

Alice in Arabia

Pilot

by
Brooke Eikmeier

3rd Draft
7-18-13

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. AMERICAN SUBURBAN HOME -- SUNSET

ALICE, 16, a pretty mixed-race girl still in her private school uniform, argues with her parents, AMAL, 38, Saudi Arabian, and ERIC, 40, white American, as they make their final preparations to go out for a night.

ALICE

We can negotiate this.

ERIC

We can, this is true. It is within our ability.

ALICE

(accusing)

You two get to go out.

AMAL

(elegant Middle Eastern accent)

Because your father successfully completed his work this week, brought home the required amount of money, purchased tuition and food, and yet, he did well enough that we can go out on a date.

Alice sighs and rolls her eyes, plopping down on the living room furniture with her arms crossed petulantly in front of her.

AMAL (CONT'D)

Whereas you brought home 2 Cs, and a D.

ALICE

I got one B.

ERIC

(deadpan)

The only reason we fed you.

AMAL

Alice, you act like we're being unreasonable, but you chose not to focus on school. You have no idea how --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE
(heard it a million times)
Lucky I am to even go to school.
If I'm lucky to go to school, how
much luckier am I to go out to
parties on my own, huh, Mom?

Amal turns to Eric with an incredulous look on her face.

ERIC
Honey, we love you. We want you to
be happy. We also want you to get
good grades.

ALICE
This party is a once in a--

ERIC
When you get good grades you can be
happy again. Until then, you are a
prisoner in this home and the
beatings will continue until morale
improves.

Amal laughs. Eric gives her a wink.

ALICE
Ha. Ha. You're so funny.

AMAL
It's why I married him.

She gives her husband a kiss and Alice glowers at them.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN SUBURBAN HOME -- A COUPLE HOURS LATER

Alice is at the dining room table in front of her homework,
joylessly, folding a piece of paper into an origami animal.

Her phone rings. A photo pops up of her school friend,
CARLEE. She answers it.

ALICE
Can't come.

CARLEE
To answer the door?

Alice turns around, hangs up and opens the front door.
Carlee is standing there holding a skimpy dress and heels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLEE (CONT'D)
I'll have you back by 10:30.

Alice grins.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Carlee and Alice, drinks in hand, walk through an expensive house, packed with kids in various states of drunk. Lights flash across Alice's bare skin, her hair flowing over bare shoulders.

CARLEE
He's right over there. He saw your picture on Facebook and begged my brother to get me to introduce you.

Carlee points out a cute college boy, GRAHAM, who perks up as he sees them.

CARLEE (CONT'D)
It's up to you, though. Yes or no.

Graham walks up to them. Alice carefully looks him up and down.

ALICE
Mmmmm... good enough for tonight.

The girls laugh as Graham holds out his hand.

GRAHAM
Graham.

ALICE
The girl in the picture.

GRAHAM
You look just as... intelligent... in person.

Graham gives her a wry smile and Alice grins back.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - SWIMMING POOL -- LATER

Alice and Graham cuddle on a day bed, lit by the pool next to them and a flickering fire nearby, getting to know one another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAHAM

Half Saudi? Does that mean you know how to ride a camel?

ALICE

Yeah, I just spread my legs and hop on.

GRAHAM

Wow. Really?

ALICE

Mmmm.

GRAHAM

You're pretty bold.

ALICE

I've never been there, though. My mother's family is all passed away.

GRAHAM

Sorry.

ALICE

(shrugs)

Never knew them.

She fishes her drink off the deck and takes a sip.

ALICE (CONT'D)

How about you?

GRAHAM

I'm at Saint Joseph's University. Studying philosophy.

ALICE

Sorry, I thought you said you were studying--

GRAHAM

Philosophy.

ALICE

Would you like fries with that?

Graham's mouth hangs open as Alice laughs impishly at her own joke.

GRAHAM

That was not nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

Sorry.

GRAHAM

I can't--

Alice continues to grin.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I think you should make it up to me.

ALICE

Oh yeah?

GRAHAM

My feelings are devastated.

Graham leans in as he says it, and he and Alice begin to kiss. Hesitantly at first, then heavier.

Graham shifts her weight so she's laying on her back on the day bed. He takes her drink and sets it back down, goes back to kissing her.

ALICE

How are your feelings doing?

GRAHAM

They still sting a bit.

ALICE

Awww.

She goes back to kissing him. His fingers trail her skin, whispering along her arms, then his hands travel down and grip her thigh.

Alice sighs, slipping her hands under Graham's shirt, but then--

CARLEE

Ah-hem.

She opens her eyes and looks up at Carlee.

CARLEE (CONT'D)

I have bad news.

ALICE

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARLEE
It's already ten-thirty.

Alice's eyes widen and she pushes Graham up, scrambling.

GRAHAM
What?

CARLEE
Princess has to get back to her
pumpkin.

ALICE
I'll call you.

GRAHAM
You don't have my number.

Alice hurries off with Carlee, she calls over her shoulder.

ALICE
Friend me.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMERICAN SUBURBAN HOME -- A LITTLE LATER

Alice is sitting in Carlee's convertible, finishing changing back into her study clothes. She throws the skimpy dress in the back seat.

ALICE
It looks like they've gone to bed,
maybe. Or maybe they aren't home
yet. It's the same as when I left.

CARLEE
You gonna risk it?

ALICE
No. I'll call you tomorrow.

Alice jumps out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN SUBURBAN HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

Alice climbs in through the window of her bedroom, being as quiet as possible. She undoes her fake pillow decoy in her bed and quickly changes into pajamas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She washes her face, putting her hair in a pony tail, gargles as she flushes the toilet and then sneaks out into the hallway.

She listens to the house. Nothing.

She pads down the hallway and reaches her parents room. She takes a breath, peeks in...

Her parents' bed is made still. She sneaks the rest of the way down the hallway and looks in the kitchen, living room.

Empty. She's alone.

She takes a deep sigh of relief.

Back in her own room, she slips under the covers of her bed and checks her phone. She has a friend request from Graham.

She squeals in delight, accepts him, then sets her phone by the bed.

Her finger trips the silent button as she drops it on her night stand and she flicks off the light, settling in for sleep.

As she snuggles happily into her pillow, her phone lights up and displays a call is coming in. Oblivious, Alice sighs contentedly into sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN SUBURBAN HOME -- SUNRISE

Alice is dead asleep. The house phone begins to RING. It rings and rings. No one answers.

Alice stirs. This is odd.

The phone begins to ring again. Again.

She looks at her phone and sees the missed call.

She gets up, wanders sleepily down the hallway of the house. She looks inside her parents' bedroom.

It's still empty. The bed untouched.

Her parents never came home.

Concern scrunches up her features.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The phone continues to ring. She crosses to her parents' night stand and answers.

ALICE
Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Alice is still in pajama bottoms, a zip up hoodie thrown over it as she bursts through the doors of Emergency and rushes up to the nurse.

ALICE
(panicked)
I'm Alice MacFarland. My parents
have been in a car accident.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Alice is striding down the hallway when nurses bring her mother out on a gurney, calling a code.

INTERN
We can't get her pressure up.
She's coding.

ALICE
Oh my god.

Alice rushes up and catches a glimpse of her mother's face, broken, as the nurses and intern rush her into a room to try to resuscitate her.

The NURSE escorting her pulls her back.

ALICE (CONT'D)
That's my mom! Mom! Mom!

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER

A sheet has been pulled over Amal's face and Alice sits, stunned, next to the body.

The nurse is there next to her.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL -- ICU -- LATER

Alice, accompanied by the nurse, enters a room where her father lies in a coma.

