

Full Circle
By
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FADE IN ON:

EXT. - JERUSALEM (OLD CITY) - ROAD - DAY

So much sun, there's no secrets. Stone walls and dirt roads run parallel. And, on this barren stretch: no shops, homes or *life* in sight.

Until brakes SCREECH. Tires SQUEAL.

Voices raise in anger (OS.) Most of it in modern Hebrew. A smattering of English, too.

Footsteps CRUNCH in sand. HAROLD (well preserved 90s) shuffles into view.

Dust haloes behind him as a BUS roars off. The old man bends over to catch his breath.

An angular and pissed off BENJAMIN (20s, heavy metal tee, yarmulke) runs to his side.

Swinging around, Ben flips someone the double bird.

BENJAMIN
Neocolonialist apartheid bastard!

Harold groans, rolls his eyes. He tries to straighten up; but his back protests.

HAROLD
Ow!

Benjamin's anger morphs into concern.

BENJAMIN
Dziadzio, you OK?

HAROLD
While sitting down? Yes, I was. But if you didn't notice, those steps are steep. If you had to get us thrown off the tour, a ramp would've been a respectful parting touch, at least.

Ben growls towards the rapidly retreating bus - now barely a speck on the road.

BENJAMIN
I didn't get us 'thrown off'. I asked some questions. Can you blame me?

HAROLD

Yes! "And asked some questions"? Please!
You compared Israel to South Africa!

BENJAMIN

While quoting Nelson Mandela, and he was
right! "We know too well that our freedom
is incomplete without the freedom of the
Palestinians."

HAROLD

I heard that the first two times you
screamed it. There's no need to repeat.

Harold squints up at the blazing sun.

HAROLD

Looks like it's noontime. So there is
reason for us to get inside, sit down.

Benjamin nods, whips out a phone.

BENJAMIN

On it, grampa. We're all good.

HAROLD

From where I'm standing - such as it is -
this situation's the *opposite* of good.

Ben tries to dial, but there's no signal.

BENJAMIN

Shit!

HAROLD

Language!

BENJAMIN

You laughed when I called the driver
"zine".

HAROLD

Only because I appreciated your grasp of
Hebrew slang.

Benjamin holds his cell high. Still no bars. He turns to
his grandfather, droops in defeat.

BENJAMIN

Looks like we're gonna have to walk.

HAROLD

All the way back to the hotel? Insanity!
I need a cab.

BENJAMIN

Orrrr - we walk 'til we find a place.
With a landline. In the scheme of things,
not too bad.

Ben glances furtively towards a pile of RUBBLE that was
once a building.

BENJAMIN

For us, I mean. Let's go.

The two start walking. Ben gently supports Harold's arm.

LATER

The road and wall meanders on.

Harold's pace: slower now. He wipes his sweating face
with a cotton handkerchief festooned with Polish art.

HAROLD

Wait'll your mother hears what you've
done.

BENJAMIN

Mom? Pffft. She stopped getting outraged
in my teens. Now she lets "me be me".

HAROLD

(mocks Ben's voice)

"Come to the birthright tour with me,
Dziadzio! You've always wanted to see
Israel, right? Ever since you left
Warsaw. Plane rides are safe. It'll be
fun - a generational bonding experience!

Benjamin groans. Keeps walking, kicks a rock.

BENJAMIN

Gimme credit. I was right three and a
half times out of four.

HAROLD

Math was never your strong suit, boy?

BENJAMIN

You slept like a baby through the flight.

HAROLD

Because I never dreamed you'd get me
tossed from a moving bus.

BENJAMIN

They *did* stop to let us out. Admit it - you loved breakfast at Ja'far Sweets this morning. You said...

HAROLD

I know what I said. My memory's good.

BENJAMIN

That the Knafeh was - quote unquote - the "best you'd had in your life"!

HAROLD

If I knew I was going to be exercising, I'd have eaten much, much more. What do they call it, carbo loading? I haven't been this hungry since I was a boy!

Harold takes a step - sways from heat exhaustion. Ben darts over, holds Harold up.

BENJAMIN

Grandpa!

Supporting Harold, Ben looks around. In the distance, he spots a modest home. He fist-pumps.

