFE:

God will provide.

GEULA:

And you can't talk about God to them. Daddy told you a hundred times. They won't let us alone if they think we're still worshipping. Every Friday night when we go into the secret room all I can think of is any minute they'll find out.

LOT'S WIFE:

You should be thinking of God when you're in that room.

GEULA:

Why? All our people still living in caves and tents. What has God done for them? Here they have over a dozen gods, people live in houses, there's food and wine for all. Why are we still doing this?

LOT'S WIFE:

(LOT'S WIFE slaps GEULA) You are not to speak like that.

GEULA:

(Beat) I'm going to marry Horab.

LOT'S WIFE:

Over my dead body.

GEULA:

You can't stop me.

LOT'S WIFE:

Your father will.

GEULA:

Daddy will support me. In fact, he'll insist on it.

LOT'S WIFE:

Why do you say that?

GEULA:
Because I know daddy. (Beat) And because I'm pregnant.

LOT'S WIFE:
(Beat) Shira, leave the room.

SHIRA:
No way.

GEULA:
So you see, you better get used to it.

LOT'S WIFE:
There is a woman I know who can --

GEULA:
That's a sin, mommy. You know that.

(LOT'S WIFE collapses in a chair and starts to cry. GEULA comes over)

GEULA:
Please, mommy, please. I love you. I don't want to go through what Gesamene and Roni went through. Please accept this, let me have my baby. Don't make me grow up like Aunt Sarah. Please, mommy. Don't you want me to have children?

LOT'S WIFE:
Of course I do. But how will they grow up, like us or like the people of this town who mock our God and make us hide our true selves?

GEULA:
Better to have no children?

LOT'S WIFE:
We'll find you a husband. Our people in the hills, surely --

GEULA:
I won't go back to that life.

LOT:
(LOT enters) What life?

SHIRA:
Hi, poppa. Guess what happened to Geula.

LOT'S WIFE:
Shira! That's enough.

LOT:
What happened? Why are you crying? What's happened here?

LOT'S WIFE:
Geula, take Shira inside.

SHIRA:
Mama.

LOT'S WIFE:
Geula, please. Now.

GEULA:
Come, you little brat.

(GEULA takes SHIRA from the room)

LOT:
Her name is Asherah.

LOT'S WIFE:
That's a pagan name and an affront to God.

LOT:
It's just a name. This town has a very dim view of our people because of attitudes just like that.

LOT'S WIFE:
Geula is pregnant.

LOT:
(A silence) The tavern keeper's youngest?

LOT'S WIFE:
You knew of this?

LOT:
At the market people tell me the gossip. They think I'll cut them a better deal.

LOT'S WIFE:

And you didn't think this is something you should have told me? I don't know what you're thinking, Lot. Isn't it enough to have lost Roni and Gesamene?

LOT:

You haven't lost them.

LOT'S WIFE:

We have.

LOT:

We can see them whenever we want.

LOT'S WIFE:

"We" is more than this family. God has lost them. And that's the loss of all our people.

LOT:

We live in Sodom now. These must be our people.

LOT'S WIFE:

Oh. And does that mean that you'll be making offerings at their temple? Should I be preparing a lamb for Baal?

LOT:

Listen, in my way I still revere the one true God. But our daughters will make their own choices. We teach them the old ways, and if they wish they can follow them, and if they don't, they can choose whatever other options seem practical. You know, for generations we wandered the plains; now cities like this are growing everywhere. Soon everyone will live in them, including my uncle and his clan. And they too will have to bend a little if they're to survive.

LOT'S WIFE:

Worshipping God in secret, giving our children pagan names, watching them marry the hedonistic brutes of this town, this isn't survival.

LOT:

Do you want to move back to the hills then? I've become one of the wealthiest merchants in this town. You want for nothing, your daughters want for nothing.

LOT'S WIFE:

We want for ourselves.

LOT:
I don't know what that means.

(GEULA enters)

GEULA:
Daddy?

LOT:
It's all right.

GEULA:
I'm sorry.

LOT:
He'll marry you, this Horab?

GEULA:
Yes. He wants to.

LOT:
He knows of the child?

GEULA:
Not yet. But having children is all he talks about. He'll have me, this I know.

LOT:
Then all is well. Our family will grow.

LOT'S WIFE:
As our people decrease.

LOT:
Hush, mamma. Prepare for tonight.

LOT'S WIFE:
I will prepare for tonight. But if this keeps up I don't know how I can prepare for tomorrow.

End of scene.

A HILLTOP

(The stage is black. We hear:)

ABRAHAM:

Hineni.

(Lights up. It is a hillside. ABRAHAM sits at a potter's wheel, working on a pot. GOD is not visible to ABRAHAM or SARAH [and can be performed by an amplified offstage voice]. ABRAHAM can hear him although SARAH cannot. ASHONAEL and YAEL, two angels, are standing near ABRAHAM)

GOD:

I need to talk to you.

ABRAHAM:

Of course, lord. But (indicating pot) this is sort of a crucial time --

GOD:

You may keep working.

ABRAHAM:

Thanks. (Noticing ASHONAEL and YAEL) Sarah, we have visitors.

SARAH:

(SARAH comes on) Oh. Oh my.

ABRAHAM:

Bring them water for their feet.

SARAH:

Of course, of course. (Looking around nervously and then *sotto voce*) Is *he* here?

ABRAHAM:

(Smiles) I don't think whispering is necessary, or, for that matter, particularly effective.

SARAH:

(SARAH notices ABRAHAM working at the wheel) What are you doing?

ABRAHAM:

I've always admired so much how you do this. But I see now it's easy.

SARAH:

(Examining his work) Sure, if you don't care whether your pitcher has a bottom or not. Well, it will make it easier to clean.

ABRAHAM:

(Looking into it) Oh.

SARAH:

(To ASHONAEL and YAEL) Can I get you something to eat? There's a calf.

YAEL:

I don't think so. Thank you.

SARAH:

Okay. I'll fetch the water. (**SARAH exits**)

ASHONAEL:

(Calling after SARAH) Can I pet the calf?

YAEL

Shhh.

ABRAHAM:

So, lord, how can I serve you?

GOD:

I have come with wonderful news. I chose you quite sometime ago to start a kingdom...(GOD is distracted as he speaks)...because I find that in you and Sarah ...in you and Sarah -- how can you stand that din?

ABRAHAM:

Din?

GOD:

That awful noise.

ABRAHAM:

I don't hear anything. (To YAEL and ASHONAEL) Do you?

Yael:
There is something.

Ashonael:
(Ashonael is involved exploring his surroundings) What? Oh, no, I don't hear anything.

Abraham:
What is it?

God:
It's coming from that city.

Abraham:
That's Sodom.

God:
It's the sound of contempt.

Yael:
It's the sound of the worshipping of sin.

Abraham:
Oh, well, that's old news. They're a rowdy bunch down there, the whole valley knows that.

God:
To forget your god is bad enough. But to mock and scorn, this is unbearable.

Abraham:
I'm sure they're harmless enough.

God:
You are wrong, Abram. They must be stopped.

Abraham:
Oh. Well, after lunch, if you'd like, I can go down and talk to them. Been meaning to visit anyway.

God:
And what will you say?

Abraham:
I don't know. (Smiling) I'll wait for divine inspiration. Now, your news.

GOD:

Yes. Abram, it is necessary, as the unfortunate Sodom makes clear, that the founding of the Nation begin. In leaving your home you showed great bravery. But more is expected.

ABRAHAM:

Yes, I know. It's a little hard to know *how* to begin. I mean, at my age, I -- and I'm just a simple shepherd, what do I know of founding a people, not that anybody has a lot of experience with that, granted, and Sarah is always after me to sell the herd and retire so maybe you want to find --

GOD:

(Sonorously) Abram.

ABRAHAM:

Hineni.

GOD:

This is a command.

ABRAHAM:

Yes, of course, then, I'll do it. It just seems a little -- I mean, father of a people, I'm not even father to a son.

GOD:

That too will be attended to.

(There is a mishap at the potter's wheel)

ABRAHAM:

My lord, I --

GOD:

But this wonderful news you should share with Sarah as well. Go to her; I will be with you. Yael, you stay here and please keep Ashonael out of trouble.

ASHONAEL:

What? (As in: Why are you picking on me?)

(ABRAHAM exits)

ASHONAEL:

I'm just looking around. Who knows when I'll get back here

again.

Yael:

We're here on serious business. You must behave yourself.

Ashonael:

Right. Looking at the scenery, that's misbehaving?

Yael:

You must pay attention to God. You're too easily distracted.

Ashonael:

And what's the serious business?

Yael:

A people on earth chosen to carry forth God's message. That's what we're doing here.

Ashonael:

Uh-huh. Well, I don't know.

Yael:

You don't know what?

Ashonael:

Remember the last time he tried this? He ended up flooding the place when it didn't work out. **(Ashonael looks at a rose bush)** Incredible, to destroy all this beauty just because some malcontented people are a little rude. I mean if he wants reverence, why doesn't he stayed focused on something like this. Look at this, Yael. Look at its beauty, and its innocence. What could be more reverential than this? If he wants to choose somebody to carry his word, let him choose a flower or a bird, anything but people.