She approaches his bed and grabs his hand.

ALICE
I'm so sorry, daddy.

She looks up but the machine breathes for him, steadily. In.
Out.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- DAY

A DOCTOR talks to Alice. The nurse who has been shadowing her is nearby.

DOCTOR
His coma could last for days,
weeks, months... His body has gone
through extreme trauma and, I just
can't say. You have to prepare for
the possibility he might not pull
through at all.

ALICE
(shaky)
Thank you.

DOCTOR
I'm very sorry.

The nurse hands Alice, who is still in shock, a bag of personal belongings.

NURSE
Last night, as soon as they were
brought in, we started calling
people from your mother's cell
phone when we couldn't find a
contact number. Aby? Only one b?

ALICE
Aby?

NURSE
The person who answered that one
asked about you. They said they
were flying out immediately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Aby is Arabic for "my father,"
but... my mother's entire family is
dead. I don't have a grandfather.

The nurse and doctor exchange a glance. And then look beyond
her.

ABU HAMZA (O.S.)

(same elegant Middle
Eastern accent)

I'm afraid your mother wasn't
entirely telling you the truth,
Alice.

Alice turns to see a man who is clearly her grandfather, ABU
HAMZA, tall and regal, in Western dress, accompanied by a
woman, her aunt RADHA, who looks so close to her mother as to
take Alice's breath away.

Radha is dressed as if she has just stepped off an expensive
fashion runway, perfectly done up head to toe.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

I am Prince Bakr Shookri Al-Saud.
From the House of Saud, ruling
family of Saudi Arabia.

Abu Hamza holds out a hand with a smile. Expensive rings
glint on his fingers.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

But for you, Alice, I will answer
to Grandpa.

And on Alice's stunned expression...

CUT TO BLACK.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC MACFARLAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Alice sits with Abu Hamza and Radha near her father's bed.

Alice and Radha's gaze are on Eric, while Abu Hamza is solely focused on Alice.

ALICE

My mother was a princess and...
Why? Why would she lie about all
of you?

RADHA

(careful)
She fell in love with your father
and our culture is not like it is
here in the United States.

Alice turns to her grandfather.

ALICE

You didn't approve, so she ran away
with him.

ABU HAMZA

This is the
(turns to Radha)
Keyf taqool ala al-ta-eer?

RADHA

Qui--

ALICE

Quick and dirty. You're trying to
say it's the quick and dirty
version.

Radha looks startled.

ABU HAMZA

Do you understand that expression?
I'm sorry, I didn't expect you to
speak Arabic.

ALICE

(in Arabic)
My mother always spoke Arabic to
me. We can switch if you want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Radha drops her gaze, blinking away the threat of tears.
Alice notices her losing her composure.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

RADHA

You-- you sound exactly like your
mother, my dear.

(shakes her head)

Sorry. I wasn't-- expecting...

Radha turns toward the wall, a shuddering in her shoulders.

Even Abu Hamza shows the hint of emotion. He clears his
throat, clearly annoyed at himself, then regains composure.

ABU HAMZA

We we speak Arabic in Arabia,
American in America. How's that?

Alice frowns a little, turns back to her father, runs her
hand down his motionless hand.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

(off Alice's silent
expression)

You're thinking you don't like me
so much now that you know. Yes?

ALICE

(defiant)

My parents love-- loved each other
very much. I don't understand
what's wrong with that. I love my
father, too. I'm half American.

Abu Hamza's expression grows more serious. Radha turns back
to Alice.

ABU HAMZA

You are fully my family. There is
no dividing that.

RADHA

(we ALL think of you as
our family)

Kulna nthun liki kosratuna.

Alice softens when Radha says it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE
(thanks)
Shokran.

She turns to her father and reaches out to hold his limp hand again.

ALICE (CONT'D)
If she pretended that you were
dead, why did she have your number
in her phone?

RADHA
She called once a year on father's
birthday. Each year she asked him
if he would accept Eric.

Radha sits and takes Eric's other hand fondly. Alice's eyes
finds her grandfather again. He looks down.

ABU HAMZA
I am, now especially, greatly
ashamed of my stubbornness. You
must understand how much it broke
my heart when Amal chose to leave
me. We are alike in that we each
want our way. I... I was stupid.

Abu Hamza shakes his head regretfully. Again, that small
slip of emotion that he angrily quashes immediately.

ALICE
(whispers shakily)
That sounds like Mom.

Radha smiles a little sadly at that. Alice tightens her grip
on her father's hand. She swallows, regaining composure.

ALICE (CONT'D)
The nurse said that because I have
no family here, family services
will have to take care of me until
my father can again. I'm only
sixteen.

ABU HAMZA
You don't want this to happen?

ALICE
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ABU HAMZA

Then this will be our first act of family. Your aunt will stay on as long as you need, after the services.

Alice shoots Radha a questioning look on 'services.' Radha regains composure and smiles.

RADHA

Dear, we would like to take you back to Saudi so that you can attend your mother's funeral there. Meet your cousins, see where your mother grew up.

ALICE

But my father, if he woke up?

ABU HAMZA

We will fly you back to America immediately. Our family owns several private planes. This will not be an issue. And then, once respects have been paid, you can come back and stay in your own home, here, wait for your father.

Alice hesitates. She searches her father's comatose face.

RADHA

Please, Alice. Come help us say good bye to your mother--
(swallows)
--in her homeland. It would be our greatest honor. Let us help take care of you.

Alice considers this. Abu Hamza watches her very, very closely. He and Radha exchange an anticipatory glance.

Then as Alice's face smooths with a decision...

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE PLANE -- NIGHT

Alice, holding a suitcase, turns the corner into the fuselage of a perfectly appointed private 747.

Radha and Abu Hamza follow her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADHA

Your bedroom is the second cabin on
the right in back.

Alice's eyes widen.

ALICE

I have a bedroom? On a plane?

Radha smiles, but Abu Hamza catches her eye. Something
wordless is exchanged between them.

Radha turns back to Alice with a bit of a forced smile.

RADHA

Oh, Alice, I will need your
passport to prepare the entrance
papers into Saudi.

Alice digs in her pocket and hands it over to Radha, then
heads deeper into the plane.

Radha turns to Abu Hamza, who holds his hand out. Radha's
smile has evaporated. She hesitates. Abu Hamza grows stern.

ABU HAMZA

Give it to me.
(then)
Now.

Radha reluctantly hands him Alice's passport. Her expression
is now pained. Abu Hamza's is ice cold.

Abu Hamza crosses to a briefcase, puts it inside, then
securely **locks** it inside.

He straightens and looks at his daughter.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

It is done.

Radha turns sharply and follows Alice back into her private
cabin.

Alice is standing next to the bed, fingering a long black
piece of fabric. There are intricate pieces of embroidery
along the seams in bright, beautiful colors.

ALICE

What's this? My dress for the
funeral?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RADHA

(smiles)

Come with me to a seat. We must be sitting in one for take off, and then you can come get some sleep.

Radha leads her outside and they both buckle up. As Radha explains, the window between them shows the plane rushing down the runway and taking off into the air.

RADHA (CONT'D)

That is called an abaya. Did your mother explain what that is?

ALICE

No. She didn't like talking about Saudi at all.

(then)

Sorry.

RADHA

It's all right. In Saudi Arabia, only the men in a woman's family or her husband may see her unveiled. For that reason, in public, all women must wear the abaya over their clothes. When we get to the airport, I have chosen this one for you.

Alice looks a little wide-eyed and nervous about that.

ALICE

Are you going to wear one?

