

THE TWO OLIVE TREES

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Cast of Characters

JUSTICE (an American naturopathic doctor in his twenties who becomes a missionary to the Middle East)

LIBERTY, his wife (a Canadian naturopathic doctor in her twenties)

THE DOCTOR (a professor from the U.S.A. living in Istanbul, Turkey, around forty)

TWO GUITAR PLAYERS (serenade the three diners at the restaurant)

Act I

Scene 1. Justice and Liberty speak of themselves, how they met, and their beliefs from separate end rooms, as we are introduced to their respective characters.

Scene 2. Justice and Liberty come into the middle room and converse back and forth at the table.

Scene 3. Justice and Liberty fly from Seattle to Istanbul. Here they go to stay at the house of the Doctor, who is working for the underground church. They visit a Turkish restaurant where they converse about their goals and his work there.

Scene 4. Justice and Liberty visit the Parlour House with the doctor. He is later taken in the night by Turkish authorities and executed.

Scene 5. Justice and Liberty must leave Istanbul. They travel to Israel where they find a house that can be used to take in children there.

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Foreword

The Two Olive Trees is a study of two prophets, Justice and Liberty. Originally a book of prose-poetry, this play involves a journey that takes them to study natural medicine at one of America's top universities, and then as missionaries to the Middle East and Israel. The two olive trees, mentioned in the Bible in the eleventh chapter of Revelation and in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, represent the two prophets who stand before the Lord of the whole earth. Olive trees were also painted very characteristically by van Gogh, as well as other artists through the ages.

Justice and Liberty are in the Middle East, dedicated to the cause of the underground church, but when they lose the one person they need the most, it seems the only thing left to do is try their wings and go it alone. As they travel from Turkey to Israel, the guidance of their hearts emanates and they do find a home in Jerusalem where they resume their teachings at the university there, and uncover a deeper meaning to the vocation of healer in the physician.

Justice and Liberty are not only prophetic partners, but intent on leaving a legacy that is immortal in their time. They are faced with martyrdom that deepens their security, telling both of their deepest fears and noblest character. Someday they will know the reason they came to Israel, but for now it is enough to spell out the emotion of this land. They, in their hearts, cultivate an Israel that will know the Lord the way an olive tree knows its gardener. This play bears a portrayal of life's greatest reward for those who are most hard-pressed and overcome.

The Wild Lily Institute

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Act I

Scene 1

Setting Notes : There are three separate rooms. Unlike a one-act monologue, the actors speak their lines as if alone, in three separate divided rooms. Their contact throughout the play is limited, and serves to enhance the dramatic rising action. The postmodern element of this play is its poetic style to demonstrate that these are two prophets who are giving prophetic words, symbolized by two olive trees. The interaction between characters is highlighted by them moving from separate end rooms in darkness to the lighted center room to speak to each other.

The play begins in the United States where Justice and Liberty are naturopathy students, until they graduate and marry. It then moves to the Middle East, and the home of the professor, then later Israel. At the beginning of Scene 1, the three rooms begin in darkness with a candle then lit in the two rooms on alternate ends. When each character speaks, the lights go up in their room.

Note: This play takes place in modern times in a Muslim country (Turkey), where the gospel is illegal, and Christians can be arrested for their faith and evangelistic activities. To blend in with the local women, Liberty is wearing a long linen skirt and modest blouse. For two young Christian doctors to move to Istanbul to teach at the university is taking a calculated risk.

JUSTICE (*in stage left room, lights first candle*): Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls. . .

LIBERTY (*in stage right room, lights second candle*): The most massive characters are seamed with scars. . .

JUSTICE: Martyrs have put on their coronation robes glittering with fire. . .

LIBERTY: And through their tears. . .

JUSTICE/ LIBERTY (*together*): Have the sorrowful first seen the gates of heaven. . .

(quote from Chapin)

JUSTICE: Do you remember the fateful day we met?

LIBERTY: I held in my arms the riches of kings: all the field in bloom stretching as far as the eye could see, wildflowers filled my basket on the day I met Justice.

JUSTICE: I took your picture in sepia that day so I would not forget how the spires of wild roses reminded me of church steeples.

LIBERTY: I was clothed in white garments, a linen dress that swept the meadow.

JUSTICE: The stately innocence of the last church's vast naves at sunset, its chorale echoing down the valley.

LIBERTY: The sun bequeathed the dawn, breathing life into each bud, fern rustling beneath the deer, the stream gathering momentum to rivet the glade with its rushing nuances.

JUSTICE: The church rose from her trappings of the old world, guilt and sin like a discarded chrysalis, shed for the long monarch skirts of summer, the tentative afternoons with flight on baited wings.

LIBERTY: Nature is my home, and the place where I grow and cultivate. Each row of yellow corn, and green gourd, each field of blueberry, flax and rye, white and sweet potato relinquishes its fruitful harvest, feeding the family.

JUSTICE: The soil hides the seed deep in the ground where from the center of the earth it grows and reaches redemption in the wind, rain and storm, in gentle sunlight and warmth.

LIBERTY: The seed lies in the ground dormant, unaware until it rises above the ground and is cultivated.

JUSTICE: The most resilient and smallest unit of life: it exemplifies waiting more than anything.

LIBERTY: We cultivate many hurts, dreams, truths, and notions, waiting until what we believe is proved to us, proving what we live, our lives a hypothesis that invites healing over failure and pain.