Yael:

You're so foolish. Do you pretend to know more than God?

Ashonael:

(A little petulantly) No. **(Ashonael takes a deep whiff of the rose)** I just think he may be missing something.

(Sarah's loud, raucous laugh is heard offstage)

ASHONAEL:

Now that sounds like somebody who misses very little.

YAEL:

I wonder what she's laughing at? Perhaps it's her joy at finding out she'll have a child.

(ABRAHAM enters)

GOD:

I don't know what was so funny about that.

ABRAHAM:

It's the shock, really.

(SARAH laughs again)

ASHONAEL:

(Calling to Sarah) Why do you laugh?

SARAH:

(From off) I wasn't laughing.

GOD:

Oh yes you were, count on it.

ABRAHAM:

I don't think she can hear you.

GOD:

All people can hear me. They must first choose to listen.

ABRAHAM:

Yes, of course. Look, don't get me wrong on this –

GOD:

No need to thank me.

ABRAHAM:

Oh, well, yes, of course, thank you. But you see, we haven't, I mean, Sarah and I – it's been a long time.

GOD:

You have a busy schedule, I understand, but you shouldn't ignore your wife.

ABRAHAM:

Right, but you get to a certain age and -- you know.

GOD:

Avram, you will have the lord with you.

ABRAHAM:

(Not fully convinced) Ah. Well, that will help, certainly.

(From off, **SARAH's laugh is heard again**)

ABRAHAM:

(Skeptically) I'll give it my best shot.

GOD:

Now, let me speak with you of the specifics. I have asked these two, Yael and Ashonael, to accompany me here to help you -- (distracted) that noise again. It is clear I cannot do anything until I deal with it. Yael, Ashonael, we must take the town down.

Yael:

Yes, lord.

ASHONAE:

Really? Wow, radical.

ABRAHAM:

Take it down?

GOD:

Yes.

ABRAHAM:

As in destroy it?

GOD:

Yes.

ABRAHAM:

Destroy the whole town and everyone in it?

GOD:

Yes. This is unforgivable.

ABRAHAM:

"Unforgivable"? There can't be any such thing.

GOD:

I'm the forgiver and so this I decide.

ABRAHAM:

Right, but destroying a whole town. There are people in that town, I am certain of it, who are decent people. My nephew and his family live there. You would destroy them as well? What kind of message does that send, destroying let's say fifty sincere people just because of the contempt of the rest?

GOD:

Yes, that is true. I respect your judgment. Fifty sincere people might, in time, bring the rest around. If I find fifty, I will spare the city.

ABRAHAM:

Well, good. Then that's settled. (Beat) But for that matter one good person could bring the rest around, if it was a really persuasive person.

GOD:

Abram, no. I will not spare the city for one. An entire city of sinners on account of one who might be decent? I'm afraid not.

ABRAHAM:

All right. You won't do it for one, I understand. But two, suppose we find two. If it's the right two they could in time produce their own family of forty-eight more. How about two?

GOD:

No. Can't you hear that contempt. Two is not enough, not nearly enough. But perhaps I could be persuaded to take a chance on them if I found forty.

ABRAHAM:

Forty?

GOD:

Forty people. I would consider saving the city for forty people, *if* they were truly sincere.

ABRAHAM:

Lord, I mean, who am I to say this to you, but I think you're being unfair here. I'm sure there are forty, there's more than forty, you know, depending on what your definition of sincere is, but they're there, I'm sure. It's not the number. It's just in acting so precipitously you sound angry, you sound like you're acting with the same contempt that you're criticizing the Sodomites for.

GOD:

You think so?

ABRAHAM:

Forty. Forty is a significant number. You made it rain for forty days when, *in your anger*, you sought to punish your children with the Flood.

GOD:

Tell me a compassionate number.

ABRAHAM:

Five.

GOD:

Abram, no.

ABRAHAM:

Five good people, and I'm talking about five truly devout, truly reverent people.

GOD:

I am trying to send a message here. Sparing the town for five people teaches nothing. Would thirty satisfy you?

ABRAHAM:

It's not me, lord. It's you. You ask too much. Thirty? What kind of message is that? You'll be known as a vengeful god. Would you consider seven?

GOD:

Would you consider twenty?

ABRAHAM:

Nine.

GOD:

Ten.

ABRAHAM:

Ten. It's a deal.

GOD:

(Beat) I have chosen well, Abraham.

ABRAHAM:

Abraham?

GOD:

You are the father of a nation, you should have an appropriate name. Ten sincerely devout people and I will spare that awful town.

ABRAHAM:

Great. I can find that many easily. My nephew with his wife, that's two, they have four daughters, that's six, and I haven't spoken to them in awhile but they must have married off those daughters by now, that's four more, that's ten on the button.

GOD:

Well, then, your task has been laid out for you and I will leave you to it. Yael, Ashonael; you are to watch over Abraham on his journey.

ABRAHAM:

Thank you. I'll go get ready. We should leave right away.

(ABRAHAM exits; GOD is no longer present)

ASHONAEL:

I don't know. I had a completely different picture of how God formed his judgments.

Yael:

Me too. Come, let's go.

ASHONAEL:

You're hoping we don't find ten, aren't you?

Yael:

You're being foolish again.

ASHONAEL:

You'd love to burn the whole place down, I know you, Yael.

YAEL:

Can we go?

ASHONAEL:

Right. **(To the rose)** Goodbye. (He starts to walk) Think of it, how beautiful it all is.

(ASHONAEL is looking back as he walks)

YAEL:

It is that.

ASHONAEL:

It would be such a shame to see such beauty destroyed.
(ASHONAEL, not looking where he's going, trips and falls)
Whoops.

YAEL:

Come. (Lifts him up) That should be a lesson to you.

ASHONAEL:

What?

YAEL:

You shouldn't look back.

(They keep walking, ASHONAEL continues to look around)

End of scene

OUTSIDE LOT'S HOME

(LOT is looking at some tablets. SHIRA enters)

SHIRA:
What are you doing?

LOT:
The accounts.

SHIRA:
Oh. (Beat) What's that?

LOT:
The accounts? These tablets contain information about our business.

SHIRA:
Oh. (Beat) What is our business?

LOT:
What is your mother doing?

SHIRA:
Grinding barley.

LOT:
Why don't you help her?

SHIRA:
I tried to and she told me to come out and help you.

LOT:
Oh.

SHIRA:
Mirsani's father cuts trees and Abonoreb's father is a goatherd. What do we do?

LOT:
We help Mirsani's father and Abonoreb's father with their trees and goats.

SHIRA:
How?

LOT:

When Mirsani's father needs more forest to cut down, we help him buy the forest. When Abonoreb's father needs grain to feed his goats, we help him buy the grain.

SHIRA:

How do you help them?

LOT:

We lend them the money and they pay us a percentage of their profits.

SHIRA:

So you don't have goats or trees?

LOT:

No, just money.

SHIRA:

Oh. (Beat) Why don't we have goats or trees?

LOT:

We're not allowed. Only Sodomites can own property or herd animals.

SHIRA:

(Beat) I wish we could.

LOT:

Why? That's the life we gave up when we came here. Now you want to go back?

SHIRA:

You can't get fruit or milk from money.

LOT:

Oh, yes you can.

SHIRA:

How?

LOT:

(Beat, he looks at her) Marry well, Asherah. And whatever you do, don't go into business.

(ABRAHAM enters; walking behind him are ASHONAEL

and YAEL)

SHIRA:

Uncle Avram. (She rushes to him and hugs him)

ABRAHAM:

Shira, (grunts as he lifts her) you have grown so.

LOT:

(Subdued; nervously looking around) Avram, what a surprise.

ABRAHAM:

Yes, for me too. Shira, you are beautiful. Haven't you married yet?

SHIRA:

I'm just thirteen.

ABRAHAM:

Soon, Shira, soon.

LOT:

Her name is, uh, Asherah, or so we call her here.

ABRAHAM:

Really?

SHIRA:

I hate it. Asherah is a big, fat goddess made out of rock, not even alabaster.

LOT:

What brings you here, Avram?

SHIRA:

Daddy, you're supposed to wash their feet.

LOT:

We don't do that here, Asherah.

SHIRA:

We're supposed to. Mommy says.

LOT:

It's not a local custom.

SHIRA:

I'm telling mommy. (**SHIRA runs off**) Ma, Uncle Avram is here.

LOT:

I don't mean to be rude, but we have to be careful here.

ABRAHAM:

Yes, you do indeed. Speaking of being rude, you should meet my friends.

LOT:

Of course. (Looking around nervously again) Perhaps we should go inside.

ABRAHAM:

Ashonael and Yael. They are travelers.

LOT:

I'm pleased to meet you. (Beat) Are you staying long?

ABRAHAM:

That depends on you, Lot.