RADHA

(laughs)

Of course, but darling, inside, you don't have to worry. And father is very generous with his clothing allowance. You'll find many women secretly wearing La Perla underwear and the latest Paris fashions to match their LouBoutins underneath even the drabest of veils.

(winks)

We read Vogue, too.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE PLANE -- ALICE'S CABIN -- NIGHT

Alice stands in front of a mirror. Her abaya is on the bed behind her. She stares.

There's a **knock** on the door.

RADHA (O.S.)
We're ready to leave, Alice.

ALICE
Just a moment.

Alice then picks up the abaya and slips it over her head, transforming herself from a typical American teenager into a completely formless, anonymous woman.

ANGLE INSIDE the abaya as Alice breathes, looking at herself through the gauzy black.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MERCEDES BENZ LIMOSINE -- NIGHT

Alice, Radha and Abu Hamza are riding in the car as Alice stares through her veil out at Riyadh as they whip past slums followed by enormous sparkling mega malls.

They whip past an Applebee's with the sign in two languages.

She wordlessly takes it all in, the reflection on the window framing her shapeless head.

They then turn into a royal neighborhood, the walls high and forboding around entire compounds.

RADHA
This is where we live, Alice.

Radha points out one of the biggest compounds as one of two Saudi soldiers guarding it opens the gates and the car sweeps inside into an enormous courtyard centered around an enormous, blooming fountain.

Servants stand by the door, waiting for them, a male and two females. The females wear only head scarves instead of the full abaya. One is Sudanese, the other female and male South Asian.

As the car stops, Alice opens the door.

EXT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

Alice takes in the enormous, traditionally Arab exterior of the home.

Gardens are visible on both sides, a fine mist of water continually falling on them from discrete hoses installed in the walls blocking the home from the outside.

RADHA

Let me show you inside.

Alice follows Radha as Abu Hamza stays by the car, holding the briefcase with both hands in front of him.

ABU HAMZA

Good night, Alice. I am so happy you decided to come visit us.

Alice looks back at him and smiles. She crosses back to him and gives him a kiss on the cheek through her abaya.

ALICE

Good night, Grandpa. Thank you for... everything.

This softens Abu Hamza somewhat. He watches her follow Radha into the compound, a look of slight confliction now on his face.

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

Alice follows Radha inside. The entrance way soars two stories, elaborate lattice work letting the moonlight dapple down to be reflected into a long, rectangular infinity pool in the middle. From there, huge double lattice work doors lead in four directions.

Radha walks confidently toward one of the far doors.

RADHA

The women's wing is through here.

Alice follows her aunt. As she weaves her way through, she catches sight of children playing, tended by nannies, others like her lounging in front of a huge screen television playing *Desperate Housewives*. Women sitting around a hookah, smoking and laughing.

They all look up as Alice passes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADHA (CONT'D)

You will meet everyone tomorrow,
dear. I want to show you your
room. You mentioned you wanted to
be a fashion designer when you grew
up?

ALICE

Well, yeah, I--

Radha shows Alice into a large room. It's stunning. The ceilings soar, the bed is covered in lush fabric, and, in an expansive corner there is an entire sewing suite, complete with adjustable dress form and racks flowing with gorgeous fabrics across the entire spectrum of color and pattern.

Alice's eyes sweep over all this, she crosses to a bookshelf stacked with instructional tailoring and design books. In an array across the top, each of the best glossy fashion magazines from across the world.

ALICE (CONT'D)

But... how?

RADHA

Your grandfather called from the plane while you slept. You mentioned it just as we took off from Philadelphia. Europe is much closer than that. We have personal shoppers at our beck and call, Alice. They were able to get you everything at short notice but the right kind of thread, but don't worry. That's easy.

She studies Alice's reaction.

RADHA (CONT'D)

Worth having to wear a silly veil while outside, right?

Alice turns to Radha, stunned.

ALICE

But for only a couple of days, this is... this is too much.

Radha's smile fades.

RADHA

Come sit with me on the bed, my darling. Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Alice comes and sits next to her, her face blanching.

ALICE

What?

Radha takes her hands, struggles to remain strong.

RADHA

We can also receive calls on the plane, my darling. And I am so, very sorry that your grandfather got one from the hospital shortly after we took off.

Radha pauses as Alice realizes what her aunt is saying.

ALICE

No.

RADHA

He didn't make it.

Alice shakes her head, beginning to cry.

ALICE

No!

RADHA

He never woke up, dear, there was nothing you could have done.

Alice throws her arms around her aunt, weeping. Radha holds her back.

RADHA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Alice...

Radha pets her head, comforting her weeping niece. Her face shows confliction and dread, as if she is apologizing for something else, entirely.

RADHA (CONT'D)

I am so, so sorry.

CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ALICE'S ROOM -- DAY

Alice is in bed, her eyes red from crying, but now her face is stone, staring into nothing. Grief and shock have paralyzed her.

There is a soft knock on her door. Alice doesn't seem to hear it. After a moment, the door opens and one of the South Asian servants who were waiting for the limo the night before enters.

This is LIA, 20. She knows enough to portray a submissive exterior, but at moments her sharp glance lingers too long, betraying a hidden intelligence.

Now, she is carrying a tray with a french press, creamer, sugar bowl, and cup. She crosses to Alice and puts it on the table next to her, then starts to leave, wordlessly. Halfway to the door, Alice speaks.

ALICE

Thank you.

Lia stops in her tracks, surprised.

LIA

(hesitant)

You are welcome, ma'am.

ALICE

What's your name?

Lia turns, hesitates.

LIA

Lia.

Alice gives the tiniest of smiles. Lia returns it, then Radha enters and Lia hurries out of the room. Alice watches but doesn't move as Radha comes and sits on the side of her bed.

RADHA

How are you my dear?

ALICE

...I keep...

Alice buries her face. Radha plays with her hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADHA

Oh, darling... can I convince you
to eat anything?

ALICE

(into her pillow)

No.

Alice emerges from her sheets and peers up at her aunt.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I wish I had been nicer to them.

Radha laughs a little.

RADHA

Let me tell you a mother's secret.
We know you can't help it, and we
love you fiercely anyway. You may
have baffled Amal, but I know my
sister and I know she would never
had been disappointed in you.

Alice absorbs that, somewhat mollified.

RADHA (CONT'D)

Would you like to see her room?

Alice's eyes widen.

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- AMAL'S ROOM -- MINUTES
LATER

Alice and Radha enter Alice's mother's old bedroom. The style
is surprisingly Western and subtle, close to the aesthetic of
the suburban home Alice left behind.

Maps are framed on the wall. A bookshelf is packed. As
Alice approaches and looks over the books, she finds history
titles.

RADHA

I last spoke to your mother the
night before she left. She wanted
to study history in America. She
talked about women's rights, the
civil rights movement, the way
these things were debated openly
there and change happened. She
thought, if she understood it,
really cracked the mystery of why
it worked in America, she could
make it work here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The titles and names in Amal's bookshelf back up Radha's words.

ALICE

But she couldn't even get her father to accept the man she loved.

RADHA

She never stopped trying, Alice. Don't you think that's something? I wish I...

Radha fades into embarrassed silence. Alice turns and looks at Radha, a new concept of her mother taking shape. Radha shakes it off.

RADHA (CONT'D)

Some, many, of her books are banned here. But father could never say no. He had them smuggled in. He was different before she left.

ALICE

She became a history professor, you know.

Radha's face breaks into a pleased, touched smile.

RADHA

Really?

ALICE

She started school when I did. She got a teaching position at Penn last year.

Radha has to cover to mouth.

RADHA

Good for her. What did she teach?

ALICE

Women's studies.
(then, miserable)
I called it a would you like fries with that? degree. It embarrassed me.

Radha's face flickers, but she lets it go.

RADHA

Come here. I want to show you something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Radha leads Alice to the corner of the room and moves a decorative table. She presses in and a section of the wall comes loose.

RADHA (CONT'D)

Some titles, she wouldn't even ask father for. Some, she had to smuggle back herself from vacations. Being from the House of Saud is some protection against customs officials.

Behind the piece of wall are a couple well-loved paperbacks. Alice pulls out the one on top. She flips through it. It's highlighted and the margins have been written in.

She closes it and reads the title:

ALICE

Rules for Radicals.
(then)
Can I keep this?

RADHA

You can keep it all. This room is waiting in vain now. For certain. I always expected it was, anyway. I saw her with your father once. We are not brought up expecting to marry for love. But your mother managed anyway. She was remarkable.

Alice smiles at that, then opens the book again.

ALICE

She always said she married my father because he made her laugh.

RADHA

A luxury.

Alice runs her fingers over her mother's writing, thinking. After moment she raises her face. Then:

ALICE

You said before you had a mother's secret.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- GIRLS' CLASSROOM --
MINUTES LATER

The classroom is set up in a semi-circle around a huge flatscreen on the wall, except instead of desks, a designer white couch with laptops strewn on it waits to be filled.

The space is open to the gardens outside between the compound and the imposing high wall. A peacock wanders in and toward the couch.

Two Saudi girls are already present with their servants.

ABEER, 16, dressed in Lululemon with dyed-blond hair and a french tip manicure, scrolls through her Facebook feed, the languages spanning from heavily Arabic script to Roman characters.

Her servant, a black girl, sits next to her, doing the same.

Abeer's sister, MIRIAM, 14, is wearing a headscarf even indoors, and a long, shapeless dress. She is reading the Koran online. Her servant stands against the wall, waiting.

ABEER

(not looking up)

If you're gonna wear that stuff
when you don't have to, you should
send your girl for better
deodorant.

MIRIAM

(also not looking up,
dripping sarcasm)

I'd love to contribute money to
American companies so they can
continue to support Jews killing
Arabs. I'll get right on it.

They both raise their eyes, the sisters giving each other looks that could kill.

The door opens and Radha enters with Alice.

RADHA

After your mother left, father
wouldn't let the girls go to school
anymore. He had this room
installed, hires the best teachers
to deliver lectures remotely from
all over the world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADHA (CONT'D)

Females can see in, but for male teachers, we cut the feed so the girls don't have to be in abayas. The males can still hear and answer their questions, but can't see our girls. It is of utmost importance here.

Abeer glowers at her mother, her eyes shifting between Alice with sympathy. Miriam gives them both an overly patient smile, like a cat with a canary.

RADHA (CONT'D)

Girls, let me introduce you to your cousin, Alice.

Abeer gets up and gives her a hug.

ABEER

Abeer. I know. It's like Amber, but... not.

MIRIAM

(cooly, from the couch)
Miriam.

RADHA

Please, introduce her to the others.

(to Alice)

The quality of the teachers has brought girls from other prominent families to us. You're sure to make friends.

(then, with a smile toward Miriam)

I have to meet Mr. and Mrs. Al Hamdi.

Miriam grins broadly and Radha winks at her. Abeer sneers at the exchange.

MIRIAM

(explains to Alice)
Hopefully, now, my future in-laws.

Alice looks sufficiently shocked at this.

RADHA

(to Alice)

These are your family, dear. Please feel welcome with us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And then she is gone.

Alice and the others sit in an awkward silence for a moment.

ALICE

My mom always said I was lucky I
got to go to school. I never
thought I'd agree with her.

ABEER

Oh, it's not that bad. You'll see.
This is Amna, by the way. She's
supposed to be my servant, but I'm
not much for class subjugation.

Abeer's servant, AMNA, shakes with Alice, smiling.

AMNA

Pleased to meet you.

Abeer is warm toward Alice, while Miriam goes back to her
Koran and leaves her servant against the wall without
introduction.

ABEER

So. This is Alice MacFarland.

ALICE

(shy)
In the flesh.

ABEER

Your mother is a little bit of a
hero around here.

Miriam snorts.

ABEER (CONT'D)

To some.
(then)
So how in the world did they trick
you back?

Alice looks confused at that, but before she can open her
mouth to ask, there is a commotion at the door as more girls
enter, still covered in their black abayas.

One is ahead of the others and as she enters...

KIMBER

She's here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The girl rips off her abaya, revealing a pretty, blonde American, KIMBER, 17. She's wearing jean shorts and Chucks. Vaguely punk.

She crosses straight to Alice as the others remove their abayas and an Indian girl, SURAYA, shadows Kimber and sits with Amna.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

I'm Kimber. Here, I belong to the American ambassador, but back in the states I'm just his daughter.

She laughs.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

This is Suraya.

SURAYA

Hello.

KIMBER

So how the hell--

ABEER

I was just about to ask her--

ALICE

What do you mean "trick" me?

The room stops as the girls stare at her, then exchange glances.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I'm here for my mother's funeral.

Abeer and Kimber share a lingering glance, then Miriam speaks up.

MIRIAM

When do you think you're going home, Alice?

ALICE

Now? I don't know. I thought in about a week, but now that my father... When I turn 18? College? It doesn't seem to be a bad place to wait out being legal. Why?

Miriam laughs out loud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MIRIAM

This is her? The daughter of the woman you all cherish as your hero? The one that "got out"? Hilarious. I love it.

Lia slips into the room, looks toward Alice, worried. Alice notices the rest of the girls are staring at her, serious.

ALICE

What?

KIMBER

Alice, 18 doesn't mean here what it means in the states. Here, when you turn 18, as a female... you're still not an adult.

ABEER

Not unless when you're born your mother stands up for your rights, insists the father--

ALICE

Wait. So when do you become an adult here?

MIRIAM

When you get married. Or never.

ALICE

No... really?

Alice looks toward the others. Some avert their gazes.

KIMBER

Please, Alice, just... tell us your mother taught you well enough not to give up your passport.

Alice doesn't answer.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Shit.

MIRIAM

(scoffs)

She wouldn't have been able to leave without grandfather's permission, anyway. And now with her back, the shame of Amal Al Saud has finally been rectified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Alice stares at Miriam, who continues to give her a smug smile.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

My mother helped because without resolving your mother's bullshit, the Al Hamdis would never let their son marry me. They are much too pious, which is exactly the kind of family I prefer to be part of. So, thank you cousin. I'm so thrilled you're here. But don't think you're leaving anytime soon, darling. In fact, being half Jew-loving monkey, I'd stop hoping you're going to leave here ever again.

ABEER

Shut up! Don't listen to her, Alice. She's being disgusting.

ALICE

But is she telling the truth?

Abeer just swallows, looking worried. And on Alice, stunned once again...

CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- DAY

Alice charges through the entrance way.

ALICE
Grandfather!

Abeer and Miriam trail her.

MIRIAM
(points out a door)
He's through there.

ABEER
Alice... you can't--

ALICE
Grandfather!

ABEER
He won't like you confronting him.
It's way too American.

MIRIAM
Through there.

ABEER
(to Miriam)
Stop encouraging her.

MIRIAM
I want to watch.

ABEER
Alice, there are better ways to get
what you want.

Alice throws open a door, revealing her grandfather working on his laptop.

ALICE
I want my passport.

He narrows his eyes at her, then takes in the other two girls hanging by the doorway.

ABU HAMZA
Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

It's mine. I should have it.

ABU HAMZA

Why? So you can go home? To an orphanage? Out of the question.

Alice trembles.

ALICE

I just want it.

ABU HAMZA

(sigh)

No.

ALICE

Why?

ABU HAMZA

What exactly do you object to? Have we not made your room the way you like it? Is it the food? Has your aunt somehow made you feel unwelcome?

Alice is perturbed by her grandfather. She exchanges glances with her cousins as she realizes she's made a mistake.

ALICE

No. It's all been very generous.

ABU HAMZA

Good, because I aim to make my family happy, but if what I have given you does not make you happy... I can take it away.

She steels herself.

ALICE

But it would help me trust if you would let me keep what is mine.

ABU HAMZA

Help you trust?

He gives a small laugh and leans back in his chair.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

Did your mother raise you Muslim, Alice?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

Yes.

ABU HAMZA

And do you pray?

ALICE

Yes. I'm a good Muslim. I am a spiritual girl, but I don't feel I need to be extreme--

ABU HAMZA

So you know that alcohol is forbidden in Islam.

(beat, silence)

And yet, when I met you in the hospital, when you were sweating with fear and worry, what did I smell, Alice?

Alice just stands there.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

So you tell me you're a good Muslim, yet you have sinned and you have lied. Just now. And I am the one who needs to show trust? Have you let a man touch you?

ALICE

(whispers)

I'm a virgin.

ABU HAMZA

(snaps)

If I wanted to know that I would have a doctor tell me that.

Alice turns even whiter, if that were possible. Abu Hamza regains his composure.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

I asked you a question.

Alice stays silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

You come from a strange and perverted world, Alice, where instead of caring for their women, celebrating their natural gifts as caretakers, lovers, nurturers, mothers, they force women to be eye candy, to starve and cut themselves thin and big titted.

Alice cringes at "titted."

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

They force women to worship earning a buck by themselves, higher than raising the next generation to be better than the current one. Women are taught their worth is to be found in a bigger house rather than in a better son or a more cherished daughter. Does that sound like a civilization that will last, that has value to you, Alice?

ALICE

It's not that simple.

ABU HAMZA

Why do you want to be a clothes designer?

ALICE

I like pretty clothes. I like making things. I like Project Runway.

ABU HAMZA

You like it because it's a woman's job. Deep down, you know where your talents lie. Making pretty things is a woman's talent and for men who like to be treated sexually as women. Deep down, you know where you fit in this world. When I heard that was your desire, I was pleased, I knew there was hope for you. And then you come charging in here, making demands of me -- as if I need to be trusted. As if I am the one who is suspect. You have no idea what I am capable of, Alice. What this country allows me to be capable of.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Alice's eyes glitter with fear. Miriam speaks up from the corner.

MIRIAM

Tell her about Reem, grandfather.
She should know what can happen.

ABU HAMZA

I don't approve of what happened to
Reem.

MIRIAM

The example will make her see your
generosity. Your mercy,
grandfather.

Abu Hamza looks unhappy, but absorbs Miriam's point.

ABU HAMZA

Your mother leaving crushed me,
Alice. But what she did, other
girls have done too, of course.

Miriam crosses to her grandfather's computer. She begins to
type on it.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

Not the video, Miriam. Please.

MIRIAM

Americans are visual people,
grandfather.

ABEER

Don't watch, Alice.

After a moment, the images come up to prove her grandfather's
next story true.

ABU HAMZA

If a girl is caught with a man, if
she has been deflowered outside of
marriage, that is a state crime.
The state will punish her. If she
has been inappropriate, let herself
be touched, attempted to flee with
her lover, for example. That is
not for the state. That punishment
is reserved for her father. Reem,
her father was less trusting than
I. She wore a bracelet she didn't
know had a tracker in it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

That alerted him that she was at
the airport.

Alice stares at the screen. Unaware of what she's looking
at. The main event has yet to happen.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

Her father brought her back home.
He gathered the entire family and
his closest friends. He brought
them outside to the pool he had
built at Reem's request. She was a
swimmer. She met her lover at a
meet in England, during a summer
trip her father reluctantly agreed
to. That is why, when he decided
her punishment, he brought them all
to Reem's pool.

Alice's eyes widen as she begins to understand what she's
watching.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

And had them all watch as he
drowned her in it.

Alice stares as the screen. Miriam watches her reaction.

ALICE

Why aren't -- why isn't anyone
doing anything? Those men, what
are they saying to her father?

ABEER

They are congratulating him, Alice.
They are telling him good job, for
making an example.

MIRIAM

This is what grandfather can do,
Alice. So why don't you choose now
as the moment you start respecting
him?

Alice stares at Miriam in horror, then looks down at the
floor.

ALICE

Why did you bring me here?

Alice meets her grandfather's steely gaze once again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ABU HAMZA
 Because, Alice, you are my family.
 You. Are mine.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ALICE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Alice sits, alone on her bed. Staring forward into space. In shock. She breathes in and out, calculating, thinking hard. Maybe harder than shes ever had to think in her life.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WOMAN'S MOSQUE -- DAY

Her mother's body, in a basket with a black covering draped over it, sits at the front of the mosque. Women are there, saying their special funeral prayers. Alice prays along with them.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- AMAL'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Alice enters. She crosses to the hidden nook in the wall and opens it.

She comes out with her mother's copy of Rules for Radicals. She sits against the wall and flips through, comes to the first highlighted passage.

She begins to read aloud, in a whisper.

ALICE
 "As an organizer, I start from
 where the world is, as it is, not
 as I would like it to be. That we
 accept the world as it is does not
 in any sense weaken our desire to
 change it into what we believe it
 should be --

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WOMEN'S MOSQUE -- DAY

Back to the funeral. Radha slips the head of her abaya back on, affixes her veil. The others see and follow suit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE (V.O.)

It is necessary to begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it should be. That means working in the system."

Radha crosses to the door and lets in the men, who silently cross to her mother's burial basket. Raise it up on their shoulders.

Alice's eyes track her grandfather, who takes his place next to his dead daughters head.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- AMAL'S ROOM -- NIGHT

She turns a page, finds another passage.

ALICE

"To build a powerful organization takes time. It is tedious, but that's the way the game is played --

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

The men, alone, lower Amal into her sand grave.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WOMEN'S MOSQUE -- DAY

Alice is now there alone, staring at the picture of her mother left behind, anger building in her eyes.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

ALICE (V.O.)

If you want to play and not just yell 'Kill the umpire.'"

The grave is filled in. Abu Hamza lays a single palm frond on the sand. He then turns to camera and walks away, his face filling the frame...

CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- DAY

Alice is up, sipping her coffee as she walks through the hallway. She spies Kimber standing in the doorway to the main entrance talking to her grandfather.

They glance over and step further out of view. Alice continues on to the sitting room, where Abeer, Miriam and Radha sit with their coffees.

The servants are nearby.

Alice arranges herself on a low couch underneath a cascade of colored lamps and pulls out Rules for Radicals, continues reading.

RADHA

Alice? Would you like to come shopping with Miriam and I? We have a beautiful mall. We can pick out more abayas for you than just the one.

ALICE

No, thank you.

Radha is clearly conflicted and uncomfortable.

RADHA

We could all go to lunch. There's a place that makes wonderful Italian meals.

ALICE

I'd prefer to stay in.

Radha and Miriam stand.

MIRIAM

She said no, mother. Let's go.

Radha gives Alice a lingering glance and an apologetic smile before she leaves with Miriam.

Abeer gets up and crosses over to Alice, props herself up next to her.

ABEER

I'm mad at her too, but we can't be too mad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE
She helped trick me.