JUSTICE: The garment I wear is of many nations, coloured by many flags draping the peoples of foreign places waiting for their dreams to be realized, pained by the labor of birth and the gestation of life in its incessant pattern relaying investment.

LIBERTY: My eternity will be found in the generation that witness to the truth I profess, that I made a life resonant to stand like oaks in the field—stalwart at sunset, the light riveting my solitude into the art I practice day by day.

JUSTICE: What is truth but a deeper revelation than fact: the information that makes for passing news—new one day and the next day, out of date.

LIBERTY: To speak, is to listen first of all, to hear the straining of each liquid green captured in a leaf.

JUSTICE: Into the realm of art comes the order to speak.

LIBERTY: The same order made to the pearl of a rosebud in bloom, or the perfume of a dahlia reaped beneath the dusky sky.

JUSTICE: The constellations speak of the earth and the rule by which it lives and gives life: each season has its starry celestial moment on the grand stage of time; the curtain peels back and riveting it appears, a glorious stolen coronation.

LIBERTY: We walk, I with you, wanting to one day reach the ocean's shore, its salty mast, its stinging lash of foam and driftwood timed by the moments of moon, mentoring the sand with starfish.

JUSTICE: The sea anemone hide in tide pools, tiny shells mend mosaics on the sand—I am most me when I find my home; I belong where the orcas breathe passing in the vast sea.

LIBERTY: All that is in the deeps calls your name, seeking the center of all that lives. The waters teem with life, providing nourishment to every country both near and far: all of life witnesses the wild orcas.

JUSTICE: Who is the mother that encompasses the depths of the earth, the great waters, and the nature that inhabits them? All her comfort is juxtaposed with terrors and she builds up and tears down in a single day, washing the earth like a laundress.

LIBERTY: What she no longer needs she will throw away, and we all rise up in furor to declare our worth, to, with precision, calculate our days on earth as moral and not given to licentiousness; we are caretakers of this earth and the realm of all nature.

JUSTICE: How this world must be guarded and replenished, kept sacred for each generation, moving us beyond measure to recalibrate and recover, to rest and to heal, to eat and sleep in rhythm—knowing that each new day will afford us the opportunity to build with wood and stone a home in the eternal realms.

LIBERTY: I am not ashamed of the beauty of my eternal Christ, his similitude with light, and good tidings to all creation. In his hand is a sword of protection and truth to all nations; he has put in my hand the word of God for all to hear.

JUSTICE: I was born of the days when I took up a sword to duel with the gods and prove my worth. Each spirit tells his right to dwell inside a human domain when wells of the spiritual life wane, but I will draw my sword and be a conqueror.

LIBERTY: Once I dreamed of you and my soul waited in expectation; now days pass and the sun winds itself into the clouds conducting the symphony of the elements as my mind turns the page.

JUSTICE: A dream is a notion unto itself, ever wearing at its dreamer, and from the moment one is born until one draws his final breath there is a dream that lays the path of life from beginning to end, world without end.

LIBERTY: I am tested beyond belief, yet I will not bend in my honest romanticism of life, the skylarks and daffodils—the sky, verse composed by a master, and the decrepit modernism of mutual convenience will no longer hurt my soul, taking it down to the depths.

JUSTICE: I stand in the doorway; I have been the keeper of many dreams, visions, and impartations to man . . . and he is silent without the thought that is truth over fact: the revelations that heal are like drawing water from the wells of chance and glory.

LIBERTY: The groans of self-sacrifice for greater gain occur day in and day out with each worker of each working day paying with his blood, and sweat, for the pennies that will feed his family. And yet, he does not complain that his nation is poor, and he does not leave.

JUSTICE: He who overcomes what in life is his undoing, what contends with all he believes to be true and of value, will eventually lay down his cloak for a Saviour, to proclaim Hosanna! to the one honoured among men: he has heard the invitation of prophecy and given way to proclaim a King.

LIBERTY: The one who gives up all for love will find great wealth in the next world; this one bespeaks the pain of poverty, illness, disease and strife, asks that we find in solitude, in contemplation, the transcendence that will heal our wound.

JUSTICE: I looked to heaven once to understand the breaking of bread, the symbol of wine for blood, the sacrifice of everything, and philosophized that to equate a man with a sacred cup is to transcend this earthly place of suffering for the divine nature of God.

LIBERTY: The incense is burned to ash and here we are left wondering how this came about; how we became white flowers in a dry field, butterfly hovering over the yellow grass.

JUSTICE: The comeliness of your prayer is the request for silence, for serenity, and for freedom from the world and its vices. How you would hear this song, sung deep within your heart: God's prayers for you ache with completion.

LIBERTY: At the gateway of worlds I asked for a son who would bear the hatred and indifference of mankind, believing a beatitude of forgiveness as a king wears a purple robe, crowned with compassion for the hurting and the poor: injustice turned to love in his kind and noble face.

JUSTICE: What is truly significant has no end, but continues into eternity, and the man who loves most is truly the king of truth, belying his passions for ethics that will stand his ground. Turning the world upside down with mercy on his enemies, his steady look will pierce a withered fallen race.

LIBERTY: As each generation plants its seeds of rhetoric and plans its destiny, so I venture out into the world seeking its acceptance, hoping to be successful at planting and harvesting

my field of thoughtful wishes gathering the fruit of my labors, burning the chaff when the harvest is done.