LOT'S WIFE:

(**LOT'S WIFE comes out**) Avram, Avram, how wonderful. (She embraces him) Sit, sit, sit; I'll wash your feet. And your friends too.

(**SHIRA comes out with a pitcher and a cloth**)

ABRAHAM:

Thank you. (ABRAHAM sits)

LOT:

No. I'm sorry, I can't allow this.

LOT'S WIFE:

Lot, have you forgotten your manners? (She attends to ABRAHAM) Shira, tell your sister to bake a bread. (**SHIRA, who has been staring at ASHONAEL, runs inside**)

LOT:

If anyone sees this, manners will be the last thing on their mind.

ABRAHAM:

What are you saying?

LOT:

The people of this town are very mistrustful of the hill people, and their ways.

ABRAHAM:

"Their" ways? Our ways, Lot. You are from the hills.

LOT'S WIFE

How many times have I tried to remind him –

LOT:

Hush, woman. Abram, wherever I was from, I live here now. But perhaps it is best if we feed you quickly; then you can be on your way back.

ABRAHAM:

But we're not leaving so soon. We want to see the town.

LOT:

I can't allow that.

LOT'S WIFE

Lot, this is Abram you are speaking to.

ASHONAEL:

In what ways are they mistrustful?

YAEL:

Hush. We're not supposed to interfere.

SHIRA:

(SHIRA reenters) One bread coming up.

ABRAHAM:

I must say I never understood why you settled here, with all the valley to choose from; I thought perhaps there's some special closeness in city life. But from what you describe, it sounds anything but.

LOT:

You wouldn't understand.

ABRAHAM:

Try me.

LOT:

The people here are a very close-knit and proud clan. They're fearful that strangers will bring strange ways. That's all.

LOT'S WIFE:

That's not all, Lot. This is your blood you're talking to. You mustn't lie.

LOT:

Hush, woman.

LOT'S WIFE:

Avram, when we first came here it was to start a new life. I don't know why you and Lot quarreled --

ABRAHAM:

Who can remember.

LOT'S WIFE:

-- but we were very optimistic coming here. At first the Sodomites were cordial to us and others from the hills who came down. But over time they came to resent us.

SHIRA:

They say we have dirty blood.

ASHONAEL:

There is no such thing.

LOT:

They aren't to be blamed completely. Some of our people have tried to take advantage here. And they refuse to adopt local customs or local dress or local gods.

ASHONAEL:

Good for them.

YAEL:

Ashonael, you are to be quiet.

SHIRA:

(Still eyeing ASHONAEL; more to herself) Ashonael.

LOT'S WIFE:

No. I, too, say good for them. You have compromised too much, Lot.

LOT:

This isn't the time for this.

ABRAHAM:

I'm afraid, nephew, that it is the time.

LOT:

What do you mean?

ABRAHAM:

Perhaps we *should* go inside. I have something important to speak to you about.

LOT:

(Nervously) All right. But make it quick. I don't mean to be rude, but this is for your own good.

ABRAHAM:

Good, let's go then.

LOT'S WIFE:

Yes, I'll see to the bread.

(ABRAHAM, LOT and LOT'S WIFE enter the house. ASHONAEL and YAEL start to go)

SHIRA:

Your name is Ashonael?

ASHONAEL:

Yes.

SHIRA:

I think that's a cool name. Do you come from the hills?

ASHONAEL:

That is where we just came from.

SHIRA:

I can't wait to tell Geula. She thinks all hill people look like camels and smell like goats.

ASHONAEL:

Oh. You don't think I look like a camel?

SHIRA:

No. I think you're hot. (**SHIRA giggles and runs inside**)

(ASHONAEL smiles broadly, then looks at YAEL who is staring disapprovingly)

ASHONAEL:

Now now. You know what the old man says about envy.

YAEL:

Envy?

ASHONAEL:

I'm hot and you're not. (Put his arm around YAEL as they walk in) Don't let it get to you. I can give you hot lessons. First, we have to do something about your hair.

(They exit)

End of scene

INSIDE LOT'S HOME

(ASHONAEL and SHIRA are playing cat's cradle)

SHIRA:
Now you have to take it.

ASHONAEL:
Okay. **(ASHONAEL takes it gracefully but asymmetrically)**

SHIRA:
No. Don't you know how to do this?

ASHONAEL:
What's wrong with what I did?

SHIRA:
You have to make it so both sides look the same. I'll start again. (She does) See how it looks? Now, you take it so --

(ASHONAEL takes it correctly this time)

SHIRA:
Yeah. Cool. Now I go.

ASHONAEL:
I liked it better the first time.

SHIRA:
(Taking string) So, is she your girlfriend?

ASHONAEL:
Who? Yael?

SHIRA:
Yeah.

ASHONAEL:
She's my friend. I don't think she would like it if I called her a girl though.

SHIRA:
You know what I mean. Your turn.

ASHONAEL:
(Taking string) You want to know if I think she's hot.

SHIRA:

Yeah. (Of string) Ooh, I never saw anything like that before. How did you do that?

ASHONAEL:

Nah, she's definitely not hot. Use your pinky. No, like --

SHIRA:

I got it I got it.

ASHONAEL:

Do you have a boyfriend?

SHIRA:

No. There's nothing but dorks around here.

ASHONAEL:

Dorks?

SHIRA:

You bet.

ASHONAEL:

What's a dork?

SHIRA:

You know. Creeps. I mean they know it's wrong, what's going on here, but they don't say anything. They don't want to interfere; they don't want to get involved.

ASHONAEL:

Oh. (Beat) You have no friends at all?

SHIRA:

Oh, sure. Leah, she's from the hills, like us. I like her. And Merari and Amram, they're twins. They're okay. Their mom's a great cook.

ASHONAEL:

Also from the hills?

SHIRA:

I think so. They do Fridays, so they must be.

ASHONAEL:

But none of the Sodomites? You have no friends among them?

SHIRA:

Well, there's Korak. He's older, I think he likes Geula so he tries to be friendly to me so he can hang around. But I like him anyway. He's a good singer.

ASHONAEL:

Not a dork.

SHIRA:

No. I guess they're not all dorks. Some of them are okay. It's just that with all the stuff going on, you know --

ASHONAEL:

What stuff?

SHIRA:

They don't like the Habiru here. If they knew you were here, you'd be in big trouble. You are Habiru, aren't you?

ASHONAEL:

Sort of.

SHIRA:

Whew.

ASHONAEL:

You say they don't like the Habiru but Korak likes you and your sister.

SHIRA:

Well, yeah, I guess. It's not all of them. (**Of string, which they have been exchanging during above conversation**) Okay, this is boring. What else can we do?

ASHONAEL:

And the same is true of you, you like Korak and maybe some of the others.

SHIRA

I guess.

ASHONAEL

And you'd be sad, wouldn't you, if they all died or disappeared.

SHIRA:

Of course. Then I'd really be bored.

(**LOT enters, followed by ABRAHAM, LOT's WIFE and YAEL**)

LOT:
Impossible.

ABRAHAM:
Lot, you must listen.

LOT:
Impossible.

YAEL:
It will happen, you must believe that.

SHIRA:
What will happen?

LOT:
Why? This is barbaric.

ABRAHAM:
No, Lot. It's this town that is barbaric. If it can't be changed, it will be destroyed.

SHIRA:
Oh man, pop, what did you do now?

LOT'S WIFE:
Hush, Shira. Lot, this is God talking to us. We must listen.

LOT:
We'll change his mind. You, Abram, you say you talked to him before. Talk to him now.

SHIRA:
Wow, uncle Avram talked to God?

ABRAHAM:
You have an option, as I've explained.

LOT:
It's impossible. Where will I find ten people in this town who would dare swear their allegiance to Yahweh.

ABRAHAM:
Nobody's said anything about swearing.

ASHONAEL:
I think you could find them.

YAEL:
Ashonael, we must not interfere, we must not get involved.

ASHONAEL:
Dork.

ABRAHAM:
But he's right. Surely we can find ten.

LOT:
Impossible.

LOT'S WIFE:
What are you saying, Lot. Ten people in a town this size.
There are many Habiru here.

LOT:
Perhaps they were Habiru when they came, but...

ABRAHAM:
But what?

LOT:
When we first moved here, at your suggestion --

ABRAHAM:
I never suggested Sodom.

LOT:
No, but you suggested we move.

ABRAHAM:
True.

LOT:
There were many from the hills who had come. They welcomed us, or at least tolerated us. As long as the town prospered, we were all right. But when the seasons were irregular; when the fields were unfriendly; when brigands waylaid the merchants' shipments, many in the town suffered. They said their gods were displeased and soon we became the reason for that displeasure. Those Habiru who

would not forsake their ways --

LOT'S WIFE:

And our God.

LOT:

-- and their god were punished, humiliated. Only those of us who have conformed are safe.

LOT'S WIFE:

But for how long, Lot?

LOT:

As long as we don't anger them again.

LOT'S WIFE:

Nonsense.

LOT:

You're making my argument for me, woman. Not one here, forget finding ten, would chance angering the Sodomites.

ABRAHAM:

(To LOT'S WIFE) Do you think you know ten?

LOT'S WIFE:

Oh, let me see. There are us, and Geula and Shira, that's four. Can we count you?

ABRAHAM:

I don't think so.

LOT'S WIFE:

I was afraid not. My other two daughters are married. I don't know about them.

ABRAHAM:

Well, you must talk to them right away. And their husbands.

LOT'S WIFE:

Of course. Let's see, there is Yachabed and her husband, he's the miller. They're very wonderful people. You'd love him, Avram, he tells the most amusing --

ABRAHAM:

Yes, of course. That's two more. Can you think of any

others?

LOT'S WIFE:
Oh, my, this is, um, well --

SHIRA:
There's Leah's family and Ronnani.

LOT'S WIFE:
Oh, yes, I'm sure they could be talked to.

ASHONAEL:
And Korak.

LOT'S WIFE:
Oh, well, Korak, I don't know.

ABRAHAM:
That isn't an Habiru name.

LOT'S WIFE:
No. He's a good boy, though. There are many among the Sodomites who mean well. But I doubt he would give up his gods.

ABRAHAM:
God doesn't ask this.

LOT:
What are you saying? That's exactly --

ABRAHAM:
Of the Habiru, yes. But of these others, only that they respect him and not mock him, and allow those who wish to, to worship him.

LOT'S WIFE:
I could talk to him, certainly.

ABRAHAM:
Fine. We'll have much more than ten at this rate.

LOT'S WIFE:
Of course. I told you.

LOT:

It's impossible. You can't go around spreading this nonsense. It's much too dangerous.

LOT'S WIFE:

We have no choice.

LOT:

Yes, we do. (Beat) You expect me to give up all we've worked to achieve here, my business?

ABRAHAM:

You'll lose it one way or the other.

GEULA:

(**GEULA enters**) And what of me? What will I lose?

SHIRA:

Not your mind. You lost that a long time ago.

LOT:

How much have you heard?

GEULA:

Enough. Why are you letting Uncle Avram manipulate you again?

LOT'S WIFE:

Geula, watch your mouth.

GEULA:

Daddy, if Horab finds out about this, he'll never marry me.

SHIRA:

That's another good reason.

LOT'S WIFE:

Geula, if we can't find ten who will honor our God, we will all be destroyed.

GEULA:

Who said this?

ABRAHAM:

God said it.

GEULA:
So you say. Why do you believe him, Daddy?

LOT:
Why should I believe you, Avram?

ABRAHAM:
I don't ask you to. Just to believe God.

LOT:
A week doesn't go by that another true prophet from the hills comes wandering through here with dire predictions and threats. Geula is right, why should I believe you.

GEULA:
Where is the proof? Where is the proof?

(There is a loud knock on the door)

HORAB:
(From off) Geula, are you home?

LOT:
It's Horab. Quick, Avram, you must go inside.

ABRAHAM:
Yes, that would seem prudent.

LOT:
And take your friends.

LOT'S WIFE:
Come, I'll show you where to hide.

(ABRAHAM, YAEL, ASHONAEL and LOT'S WIFE exit)

LOT:
(To Geula) Not a word.

GEULA:
Of course. Do you think I'm stupid? I'm just worried about her (SHIRA).

LOT:
Asherah, if you mention our guests, you know what will happen, don't you?

SHIRA:

Yes.

LOT:

Good. (LOT goes to door) Ah, you must be Horab, come in.

HORAB:

Thank you, sir. Hi Geula.

GEULA:

Hi.

HORAB:

Hello, toad.

SHIRA:

Gribbit.

LOT:

How is your father?

HORAB:

Very well, very well. In fact, he's outside.

LOT:

Really? Well, I would love to invite him in, but my wife is a little under the weather and we were just about to retire for the evening.

GEULA:

Yes, Horab, why don't we go -- (She tries to take his arm and lead him out)

HORAB:

Actually, my father would love to come in, but he has some friends with him.

LOT:

Oh.

HORAB:

Quite a few. Riffar, the goatherd, said he saw some strangers come in here earlier today.

LOT:

He was mistaken. There are no strangers here.

HORAB:

Oh, really? Now that would be disappointing. All our friends outside were so looking forward to meeting some new people.

LOT:

Sorry, but --

HORAB:

It's a feast day, you know.

LOT:

Yes. Asherah. I named my daughter for her.

HORAB:

I know. She's a fertility god, so you see, we would love to have some new initiates. You need at least one virgin for the rites.

LOT:

Of course. (Attempt at humor) Getting hard to find these days.

HORAB:

Yes, indeed. So your guests might fill the bill. Riffar says two of them looked particularly virginal, and he has a good eye for these things.

SHIRA:

From being with goats for so long.

GEULA:

Horab, let's go. There's nobody here.

HORAB:

I wish I could believe that, but Riffar was so sure.

LOT:

Well, he was wrong.

HORAB:

Then you would have no problem with me looking inside.
(HORAB takes a step in that direction)

LOT:
(LOT blocks his way) Yes, I would.

GEULA:
Horab, please let's go.

HORAB:
If you don't let me pass, I'll have to ask my friends
outside to come in here.

LOT:
But why? There's nobody here.

HORAB:
I insist. (HORAB starts for the door to the outside)

LOT:
There's no point.

HORAB:
The point is that it is forbidden to harbor strangers here.

LOT:
We are not harboring -- look, you and Geula, why don't you
go --

GEULA:
Yes, of course.

LOT:
-- and celebrate the feast. Asherah, you go with them.

SHIRA:
No.

HORAB:
The little toad?

LOT:
Well, she's a virgin. Isn't it fitting to take one who bears the goddess'
name?

SHIRA:
Daddy!

LOT:

It's not a sacrifice, Asherah. It's just a ceremony.
You'll be fine.

SHIRA:

No, I don't --

HORAB:

You're not afraid of me, are you toad?

SHIRA:

Don't call me that.

HORAB:

I'm sorry. Shira. That's your Habiru name, isn't it, the name by which your god knows you? Don't you think it's time for you to let the gods of Sodom know you as well?

(HORAB grabs SHIRA. ASHONAEL walks in)

ASHONAEL:

(Calmly but forcefully) Let her go.

HORAB:

The lizard comes out from under the rock.

ASHONAEL:

Let her go now.

HORAB:

(HORAB does so. SHIRA runs behind ASHONAEL) Welcome to Sodom, stranger. Allow me to introduce you to some of my friends.

(HORAB walks towards the door. YAEL walks in and makes a gesture. The stage is flooded with a very bright, white light)

HORAB:

(HORAB grabs his eyes and crying in anguish) I can't see.

GEULA:

Horab!

HORAB:

(As he gropes for the door) I can't see. What have you

done to my eyes? Help me, help me.

ASHONAEL:

Gladly.

GEULA:

What did you do to him?

(ASHONAEL takes HORAB and pushes him out. As he opens the door, we can hear the cries of the people outside, who have also been blinded. ABRAHAM enters)

ABRAHAM:

Find your ten.

LOT:

(Badly shaken) Yes, yes.

SHIRA:

(SHIRA takes ASHONAEL's arm as she walks off. To GEULA) I think you have your proof.

End of scene

OUTSIDE THE TAVERN

(HORAB sits on a rock. GEULA enters)

HORAB:
Who is it? Tell me or I'll –

GEULA:
It's just me.

HORAB:
What are you doing here?

GEULA:
I came to talk to you.

HORAB:
You caused all of this in the first place. You're the last person I want to see.
(More to himself) See....

GEULA:
I've come to tell you your sight will return in time.

HORAB:
How do you know?

GEULA:
Yael told me.

HORAB:
Who is Yael?

GEULA:
The woman who blinded you, if she is a woman.

HORAB:
She's a demon. And you Habiru summoned her. And you will all
be destroyed. When the rest of the Council learned of what happened they
went – but why am I telling you this.

GEULA:
(Beat) Can you see nothing yet?

HORAB:
Just that awful white light, wherever I look.

GEULA:
Behind that light is the face of God.

HORAB:
Your god will not protect you. Even now offerings are being prepared for Anat and Hadad.

GEULA:
Horab, you must listen to me. All the offerings in the world aren't going to help you. God – not *my* god, but God has threatened to destroy the whole town. What happened this afternoon is just a whisper of his power.

HORAB:
Destroy the whole town? Just because we have our fun with some of your people, he's threatening to kill us all? What kind of god would do that?

GEULA:
I agree, it seems terrible to me too. I think when the Council said we could no longer worship him, well, maybe...I don't know. (GEULA waves her hand in front of HORAB's eyes) Could you see that?

HORAB:
Do it again. (GEULA repeats the gesture) I may have seen a shadow pass.

GEULA:
(GEULA sits next to him) Why are you sitting here?

HORAB:
I told you, I don't want to talk to you. (Beat) Some villagers whose sight had been spared came and led us back here. They're meeting inside, planning what to do. But they wouldn't let me join them because of my relationship with you.