Abeer nods, patiently.

ABEER
I have three brothers, you know.
Two real and one adopted.

ALICE
Do they live in another part of the
house?

ABEER
No. They live with our father.

Abeer smiles. It's a brave smile she's had to work at.

ABEER (CONT'D)
After he divorced mother, he could
have taken us all, but...
(that smile again)
--he only took the boys.
(perks up)
My favorite is Arnab. He's the
adopted one. He's four years older
and so funny. We used to be known
as the pranksters together.

ALICE
Wait, his name is *rabbit*?

ABEER
(laughs)
Yeah. Anyway, my... father...
doesn't even let my mother -- or me--
- visit.

ALICE
Why?

ABEER
She is more modern, like me and
Arnab, he is more religious, like
Miriam. When they got married, Mom
had her own ambitions and thoughts
of her own and Daddy wanted a blind
cat.

ALICE
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ABEER

A blind cat. A helpless pet. It's a Saudi expression.

ALICE

That's awful.

ABEER

Yeah, so, I guess they weren't the match their parents hoped they would be. I think my father's family saw the chance to marry into the royal family and it didn't matter who the girl was... until it did.

ALICE

Wait, so this guy Miriam wants to marry..?

ABEER

Hasn't even met him. He's from a family my dad is friends with and for her right now, that's all that matters.

Abeer lets Alice absorb that, shock on her face.

ABEER (CONT'D)

I think that's the reason Miriam is like that, by the way. She hopes the news of the match will get back to Daddy.

(beat)

And I think if Miriam makes this match, which she can now--

ALICE

Because I'm back.

ABEER

--my mother hopes she can see my brothers again. I've been wondering why she did it myself. That's all I can think. It's the only thing that --might-- have made me do it. I miss them.

Alice turns that over in her mind. She clearly has some sympathy, but sticks by her guns.

ALICE

I feel bad for your mom, but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ABEER

She admires your mother, too. For getting out, for standing up for herself and getting her freedom. For finding true love...

Abeer smiles a teenager's dreamy grin. Then:

ABEER (CONT'D)

I know. You think it all seems like the end of your world, a gilded cage, right? Beautiful and rich, but... a cage.

ALICE

(soberly)

I can be drowned for making out with someone.

Abeer laughs.

ABEER

Sorry, gallows humor. You won't be, though. Grandfather is sweeter than you think. He's... I think he'd like things to be different for us, but... this is a conflicted place. There are those who want to be modern and successful and free and those who want God to love them more than they want to know what having the true free love of a woman is like, or, what it would feel like to be trusted not to be some kind of wild raping machine at the sight of a woman's hair.

Abeer rolls her eyes.

ALICE

There are people who want that?

ABEER

Of course there are. There are good people everywhere.

Alice thinks.

ALICE

You said yesterday there are better ways to get what I want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ABEER

Yes, you have to manipulate, not demand.

(joking)

It's a subtle art, but you end up with shoes, which is--

At that moment, Kimber enters with Suraya. Abeer cuts herself off. Kimber appears spooked.

KIMBER

Hi. It looks really nice out in the garden. Don't you two think?

Abeer and Alice exchange a 'what's going on?' glance.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- GARDENS -- MOMENTS LATER

Alice, Abeer, Kimber, Suraya, Amna and Lin huddle on a bench under a huge banana palm, whispering.

KIMBER

I'm not supposed to tell anyone. Your grandfather ambushed me, asked a million questions to try to find out if I knew, but I played dumb. He's going to cut the lines in the house though, I heard him tell his boy.

ABEER

What? Like the internet? Why?

KIMBER

To buy time, I guess. Figure out what he's going to do.

(then)

I told another lie.

(to Abeer)

I said that you were invited to have dinner with my family.

ABEER

I don't understand.

KIMBER

But Alice is going to wear your abaya instead and she's going to walk out with me and she's going to walk back in and pretend to be you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

You're taking me to the American
embassy?

KIMBER

We'll only have a couple hours, but
I told him to be waiting by his
computer.

ALICE

Oh my god! Are you going to try to
get me out?

Kimber grimaces.

KIMBER

No, unfortunately I already asked
my father and we have no
jurisdiction on that and there's no
desire to piss off an actual prince
from the House of Saud, we'd never
get support for that... but...
there is someone who is already
trying for you. Very, very hard,
Alice.

Alice stares at her.

ALICE

Who?

Kimber swallows, takes Alice's hands.

KIMBER

Alice. We got a call early this
morning looking for our help. Are
you ready for what I'm going to
tell you?

ALICE

No.

KIMBER

(pause)
Your father is alive.

And on Alice's face...

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ENTRANCE HALL -- SUNSET

Abeer peeks out. Her grandfather is sitting in the entrance hall, reading a newspaper on his ipad.

Abeer comes back into the sitting room where Kimber, Alice, Amna and Suraya are waiting.

ABEER
He's still there.

KIMBER
I can't stay here all night.

ABEER
I know.

Abeer is pensive.

ABEER (CONT'D)
Any ideas?

AMNA
I've got one.

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- HALLWAY OUTSIDE BEDROOMS --
MOMENTS LATER

Amna has a panel slid aside in the wall to reveal a laundry chute.

It's circular.

ALICE
You want me to go down the hole?

AMNA
Yes. It leads to the kitchen,
servants quarters, laundry and...

ABEER
The garage! You're brilliant,
Amna.

SURAYA
I can delay the driver. Abeer and
Kimber will go wait in the car in
the garage and Alice can switch
with her there.

ABEER
Then I'll just sneak back upstairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice is still staring at the chute.

ALICE
No, wait, but seriously... You
want me to slide down the hole?

AMNA
(shrugs)
There's a cart full of sheets at
the bottom. We changed all of them
this afternoon.

ALICE
I still wanna go feet first.

The girls struggle to help Alice, hold her up so she can
stick her feet in.

ALICE (CONT'D)
This whole experience just keeps
getting weirder and weirder...

And then she slides down the chute with a little shriek.

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- DOWNSTAIRS -- CONTINUOUS

Alice lands in a laundry cart. It rolls away from the chute
a little ways, stops square in front of the doorway where a
SERVANT is walking past carrying a tray with tea and small
cakes.

The Servant stops, surprised. There's an awkward beat as
Alice gives a grimace smile, waiting to see what the Servant
will do.

Finally, she holds the tray out:

SERVANTS
Refreshments?

ALICE
Uh, no thanks. Which way to the
garage?

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ENTRANCE HALL -- MOMENTS
LATER

Abeer and Kimber followed by Suraya and Amna pass by Abu
Hamza.

ABEER
I'll be back in a few hours
grandfather.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She stops and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

Abu Hamza eyes the doorway to the women's quarters as the girls affix their head coverings and veils.

ABU HAMZA

Have fun.

KIMBER

Good-night.

They are gone. Abu Hamza's eyes linger on the doorway, then he goes back to reading.

EXT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

Suraya begins to chat with the CHAUFFER, standing in his way as Abeer and Kimber hurry towards the garage.

Alice is waiting. Abeer gives her her abaya.

ABEER

Quick.

ALICE

I'm not used to these things yet.

KIMBER

Just get in the car, I'll help.

They finish the switch quickly, and dive into the back of the car just as the Chauffeur enters the garage.

INT. CHAUFFERED CAR -- CONTINUOUS

As he gets in, Alice turns to Kimber as if about to say something, then Kimber brings her gloved hand to her "lips" behind the abaya.

She shakes her head subtly "no," then points at the driver and rubs her fingers together in the sign for money.

KIMBER

Did you have a nice visit with your friends, Omar?

CHAUFFEUR

Yes, ma'am. Very nice.

Alice understands, sits back in her seat, remaining silent.

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ENTRANCE HALL -- SAME TIME

Abu Hamza sighs as he finishes his paper, begins to play an episode of *Tash Ma Tash* (a very popular, long running Saudi sitcom) on his iPad.

He chuckles.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIYADH -- AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S HOME -- MINUTES LATER

The car sweeps past the open gates of the embassy and deposits the girls at the front.

Alice, Kimber and Suraya enter.

INT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S HOME -- CONTINUOUS

The moment they step through the doors, they strip off their abayas, returning again to recognizable, separate entities rather than four black pegs.

KIMBER

Come on.

Kimber rushes again, storming up the stairs, Alice at her heels.

They continue into Kimber's room and she rushes over to her desk to click her laptop back on.

Alice sits in front of it, pulls up Skype... then she hesitates.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Go on, give him a call. We don't have that long and if we get found out, who knows when you'll be able to speak to him again.

ALICE

(afraid)

What if he's mad at me? Oh, my god, of course he's furious. We don't have that much money, and... oh my god, we took my mother's body.

KIMBER

Alice, you'll work it out. Call him. You don't understand, he's been frantic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice hesitates, then puts the call through. Almost immediately, the screen fills with Eric's face. His eyes are black and blue, a line on his cheek still bristles with stitches, but he's alive. And he's in their suburban home.

ALICE

Daddy?

He breaks into tears, touches the screen.

ERIC

Oh, my baby. Oh my sweet girl.
What have you done?

ALICE

Daddy I'm so sorry. I didn't know.

ERIC

I know. We didn't want you to
know. Oh, baby. Are you okay?

ALICE

Yes.

ERIC

Are they treating you okay?

ALICE

They drowned a girl, daddy.

ERIC

I know.

ALICE

You knew.

ERIC

Yes.

ALICE

Everyone has lied to me, daddy. My
whole life.

ERIC

(shakes his head)
I'll never lie to you again. I
never thought the cost would be
this high.

ALICE

Get me home, daddy. I want to come
back to you. Get. Me. Home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Her father's face settles into firm resolution as Alice weeps
and we...

CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S HOME -- NIGHT

Alice is still on Skype with her father. They've calmed down, they are planning now.

ERIC

You understand, right? You know what you have to do until I can get you back. I'm not Muslim, so it will be very, very difficult and it may take some time, but you have to work to survive there in the meantime.

ALICE

I will. I'll stay safe. I'll learn.

ERIC

We raised you to be strong, to be free in your own head, but now you have to be even smarter.

ALICE

I understand, daddy.

(then)

I miss you so much. I wish you were here to help me.

ERIC

Baby. I miss you, too. And I will get you back, don't worry about that.

ALICE

I'll call back as soon as I can.

ERIC

I'll be working hard.

Alice blows a kiss.

ALICE

Me, too.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S HOME -- CONTINUOUS

Alice comes down the stairs and finds Kimber and her mother, CHLOE, sitting in the breakfast nook. They stop talking when Alice comes in. Her eyes are red from crying.

Chloe, a beautiful, sophisticated, yet warm woman, about 40, gets up and crosses toward Alice with a smile.

CHLOE

Alice! I'm Kimber's mom, Chloe.
I've heard so much about you from
your dad I bet I could guess all
your passwords.

Chloe gives Alice a hug as Alice reacts.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. Maybe.
(winks)
Sit down. Can I get you something
to drink?

ALICE

I thought Saudi didn't allow al--
Oh. You weren't thinking a drink
drink.

CHLOE

No, I was thinking soda, but if you
want... we might be a little
naughty in this house.

KIMBER

Mom.

CHLOE

Okay, okay. How about Saudi
champagne?

Alice gives Kimber a questioning look. Kimber just grins back.

Chloe has the fridge door open and fishes out a bottle.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

So, love, I want you to think of
this as your second home.

She pops it with a flourish--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHLOE (CONT'D)
You miss America, you miss anything
about America, you can come here
and we'll help you out.

--then pours it into a champagne glass, sets it in front of
Chloe.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Please don't feel alone.

ALICE
Well, Kimber said--

Alice takes a sip of the liquid and stops, giggles.

ALICE (CONT'D)
That's sparkling cider.

KIMBER
No, that's Saudi champagne.

ALICE
Okay.
(then)
Kimber said you couldn't piss off
the Al Saud family. That's why...

Chloe blinks, gets more serious.

CHLOE
What she says is true.

ALICE
But why? I don't understand.

KIMBER
I kinda don't either, Mom. Can't
you do *something*?

Chloe thinks, then squints as she tries to explain it to both
girls.

CHLOE
There are a very wide range of
issues that need Jay's --daddy's--
attention. Think of favors and
demands like a shared bank account.
The deposits and withdrawals on
both sides are done very carefully
so that neither side ever owes too
much and things stop getting done.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

And getting me out is too much of a withdrawal.

Chloe makes a face.

CHLOE

Okay, I need to rethink my analogies, 'cause that sounded really harsh.

ALICE

No, it's...
(pause, then smiles)
Thank you. It feels really nice here. Thank you so much for allowing me to talk to my dad.

CHLOE

Everything we can do, sweetie. We will. I promise.

ALICE

Fair warning: you might get sick of me.

Kimber leans her head on Alice's shoulder. Chloe rubs Alice's forearm and smiles.

Alice swallows, disappointed, yet grateful.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- NIGHT

It's quiet and very still. Alice and Amna return, Alice back in Abeer's abaya and slip into the women's wing. Alice slips off the abaya as she runs into Radha.

RADHA

Alice, Amna, come with me. I'm about to deliver some good news.

Radha takes Alice's hand and leads her into..

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND - WOMEN'S SITTING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Abeer, Miriam, Suraya and Lia are watching television, Sex and The City, subtitled in Arabic.

Radha, Alice and Amna enter and their heads swivel. Miriam jumps off the couch at the sight of her mother's smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

You guys watch *Sex and the City* here?

MIRIAM

Please tell me you did it.

RADHA

I did it. The shouf is tomorrow!

Miriam squeals and jumps up, embraces Radha. Peppers her cheeks with kisses. Alice watches, then turns to Amna.

ALICE

(whispers)

What's a shouf?

AMNA

It's the one and only time a bride and groom can see each other before they agree to marry. Radha convinced the Al Hamdi's. Little Miriam is going to have a wedding.

ALICE

She's fourteen.

AMNA

And she's never been on a date. Welcome to Saudi. They might try to make you next.

Alice looks terrified. The scene on the television screen catches her attention. Samantha being utterly raunchy.

And on Alice's expression, incredulously taking in this total juxtaposition of cultures... 14 year old Miriam excited and celebrating in front of this most sexual American sitcom...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S COMPOUND -- WOMEN'S SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Abeer is helping Miriam get ready for her shouf.

ABEER

The Quran says that you can wear jewelry.

MIRIAM

I don't want him to think me unmodest.

ABEER

You wouldn't let me put on any make-up.

MIRIAM

I don't want him to think I'm a whore, that's why.

Abeer rolls her eyes.

ABEER

How 'bout some moisturizer at least? You're kinda... ashy in your t-zone.

Miriam looks alarmed, picks up a mirror. Abeer smiles a little wickedly.

MIRIAM

Really?

ABEER

(not really)
Totally gross.

Miriam relents. Abeer starts to apply moisturizer.

ABEER (CONT'D)

(frowns)

Oh no. Now you're shiny. Maybe a little powder just to knock it down.

MIRIAM

Abeer!

Alice enters the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Wow, Miriam, you look nice.

It instantly calms the building spat between sisters.

MIRIAM

Thanks.

Alice sits down on the couch with them. Abeer dusts some powder on her sister's face.

ABEER

Tell her she should wear the necklace Arnab sent for her.

Abeer motions to a gorgeous piece of jewelry, made to look like a sparkling flower.

ALICE

Oh my god. Why wouldn't you wear this? Your brother, Arnab, right? Mr. Rabbit?
(frowns)
Nice taste in jewelry.

Abeer continues to work on Miriam's face. Miriam recoils at lip gloss.

ABEER

It's not lip gloss, it's just, like fancy chapstick.

MIRIAM

Arnab isn't our real brother. He's adopted.

ABEER

I consider him a real brother.
(to Alice)
Help me with her hair. I want to put it into braids like this picture.

Alice starts to plait Miriam's hair.

ALICE

Soo... not to be rude but, if there were already four of you, why did your parents adopt another kid?

MIRIAM

Arnab's father fought in the war with our father and grandfather.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

What war?

ABEER

The Afghan war. The Soviet one in the 80s.

ALICE

The Soviet one? I need to study some history.

She begins another braid.

ABEER

EVERYBODY was fighting. Saudi Air offered special flights up to where the training camps were. People took their wives and kids. It was a big opportunity to conduct jihad for God and bond. And the Americans and the royal family paid, like, a ton. It sounds like it was so much fun.

Alice can't control herself from grimacing. She starts the third braid.

MIRIAM

It's how Grandfather met Daddy and arranged the marriage with Mother.

ABEER

Arnab's father saved Daddy's life in Afghanistan. So when Arnab was orphaned... he came to be with us.

MIRIAM

(rolls her eyes)

And that's when all the trouble began.

Abeer grins, her love for Arnab clear on her face. Alice clearly doesn't quite know how to take this story.

ALICE

Oh.

(then)

Done. You look nice.

Radha enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RADHA
Miriam? It's time. Ooh! So
pretty.

Miriam gets up and crosses to her mother.

RADHA (CONT'D)
Are you nervous?

MIRIAM
(offended)
No.

Alice and Abeer are left alone.

ALICE
So... You gonna have a shouf
anytime soon?

ABEER
Yeah, right. I'd like to go to
college, thanks very much. I'll
hold out for true love or nothing
at all.

ALICE
Why does that now sound so daring?

Abeer laughs. At that moment, they hear a delighted shriek.

MIRIAM (O.S.)
Daddy??

INT. ABU HAMZA'S COMPOUND -- ENTRANCE HALL -- DAY

A tall, handsome man in traditional dress, late 40s, QASIM AL HOURI, he looks up from tapping away on his cell phone, sees Miriam in the hall, followed by Radha. Miriam races toward him.

MIRIAM
Daddy!

She throws herself into his arms. He smiles and kisses her. She closes her eyes and squeezes him tight, not wanting to let him go.

She suddenly looks like the 14 year old she is.

QASIM
Hello, my little angel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Radha seems surprised to see him, hangs back, looking wary. After a moment, having heard her sister, Abeer rushes into the entrance hall, followed by Alice.

Qasim rubs Miriam's back as she clings to him. He gives a thin smile to the others.

RADHA

You've come to participate in the shouf.

QASIM

The Al Hamdis are great friends of mine. I want Miriam to be well represented. This marriage would be a great honor.

ABEER

Hello, daddy.

QASIM

Come give me a kiss.

Abeer goes to her father and gives him a shy kiss. He runs his fingers through her treated hair and frowns. Abeer just averts her eyes.

Alice stays by Radha, watching. Qasim spies her.

QASIM (CONT'D)

You're Alice.

ALICE

Yes. Sir.

QASIM

You should be veiled in front of me. I would be allowed to marry you. You should not allow me to see you. Go away, dear.

Alice turns and hurries away. Qasim reacts.

QASIM (CONT'D)

She seemed offended. I was trying to help.

Radha blinks, embarrassed, but doesn't go after Alice. She steps, instead, toward her ex-husband and daughters.

RADHA

Please, come in for some tea before they arrive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The splintered family disappears into another section of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ALICE'S ROOM -- DAY

Alice enters her room where Lia is making her bed.

ALICE

You guys have no sense of sexual harassment in this country.

LIA

I think you have to have clear laws on rape before you start petitioning for that, but maybe that's just me.

Lia smiles. Alice makes a face. Lia approaches her conspiratorially.

LIA (CONT'D)

Listen, Kimber called me on my cell phone a little bit ago. She said if you want to use the commotion of the shouf to sneak out to talk to your father again, she'd have her driver waiting in front.

Alice's eyes widen.

ALICE

Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ENTRANCE HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

Alice hurries into the entrance hall as a VERY handsome young man, 18, enters.

He's dressed in a white ghatra and a white thobe. White head to toe.

Alice has the body part of her abaya on, but hasn't covered her head or face yet. She's reaching back when the sight of the man stops her short.

ALICE

Oh crap. Can you marry me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man smiles, amused. He shrugs, laughs.

MAN

Sure. Why not?

ALICE

No, no, I mean... are you allowed to marry me?

MAN

Oh. You're a religious one.

ALICE

No... I'm a terrified one.

He takes her in, intrigued.

MAN

I think I might be allowed to marry you.

ALICE

Are you gonna tell you saw my face?

His grin widens. He likes her.

MAN

No. I do like to brag a little about meeting pretty girls, but in your case, I'll make an exception.

ALICE

Thank you.
(then)
I'm Alice.

The man offers Alice his hand.

MAN

I'm Arnab. Miriam's brother. I'm here for the shouf.

Alice takes it and they shake.

Arnab then looks at his watch.

ARNAB

I'm late.

And on Alice, the spark of a connection being made between them...

CUT TO:

INT. ABU HAMZA'S ROYAL COMPOUND -- ABU HAMZA'S OFFICE -- SAME
TIME

Abu Hamza is on a video conference call with Eric.

ABU HAMZA

I was rather hoping my lie would be
prescient and you would not be
waking up.

ERIC

Then how could you gloat?

Abu Hamza lets a small smile slip.

ABU HAMZA

How does it feel? To have your
daughter taken from you?

ERIC

You pushed Amal away. Amal left by
her own choice.

ABU HAMZA

Well, you had one of my girls for
about sixteen years. You made your
play, trying to shape her life.
Now its my turn. How do you think
she'll turn out, after another
sixteen years as a princess under
my rule?

ERIC

You wouldn't do that to her. You
want to punish me, you wouldn't do
that to her. Please.

ABU HAMZA

(suddenly bitter)

Wouldn't I? Wouldn't I keep her,
marry her off? Deny you seeing the
birth of your granddaughter?
Grandson? Beautiful little anchors
that will hold her here forever?
Tell me, after all that? Do you
think she'll leave?

Eric reddens.

ERIC

Please don't take my daughter from
me. Please don't shame Amal's
memory by taking Alice's freedom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC (CONT'D)

Haven't you learned from Amal?
From what you did to her?

There is a knock on the door and a servant holds up a package. Abu Hamza motions to him and he takes the package, begins to open it.

ABU HAMZA

I did learn from Amal. I learned
to watch much, much closer.

He reveals what is inside, reads the cover: Rules for Radicals. He raises his gaze back to Eric.

ABU HAMZA (CONT'D)

And this time, she won't be getting
away. Plus, you haven't taken into
consideration one thing.

ERIC

What's that?

ABU HAMZA

What happens when she asks about
her grandmother?

And on Eric and Abu Hamza staring each other down...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW