

ACT TWO

EXT. HOME OF ALPHAEUS - EVENING

Matthew hesitates before knocking on a door at a humble wood house in a row of houses.

After a beat, he turns on his heel, retreats. Dog follows.

Just as suddenly, Matthew turns again, returns to the door. Second verse, same as the first. Finally, Matthew squints his eyes like he's passing a kidney stone and KNOCKS.

The door cracks...a beat...then we the shocked face of ISABEL (40s) peer out at --

START →

ISABEL

Matthew?

MATTHEW

Hello, eema.

(catching himself)

...or Isabel, I mean. Hello.

ISABEL

Matthew.

A beat. She's shocked at this moment. An existential shock.

MATTHEW

I don't receive visitors, myself.

Is this a custom?

Isabel snaps out of her daze. Opens the door a few inches.

ISABEL

If your father were here, I couldn't do this.

MATTHEW

Where is Alphaeus?

But Isabel doesn't hear him. Her eyes stuck on Dog. In a shocked whisper --

ISABEL

I think a dog followed you.

MATTHEW

He's with me. He'll stay here if you'll let me in.

Almost despite herself, she opens the door for her only son.

INT. HOME OF ALPHEUS - AFTERNOON

Matthew and Isabel sit in awkward silence at a table with clay cups of water.

MATTHEW

Will Alphaeus be home soon?

ISABEL

He's away on a work trip.

MATTHEW

Where would work take him? Does he no longer make leather goods?

ISABEL

His shop was robbed. Many of the shops have been. Crime is rampant. It makes it very difficult to reopen. He's forced to make items on commission and travel.

MATTHEW

He loved his shop.

Matthew takes it all in. Feeling the sting of all the life he's missed..

ISABEL

But we still have a roof over our heads, which is more than some people can say.

MATTHEW

You can ask me for money if you ever need it.

ISABEL

How can you say that?

MATTHEW

It's quite common. I've seen many parents entirely dependent on--

ISABEL

Your father would sooner die than take your blood money.

MATTHEW

I know you are ashamed of me, but your decision is irrational.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Rome will collect no matter what.
I'm skilled with numbers--

ISABEL

Did you come here to justify
yourself?

MATTHEW

No!

Matthew stands, frustrated with his inability to communicate.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Everything's like...sand in a
flood. The things I thought I knew
to be true...

ISABEL

Are you in trouble?

MATTHEW

Do you think impossible things can
happen? That overturn the laws of
nature? That cannot be explained?

Her eyes light up at a memory. Just as quickly drown by
tears welling up.

ISABEL

That's what people asked when you
were a boy. Even the rabbis were
astonished at your talent for
reading, math, the way you could
think faster than any child. They
thought you'd become someone great.

She puts a hand to her mouth to cover the emotion.

MATTHEW

(honestly)

Great at what? I am rich. I have
an armed escort. I am trusted by
the Praetor of Galilee--

ISABEL

We never dreamed you would use the
talent God gave you to bleed your
people dry!

Matthew studies her face. He knows her words should hurt
him...but they don't. His mind goes immediately back to --



MATTHEW

But have you ever seen anything miraculous?

ISABEL

Matthew--

MATTHEW

My whole world -- everything I thought I knew...what if it's wrong?!

ISABEL

I think you should go.

He doesn't look her in the eyes as he stiffly makes his way to the door.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

You didn't even ask about your sister.

MATTHEW

She looks well. *

(off her look)

I came to celebrate Shabbat a few weeks ago. But then I left. *

Isabel reacts. Sadness and regret.

END →

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Good bye, eema.

Isabel watches him leave.

INT. SIMON'S HOME - NIGHT

Eden and Jesus are working at the counter. Jesus fillets a fish while Eden slices parsley and mint for tabbouleh. Simon paces the room, anxious.

SIMON

I'm not so sure this is a good idea.

JESUS

Why not?

SIMON

It could be a trap. Nicodemus cooperates with Rome. They're the ones who sent him to Mary when she was possessed in the Red Quarter.

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