GEULA:
Would you like me to talk to them?

HORAB:
Are you crazy? If they didn't stone you outright, they'd take you prisoner as a hostage. You really should leave.

GEULA:
Are you concerned for me? (Beat) Do you remember the first time we sat together here?

HORAB:
(After a long silence) Yes.

GEULA:

Was I the first girl you ever kissed?

HORAB:

(Another long silence) Yes.

GEULA:

Horab, I need you to listen to me. God has threatened to destroy the town but has said he will spare it if we find ten reverent souls.

HORAB:

What does that mean?

GEULA:

Yeah, good question. But I think if we could convince the people here – I know the Council will never listen to us – but if enough of the other people here agreed to allow us to keep our traditions and our religion, if they defied the Council, then maybe –

HORAB:

Never happen. First of all they're afraid of the Council and second they're afraid of angering the gods and third of all they would never humiliate themselves that way. This is our town.

GEULA:

Okay. I understand that.

HORAB:

If you think that the people in this town are about to –

GEULA:

It doesn't have to be everyone. We were told to find ten.

HORAB:

You won't find one.

GEULA:

But that's why I came looking for you. To find one. (GEULA repeats the hand-waving gesture. HORAB reacts)

HORAB:

I saw something; was that you?

GEULA:

Yes.

HORAB:
I'm beginning to see shapes. My sight is returning.

GEULA:
Horab, I want you to come to us; I want you to be one of the ten.

HORAB:
What?

GEULA:
My father and mother are even now trying to find people. You're the only one I know who I thought might...

HORAB:
Geula, you need to leave. If their (HORAB points to the tavern) sight is also returning they'll be out any second.

GEULA:
He's going to destroy us all. But if we find ten –

HORAB:
What kind of life do you think I'll have even if all this nonsense you're spouting is true. I abandon my gods and my people? My father would disown me, that is if he didn't kill me first.

GEULA:
You can work for my father.

HORAB:
There's no way I would do something like that. Why would I even consider it?

(GEULA takes HORAB's hand and places it on her belly)

GEULA:
You would do it for your child.

HORAB:
(Long beat. HORAB looks directly at GEULA) Geula, you're...

GEULA
Yes, *we* are. You have to join us. We have to save our child.

(HORAB breaks into tears and GEULA embraces him. SHIRA enters followed by LOT'S WIFE)

SHIRA

I told you they'd be here.

HORAB

Who is it?

LOT'S WIFE

What are you doing here, Geula? Don't you realize how dangerous things are?

GEULA

I'm trying to find people to come along with us.

LOT'S WIFE

And this is who you ask?

SHIRA

Mama!

GEULA

Yes. This is the father of my child.

SHIRA

Ashonael said God will take anyone who is righteous.

LOT'S WIFE

Righteous? He may claim to be a true soul now that God has brought him to his knees. But need I remind you young lady that not half an hour ago he was trying to drag you to one of their abominations.

HORAB

Abominations?

LOT'S WIFE

I don't care if God will take him; I won't. Geula you are to go home immediately.

GEULA

No! Not without Horab.

HORAB

This is why the Council has come down so hard on you people. The arrogance.

GEULA

Horab, please, come with us.

(There is the sound of shouting from the tavern)

LOT'S WIFE

Geula, come now.

SHIRA

(SHIRA grabs GEULA's arm and tries to pull her away) Geula, please. They'll be out any second.

GEULA

Horab, our child.

HORAB

I would rather die than have my child brought up as one of them.

LOT'S WIFE

It's impossible, Geula, come.

GEULA

Our child.

HORAB

If you want to stay with me, Gilly, once my father learns you bear his grandchild I'm sure –

GEULA

I can't. Don't you understand, he's going to destroy us all.

HORAB

Then you've made your choice. I can see you now, Gilly. But this will be the last time.

(More noise from the tavern)

GEULA

(Pleading, near tears) No.

SHIRA

(SHIRA tugs more desperately at GEULA) Come on.

GEULA

Horab, no.

**(HORAB, clearly torn, finally stumbles off towards the tavern.
GEULA tries to follow but is restrained by SHIRA)**

End of scene

LOT'S HOUSE

(YAEL sits trying to figure out cat's cradle with the string. She quickly puts it down when GEULA enters)

GEULA:
Where's my father?

YAEL:
He's still out trying to find true believers.

GEULA:
(As she collapses in chair) Horab's sight has returned.

YAEL:
Good.

GEULA:
What's good about it? He doesn't want to see me ever again, he made that clear enough.

YAEL:
That's also good. He's not a suitable father for your children, or indeed for anyone's.

GEULA:
Great, now I have two mothers?

YAEL:
(Beat) Sorry, that was not for me to say.

GEULA:
No, it wasn't.

YAEL:
It's hard, I find, not to try to influence things.

GEULA:
Well, maybe you can influence God a little. We'll never find ten in this town, particularly if you're depending on my father to find them.

YAEL:
Your mother also looks. (Beat) Do we count you in the ten, Geula?

GEULA:

Yes, of course.

YAEL:

Yet you've shown contempt for God; even now I feel it.

GEULA:

Do I have to like everything he does? I mean, how can I trust him to take care of me. You have to do some things for yourself, like daddy did when he moved here. What were we going to do, just sit in the middle of the desert? Nobody, not even the most devout can survive like that. You have to make choices. How are we supposed to know what's going to please him?

YAEL:

Showing contempt for God certainly won't please him. Worshipping other gods certainly won't please him.

GEULA:

I never worshiped any other gods. And I don't really have contempt for him; I'm just angry. He asks too much.

YAEL:

He offers much in return.

GEULA:

Well, it's a stupid system. (Beat) That's probably more contempt. What is he going to do if we can't find ten?

YAEL:

I can't tell. But it will be a punishment commensurate with the crime.

GEULA:

That's what I don't understand. Sure, there are some people here who deserve to have their butts kicked, Horab is probably one of them. But most of the people here are just people, why should they be punished?

YAEL:

For allowing the bad ones to act the way they do.

GEULA:

If that's the case, the first person to be punished should be God.

(**ABRAHAM enters**)

ABRAHAM:
Ah, Geula, how is Horab?

GEULA:
What difference does it make.

ABRAHAM:
(Beat) I'm sorry for your pain.

GEULA:
I don't have any pain. Just anger...and despair.

ABRAHAM:
God will hear that, if you share it with him.

GEULA:
And will he find a father for my baby?

ABRAHAM:
I don't know. But he will give you the courage to face the iniquities of your life.

GEULA:
I have plenty of courage. But my baby will need a father.

ABRAHAM:
As do we all.

(They sit for awhile in silence. **YAEL absentmindedly picks up string and tries cat's cradle again. GEULA and ABRAHAM laugh at her ineptitude. YAEL finally laughs as well**)

GEULA:
It's funny that someone who can blind half a city can't play cat's cradle.

YAEL:
Well, this requires balance.

(**LOT enters**)

ABRAHAM:
Ah, Lot, how did it --

LOT:
I got them.

ABRAHAM:
You got ten? That's wonderful, nephew. (To YAEL) I told God we could find ten.

LOT:
Actually, I found six. Melachem, the butcher and his wife; Ugar, a physician who lives alone; Amon and his wife and their son, Zoab, who is past thirteen. I won't count their daughter Leah, who is too young.

ABRAHAM:
Only six?

LOT:
That should be more than enough. Me and my wife, Geula and Asherah plus the six I found --

ABRAHAM:
Of course.

LOT:
-- and my wife is right now talking to our other two daughters. Counting them and their husbands that's fourteen. That should satisfy your god.

ABRAHAM:
My god?

GEULA:
I hope he's satisfied because we're going to need his help when they come back tonight.

ABRAHAM:
What are you saying?

GEULA:
When I was with Horab, his father was rounding up another gang to come back here.

LOT:

I spoke to his father. They're not coming back.

ABRAHAM:

Well, you have been busy. I had no idea you had such a gifted tongue. When we had our little disagreement all those years ago, you hardly argued with me at all. I began to question whether you were an Habiru. (Beat) That was a joke. Anyway, you have redeemed yourself wonderfully well.

(LOT'S WIFE enters with SHIRA)

ABRAHAM:

Have you heard?

GEULA:

Daddy found six.

LOT:

We won't have to leave; Sodom will be saved.

LOT'S WIFE:

Yes, I heard. Zoab came to find me at Gesamene's house. He said to tell you his father was having second thoughts.

LOT:

That fool. (Starts to door) I'll go see him.

SHIRA:

Try the tavern first. Alana says whenever *her* daddy has second thoughts, that's where he goes.

LOT'S WIFE:

And just so you know, he began having second thoughts when he found out that you offered Ugar twice what you offered him.

LOT:

Hush, woman.

ABRAHAM:

What are you saying?

LOT'S WIFE:

(Beat) I wait for Lot to speak.

LOT:

(Beat) Naturally I felt it only right that I should reward these people for their courage.

ABRAHAM:

You bribed them?

LOT:

Of course not.

ABRAHAM:

You bribed them to return to their god?

GEULA:

Doesn't that count?

ABRAHAM:

God is looking for sincerity. Did you think you could fool him?

LOT:

What did you expect? He's threatening to blow up my whole world. I had to do something.

ABRAHAM:

I'm afraid you have wasted your money, Lot. (To LOT'S WIFE)
What of your daughters?

LOT'S WIFE:

No, neither of them. Gesamene is too afraid --

SHIRA:

Such a wuss.

LOT'S WIFE:

-- and Roni too angry.

ABRAHAM:

Then there's nothing more we can do.

LOT:

You can't let him do this, Avram. You can't let him destroy all that I've built here. Many Habiru have assimilated here; would he destroy them all as well?

LOT'S WIFE:

What difference does it make? If God spares them, the Sodomites will destroy them.

LOT:

No, they won't. Didn't you hear what I said before? The men of Sodom will not harm me.

LOT'S WIFE:

They already have. But I believe I have found some.

ABRAHAM:

Wonderful.

LOT'S WIFE:

Lot and myself, Shira and Geula is four. I have spoken to Yachabed, but her husband will not allow it. Rachel's husband also says no, but she will do it anyway. That's five. Melachem also --

LOT:

That woman is senile.

LOT'S WIFE:

She strays, but on this she was completely clear. That's six. Obaleched likewise will declare herself. Her husband will do as she says, I hope that's all right.

ABRAHAM:

If he believes as she believes, it will be.

LOT'S WIFE:

And their daughter.

ABRAHAM:

Yes? That's only nine.

LOT'S WIFE:

I found no one else.

ABRAHAM:

It was hard enough to get him down to ten. Nine won't do it.

SHIRA:

(Big smile) I got one.

ABRAHAM:
You did? Wonderful, Shira.

GEULA:
Who did you get?

SHIRA:
Korak.

GEULA:
That pimply faced nerd. God won't want him.

SHIRA:
Yes he will. God can see how good he is inside, unlike some people I know who can't see past a person's skin.

LOT'S WIFE:
So, do they all gather here? Is there a temple we must go to?

ABRAHAM:
No. Just so God knows they exist here, ten just people, that will save the city. (To YAEL) Am I right?

YAEL:
Your reasoning is right. Your math is faulty.

ABRAHAM:
The lord said if I find ten.

YAEL:
He did indeed.

ABRAHAM:
We have found ten.

YAEL:
Nine.

LOT'S WIFE:
Is it Korak, because he is not Habiru?

YAEL:
Korak is a true soul.

SHIRA:
(To GEULA) It's you because of your stupid boyfriend.

YAEL:
Geula's heart is with God, even if her mind is not.

ABRAHAM:
Then who?

(YAEL looks at LOT)

LOT:
Me?

YAEL:
You worship another god, Lot. Money. The lord cannot accept you.

(There is rumble of thunder which increases as the scene progresses)

LOT'S WIFE:
No, wait, I can find another, I know.

YAEL:
Too late. Because you are Abraham's blood, the lord will allow you and your family to escape, despite your apostasy, but no one else.

LOT'S WIFE:
Gesamene and Roni, they are my family.

YAEL:
No longer.

LOT'S WIFE:
No!

(The house starts shaking)

YAEL:
Come, we must all leave now. The lord commands but one thing of you, you must not look back.

LOT'S WIFE:
My daughters, my grandchildren!

(LOT'S WIFE breaks towards the door. ASHONAEL comes in and stops her)

YAEL:
You must not look back.

(ASHONAEL gently restrains LOT'S WIFE as she cries in anguish. The destruction of Sodom has begun)

End of scene.

THE HILLS

(The hills outside of Sodom. The sound of Sodom's destruction is heard in the background. ABRAHAM and LOT are on one side of the stage, climbing, LOT carrying a casket)

LOT

(Stopping) How can you see where you're going in all this dust?

ABRAHAM

My feet know the way. I'm just going along for the ride. Come.

LOT

Wait. I need to catch my breath.

ABRAHAM

City life has left its mark on you, Lot. You were such a spry, energetic young man.

LOT

I turned my energies to pursuits more profitable than chasing stray lambs.

ABRAHAM

There is no pursuit more profitable than that. (Beat) You might find it easier if you discarded that casket.

LOT

I might need it. (Beat) Where are the women? I thought they were right behind us.

ABRAHAM

They're just below that ridge.

LOT

They'll get lost if they fall too far behind.

ABRAHAM

Not everyone has as much trouble recognizing the path as you seem to. They'll be fine.

LOT

The path to where? Where are you leading us?

ABRAHAM

Home.

LOT

Your home.

ABRAHAM

And your home now.

LOT

(Beat) This can't be happening.

ABRAHAM

It's not a bad life. Certainly better than what you left behind. I'm too old to be shepherding such large flocks, (somewhat to himself) although apparently I have a larger flock to come. But you can oversee my herds. You were once a fine shepherd.

LOT

(LOT looks out over the plain) And what of everything else that I was, everything that I became.

ABRAHAM

Who you were in the awful town met the same fate as that awful town. Do you understand nothing of what has just happened?

LOT

I understand too much of what has just happened. **(LOT puts his hand on a heavy pouch hanging from his shoulders)** Not everything is gone.

ABRAHAM

That gold won't help you where we're going.

LOT

That's why we're not going there.

(Crossfade to LOT'S WIFE, GEULA and SHIRA on the ridge below)

LOT'S WIFE

Abigail and Jamal?

SHIRA

They're gone, mom.

LOT'S WIFE

And they had a child...

SHIRA

Also gone. We have to keep moving.

LOT'S WIFE

What was the child's name?

SHIRA

I don't remember. Geula, help me with mom.

LOT'S WIFE

It was a boy. What was his name?

SHIRA

Geula!

GEULA

In a second.

SHIRA

Geula, we're going to get lost. I can't even see Uncle Abram and daddy anymore.

LOT'S WIFE

And Orpah. She lived by the markets.

SHIRA

Also gone, momma. They're all gone.

GEULA

I'm feeling a little dizzy. I need to rest for a second.

LOT'S WIFE

What was that boy's name?

SHIRA

What difference does it make? He's gone whatever his name was.

LOT'S WIFE

And Zophar and Tamar and Ithamar and Hannah and –

SHIRA

Mommy, stop! They're all gone, don't you understand, they're all gone.

(LOT'S WIFE just stares at SHIRA and then out at the plain)

LOT'S WIFE

Why.

SHIRA

We need to move on, mommy. Geula, please help me.

GEULA

I need to rest.

SHIRA

We need to catch up with daddy. Then we can rest. Come, I'll help you up.

(SHIRA approaches GEULA who is trying to hold in her sobs)

SHIRA

Geula, what is it?

GEULA

Nothing, I – nothing.

SHIRA

You're bleeding.

GEULA

(Continues to try to hold herself together)

SHIRA

Is it...

GEULA

(GEULA struggles with her emotions and then composes herself) Shh. Help me up.

SHIRA

But you're bleeding.

GEULA

I think it stopped. Help me up.

SHIRA

But the baby –

GEULA

Quiet. Mother's gone through enough. And not a word of this to Avram or dad, do you hear me?

SHIRA

But...okay. You're right. Can you walk?

GEULA

I think I'm alright.

SHIRA

(Supporting her) You can lean on me.

(LOT enters)

LOT

What's going on? Why have you stopped?

GEULA

We needed to rest.

SHIRA

And mom, well, she's ...

LOT

She'll be alright. Come, there's a change in plans. (To GEULA) Are you hurt?

GEULA

I—

SHIRA

She twisted her ankle on a loose stone.

LOT

You can walk?

SHIRA

Yes, I'll help her. Where's Uncle Avram?

LOT

We're not going with him.

SHIRA

Where are we going?

LOT

To Zoar.

GEULA

Thank god for that.

SHIRA

Why are we going to Zoar?

LOT

(To LOT'S WIFE) Come, woman. It's time to go.

LOT'S WIFE

Ephraim. That was the boy's name. Ephraim. And now he's gone.

(They exit)

End of scene

THE HILLSIDE

(The potter's wheel outside ABRAHAM and SARAH's tent. The sounds which ended the previous scene have receded into the distance. SARAH enters)

SARAH:

Some storm they're having down in the valley. I hope Avram is all right. (Beat; to God) Is he all right? (Beat) You never answer me. When Avram speaks to you, you answer; when I speak to you, nothing. I guess I'm supposed to just know the answer. (With a sigh) Oy, you don't make it easy. Like this child we're supposed to have. Year after year, month after month, the disappointment I felt, the pain when my time of the month came. Not the cramps, just knowing it was not this time. I asked why. You never answered. After so long, I gave up. I've accepted it. Now you want me to start all over. And who's to be the father? Avram, God bless him, he is a wonderful man, capable of so much, but this, at his age...(beat; with a sigh) Oy, you make it so hard (catching herself, laughing) I guess you'll have to. **(SARAH looks at ABRAHAM's pot)** What am I supposed to do with this? It's useless. Well, I guess nothing is totally useless. It'll make him feel like he's made something, at least.

ABRAHAM:

(ABRAHAM enters, somewhat out of breath and disheveled)
Sarah, oh, Sarah I'm so glad you're here.

SARAH:

Thank god you're safe.

ABRAHAM:

What I have seen.

SARAH:

Sit down.

ABRAHAM:

What I have been through.

SARAH:

Do you want something to eat?

ABRAHAM:

No, no, you must listen to this, you must hear about -- what is there?

SARAH:

I have some lamb left.

ABRAHAM:

Lamb. (Considers it) Maybe later. So listen to what happened.

SARAH:

Did you stop in with Lot?

ABRAHAM:

Oh, yes, and that --

SARAH:

How are the children? Are they married?

ABRAHAM:

Well, two are -- would you let me tell you what happened.

SARAH:

Of course.

ABRAHAM:

Good.

SARAH:

Are there any grandchildren?

ABRAHAM:

(Beat) Not anymore. (Peering off) Look down at the plain. See the smoke rising. Last night, didn't you hear all the commotion?

SARAH:

The storm.

ABRAHAM:

Storm? That was the will of God.

SARAH:

So is a storm.

ABRAHAM:
Sodom has been destroyed.

SARAH:
(Silence) The whole town?

ABRAHAM:
The whole town.

SARAH:
Lot....?

ABRAHAM:
Lot survived, with his wife and his two youngest. All others perished.

SARAH:
Roni, Gesamene? Oh, that poor woman.

ABRAHAM:
Indeed.

SARAH:
Where are they?

ABRAHAM:
I don't know. I invited him here and at first he seemed agreeable. But then he changed his mind and left me. I don't know where they went.

SARAH:
I pulled Roni from her womb; that poor, poor woman.

ABRAHAM:
All those people. Think of it, Sarah, a whole town. I struggle to understand it all, sometimes. (ABRAHAM has unconsciously drifted to the potter's wheel) My pot. What are you doing here?

SARAH:
Oh, I was trying to salvage it.

ABRAHAM:
Oh. Yes, well I suppose it was useless without a bottom. Were you able to?

SARAH:

I just started, but I must say that in all likelihood it will never be water tight, no matter what I do.

ABRAHAM:

I see.

SARAH:

Would you like that lamb, now?

ABRAHAM:

Yes, that would be fine.

SARAH:

I'll just go put it on the fire. **(SARAH exits into tent)**

(ABRAHAM stares at his pot. He looks through the hole and sees the smoke rising over Sodom. He takes the pot and throws it over the edge of the hill)

SARAH:

(SARAH runs to him to stop him, but she is too late) No, Abram, I -- I didn't mean you should --

ABRAHAM:

It's all right, Sarah. If it doesn't work like it's supposed to, maybe it should be destroyed.

SARAH:

It was your first try.

ABRAHAM:

So I'll learn.

SARAH:

What will you learn from it now? It's just a bunch of broken pieces.

ABRAHAM:

You can learn a lot from that, I think. I prophesy, Sarah, that some day someone from some far distant time will find those shards, examine them, try to put them back together, and wonder who were the people who made this thing. We'll come alive again, and do you know what they'll think of us?

SARAH:
That we didn't know the first thing about making pots.

ABRAHAM:
No. They will say: These are our ancestors; they gave us
the skills to create and to destroy.

SARAH:
(Ruefully) Ancestors?

ABRAHAM:
**(ABRAHAM walks behind SARAH and embraces her) Yes. Our
people. (He starts to kiss her on the neck)**

SARAH:
(Squirming a little) What are you doing?

ABRAHAM:
I know you have not forgotten this. (He continues)

SARAH:
Avram, don't make a fool of yourself. Avram, Avram --
Avram, the lamb is burning.

ABRAHAM:
So am I. **(ABRAHAM turns her and kisses her passionately,
she eventually returns his passion. The lights fade)**

End of scene

OUTSIDE A CAVE

**(LOT'S WIFE sits on a crag overlooking the plain.
She stares out)**

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

SHIRA:

Momma, we told you why.

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

SHIRA:

There were too many wicked people in the town, momma. In all the towns. God had to punish them.

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

SHIRA:

Momma, please don't say that anymore. Please come down; come into the cave. It's getting so cold. With all the dust in the air from the explosions you can't even see the sun, let alone feel it. You'll get sick if you keep staying out here. Momma, please?

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

(GEULA comes out of the cave)

GEULA:

Well, he's asleep, at least for awhile.

SHIRA:

You left him alone?

GEULA:

He'll be all right. What's with her?

SHIRA:

(Coming down to GEULA) No change. She's just sitting there.

GEULA:
She's lost it.

SHIRA:
We've all lost it; we've lost everything.

(**GEULA looks at her sharply**; her expression is more hurt than anger)

SHIRA:
I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. (Beat) What are we going to do?

GEULA:
I don't know.

SHIRA:
Did he say what happened in Zoar?

GEULA:
Nothing I could understand. He said he just couldn't face it.

SHIRA:
Couldn't face it? Why?

GEULA:
I don't know. He wouldn't say.

SHIRA:
Why did he change his mind about staying with Uncle Avram?

GEULA:
Is that really where you want to go?

SHIRA:
We have to go somewhere. We can't stay here.

GEULA:
Well, we're not going there.

SHIRA:
But why --

GEULA:
Stop it! You're beginning to sound like her (meaning LOT'S WIFE).

(Beat) I don't know why this happened. Things were going so well. Now --

SHIRA:
Are we going to die here?

GEULA:
One way or the other.

SHIRA:
What does that mean?

GEULA:
Even if we survive, what will happen to us? We grow old and we die. That's it; it's over. No family, no future, the end.

SHIRA:
What do you mean no family?

GEULA:
Family, like husbands and babies. You do know where babies come from, don't you?

SHIRA:
Yes.

GEULA:
Well, where are we going to find husbands up here.

SHIRA:
So we can leave, we can go back down.

GEULA:
There's nobody left down there. Just look. God destroyed the entire plain.

SHIRA:
We can go to Zoar.

GEULA:
Only if you're willing to leave daddy here, because he's made it clear he's not going to go there.

SHIRA:
We can find Uncle Avram.

GEULA:
Daddy says no way.

SHIRA:
Well then forget him. He can't make us stay here to die.

GEULA:
Fine. Forget him. And what about her? Forget her too? She hasn't moved since we got here.

SHIRA:
Geula, please, we've got to do something. Talk to daddy some more, please. Make him understand. I'll work on mommy. Geula, please.

GEULA:
(Big sigh) Okay, but -- okay.

(GEULA goes in the cave. The lights dim on the outside and come up on the interior of the cave. LOT is sitting up, staring out)

GEULA:
Daddy.

LOT:
Geula. How is mother?

GEULA:
She's resting.

LOT:
Good. She's been through so much.

GEULA:
We all have.

LOT:
Yes.

GEULA:
Daddy, we can't stay here.

LOT:
We have no choice.

GEULA:
(Beat) But why not Zoar; what happened there?

LOT:
There's something in Zoar that I just can't face.

GEULA:
What? (No answer) Daddy, we can't stay here. I need to find a husband. So does Shira. You still have your money. If we go to Zoar you can start a business, you have enough for dowries. Isn't that what you want for us?

(As he begins the following speech, LOT, in a flashback, gets up and moves to the counter behind which the INNKEEPER stands)

LOT:
(Beat) When we got to Zoar, and I left you at the outskirts, I walked to the inn to get us a room. There were many people in there, talking, drinking. But everything stopped as I walked in.

INNKEEPER:
Good day, stranger.

LOT:
Good day. I've come for a room for me and my family.

INNKEEPER:
A room. Where are you coming from?

LOT:
Uh, I come from the east.

INNKEEPER:
The east?

LOT:
There's me and my wife and two daughters. The oldest is with child. If we could –

INNKEEPER:
The east? There's nothing to the east; at least, not anymore.

LOT:
No, I guess not. So if you –

INNKEEPER:

I recognize you. You loaned my brother-in-law money when the blight took his millet crop.

LOT:

Perhaps. I have helped some people here over the years.

INNKEEPER:

You're from Sodom. (LOT is silent) What happened there?

LOT:

I - I don't know.

INNKEEPER:

You don't know? (Beat) We were led to believe all who lived there perished.

LOT:

Well, certainly many did.

INNKEEPER:

All. That's what we were led to believe.

LOT:

Well, not all, as you can see. Now, about the room –

INNKEEPER:

How did *you* survive?

LOT:

We were lucky, I guess.

INNKEEPER:

Indeed. (**Eyeing LOT's pouch of coins**) Very lucky I would say. And you don't know what happened there, or even how you managed to escape?

LOT:

No, as I said. There was great confusion there. (**LOT places a coin on the counter**) Now, if you could please just show me to a room.

INNKEEPER:

(Beat) The inn is full.

(**LOT pauses and then retrieves the coin and turns to leave**)

INNKEEPER:

My son lived in Sodom.

(LOT exits the inn and we hear the sounds of the patrons becoming slightly agitated and calling out: “What happened in Sodom?” “Who angered the gods?” “How did you get out?” “You’re Habiru, aren’t you?” as LOT walks back into the cave scene with GEULA)

LOT:

I had no answers for them, or indeed for the questions I keep asking myself. That’s what I can’t face. The shame.

GEULA:

What shame?

LOT:

The shame of what happened, Geula. Don't be so naive.

GEULA:

That wasn't your fault.

LOT:

Whose fault was it, then? All those people, good people many of them, people we didn't know. How can I face the good people of Zoar after that?

GEULA:

It wasn't your fault.

LOT:

It is now. I can't go, Geula. Don't ask me to.

GEULA:

Then we will just evaporate here, into nothingness.

LOT:

You have a child inside you, Geula. We’ll go on through that child.

GEULA:

Daddy, I -- what about Shira?

LOT:

I'll die soon -- if I had the courage it would be tomorrow -- then you, mother and Shira can leave.

GEULA:

Don't talk like that.

LOT:

It's true. God is punishing me with life now. It is unbearable. So many lives; so many good and honorable people. All dead because of me.

GEULA:

It's not because of you.

LOT:

Because of me. All dead.

(LOT rocks to this mantra. GEULA goes over to the casket and removes a bottle)

GEULA:

Here, Poppa.

LOT:

What's that? Wine?

GEULA:

Yes. The wine you ran back to get as we were leaving.

LOT:

Oh, yes. You can influence people much better over wine. I thought we might need it. Sometimes it's better than money.

GEULA:

Here, have some; it'll help you sleep.

LOT:

Yes, maybe I should. Maybe it will help me forget.

(The lights fade on the cave as LOT starts to drink and come up on the outside where SHIRA is with her mother)

SHIRA:

It's getting very cold, mama. If you stay out here you'll get sick. (Beat) I can't tell if it's day or night with all the dust. Korak used to say that the night made us cherish the day. But some days...(Beat) Korak is dead now. I can't imagine what that's like, not to be, not to have some connection to the world. (Beat) Mama, I have something to tell you. Geula told me not to but I have to

tell someone. She lost her baby when the town was destroyed and we were running up here. That's why we have to get out of here, mama. We have to start over.

(ASHONAEL appears)

ASHONAEL:

Shira.

SHIRA:

Ashonael! (SHIRA runs to and embraces him) I was praying you'd come.

ASHONAEL:

Yes, I heard. How are you?

SHIRA:

Terrible. We are all terrible. You have to help us.

ASHONAEL:

I'll try, but I was specifically forbidden to come here.

SHIRA:

First my mom. Come.

(SHIRA leads ASHONAEL up to where LOT'S WIFE sits)

ASHONAEL:

What's wrong with her?

SHIRA:

We don't know. She just stares out at the plain and when you try to talk to her, all she says is "why."

ASHONAEL:

Let me see what I can do.

SHIRA:

Mama, do you remember Ashonael who helped us get out of Sodom? Ma?

ASHONAEL:

(As he positions himself next to her) How are you, Mrs. Lot?

(LOT'S WIFE does not look at him but continues to look out at the plain)

ASHONAEL:

How are you feeling?

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

SHIRA:

See? It's terrible.

ASHONAEL:

Why? Well, there were people there who had strayed too far from God. I know it seems harsh -- it certainly does to me -- but the world had to know the importance of respecting the lord.

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

SHIRA:

She lost both my other sisters, you know, and her grandchildren.

ASHONAEL:

I know that must seem to be terribly unfair to you, to lose those you love. But you see, that is how God felt.

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

SHIRA:

Maybe she's asking why the good people were taken with the bad. I know *I'm* having trouble understanding that.

ASHONAEL:

No one is ever only good or bad. There are elements of both in all. Whenever anyone dies, the good is taken with the bad.

LOT'S WIFE:

Why.

ASHONAEL:

I am trying to help you, but I don't know what you're asking.

LOT'S WIFE:
(For the only time in the scene, LOT'S WIFE moves. She turns her head to look directly at ASHONAEL and says:) Why was I allowed to survive?

(To this ASHONAEL has no answer. GEULA comes out of the cave)

GEULA:
Shira, where are you?

SHIRA:
Up here with mama. Look who came to help us.

(SHIRA comes down to GEULA. ASHONAEL, looking very troubled, stays with LOT'S WIFE who is again looking out at the plain)

GEULA:
The time to help us was back in Sodom. What can he do for us now?

SHIRA:
He can get us out of here.

GEULA:
To where? Daddy's right, there's no place for us now. Do you really want to walk down the streets of Zoar with everybody staring at us thinking: Why were they chosen to get out alive? They blame us when a caravan goes missing. You think they're not going to blame us for this? Maybe sometime years from now we can fit in again, but until then we need to live here and keep going.

SHIRA:
What do you mean "fit in again?" We can fit in right now. If not in Zoar, how about with Uncle Avram?

GEULA:
Hasn't he humiliated us enough, first making us move to Sodom, then having us blamed for its destruction. Now you'd have us go begging him to take us in.

SHIRA:
(Beat) So we're stuck here?

GEULA:
For awhile. But we can't give up. Our family must go on,
do you understand me?

SHIRA:
No.

GEULA:
We can survive here and raise our families here.

SHIRA:
You just ten minutes ago said we couldn't.

GEULA:
I have an idea.

SHIRA:
And I think you're wrong. We have to figure out what to do
about mommy and daddy first.

GEULA:
I'll take care of daddy. And if you want to help mommy,
you'll listen to me because she's worried about the same
thing I'm worried about. She's lost her immortality.

SHIRA:
What are you talking about?

GEULA:
She's lost her grandchildren; she's lost the possibility of
going on, as we all have. We have to restore that hope for
her, Shira. You have to.

SHIRA:
(Beat as SHIRA looks up at her mother) How? There are no
men here. How can we raise families?

GEULA:
(Beat) I just gave daddy a bottle of wine.

SHIRA:
Oh. (Beat) So?

GEULA:
Remember how drunk daddy got at the Baal sacrifice at the
last solstice? And when he came home, how silly he was, how

he would do anything, how you got him to kiss that stupid doll of yours?

SHIRA:

Yes. Oh, dear, she must have gotten burned in the fire too.

GEULA:

Well, when daddy's drunk, like he is now, you can get him to do anything, or to kiss anybody.

SHIRA:

(Beat; then horror) Geula! You didn't.

GEULA:

I didn't, no. I'm still healing. But we have to go on. You know what you have to do.

SHIRA:

I won't. I couldn't. (Calling out to him) Ashonael!

GEULA:

You know that he can't help you. You know I'm right. This is the only way. I'm going to see to daddy. (**GEULA goes back into the cave**)

(ASHONAEL comes down)

ASHONAEL:

What? Are you all right?

SHIRA:

No. How's my mother?

ASHONAEL:

I couldn't reach her. Perhaps in time, if she can forget.

SHIRA:

She will never forget. We must never forget.

ASHONAEL:

You've grown up in a hurry, Shira. No more cat's cradle.

SHIRA:

No. No more.

ASHONAEL:
Do you still want me to take you away?

SHIRA:
Where? Up there, where you live?

ASHONAEL:
It's not really up. It's more like
behind or inside. But no, you can't live there. Nobody
can. That's why god created the earth.

SHIRA:
Don't you live there?

ASHONAEL:
Yes and no. Yes, we're there, but no, we don't really live.

SHIRA:
I don't understand.

ASHONAEL:
You aren't supposed to; it's not a thing that is
understandable.

SHIRA:
I always thought that when I died I would go where the
angels lived.

ASHONAEL:
Uh, no.

SHIRA:
Where will I go?

ASHONAEL:
I don't know.

SHIRA:
Why would God give us life only to take it away while he
lives eternally?

ASHONAEL:
I don't know that either.

SHIRA:
Well, if you don't, I can't think who would. (Beat) My

father says we live on through our children.

ASHONAEL:

That's a good way to look at it. Having children, that even God can't do.

SHIRA:

No, he can't. (She looks towards the cave) I can.

(YAEL appears)

YAEL:

I knew you'd be here.

ASHONAEL:

Duh.

YAEL:

The old man is really hot.

ASHONAEL:

Great, now he can blow away another half dozen towns.

YAEL:

You have to leave. Now!

ASHONAEL:

Shira, what are you thinking of? (No answer) Shira?

GEULA:

(Poking her head out) Shira, daddy wants you.

SHIRA:

(After a pause) I'm thinking of God.

(SHIRA starts to walk towards the cave)

ASHONAEL:

No.

(ASHONAEL moves to stop her but is restrained by YAEL)

YAEL:

We must not interfere.

ASHONAEL:
(Calling after SHIRA, who has already entered the cave) Shira,
why? Why?

LOT'S WIFE:
(From her spot on the hill) Why.

**(The lights come down except on LOT'S WIFE whose
face has not changed its expression or focus, but is covered
with tears)**

End of play