BENJAMIN

Boo-yah!

EXT. OUTSIDE HOME - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Ben guides Harold towards the weathered porch. Up close, the house is barely a shack - a flimsy structure painted to look like more.

Exhausted, Harold sinks down on the steps. Ben darts up them, to the door.

HAROLD

Well, shade's an improvement.

BENJAMIN

God, let's hope someone's home.

Ben knocks. No response. He tries again.

Harold leans over his knees to catch his breath.

Little feet step into view. Harold gasps - looks up.

At little Palestinian girl AADINA (5). Clad in a simple dress, she regards Harold with dark, somber eyes.

Harold cracks a weak smile.

HAROLD

Why hello there, córeczka tatusia! What's your name, dear?

Aadina fidgets. Too shy to respond.

HAROLD

Are your parents home?

The door swings open, revealing a stern FARNAZ (30s). He glares at Ben and Harold. Waves to Aadina, "come here."

FARNAZ

Who wants to know? Are you from Elad?

BENJAMIN

What? Who? Uh, no...?

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Oddly empty. Few furnishings. Traditional Palestinian decorations here and there.

But no couch - just a mattress on the floor. On it, a suitcase and pink Disney Princess book bag.

A table in the kitchen nook; the only other place to sit.

Farnaz leads Ben and Harold toward it. Curious Aadina trails behind.

FARNAZ

So, you are not one of the settlers?

BENJAMIN

Just your friendly neighborhood tourists from Brooklyn. Scout's honor. That's how we roll.

FARNAZ

Brooklyn, USA?

BENJAMIN

New York. We had a... technical difficulty with transport. On a bus near here, I mean. Not the plane.

He glances at Harold, who scowls.

BENJAMIN

We lost our ride unexpectedly. So, if we could use your phone?

Farnaz snorts, points to an old ROTARY on the counter.

FARNAZ

Feel free. And blessed it hasn't been disconnected... yet.

Benjamin grabs the handset. Then hesitates, confused.

BENJAMIN

How exactly does this work?

HAROLD

Stick your finger in and swipe. That's how your "apps" work, too - right?

Harold shares an amused look with Farnaz.

HAROLD

Kids these days. So helpless. Then again, you're not much older. One third my age, no?

Farnaz eyes Harold's weakened state.

FARNAZ

Let him work. You - please, sit down.

MOMENTS LATER

Farnaz boils tea at a stove.

Harold and Aadina face-off at the table. Aadina slurps milk from a cup - offers some to Harold. Harold grins, pats his stomach.

HAROLD

No, thanks. Lactose intolerant.

A confused look from Aadina. Harold chuckles.

HAROLD

Trust me, you don't want to know. Keep it for yourself, little one. For me, years of Polish soups were enough.

Benjamin talks excitedly into the phone.

BENJAMIN

Yeah. We're at...

He shoots a questioning look towards Farnaz.

FARNAZ

Silwan, Wadi Al-Rababa. 175 Ezrat Nidhim.
That's what they call the street now.

His face sours, as if he'd like to spit on the floor.

BENJAMIN

(into the phone)

175 Ezrat Nidhim. A taxi in twenty
minutes? Fab!

Farnaz looks dubious, glances at a clock on the wall.

FARNAZ

Twenty minutes? Not much time for...

He catches himself, forces a smile.

FARNAZ

Resting. But until your "ride" comes, my
home is yours.

The kettle whistles. Farnaz pours tea into cups.

Waving to Ben to join him, he sits down.

The three adults face each other. Awkward silence, but
for Aadina's happy chirps.

Harold takes a sip of tea. Sighs. Looks around.

HAROLD

Suitcases? Going on a trip?

FARNAZ

Consider yourself lucky. If you'd been an
hour later, you and your grandson would
have found us... gone.

Aadina swings her legs. Accidentally kicks Ben.

BENJAMIN

Ow!

FARNAZ

Aadina, behave yourself!

AADINA

Na'am Baba.

She settles down.

FARNAZ

She listened to her mother more than I.

BENJAMIN

When's Aadina's mom coming home?

Farnaz's face falls.