JUSTICE: I relinquish what is dear to me, in seclusion: loving by holding to what is most mine with open hands, letting the rain fall from the sky as a gift to the ground, watering the field, then plowing the soil, rich and full of life as a servant of the seasons, waiting on their mercy.

LIBERTY: My seed germinates unseen, bearing the messages of growth, blossom and fruit, herbs of restorative prowess, speaking healing to my country and its plentiful ground where the words of truth are valued and kept for generations after.

JUSTICE: I sit beneath an apple tree in an old orchard, where the wind blows in its branches, the bark like parchment paper of a cherished book, reading the day from dawn to sunset, eating the scarlet fruit, sweating juice, writing a record of days.

LIBERTY: There has to be a moment where freedom first tastes like a much desired fruit, with all the qualities of an after-hours drink, a step toward the wine of inebriation, daring one to have just one more tumbler full of sherry, turning a blind eye.

JUSTICE: If night were descending in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia would sound the alarm; one would be taken as prisoner and made to pay the price. Where a drink is inadmissible, one can only hope to make a stew with onions.

Lights fade. End of Scene 1.

Scene 2

In the dark there is the sound of pigeons fluttering. The lights go up. JUSTICE and LIBERTY are in the middle room, sitting at the table. Here there is only a table and chairs. The window behind them is closed.

LIBERTY: There was a time when the moon, a sliver in the night, hesitated as it reflected the sun—the light of all peoples, milling from country to country illustrious and decadent in education, or illiterate and poor, the dust rising toward heaven, a line of ivory camels disappearing into the desert.

JUSTICE: I saw the large orange sun rise glistening over the dusty citadels of Arabia, the turrets whispering prayers toward the East, kneeling and bowing, intent on an archaic

worship that blackened the heads of the women, faces covered, walking without cars to make amends to the busyness.

LIBERTY: Standing by the one window, facing out toward the darkness, I remembered your letter and thought the twilight would capture you like a rising moon. In the injury of our steadfast sorrow, our unspoken thought would be like a tide that crashed between us, unbending in its course and ravishing the seashore.

JUSTICE: The passion of the Christ met the gentile world, in its unsculpted form, in its darkened comparison to your companion. Yet Israel was tall and stately and walked among the Jews with an open umbra; in the marketplace, her hair in cascades, shoulders deep, a sword at her waist, she was a rival, a glittering amethyst bearing oils.

LIBERTY: The camels across the open sand, a sea rifted by a dark wind, in train swallowed by each consenting dune, followed the moon. Three pears and a peach with meat roast over the open flame. The turbans weigh dark heads and earnestly hide prayers. The domes reach skyward, the children humming like bees.

JUSTICE: The bath house was there when I was taken dusty by the side of the road. My shutters clicked when oiled Arab people bent at the landscape, dusty and barren. They are well-intentioned, and speak in phrases long and concise. The army sent several officers in my direction once, and I waved them on by.

LIBERTY: Standing on the bluff overlooking the city, the lights like candles alight as the dark falls and the moons come out one by one. In dreams, I remember the austere institution where we studied natural medicine, and the lantern light of your physique as you searched through botany textbooks.

JUSTICE: The pillars were white at the old seminary, and the ornate bronze doors held the memory of your incense. Down in the orchard, the apple trees were small and knarled and pointed the way to paths in concentric universes, ending in a stately diamond.

LIBERTY: When you had passed the water tower, and found the path to the bottom of the wood, where the lake became no longer a far-away ideal but lapped the small shore in calm anticipation, you bent to Lake Washington's waves and became like a harvest in a far-away hothouse.

JUSTICE: When the birds hit the windows, the tiny twangs metering the silence are startling, but the out-of-tune upright is not. You could even draft a version of the Moonlight

Sonata on it without too many wrong notes. Someone left France once with the thought of pursuing medicine, and a Russian pianist fought her way to America.

LIBERTY: The young Catholic couple wandered about, and a few people volunteered to sing carols at Christmastime. The Chapel was well decorated with mistletoe and holly; fake trees in the hallway glinted with silver bulbs and tinsel. Students received packages from home, hailing from a distant city.

JUSTICE: The snow falls six inches deep and the hickory hills look like an Iceland morning. The med students converge like slight winged pigeons on millet and six hours pass before eventide. In the even, with a head full of unplayed music, you play the piano. When the glass is frosty, the icons in the windows simmer and grow transparent.

LIBERTY: The steady-winged shadows under the Virgin flicker and the wide stage beckons, waiting for an antithesis of nine feet. The grand piano is ushered in for a concert by the symphony. The strains echo in the vast chamber resounding on the Gregorian chant sound panels from Europe; and then when it is over, this grand notion waits in the wings.

JUSTICE: Still, under the stairs, the mats and mirrors begat a tryst with some minor key. Once a dancer, you could always find a myriad of ways to say hello to youth. The mats are ivory and sweat glistens to a Christmas oratorio. Each candlelight service across the emerald city beckons the bright child's dance.

LIBERTY: In the elusive springtime, the bells ring and class is dismissed. The med students weave their way through the halls and the cafeteria is structured to accommodate coffee, bananas, and tofu. The long windows gaze out over the sloping hills.

JUSTICE: The nut-shell covered ground was shaped into pathways around the herb exhibits with gold plaques, and the name of each and every one in full botanical splendour was comprehensible at last. Once a year, they allowed you clippings for a dollar.

LIBERTY: The sunny girls in bonnets fry eggs, but we avoid cholesterol like the plague. The zookeepers absorb our unfriendliness with hot broccoli, the crush of people thins out around two. Each pencil sketch brings us closer to reality, and the human dimensions of your soul are escaping peril through the art of medicine.

JUSTICE: Someone brings a cake to a potluck and it is made of Egyptian kamut. The flowers are honeysuckle and early hibiscus. The slight insipid pansies wilt and die. The momentary tulips are petal-bright, and we are all just chewing softly while we wait for you.

LIBERTY: Eventually we finished with our diplomas in hand saying goodbye to fast friends, promising the world of medicine to make a difference, we set out on the journey of our lives. It would take us again to the Middle East: this time we were bound for Turkey.

JUSTICE: We know a doctor from the university there and he welcomes us to come, so we jump at the opportunity: we will be teaching pre-med at the University of Istanbul. We will trade our knowledge for experience in a country we would grow to know and love, but in all, we embraced the risk of being Christians in a foreign country opposed to the gospel.

Light fades. End of Scene 2.

Scene 3

The Doctor's house (center room): The center room represents the two young missionaries' unity and their destination in Istanbul, Turkey. Here in Scene 3, coloured swaths of cloth and baskets hang from the ceiling. There is a wood table with three chairs in the middle of the room, and a neatly made single bed in the corner with a patchwork quilt. The window, which can open to the street, is behind them. There is also a door behind them so they can exit. JUSTICE and LIBERTY are in separate rooms until they reach the house of the DOCTOR.

LIBERTY: We boarded a plane and it climbed into the sky, we watched as Seattle and the old seminary became a far-away dream, the ornate gold chapel had closed its doors behind us for now, leaving two people bold and riveting, following our simple wedding.

JUSTICE: When we reached Istanbul the window was open to the street. The blue swathes of cloth fluttered in the rippling wind. Dante's Inferno lay on the bed, half-read, in the doctor's Turkish home, and the grandfather clock chimed the hour. (*Sound of clock chiming*). The children in the street played a latticed hopscotch, and bicycles sat propped against a brick wall in the courtyard (*as he says this, he looks out of window*).

JUSTICE and LIBERTY enter the middle room, where everything is just as he said.

LIBERTY: There was a guitar leaning against the back wall that needed tuning. The tall windows were too high to open, except one. (*She opens the window at eye level.*) And the dust usually settled by mid-afternoon. We sat and ate our first meal of cold lamb before unpacking; "Here we are," I wrote home.

LIBERTY sits down to write a letter at the table.

JUSTICE: The time floats by, and like a ship we ride the waves of peacock-bright hues and strong tastes, a waterworld of brusque food and foreign wine. The women were hearty, the children dark-haired, and the television was usually on. We will not forget the reason we came: and love burned like one small candle.

DOCTOR enters. He is dark and very suave.

DOCTOR: Love is that way. And now we will see to your belongings. Your room is just to the left, tucked away under the eave.

(The two of them go through the door into the room stage right.)

DOCTOR *(calls to them)*: Do you love this country yet?

JUSTICE *(calls back from next room)*: We know there's not much that would ever make you leave. You've married the country you love, and we are your witnesses.

LIBERTY: You have made us feel at home.

DOCTOR: Aha! I bet you like seagrass mats and coloured slippers *(to himself)*. Could I interest you in some fine Turkish dining? *(He calls to them in the next room.)*

They return to the main room.

JUSTICE: Yes, you could.

LIBERTY: Sounds lovely.

The three of them go back into their respective original rooms and the light dims to set up restaurant.

LIBERTY *(says in the dark)*: At nighttime, the sky is spun with stars and the folk music is captivating, while men in cloaks carrying Ottoman swords stand in the entrance. Waitresses pass carrying fruit on trays, their long dark hair swaying in rhythm like hooves. We sit and tap our fingers: how they love the music and warm bread, the garlic and goat cheese and olives.

Turkish music fills the room as two men with mandolins serenade them from the corner of the restaurant (guitar music plays).

LIBERTY looks toward the DOCTOR and smiles.

DOCTOR: (*Leaning over toward her.*) You're a writer, and a doctor I hear. Every few years you should publish a book.

LIBERTY: I may teach science, but yes—my interest is in words, correctly expressed.

DOCTOR: Creative writing then; poetry?

LIBERTY: You can't really ever submerge a poet; but my schedule for this fall is full of students and classes to teach at the University of Istanbul. But dancing I won't give up; why I love Israeli dancing when I have the hardwood floors all to myself.

LIBERTY: I used to lie on the porch and listen to the music: "Thank you for the chance to live again, I will run only to you." The afternoon stretched out like a fragrant garden: each rose unplucked, each tended leaf; she remembered the doctor's green thumb in America and his love of fine furniture.

JUSTICE: Why, our relationship in America goes way back several years. You never made any demands on us to join you.

LIBERTY: No, it is our faith, our complete voluntary zeal for missions that brought us here. Even the danger compels us.

JUSTICE: What demands of us will eventually fulfill itself. It has reason and it will encompass a future. The child in us must thirst, for in thirst we find reason. We find the reason to be filled and satisfied. It is in finding that balance that we are esteemed by others, by ourselves.

DOCTOR: Give us a clue then to your interest in Turkey. What captures your interest? You've spend months studying this foreign place, and now you're finally here.

LIBERTY: I am captured by this country that majors in sunshine: round and orange, setting over a myriad of colours and songs, of old instruments, out of tune, and shiny new Volkswagens.

JUSTICE: I like the art, and the food. Goat cheese is one of my favourites, anything Mediterranean!

DOCTOR: Well, the food you say is to your liking. Very good. But you're both here on a mission. A mission that you know little of. I have yet to explain to you (*he leans over and whispers*) the danger you've put yourselves in; the risk to our very lives. . .

JUSTICE: Doctor, we've got you covered. We know about your Bible school here in the the underground and the sacrifice you make to keep it going. We're here to help in any way we can.

DOCTOR: Well I appreciate that. You will be of great influence on your students. Having a job helps, yes. But there is more . . . I know you are writing things about me, documenting things about our work here. Take care that you do so in a way that protects all our interests.

LIBERTY: Doctor, you can be sure that our metaphors keep you well hidden; and we never write in public. It was merely to keep our church at home aware of your work. Everything from my computer is encrypted though.

DOCTOR: Well, now, I take it as your generosity in helping with the work. Never would I question you; merely taking precautions, that's all.

The lights dim. The three separate back to separate rooms.

LIBERTY's voice: Plants wilt on the windowsill and the African violets turn brown. The stacks of music on the floor elucidate Rachmaninoff. But the flowers bloomed in the front walk at the university in spring. Professors nodded back and forth, stringing the hallways with nuances. We tried to keep up the pace of eclectic tappings in the face of medicine's cold religion.

JUSTICE's voice: Somewhere a theatre waits in velvet and purple brocade, an entrance to a grand world of plays, poems, and literature. It has stone pillars and an archetypal figure could resound into the stillness. Wheat is a heart and chaff is a half-hearted attempt. What is strength, is not to falter and give one's life for a fallacy.

The lights go up. They face each other, impassioned.

LIBERTY: The stone in my ring is an opal and represents the conceptualized woman: the idealized race. The essence of the Muslim government's force was to turn it on its head. This woman would never live to grow old, never be cherished and always be hurt.

JUSTICE: She would die with her hands tied behind her back, her children ripped from her arms, her force an unbraided rope, a chalice nuance floating in the desert as a ghost; perishing at the hands of her enemies. She is the reason we came to this torrid Turkish dance floor. May we now untie you, may we braid your hair? *(he turns her around and takes her hair in his hands.)*

The lights dim. End of Scene 3.

Scene 4

The DOCTOR is alone in the middle room at the table. He pours some coffee from a decanter.

DOCTOR: “Oomp-paa-paa, oomp-paa-paa, sing us a tune little one,” the garnered women of the street call up to your window. Flowers are sold in the open market in all seasons, and Liberty hangs them from hooks on the walls until they are dried. The sundials used to tell the time in the park, and now the clocks tick in unison, black and white. (*Lights dim again and scene props are changed to depict the Parlour House*).

JUSTICE is alone in his room. When he speaks the lights go up.

JUSTICE: The mosaic floor shines at the Turkish Tea House where we sit on Friday afternoons, the sunlight leaching through the panes and fading the woodwork. The sculptures in marble and brass grasp Plato in the dull roar. . .

Both doors open and they seat themselves in the Parlour House in the middle room.

DOCTOR (*wearing a yellow slicker raincoat, to LIBERTY*): Look at the marble statue of womanhood. Now, you are very statuesque. It’s your poetry. You don’t write enough or you would publish. For one thing, laundry is not the main point.

A musket and tiger head hang on the wall at the parlour house. They play a game of parlour for chocolate coins. There is a glass decanter of Turkish tea on the table.

JUSTICE: Turkish tea has a sugary flavour all its own.

DOCTOR: Turkish tea is spicy, hot and pungent, warming the very soul. You’ll never forget Turkish tea, or the coffee either. Aaah! (*He puts his mug of coffee down abruptly.*) It’s nice and strong. (*He says in his Turkish accent.*)

LIBERTY: When I see the doctor amid the flavors of the street, meats and wines, making his way home at sable dusk, usually the table is set and we have baked the bread and the stew is slow-cooked and the green beans, vibrant. Holding hands around the table to pray: this is how we came to teach at the university.

JUSTICE: The bath house will steam the toxins out of you every time. We wrap our hair in turbans and speak in different religions from our own modest ports. The moments tick by, waiting for a thunderous standing ovation. We would take a deep bow if we gave our all.

LIBERTY: My hands finger my ring and shawls hang over the backs of chairs. We are quiet and lathered in olive oil soap. At the university where we teach science, the students are just as demure. When the bells ring, they change classes and carry oranges. They have new books and clean notepaper. When they write it brings tears to our eyes. Sometimes you have to try to change.

JUSTICE: In the evenings you play Bach by heart. What is in the heart cannot be explained with the mind. The heart commits treason if it does not master by practice. The mind forfeits if it cannot comply with its own rules. The Turkish have half as much on their plate, but a palate of solid gold. They streak the sky and it gleams faintly.

DOCTOR: If I bear his scars and wounds on my body, if I can no longer speak, what will you do then, little one? You sing out loud at Easter and Christmas, the rest of the time you are silent night. (*pause*) I have always loved you.

The DOCTOR leaves the Parlour House; he exits through the door behind them.

JUSTICE: Impressionism dots the surface of a dozen paintings framed on the art gallery wall. When he refused to grow old, he painted, van Gogh. I shall have memorized at least one chapter of my favourite book. You shall practice the cantata until you can play in the dark without a star.

LIBERTY: I press coloured leaves and coat them in wax. I send them to our dearest friends in letters with our greetings. We visit the concert hall every-so-often; the high-strung night waits outside and the people crowd the entrance. A concerto in violin sings, the watermark from oil to the parched for advent's velvet eventide.

The lights dim, and they all return to their respective rooms.

The lights go up in the middle room, now with just the table/ Doctor's house.

DOCTOR (*middle room*): The river is swollen, and like a jester, it flaunts in silence the cold wind, diminishing the sky and holding the tomb.

JUSTICE (*room stage left*): When I held your silent white hands, they were immaculate and the soul, humble and obedient, without a bed or soil, was like a photograph in blue and white. O church, behind the vast and solemn paradigm: one beleaguered candle, shedding verse.

LIBERTY (*room, stage right*): The cement was crippling and torturous to us, an archetype of stagnant fury. Where stained glass rose behind its stale front, the bed was suddenly stone-still and the window, open to the street, left us reeling in a cold abysmal terror under a regime of torture inflicted on the innocents.

JUSTICE: The doctor had disappeared, and there was no trace of his whereabouts, but we knew if we found him alive he would be chained in the Turkish prison for his message of the love of God to a gentile people. (*Pause.*) We cried silently.

JUSTICE and LIBERTY enter the middle room at the same time. The window is open, and the single bed unmade and askew. The book is open on the floor. They cry, holding cloths to their faces.

JUSTICE: The books fluttered and were silent under the open window and its linen curtain. A mock trial had ensued when the doctor was imprisoned. After three months he was executed. The young Liberty held her head high, shedding tears, but we could not continue to exist in this forsaken land. She packed up our possessions leaving no trace of our whereabouts, and we left for Israel.

Light fades. End of Scene 4.

Scene 5

JUSTICE and LIBERTY are in the middle room. They talk back and forth, but each is speaking standing, as if the other is not in the room, with appropriate gestures as if telling a story.

LIBERTY: We travelled with an archeological dig. Sifting through the remains in the desert: the pottery shards, the spikes and the tiles, nothing is deemed unimportant. I record the symphonic movements in stone and the sun sends chills down my spine. At nighttime the tents are loaded with tarps keeping the sand out of our eyes, and some drivers cross the grid in the currents, with only the stars for direction.

JUSTICE: My mother was a washerwoman in India once, my father was a statesman in France, my brother was an oil well digger in Alaska, my sister, mon coeur, was a princess with a dime purse in New England. Whittling at a few last objects of humility, the remains of an ancient and stately people, I am waiting for Israel. Somewhere in the crowd I will find

her, with her tall and lanky perfume. I will ask her to dance. I will know the steps and it will work.

JUSTICE takes her hand and they dance.

LIBERTY: At night, I remember the moonlight shadows of your physique, walking and walking down among the pear trees, bearded like little old men, they pointed the way to paths through the magic wood. Someone had evoked a healer within you to right the wrongs of the human body, and the world outside, in both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of medicine. Here you did not belong to the cold and sleet, the rainy grey days.

JUSTICE: The coffee being poured into mugs meant a respite from studying to feel-good notions of peace, but the symbol had been done away with a long time ago. Did bluebonnet outface you once? You could not consent anymore, not after having dunked your bread in oil. When the sweet cheeks of olives hung on the limbs; someone captured their signature at a glance.

LIBERTY: In Israel, I sit under an olive tree like a statue, beside the water. My dark hair mixes with the wind, au vent, un ange, composing a song is too tedious so poésie will suffice. Walking along the bank, a baby is held in arms—too young for anything but dreams.

LIBERTY pours olive oil into two wine glasses.

JUSTICE: If you wandered up the hill and down and met the sea of Galilee, you could cry out in a loud voice. No one would hear? “Who would be antagonistic at the pain?” I asked my friend once. “Who would stop the whisper though?” he answered. Tough pain means tough love to some people. I don’t ask any questions of your love.

LIBERTY: We finally found the place: a rented house in Jerusalem. The clock ticks slowly and the tea sits in mugs, both peppermint and blueberry. The music will grow on the old stone floor; Jewish music is a circle dance with festive skirts and bright tambourines. (*She takes out two boxes of tea.*)

JUSTICE: But the paintings in the archives of our home town are plagued with nudes. A medieval current swings its shield, a knight in armor. A goddess religion seems plausible and attracts guests—witchcraft is not far from wild-crafting herbs. But under the Jewish sun, could we stay awhile?

LIBERTY: Like white cream, the music from the orchestra permeated the auditorium’s notions of chemistry; the textbooks were new, but the seats carved and valerian was like a

subtle perfume guarding against early confusion. The schedule was slated for us to teach into the next year. (*They both sit down at table; she looks down at a piece of paper containing her schedule*).

JUSTICE: (*Sits at table, marking papers.*) I teach biology like an undisclosed journal entry; singing, as we are sung to; reading, as we are read to; saying no, as we are said no to. Science is deeper than fact, but belays hypothesis and probability: the construction of ideas, that we might assume new things based on the old.

LIBERTY: Let me live while others die, my body cries—My spirit would presume to die first, for another. I believe that Israel is tired of death and the funeral procession, and would prefer to look on down the dusty road at a future for her sons and daughters, at olive groves, and citrus plantations. (*She puts lemons in a bowl in the centre of the table*).

JUSTICE: Like the moon, left alone—a fragile reflection of the sun. Your planets move in succession, actors in a theatre. We revisit the nature of earth to duel with human nature and the supernatural at its birth as our mind-altering and mortal fragile coil disappears leaf by leaf, thread by thread. . . as history unravels.

LIBERTY: My ideals to attain goodness, mercy, and love in this life are bound up in a crucifix where reason ends in the natural world and character begins: we presume our values will guide our decisions, but find that fate and chance may throw the die. (*Pause.*) I'll let you carry on.

JUSTICE: I have only the natural world and its impermanence to speak of the divine and the eternal. Yet I place all my material possessions before an altar of stone; because I am mortal I cannot take with me anything but the precepts of healing and love. I am honored to be the recipient of this teaching gift, but what of pathos and medicine?

They both take a wine glass of oil and drink (this could be apple juice).

LIBERTY: I drink deeply of the soul of love, what I dreamt I would be before my spirit was shrouded with death and ravished by the world of no-mercy. I taste the fragrance of God in the place of no return, where I thought my heart doomed forever to an evil caste, wearing an ornate mask of disguise and folly.

JUSTICE: I am hounded by time which cleanses my sorrow and rights my grief, pursuing me for a greater purpose under heaven than fault and chagrin, that I may know rescue.

LIBERTY: The very water of peace washes me from the inside out, a fountain of the deep which knows my soul and bubbles up like a mineral spring. I have no recourse but purity and healing, no destination but the road to the cross—where thorns are a crown, blood is wine, and broken body is bread.

JUSTICE: Your healing becomes my clash between life and death, saved and unsaved, the sword dividing innocence and guilt—finding life at our truest moment.

LIBERTY: You designed the song of my spirit, raising me again, making me whole, baptizing me, submerging me in the cold waters and bringing me forth. And the perfection which comes with the knowledge of you knows that you have designed every minute of my days, meant to resonate with your purpose.

JUSTICE: You have come to recover my losses, to restore my heritage, to redeem my blood, that I might sit at the city gate.

LIBERTY: Where could the love of my soul pour from if you were not its source hour by hour, day by day, year by year. I know only the startling void of unimportance, of being silenced by the vastness of time, falling into oblivion, nothingness.

JUSTICE: Without you, my soul would scratch on the door of hell and heaven turn its back for a more educated man, more dedicated, and with a louder voice.

LIBERTY: Of the peace where the dead sleep until the rising: may their deeds rest with them, and their hands be folded as if in prayer. Silence rebounds. For the living shout aloud; they praise the God of heaven and earth. The joyful know that their home is with the eternal.

JUSTICE: The youth of this land cry out from the spirit of restlessness and the search for a home, the children ask for plenty and promise, they wait at the table.

LIBERTY: What is this chalice, this cup that I drink so deeply of pain that is not even mine, that I bear the pathos of many souls and desire their suffering be felt in my body, my core resounds. How could I betray? Knowing nothing of the other side of sorrow, the discretion of lost tears, of humble gestures, I would be poor.

JUSTICE: But here, gain entrance to the door of royalty by sharing the dark wine of what is not mine, aging my purpose for a thousand years.

LIBERTY: Pathos means I bear the hurts of a brother I cannot see, and hear his cries of pain. I feel his wound, and touch the side of Christ, drawn deeper into what is just. The mercy of

the cross can pass through me to another, when I have put aside myself, and all that is mine, trading it for the emptiness of hands, open in worship.

JUSTICE: The holiness of healing has only begun when the dregs of compassion pass by my door and reside with me as costly, purposeful robes.

LIBERTY: O healing dreamer! The cost is great, and the way difficult to find—Yet you continue on, a pilgrim in a foreign land dipping your feet in the pools of healing water. You collect the herbs and leaves that will restore to youth those that have taken ill: blistered by the sun, dampened by the rain, carried by the wind, all you gather look to you.

JUSTICE: Their minds cannot fear death when you sound your horn of felicity, their hearts are no longer bare of chivalry, beating on the sharp thorns they buttress for glory.

LIBERTY: You deeply consider the things of nature and God, the devout paths of martyrdom, of hunger and thirst; and their consensus with eating and drinking of his righteousness. You take your food as a sacrifice, from plant and animal, from barn and field, from river and ocean, and cook it over a fire, called directives to life.

JUSTICE: The forging medicine wheel goes round, ploughing the ground of hardship, piercing brittle seed, breaking the flesh of gourd and maize—a systemic stew.

LIBERTY: Your battle is fought between sickness and health, and you will always be the victor if Healer is your name, and medicine your cup. You are the means to an end in your healing hands. Be a healing dreamer and rise a physician, studying the clouds and sun, watching the weather for signs of the storm—bottling the elements in vials like fine oil.

JUSTICE: The mind of a botanist knows the properties of each plant, the depth of its power, and harnesses the green liquid of the chlorophyll to restore to balance.

LIBERTY: The swan that could never be silenced flies night and day, rose from the flame of martyrdom, swept the sky—and torment ceased. She rose, the beauty, from sin and hate, unhindered by the dark, late on her journey, prophesying of a greater world to come.

JUSTICE: Phileo! shouted the healing dreamer, holding the reins of his wild white horse, where he descended and trampled on the multitudes vying vainly for first place on a corporate ladder.

LIBERTY: The healing dreamers assembled their works, and became a great book whose pages turned in the wind, and over the ancient fire, with leaves of steeped tea . . . The book

prophesied of a time when medicine would heal because its energy was companion to the human soul: resonating of its distress yet rectifying its imbalance.

JUSTICE: They who had walked for miles knew of the journey of dreamers, before they reached the medicine—the way of healing dreamers to touch the sick with compassion and reverence. Prophecy to me (*he says, impassioned*) Speak the truth!

LIBERTY: Healing dreamers, come, part ways with a corrupt society that does not cure, a drug that binds its taker enslaved, a disease which time and fretting do not heal. Take us from a death of sorrow to a place of freedom; a dance in the desert beneath the flowering palm, an oasis of purity and the comfort of kindness, the bed whereupon you shall find peace.

JUSTICE: Dream of the place where every soul is restored, and find the greatest physician there, a champion of character and the might of a hundred horses, the white rushing.

LIBERTY: I have stated my case, I have championed my cause; one day the people of this land will remember I was first in a long line of healing dreamers waiting for admittance to walk the hallowed halls of medicine. Our patients stand—a thousand in line, whispering in the cold of a cruel sentence, flinching at the daunting task of reparation, fingering the oil that hangs like mist.

JUSTICE: I put on my coat, and made my way to the door. I opened the hallway of the hospital to the healing dreamer . . . He was physician without a potion, just empty handed and waiting for a miracle.

JUSTICE opens the door to the next room as if he is expecting someone to be there.

LIBERTY: When the day faded and night came, the young and old sat around our hearth fire foraging for story, pondering philosophy, deep into the dark. The men had many tales of bravery and wit, their souls bore wounds which were signs of valour. They sat in the circle and proudly showed their scars, the marks of conflict and resolution.

JUSTICE: When the people realized that to be a keeper of the circle, a guardian worshipper, a healing dreamer, one must have the talking piece, and permission to speak—then one's words would rise, we began to sing.

LIBERTY: Once like the sand of the sea on the shore, the children of Israel cried out to the Lord: we have wandered afflicted as the years turn to stone, and our hope dies away on the wind.

LIBERTY lights a candle on the table as she talks.

JUSTICE: Wait by the road, watch in the night, the morning is coming, we wait for the light. The fields have been ravished, the towers are gone, our spirits are broken, but still we wait on.

JUSTICE cups his hand around the candle flame.

LIBERTY: When we have enough to finally buy a house, we sit in the living room and consider the children of this land. The children need a safe place to learn to love again, to live their dreams. The mind has fragile sheaths that protect it like a bud, and many encompassing full bloom. Listen in the quiet, when your thoughts are undisturbed, and you do not cringe in pain at former words. *(She reaches out her hand and they hold hands.)*

JUSTICE: When the blanket of the house envelops you and the innocence of children that played and ate and dreamed was nothing short of perfection, we would not merely sit cross-legged and wait for the medicine.

They part and each go back to their respective dark rooms. Music plays in the background of Ennio Morricone's Cinema Paradiso.

LIBERTY: *(Returns to the middle room).* One lily on the porch has rights to bloom, near the advent of a sacred candle. The fountain trickles by under the statue of St. Clare, and I in my bright-hued shift obtain entrance to a wider world. One room exemplifies music, and one art, one is a solitary office and one a large conference. The foyer is the meadow between the two woods, where we meet and meet again, crossing the creaking floorboards one at a time.

JUSTICE: *(Also returns to middle room.)* Unspoken, my office sits you down, my chairs invite, cherish you, my windows overlook the garden, and my armoire will hold your photograph: for the days of laughter pass in pewter streams and the heads of children pass that are now counted.

LIBERTY: When you gain the right to be cherished and speak, when you obtain access to your own private world, then the garden of your soul will bloom in all the colours of love. Tell us in words how to live, and without words when we are silent. For you will be the strength of our future; once as children of day—we now view the setting sun, the nightfall.

JUSTICE: Thin and humbled, you look on us and we are but your art, sculpted in clay to attend you. We reflect the ceilings of time, refinished and reinstated. Brocaded in white is where the angels tread.

LIBERTY: For the angels trespass upon men in chains in the dungeons of the earth, and secure them for the eternal: this glory, which spoke first for our souls, then for our eternity. Those in prison see first the darkness, then the light, as they pass through the deep river for heaven's gates, where the poor and the persecuted are given their reward. Surely there is a just retribution.

JUSTICE: We did not know we could set off to every nation with the touch of healing, and cover the earth with the prayers of mankind, for we lived without understanding until we left homes and possessions.

LIBERTY: When the night has parted its pavilion for the morning with its sweet smoke, and the lucid dreams of light dissipate noiselessly into the sunrise . . . I will have found my home in the new Jerusalem, where the gold streets lead worshippers to a new wall, where prayers are answered, and the cries of his children in chains for the gospel fall like rain.

JUSTICE: Death looks us in the eye again and again, but we have won our battle with injustice and imprisonment when we ask of the medicine, heal—and heaven to dream the victory.

While they have been in the side rooms, someone has lit fifty small tea lights in the side rooms. At the end there are the candles burning in the dark. Music fades.

Lights fade. Curtain.

*Notes: for interior photos of a Turkish restaurant such as the one in the play visit:
<http://www.antiochiaconcept.com/galeri.php>*