

You'll come up with others. Better ones.

LEAH

(to us)

What followed might have been our most important conversation. It is the one that stays with me most clearly, the one where I'm most confident that I'm not paraphrasing.

Here, I should tell you that the talk will be fairly explicit, I realize we're in a synagogue. But to be polite or to edit... I don't think that would be right.

START HERE —>

JUDITH

An officer has chosen me.

LEAH

It's started?

JUDITH

Yes, our first was last night. My first time.

LEAH

I'm sorry.

JUDITH

No, don't be. He seems pleased. I have to do very little, all things considered.

LEAH

Still, the... violation? I don't have the words.

JUDITH

You know, it was the thinking about it beforehand. The worrying. It got built up so in my mind. I was taught to cherish my virginity, and that it was so important to wait, to wait for the right one...

LEAH

For marriage?

JUDITH

My parents... they weren't so strict about that aspect. Probably because I came as a surprise.

LEAH

Oh...

JUDITH

You think it's funny? You can laugh. We did, at home. A surprise, yes, that's what they called it. Me. They called me a surprise. Not an "accident," the way some of my uncles and aunts said. But I was, of course. It's so easy to have an accident.

LEAH

And if there's an accident now? Here?

JUDITH

Oh, Leah. These are German officers. They... how can I say this with some delicacy? Perhaps I'm silly to think of delicacy here, already you've seen so much that you shouldn't.

LEAH

And you haven't? You're not so much older.

JUDITH

No, I suppose not. It's funny how that works. Time is so... well, I don't have the word, but whatever time usually is, it isn't like that here. So no, Leah, I can tell you that the way the officer and I... are together... you see, an accident, pregnancy, is not possible.

LEAH

Oh...

(she takes Judith's hands.)

JUDITH

No, no, Leah, it's not so terrible. I mean... well, if it happens with you, then, it becomes a chore, like the others we do. We follow orders. And the way it works, I don't even have to be present, really.

LEAH

How can that be?

JUDITH

Oh, my body must be there, of course. The receptacle, yes? Ach, such a way to describe what should be so... No, no, I mustn't get on like that.

LEAH

Why not? Maybe you should, you don't get a chance to talk this way otherwise.

JUDITH

No... I don't want the act of love to be this. This thing for me. That's not what I want to think of, I don't want it spoiled. One day, we will be liberated, and there will be someone. It will be real, and we will love each other. I mustn't think of... this, when that happens. I mustn't confuse the two.

(beat.)

And you, my Leah. You mustn't think that way, either. If it happens. I hope it won't, I pray, but if it does... This isn't what the love-act is. This isn't "sex." It's a separate thing, a separate thing that you can endure... and you can endure because you don't have to be there in your head. That's what I was going to say before. In your head, you can be anywhere, because you don't have to pay attention, at least, not when they do it... well, back there.

(beat.)

But if you have to take it in your mouth...

(LEAH starts to gag.)

I'm so sorry, my darling, my dear friend... But maybe it's best that I say it because it could happen, it really could. But even then, you know, it's just a matter of fitting it in your mouth, and then you don't really have to be there then, either. Not so much. You have to listen to him, but he probably won't say anything terribly important. The main thing is to make happy noises, you know, like you enjoy it... And then he finishes...

(LEAH is sick. JUDITH holds her.)

JUDITH (Continued)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. That was too much, too much for one day. I won't say any more. You are all right now?

LEAH

I'm sorry. That was... that was childish.

JUDITH

That was human.

LEAH

You said... you pray? For me?

JUDITH

For you, for my family... for me, too. I suppose I shouldn't pray for myself, it's wicked.

LEAH

I think that is also human.

JUDITH

Perhaps.

LEAH

You pray, so you still believe? God is here?

JUDITH

I don't know, exactly. He's not here protecting us from what's happening. He's not here protecting us from pain, from humiliation, from filth... He's not punishing our enemies, at least not yet.

LEAH

So how then? How is He here? If He is here, He's silent? Unresponsive? Uncaring?

JUDITH

I'm not sure, my Leah. I just don't know, exactly. It's the old joke, you know? I know you like jokes. You know, we are supposed to be the chosen people... perhaps it is time God chooses somebody else?

LEAH

And yet you pray.

JUDITH

Yes. It's not a logical thing. Not intelligent. Yet I feel better somehow. I pray in the morning, and before I go to bed. Sometimes in between. It helps me... continue. And when I awake in the morning... I thank Him.

LEAH

You thank God.

JUDITH

I thank Him for another day. Another day of this.

(beat.)

Crazy, no?

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