FARNAZ

Never. She was murd-
(eyes Ben's Yarmulke)
Killed by snipers.

BENJAMIN

Oh my God. I'm so sorry.

Harold's eyes widen, strangely affected by the word.

HAROLD

Snipers? Here? Now?

FARNAZ

(bitter)

If they were, you'd be safe. It was IDF soldiers in the market, last year. They said she had scissors. Which - she did. She was shopping for groceries, and some young man his age, with a uniform...

(points at Ben)

Panicked. So now she's gone.

Farnaz pulls a worn photo from his jacket: a smiling picture of NOOR (30s.)

FARNAZ

That's my wife, Noor.

AADINA

Omah!

FARNAZ

Aadina's young. She doesn't understand yet. That's for the best.

EXT. - OUTDOOR MARKET (JERUSALEM) - FLASHBACK - DAY

Noor argues with an IDF SOLDIER, juggles scissors and a bag. He pushes her back.

Something flashes from a rooftop. BANG. Noor crumbles. The bag drops. Groceries roll out, mingle with blood.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

Benjamin chokes on his tea, reddens.

BENJAMIN

It's none of my business. I should've known not to ask.

FARNAZ

A boy from Brooklyn know what life's like here? How could you, so far from home?

BENJAMIN

No, I'm very informed.

Mortified at his own faux pas, Ben stammers on.

BENJAMIN

The occupation's got to end!

FARNAZ

But the US is a "friend of Israel."

BENJAMIN

The government. But my generation? No, thanks. My friends and I believe in BDS!

Farnaz squints, unfamiliar with the term.

BENJAMIN

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. That's why we took this tour - to see what's happening in Gaza and the West Bank, up close!

FARNAZ

Thank you for your thoughts. But my daughter and I aren't in a petting zoo.

BENJAMIN

(points at Harold)

We need to make the older generations aware. HE thinks Israel is paradise...

Farnaz and Ben turn to a strangely quiet Harold, who seems lost in another world.

BENJAMIN

Grandpa? What's wrong?

HAROLD

(whispers)

Snipers in a market. That brings back... too much.

He zeroes in on wriggling Aadina.

HAROLD

Consider it a blessing she doesn't remember. I can't forget. I was twice as old when it happened.

BENJAMIN

What happened? When?

HAROLD

Warsaw. 1939. I was a boy of ten during the Siege. Saw several neighbors gunned down. School friends caught in the cross fire. All for the "sin" of being Jews...

EXT. - OUTDOOR MARKET (POLISH) - FLASHBACK

Everything's sepia tone. The market explodes in chaos. NAZI SOLDIERS spray bullets into a CROWD.

TEN YEAR OLD HAROLD ducks behind a barrel. People scatter, scream. Fragments fly.

A soldier's shadow from above eclipses Harold's terrified face. He closes his eyes in terror, prays.

EXT. - OUTDOOR MARKET (JERUSALEM) - FLASHBACK - DAY

Farnaz holds a howling Aadina. The market's sealed off with police tape. He cranes his neck to find Noor.

Sees blood on the ground, spilled baskets and a covered corpse. Unable to ID, Farnaz also closes his eyes. Prays.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

Harold sips tea to hide both his face and fear. But trembling hands betray how painful such memories remain.

HAROLD

All those buildings and lives destroyed. For what? My brother was one of the dead. They rounded up my family, walled us off - used us for labor. My grandfather resisted. They shot him, too.

Farnaz's face melts.

FARNAZ

My grandfather was killed in the Dayr Yasin massacre.

HAROLD

Dayr Yasin?

FARNAZ

(bitter)

A village the Zionist troops ethnically cleansed in 1948, in order to create a "land with no people", which they could claim for their own. Over one hundred died in that Nakba.

HAROLD

Thirty thousand perished in the Warsaw bombing.

FARNAZ

Every life is precious. One or one million, such killing's wrong.

HAROLD

I remember most what happened afterward. The disease. The hunger. They called it the "artificial famine". They did it on purpose, to keep us weak. Every day that passed, I didn't know when my stomach would be full next. My father often gave his meal to me, but I could see what such sacrifice did to *him*.

INT. POLISH LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Young Harold watches as thin SOUP'S ladled into a bowl.

YOUNG HAROLD

But, papa!

His father smiles down at him, pale.

HAROLD'S FATHER

Eat, son. You need strength.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

Harold's stomach GRUMBLES.

Farnaz jumps up. Runs to a bag on the mattress, pulls out BREAD. Returning, he sets it down before Harold.

HAROLD

Thank you kindly. But these are just memories. I'm not that boy anymore.

FARNAZ

(sarcastic)

That much, I can see.

Benjamin snorts. Covers up his smirk as Harold glares.

FARNAZ

But young children are resilient. Once one's body is aged, we need it more.

(beat)

Your story - another thing we share. The Israelis "put us on a diet", too.

Ben reaches across the table and steals a chunk of bread. He chews it thoughtfully, listens. He's never heard his grandfather talk of such things before.

BENJAMIN

I knew you were in Warsaw during the war, but -

HAROLD

Young man, there's *plenty* you don't know.

Harold locks eyes with Farnaz, continues.

MONTAGE - THE SEIGE OF WARSAW - FLASHBACK

The battle rages, both ground and air. It's mayhem, all forms of war. Harold's voice narrates:

HAROLD (V.O.)

Trapped like animals. Many deported to Treblinka. Early on, my father and others did what they could. Smuggling in weapons, food. That ended in '43. The Germans came in. We fought back. Now fourteen, I did too. But we didn't win. My father died that day. They sent me to a camp, but I survived. By then, hunger was an old enemy. I knew how to cheat it.. enough. When they finally let us go, I escaped to the US. And New York.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

Harold blinks back tears. Farnaz leans forward, takes the old man's hand in his.

FARNAZ

I was right. Young children are resilient, even in the worst times. But you don't regret fighting back?

HAROLD

Are you kidding? I'm proud! They came to rip us from our homes. Not for anything we'd done, but because of who we were. Knowledge of such evil can't be unlearned. "Never again" is no empty motto. It's a moral order from God.

Outside, engines RUMBLE. Ben perks up.

BENJAMIN

Our taxi's here?

Sirens WAIL. Farnaz jumps from the table, grabs Aadina. Ben's eyes widen in alarm.

BENJAMIN

Are we under attack? Is this a bomb raid?

Farnaz stares at Ben, digests the assumption.

FARNAZ

An attack? Yes. Bomb, no. Nothing you need worry for.

He points Aadina towards her backpack.

FARNAZ

It's time. Grab your things. Go.
(to Harold and Ben)
We're in Silwan, my American "tourists". That's the construction crews. They're bulldozing our house for a Jewish settlement.

Farnaz grabs his suitcase, pushes Ben and Harold towards the door.

BENJAMIN

Oh God. I read about this. Are they giving you anything in return?

FARNAZ

(chuckles darkly)
Warning to leave. Nothing more.

EXT. - OUTSIDE HOME - PORCH - DAY

The group stumble onto the porch.

Just a few feet away, a BULLDOZER looms over the house.

Harold glances down at Aadina. Weighed down by her Princess backpack, she lingers at his feet.

The shadow created by the BULLDOZER engulfs her face completely. Harold whispers. Blinks.

HAROLD

Ripped out of your homes. Not for
anything you'd done... but who you are.

A BEEP from the street prompts Ben to whip around. At long last, the taxi-calvary's arrived!

BENJAMIN

Dziadzio, your coach is here!

Another BLARE of the siren. The meaning's obvious: Get out. Farnaz scoops Aadina into his arms.

FARNAZ

Well, thank you for the distraction and
company. My home may have been your home.
But now, it will make way for others.

Farnaz strides down the steps. Ben follows, waves for Harold to come.

But Harold doesn't. Instead, he sits down on the porch.

BENJAMIN

Grandpa! You're no match for heat. Let
alone a bulldozer!

Harold smiles up at Ben. Then Aadina. Crosses his arms.

HAROLD

I said "never again", and I mean it. I
survived the Warsaw Ghetto, goddammit. So
let those bastards -
(nods to Ben at the word)
Try to go through me.

FINAL FADE OUT: