

NAKAM

1. The Plan

It was the view of certain Jewish Holy Men that, Revenge having failed –an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth –a great imbalance existed in The Universe, a great Hole of Existence. A spiritual catastrophe for the Jewish people.

In response, young survivors' from across Europe gathered to address the question of Revenge: NAKAM.

While there are rumors of revenge raids by soldiers of the British Jewish Brigade and others into Germany, in 1945, '46, there was another Jewish group, made up mainly of partisans, ghetto fighters, and young survivors of the concentration camps, that sought revenge on a large scale. It was called NAKAM (revenge). This is an imagined account of what may have happened as they began to organize.

ABBA: A fighter from Vilna.

ROSA: From the Warsaw ghetto.

MORRIS: A survivor from the camps.

HAIM: Another survivor.

HELLER: From the Jewish Brigade.

PAUL: From the Irgun.

Note: Some speeches are played out to the audience.

ROSA: Good morning, Abba.

ABBA: Morning.

ROSA: How are you?

ABBA: I feel sick. Sick at heart.

ROSA: Yes. As do I.

ABBA: I had a bad dream last night. I've lost something, something dear to me, and I spent a long-anguished time trying to get it back.

ROSA: We've lost everything. Our honor as a people. Our culture and self-worth.

ABBA: Something slipped away from me, and I couldn't get it back.

ROSA: We've fought. We fought in the woods, in the Warsaw ghetto. In the French Resistance. In Italy and Greece. Poland. Russia. Lithuania.

ABBA: It's not enough.

ROSA: Where were you?

ABBA: I'm from Vilna. I broke out of the ghetto there. And then I joined partisans in the forest. And you?

ROSA: Warsaw.

ABBA: Remember, no names. Absolute secrecy.

ROSA: There are so few of us here.

ABBA: More are coming. From the Jewish Brigade, the Irgun, others. Wandering survivors of the camps.

ROSA: How many in all?

ABBA: Maybe fifty. Funny, how many enemies I made. Half for not inviting them to join, half for inviting those with a taste for revenge.

HAIM: Many want to work on their own. Individually.

ROSA: How many?

HAIM: Maybe hundreds. They're killing camp guards and officers of the German Army, the Nazi party. One by one.

ABBA: It's not enough, as you say.

MORRIS: Most want to go home, reclaim their property, find their people.

ROSA: You know what's happening?

MORRIS: Yes.

ROSA: It's not over. We are being murdered in front of our houses, in the streets, on the roads.

ABBA: It must stop. We must make it dangerous to hurt a Jew – anywhere in Europe.

HAIM: How?

ABBA: By reprisal. An eye for an eye.

MORRIS: An eye for an eye? It's the Lord's work.

ABBA: Not in this case.

MORRIS: Psalm 94. We are Jews, the conscience of the World.

ROSA: The world is in chaos, and we have not been redeemed.

MORRIS: Revenge equals redemption?

ABBA: No. Revenge equals revenge. We need to get even. For the sake of our ancestors. For the sake of the generations to come. The massacre of the Jewish people cannot be tolerated or forgiven. It must be punished.

MORRIS: Why not attack the British and the Americans?

ROSA: Wake up, Morris.

MORRIS: I am awake. It was inconvenient to help us. The Jews can wait. The Jews can wait until they're all dead.

HAIM: The sonsabitches.

ROSA: Why didn't they bomb the camps? I can't understand it. To this day I can't understand it.

HAIM: We were expendable. The whole world knew.

MORRIS: A great sin has been committed, a shame on mankind that will last till the end of time.

HAIM: But we must remember. It is our duty to remember.

ROSA: An unforgiveable, eternal sin.

MORRIS: According to some Rabbis, the balance has shifted. The balance between Good and Evil. Evil has won.

ABBA: Alright, it's true. The balance must be restored.

MORRIS: Through revenge?

ABBA: Yes. Revenge. Justice.

MORRIS: No. By the next generation all will be forgotten.

ABBA: So what will you do?

MORRIS: I'll join the struggle against the British in Palestine.

ROSA: No. We need to act here first. We need to start. We need to start now. I feel like I'll go mad if we don't act. All the Nazi officers and S.S. will get away if we don't move quickly.

HAIM: We can pick them off one by one.

ABBA: Some of us are doing that. It's not enough.

MORRIS: What would be enough?

ABBA: Six million. *(Silence)*

ROSA: I agree.

MORRIS: Impossible.

ROSA: We need to find a way.

MORRIS: No. I'm done. I'm not going to start anything. In a few months, the world will have forgotten what happened here.

ROSA: Even more reason for revenge.

HAIM: We must never forget.

MORRIS: I won't forget. But I don't know if I can kill.

ABBA: Go home.

MORRIS: No.

HAIM: Mankind is a pus on the planet, an infection that causes murder and mayhem.

ABBA: So, what are you doing here?

HAIM: Rosa brought me.

ABBA: Rosa?

ROSA: He wasn't going anywhere. He was lost. He can help.

HAIM: I can't help. There is no help.

ABBA: Get out, then.

HAIM: Fine.

ROSA: No, let him stay.

ABBA: Why?

ROSA: He's an Avenger. And he knows where the German POW camps are, including the S. S. He has a map.

ABBA: Common knowledge, Rosa.

HAIM: Everything is written down. Everything is filed. The Germans kept a careful rendering of their deeds.

ABBA: Now is the time. Before the prison camps are dispersed and the murderers escape.

HAIM: I'm here for a dime, I'm here for a dollar.

ABBA: What does that mean?

ROSA: Nothing, really.

HAIM: It's American.

ROSA: He says odd things sometimes.

ABBA: What was he doing in Germany?

HAIM: I was a blue-eyed wonder.

ROSA: He was a spy.

HAIM: Harry Hoffman was his name.

ABBA: Who were you working for?

HAIM: The Americans.

ABBA: Which Americans?

HAIM: The Jewish Committee.

ABBA: You didn't do too much, did you?

HAIM: No. Many Jew-haters in the U.S. And elsewhere.

MORRIS: And there always will be. It's in the air we breathe.
In the soil we walk on.

ABBA: Why didn't they catch you?

HAIM: I'm a very good actor. Even now.

ABBA: And your family?

HAIM: I got them out early, over the mountains to Spain.

ABBA: And now?

HAIM: I was lost. Then I was found.

ROSA: I found him roaming the countryside in rags, starving, filthy, confused.

HAIM: How do you know which way to go?

ABBA: This is a revenge group. We will go into Germany. We will kill as many as we can.

HAIM: I will observe. These are the last hours.

ABBA: What does he mean, Rosa?

ROSA: Civilization is over. History is over.

HAIM: I am a camera.

ROSA: He won't interfere.

HAIM: In what? The sky falling? The burning of the forests? The destroyed cities? The delusion of revenge?

ABBA: What does that mean, sir?

HAIM: The last day is the longest day.

ABBA: Tell this man to shut up or leave.

HAIM: I'm not a problem. I'm a witness.

ABBA: We don't need a witness. We have plenty witnesses.

HAIM: Interesting dilemma – witnessing the end of the world, the end of God. The end of History.

MORRIS: He's right. Time evaporates history.

HAIM: The nations of the world are as nothing, phantoms in a dream. This is the End.

ABBA: This is not the End. This is the beginning. We have got to even the score and hang on. And then we can build an honorable Jewish State.

HAIM: Suit yourself.

ROSA: We have many shattered people on the roads and in the forests, and in camps. Wandering, lost, like me. Like all of us.

ABBA: We know.

ROSA: We must take them into account.

ABBA: We'll wait a bit for things to settle down. But we can't wait long. Meanwhile we can plan our attack.

ROSA: We must move quickly. Others are already on the move.

ABBA: You're right. As soon as we are prepared.

HAIM: The destruction of an entire nation. I saw it with my own eyes.

ABBA: That's why we must act.

HAIM: What kind of action can restore that world?

MORRIS: None can.

ABBA: Not restoration -- revenge.

ROSA: Haim would gladly give his life, Abba.

HAIM: What life? What's to lose? We have seen the Beast.

ABBA: Are you armed?

HAIM: I have a loaded Luger pistol that I took off a German officer at the end of the fighting. I worked in his office. I was his slave. I had been captured in Gdansk. He was packing up his stuff. I asked him politely if I could have his gun as a

souvenir. He scoffed at me and said no. "Make a run for it," he said, "The Russians will be here any minute."

ABBA: And?

HAIM: We struggled. I got the gun and shot him. In the head. He was not surprised. Then I changed clothes' and started walking. West. Toward the Americans. And then I lost my way.

ABBA: Is that true?

HAIM: Maybe. You will never know.

ABBA: Let me see the gun.

HAIM: Here it is.

ABBA: Okay. What are you going to do with it?

HAIM: I'm not telling you.

ROSA: Let him be.

ABBA: We've had enough of suicide.

HAIM: I'm not planning to shoot myself with it. People are walking around, lost, bones in rags. I might shoot one of them.

ROSA: He doesn't mean that.

HAIM: Some of them want to die. I'll be making it easier for them.

ABBA: No. Turn it on the Germans. I mean to punish those murdering sons of Satan.

HAIM: Good for you.

ABBA: And I'll kill you if you get in my way.

HAIM: Be my guest. *(Abba kicks him.)*

ROSA: Stop!

ABBA: I'm not going to put up with him.

ROSA: He's harmless.

HAIM: No, I'm not.

ROSA: Let it go. We need to get started.

HAIM: I'm ready now.

ABBA: Don't do anything.

HAIM: I'm not doing anything.

ABBA: And don't say anything. This is serious. We need to respond, make a plan of attack.

MORRIS: And bow down to Hashem. And bow and bow. In gratitude.

HAIM: You must be kidding.

MORRIS: He saved a Remnant.

HAIM: Fuck that shit.

ROSA: I agree. What are we waiting for?

HAIM: Not the Messiah.

ABBA: Revenge. Otherwise go home and stay home and stay safe.

MORRIS: And pray. A Jew prays. Every day of his life. He prays in gratitude for his existence.

ROSA: Pray to what? What 're you talking about? Who could even be thinking about such things?

MORRIS: I am.

ROSA: Think of Bar Kochbar, the Maccabees, the Destruction of the Temple, of the Second Revolt against the Romans. It's in the bible.

MORRIS: I know that.

ABBA: The first resistance in France were Jewish high school and college kids. Academics. They killed German soldiers on the streets of Paris, in the Metro, in the woods. Someone broke under torture, and the SS lined them up against a wall and killed them all by firing squad.

MORRIS: I know. You don't have to instruct me.

HAIM: So, shut up or go home.

MORRIS: I have no home.

ROSA: Where was it?

MORRIS: A town called Pinsk. It was in Poland and then in Russia. And then in Ukraine. Now, it no longer exists.

ROSA: None of us have homes anymore in Europe. We'll be going to Palestine. Or to America.

MORRIS: God willing.

ROSA: If we survive.

HAIM: Stop with the God stuff, Mister.

MORRIS: I don't think so.

HAIM: I'll break your fucking head.

ROSA: Never mind. Remember why we're here. (*Enter PAUL*) Greetings, Paul.

PAUL: Greetings. Are we still speaking of revenge?

ABBA: We are.

PAUL: Good.

MORRIS: You want to kill Germans? Any Germans? Women and children?

PAUL: Just like the krauts were with us. Now, they're scattered all over the place. They're scuttling around like rats, to South America and the U.S.A.

HAIM: And?

PAUL: We should hunt them down. One by one.

HAIM: Right!

MORRIS: It would take a generation. And a hundred thousand men. Weapons. Artillery. We'd need an army.

ROSA: We don't need an army. Just a few good hunters.

MORRIS: I'm not a hunter. I want to go home and sit in an armchair and look out the window and thank God I'm alive. On Friday nights we'll light candles and go to Shul.

HAIM: The man is dreaming.

PAUL: After this, I'm going back to Palestine; I'll do more fighting there, against the British.

MORRIS: Yes, that's where I'll go as well. The Homeland. I'll start over in Jerusalem.

HAIM: What did they do during the war, these hotshot sabras, they did nothing.

PAUL: Not true. We sent arms. We organized Partisans. We blew up trains and ambushed Germans in the woods. We arranged for escapes from the ghettos. We dug tunnels and blew up walls. We sent people in; we got people out.

MORRIS: Which woods? What woods?

PAUL: In Belarus, and Ukraine. Poland. Vilna.

MORRIS: I saw plenty Zionists, not one soldier from the Yishuv.

PAUL: And what did you accomplish?

MORRIS: Fuck you.

ABBA: The War against us is not over. Now it's time for us to make war against them, fight back.

PAUL: We've done some of that already --

ABBA: -- It's not enough.

MORRIS: It'll never be enough. They're running away.

ABBA: I'm going after them. The killers, the murderers, the Master Race. I want to find them and crush them before they escape our retribution.

MORRIS: And then what? I'll tell you: Life will go on as before. Some jerk will wake up one day and say it's time to kill Jews. Take their property and their money and their women and burn down their houses. Wipe them out forever.

ABBA: Not if we make the Germans pay. It'll be a lesson to the world and future generations.

PAUL: Soon we'll have our own army.

HAIM: When?

PAIL: Once the British are out of Palestine. And then we'll fight the Arabs.

ABBA: We can't wait for that. It would take a generation.

ROSA: We need to make our plan.

HAIM: That's not what I was thinking.

ROSA: What were you thinking?

HAIM: To hang myself or shoot myself. After we've done a few things.

ROSA: Like blowing up Germany.

HAIM: I don't see the sense of going on. And going on till the next pogrom or massacre: No. I can't stand the images, the stories, the people, I can't get them out of my head. Babies smashed against walls, split in two by bayonets. German nineteen-year-olds having fun.

ABBA: Wait. Revenge is near. Revenge is sweet. Revenge is necessary. The Butchers. The murderous sadistic evil sonsabitches. Cops, sanitation workers, teachers, lawyers, and librarians – they all believed. Young men our age, most of them. Hot shots in the S.S. Handsome, ambitious blue-eyed butchers.

PAUL: We have hundreds of thousands of our people wandering on the roads. On the beaches in France. In DP camps. And the S.S. is on the run. We need to catch them and kill them. Some are in a prison camps. We need to get them before they're released.

ROSA: They're fading fast. Into the rat holes, into the walls. The forests. South America. It's open house there for Nazi murderers. I was in the Warsaw ghetto. For months we lived in the sewers. All my friends were killed in the fighting.

MORRIS: I was shoveling ashes when the Russians were at the door. When I saw them, I ran, the Germans wanted to burn everything, and then they marched the dying toward Germany, in Winter. Thousands died on the road. I walked for weeks, months. I had no idea where I was going, till I ran into Paul and his Partisans.

PAUL: When I escaped into the woods, I killed two Ukrainian soldiers, teenage boys. I killed them both. Just boys. I remember their faces, that look of youthful innocence. It was that look, you know, where you can't believe that what's happening is happening. They were kids. They had no idea what they were doing. But it was me or them.

HAIM: Thousands and thousands and thousands, with that look: How can this really be happening? It's an amazing thing. The human mind. It can't catch up with horror. The incomprehensible. They figured it out, the krauts. You say a big lie, and you say it often.

MORRIS: Ukrainians, too? Do we go after them too? And the Russians?

HAIM: How about the Poles, the Rumanians?

ROSA: No, just Germans.

HAIM: Vichy France?

ABBA: No.

HAIM: Germans and Austrians?

MORRIS: It's too much. Two countries. Too much. It's absurd.

ABBA: The German cities. Berlin. Munich. Hamburg. Frankfurt. Nuremberg.

MORRIS: They have already been destroyed.

ABBA: Not by us.

ROSA: it was a matter of stupidity and pride that they became pigs and slaughterers. No shame, no remorse. They became ignorant blood-thirsty animals.

HAIM: The U. S. They're going to rebuild Europe.

ROSA: The Germans will be off-guard.

MORRIS: I never saw a Palestinian Jew.

PAUL: We were there.

MORRIS: I'll take your word for it.

PAUL: Thank you.

MORRIS: After all, you are a Jew. Sephardic, yes?

PAUL: Yes.

MORRIS: Where from?

PAUL: Salonika.

MORRIS: So, what will you do?

PAUL: My plan was to hunt them down and kill them. Quietly. No trace. You stake out an office or a club or a military camp and do it fast and get out.

MORRIS: Like a professional assassin.

ABBA: Yes. The Irgun and The Jewish Brigade. I learned well and things got done. On roads and trains, German Army officers on the run. And then the Americans put a lid on it. They wanted to make friends with the V 2 scientists and hold off the Russians.

MORRIS: The Russians were killing and raping right and left.

ABBA: Not us.

MORRIS: No, the German stragglers. Raping the women. Looting. Burning shit down. It was punishment enough maybe.

ABBA: Not by us.

MORRIS: They have a different attitude, the Russians. They're not like us. Not at all.

ROSA: There'll be thousands of Russian-German bastards. How will they live with that, I wonder.

ABBA: Not our business. Our business is *Nakam*.

HAIM: We can't kill six million Germans.

ABBA: Why not? We can try. Already we've had some success.

HAIM: When was this?

PAUL: When everyone was on the run and the British looked away. We hung a few German officers from trees. And then we were at the DP camps and the crowds on the beach, I was there, trying to organize the refugees. And whenever we could, we went after the Germans. We caught them on the run.

MORRIS: I'm tired. I don't want to walk anymore or go anywhere.

ABBA: Okay. Stay here.

HAIM: Where are we going?

ABBA: I don't know yet. It's on everywhere. We should continue gathering the survivors and coordinating with other groups. Meanwhile we continue tracking and killing the S.S. wherever we can find them.

ROSA: We know of at least one S.S. prisoner camp.

ABBA: Good. But also, something bigger, as some of you know.

HAIM: Like what?

ABBA: What could get the most people at one throw.

HAIM: An Atomic bomb.

ABBA: Very funny. Think again.

MORRIS: Foul the air.

ABBA: Close.

ROSA: Poison.

ABBA: Yes.

MORRIS: How?

ABBA: We can poison the reservoirs and lakes and streams.
We can poison the food.

HAIM: Where is the poison?

MORRIS: Where can get our hands on the poison?

ABBA: We can buy it.

ROSA: From whom?

ABBA: I can't tell you.

ROSA: We'll need a lot of it.

ABBA: I know.

ROSA: Where is it?

ABBA: Paul?

PAIL: I'm waiting for a courier.

ROSA: From?

PAUL: Some people I know.

MORRIS: Which country?

ABBA: Don't be such a hard-on.

MORRIS: I can't believe it.

ABBA: Shut the fuck up.

HAIM: From where?

PAUL: The Middle East. That's all I can say.

ROSA: What poison?

ABBA: Arsenic.

HAIM: Why not a bayonet and a scalp? There were tribal people, from the U.S., warriors. Navaho. They'd go out at night with knives and come back with German scalps.

MORRIS: Yeah. You catch a Nazi in his office, he's arranging photos of his family, portraits of himself with war medals, photos, awards, you come on him in the dark and slit his throat. We could do that before they've organized the mass emigration of the SS to South America.

ROSA: Did you do that?

MORRIS: I can't say.

ROSA: Sounds like you enjoyed it.

MORRIS: I wouldn't go that far -- It's a dream, a fantasy.

ROSA: Wake up!

MORRIS: It's already too late. I'm asking myself: What good would it do?

ABBA: We're not trying to do good; we are trying to restore our honor. Stop with the "good."

PAUL: The problem is the ratio, the balance between the poison and the water so we have the right balance. We don't want them to just get sick and avoid dying.

MORRIS: Overkill. Women and children.

ABBA: Tell me. How many of our people, women and children and old men?

MORRIS: I don't know. No one knows.

ABBA: To pick off an officer or two it does nothing to avenge our losses. Scuttlebutt in the American army is that they want to save these Nazi killers to build rockets for the U. S. of A.

HAIM: This is true.

ABBA: We don't know the repercussions, the consequences. They could be huge for the Jewish people everywhere.

HAIM: How so?

ABBA: Those scientists will be getting away with it.

PAUL: So, we need to think about it some more. We need to isolate and get to some of them before they're protected by the Americans.

MORRIS: You were a partisan; you never were in the camps.

PAUL: I was in and out of the ghettos, helping people to escape, like I said. If we could have joined together somehow, we could have taken them on, we could have saved more lives. That didn't happen. We were hundreds of miles from each other. And the nasty Russians, in the forests of Belarus, we were always running into the Russians. Sometimes we joined up, sometimes they turned us into servants, sometimes we fought. But it was impossible to improve our ranks.

MORRIS: What's your point?

PAUL: What's done is done. And no one will remember but us. We need to make our mark on history.

MORRIS: I agree with that.

ABBA: It's up to us.

PAUL: Yes. Then we'll get rid of the British. And then we'll fight the Arabs.

HAIM: So, what are you doing here?

PAUL: I'm with Abba. NAKAM.

ABBA: So be it.

HAIM: So. One by one is not enough?

ROSA: Nothing is enough. Nothing will ever be enough. So, let's be martyrs again? No. Like the Hasidim – whole villagers worried about kosher food – they sang the Shema and lined up on the ditches. Walked naked into the gas chambers.

MORRIS: What were they possibly thinking?

ROSA: I don't know. Things according to Jewish law. Food having to be kosher. Shit like that. Not believing what was happening to them, turning to God. Keeping the Commandments.

ABBA: Yes, they couldn't believe that what was happening was happening. They could not believe it. There are people

in every generation, more than one or two, who don't believe that what is happening to them is happening. We couldn't believe it; we could not make sense of it. We could not believe that what was happening was happening.

HAIM: What does that say about the Holy Jewish communities?

PAUL: Believers'. Idealists. Not in this world. In the next world. May their lives live in blessed Memory.

HAIM: What does that say about Mankind?

ROSA: We are savages. Even we, the most intelligent and learned of all the races. Feel the irony of that. Coming after us to exterminate – (*Trembling*) I can't stand it! I want to get back at them! Now!

ABBA: Soon, Rosa. Soon.

PAUL: Their minds are not right. The German people. There's been a mistake somewhere down the genetic line.

HAIM: It's the end of the line.

PAUL: But tell a big lie --

MORRIS: Amazing. All gone. Vanished.

ABBA: There are many on the roads, in the forests, on the beaches -- They'll go to America; they'll go to Palestine. But now, for us, there is one aim --Nakam.

MORRIS: I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go.

PAUL: Stay awhile, my friend.

MORRIS: I'm staying.

ROSA: Abba –

ABBA: Yes?

ROSA. We can poison the bread at the SS POW camps. We know where they are.

PAUL: It's not enough, we need to get them all.

ABBA: They're scattered around. Most of them will walk away, back into their lives or abroad to South America.

HAIM: Or Hell.

ROSA: I love it. They'll choke to death on their bread.

PAUL: Wait. How do we know how much poison to use?

ABBA: We'll figure it out, Paul.

MORRIS: Some of our people don't want to live anymore. They are jumping out of hotel room windows or poisoning themselves with arsenic or cyanide or going to madhouses to die. What is it like I wonder. To die. I had visions you know, while the dead were all around me. The Angel Gabriel. He would come to me in a glorious light. Forgiveness and light, and he would lovingly take me up in his arms.

ABBA: And now?

MORRIS: I want to be with my family, what's left of it, in America, and be glad for my life.

ABBA: Do you want to leave?

MORRIS: Yes.

PAUL: Let him go.

ABBA: Say nothing.

PAUL: Wait

MORRIS: What?

PAUL: I changed my mind. We can't take a chance. No one can leave.

ABBA: You'll stay with us, Morris. *(Pause)*

MORRIS: All right.

ABBA: Good. Later, you can go to America.

MORRIS: Like Haim, I have a gun. I have a gun. An American .45.

ABBA: We know you do.

ROSA: We could see it in your pants.

PAUL: Stay. You'll find a good use for it.

ROSA: I feel like I want to scream.

MORRIS: I'll stay. How many others do we have?

ABBA: Around fifty men and women.

MORRIS: All right, then.

(Suddenly ROSA stands and starts screaming loudly and angrily.)

HAIM: Rosa!

ABBA: Give her a hand! Hold her!

MORRIS: Stop screaming, Rosa!

(ROSA screams louder and louder, stops suddenly, a silence.)

HAIM: All right?

ROSA: No. Not all right. *(Pause)* Maggots! Maggots everywhere, eating the dead! Rats! Millions of rats! Eating the dead!

ABBA: I understand.

ROSA: No, you don't. You never lived in shit with rats biting you and Nazi idiots trying to kill you.

ABBA: No, but I did my share in the woods and in the ghettos. Enough said.

ROSA: Okay, okay. Fuck it.

HAIM: It's a disease in the species. A bloodlust. Psychopaths. A killing spree with no bounds.

ROSA: Shut up, Haim.

HAIM: No.

ROSA: Stupid fucking intellectual. It was a war to kill us off. Can you understand that?

HAIM: Yes. Sorry. I understand very well.

ROSA: I want to shit into their graves.

HAIM: Okay.

ABBA: That's what we must do.

PAUL: We'll have a Jewish state soon. It won't be long now.

MORRIS: We can't be like them, the *Goyim*. We can't do it. We are Jews. We are civilized. We revere Justice and the commandments.

ROSA: I don't care about that anymore! You stupid fuck! They killed millions of our people with impunity! I'm going to scream again!

ABBA: Don't. (*ROSA throws her chair at MORRIS.*) Rosa don't do that. (*MORRIS throws the chair back at her. A pause. ROSA sits down. A silence.*)

ROSA: We have guns?

ABBA: Not yet.

ROSA: We have poison?

ABBA: Not yet.

MORRIS: I have the 45.

ROSA: Let me have it.

MORRIS: Abba?

ABBA: Okay. (*MORRIS hands her the .45.*) Be careful with that thing. And the luger?

HAIM: I'll hang onto it if you don't mind.

ABBA: You have bullets?

HAIM: Yes. Four.

MORRIS: I had four uncles; Americans -- they all came back. One went from Hawaii to Okinawa, the whole four years, unscathed. Two married Australians', one a Filipina, they got good jobs, that was that.

HAIM: *Mazel tov.*

MORRIS: New York City.

ROSA: Is what?

MORRIS: A destination.

HAIM: I lost everyone. Not a single member of the family left alive. They were cornered in a town called Pinsk, where my grandmother lived on a horse farm.

ROSA: What's a horse farm?

HAIM: Don't be stupid, Rosa. It's a place where you raise horses. They were herded into the synagogue and the synagogue was burned to the ground, everybody in it. Including the horses. *(A pause.)* I was hiding in the woods. The S.S. stood and watched the fire, entranced, as though there were religious significance to it. Finally, the screaming stopped. Slowly the Germans got on their motorcycles and trucks, chatting, and telling jokes as they rolled away.

ABBA: Let's get on with it.

ROSA: Why didn't they bomb the gas chambers those fucking chicken shit antisemitic Anglo-Saxons, the railroad tracks, the train stations -- may it be on their heads for eternity!

ABBA: Nakam.

MORRIS: Again, I ask you: What will it accomplish?

ABBA: It will restore us to the life of the nations.

HAIM: Horseshit, people will go on killing and all the rest of it. Human activities. It's a mistake in Creation. And they go on living. They don't think about the Jews. Most people have never even seen a Jew.

PAUL: Sons of Abraham and Isaac. Creators of the Western canon.

MORRIS: Explain that please.

PAUL: Einstein, Marx, and Freud. I could go on.

MORRIS: Never mind.

ABBA: They didn't get us all.

MORRIS: Thank God.

HAIM: Stop with the God shit.

ABBA: We took it lying down.

PAUL: Not everywhere.

ABBA: Almost everywhere, in all of Europe. Fucking dogs and wolves and ignorant shitheads with bad teeth and shit for brains. (*Enter HELLER*) And we had people, you know, who helped them. Kapos cleaning the ovens, slave-driving the victims. Businessmen making deals. Greetings, Heller.

HELLER: How are you?

ABBA: Miserable.

HELLER: It's pride. It's our pride that's hurting.

ROSA: Someone kill this sonofabitch.

ABBA: No.

ROSA: Right now.

ABBA: No. He's one of us.

ROSA: I know who he is.

ABBA: We're talking about our families and friends and relatives and a five-thousand-year tradition of learning and obedience.

HELLER: We return as a defeated people, washed up on various beaches, fed by a committee in America. And they don't know the extent of hatred there, in the so-called beacon of freedom and equality.

HAIM: There's no returning to our homes or businesses, our families. The locals are murdering the returning survivors. I'm not returning anywhere. I'm finished.

ABBA: So, remain with us and we'll do something to even the score.

PAUL: We need to send a cohort of avengers to the towns and villagers to stop the killing.

ABBA: Yes, we do have a few. From the Jewish Brigade. Soldiers who kept their arms and went into the countryside.

PAUL: They can't do much. The so-called governments are clamping down.

ROSA: Antisemites all.

HELLER: Pride.

ABBA: Don't talk to me about pride. An eye for an eye.

HELLER: What's the plan then?

ABBA: We don't have a plan yet. We're organizing the plan.

HAIM: The soldiers I killed; they were just teenagers. Somebody told them to go kill Jews and they didn't know better.

HELLER: Somebody knew better. His parents knew better. It's in the walls, the closets, on the kitchen tables. "Get rid of the Jews and our lives will be better."

MORRIS: But what good is it killing the kids?

ROSA: The young soldiers of yours, who knows what hate-filled spite was in them, hunting down Jews? Gassing people and putting them in ovens, living or dead, what is that? What kind of people does that?

HAIM: Any type of people.

ABBA: We can't let them get away with it.

PAUL: They're scurrying all over Europe and back in Germany and a lifeline to South América.

ABBA: Meanwhile we do catch some of the rats and deal with them.

ROSA: Yes. By killing them.

MORRIS: Have you done so, Rosa?

ROSA: Yes, as you well know, and I'll do more.

PAUL: We have a group now, maybe fifty, some from the Brigade, survivors, partisans, the Irgun.

MORRIS: And then?

ABBA: And then we attack.

MORRIS: It's grandiose. Forget it. Six million Germans?

ABBA: Yes.

PAUL: I'm for individual work, or work in pairs, tracking these motherfuckers before they escape or fade into the bureaucracy.

PAUL: Two armed men, they track a colonel or a major, strangle him in his home.

ROSA: Have you done that?

PAUL: Yes.

HAIM: I have, too.

ROSA: We will do both.

PAUL: What happened to you Haim?

HAIM: Russian soldiers came into the camp. They couldn't believe what they were seeing. Stacks of skin and bones, the stench, starving people, dying people all over the place. I wasn't in too bad shape. It was chaos, I just kept walking down the road and into the woods. I was too weak to have any thoughts of revenge. I hardly knew where I was. Or who I was. And I somehow had to find clothes and get out of the prison rags and away from the smell. There were a few of us, wandering around. We came to a dirt road and an old Citroën was coming up the road. It was a group of German civilians fleeing East. And Vichy French. At first, we were frightened. It was me who had the most energy, I had only been confined about a month. So, one of the others, a woman, tiny, frail, skinny, went into the middle of the road and sat down. She was an Italian woman whose name was something like Carmine, or Carmela. She sat down in the road. The car stops. Me and the other guy, I forget his name,

went up to the car. They were scared shitless and baffled. They were heading East. They were wearing nice clothes. *(Pause)* I strangled the driver with my bare hands. The others ran away. I took the man's clothes which were too big for me, and his shoes, which fit okay, and the three of us walked on, hunting for food. None of us could drive. We headed South, toward the Mediterranean, walking all the way.

ABBA: And your companions?

HAIM: They both died on the way, they had no strength left. I abandoned them on the side of the road. I walked until I ran into the American Army. There were Jews among them. They could not believe what they were seeing across Germany.

MORRIS: What was their attitude?

HAIM: Confusion. Sorrow. Anger.

ABBA: Revenge?

HAIM: There was one little man, a civilian, who ran a business in Brooklyn. I became a mascot to him, and often we spoke of revenge. But he was too wrapped up in the American zeitgeist and revenge was too much for him. A couple of soldiers from the Jewish Brigade, on the other hand, were keen.

HELLER: Yeah, that was us.

MORRIS: I want to get to America. They leave you alone there.

HELLER: Not entirely.

MORRIS: According to my uncles.

HELLER: That's a different story.

MORRIS: I'd like to say the mourner's Kaddish for my dead.

ABBA: Let's do it here.

HAIM: Say it, Rabbi.

MORRIS: I'm not a Rabbi.

ROSA: Say it. *(MORRIS sings the first half of the Kaddish, then bursts into tears. A pause.)*

ABBA: Okay, give the man a hug. Heller?

HELLER: Look up. What do you see?

MORRIS: Blue.

HELLER: The sky, yeah?

MORRIS: Yeah.

HELLER: It's the atmosphere. What's in it?

MORRIS: Oxygen. Nitrogen. Carbon dioxide. Rain.

HELLER: Right. We breathe it to live. By some miracle.

ROSA: What miracle.?

HELLER: The atmosphere is thin, delicate. A few more wars, big fires, bombs, volcanos, the thing could break.

MORRIS: I see. But I don't care anymore.

ROSA: I don't either.

HELLER: Married, Rosa?

ROSA: No.

HELLER: Boyfriend?

ROSA: Relationship? Don't kid yourself. Anyone takes off their clothes around me I will scream with horror. Why? I saw dead naked bodies stacked up like larvae, bodies on the street turning to pus and maggots --- no, never, I want nothing to do with the stink of bodies.

MORRIS: I'm sorry I asked.

ROSA: I saw the smoke you know. I saw my husband and two daughters go up in smoke. And then I saw the ashes. What are we to make of such things? How do we live with it?

MORRIS: I don't know.

HAIM: Man as a predatory, psychotic animal.

PAUL: Not all men. We have retrieved our sanity.

HELLER: I'm afraid that man is correct –

MORRIS: Morris.

HELLER: I'm afraid it's true. I'm not right in my thinking. I'm obsessed with thoughts of revenge.

ABBA: As am I

PAIL: So, what are we doing with all this prayer and all this Talmudic reasoning, when it has nothing to do with reality?

MORRIS: It's so we can cope.

ABBA: No. None of that. We need to even the score. And then we can go on from there. Live normal lives in the homeland.

MORRIS: I'm sick at heart and sick in my mind. I cannot accept what's happened. I don't want to be near death anymore. Why did I survive and not the others?

ABBA: Guilt serves no purpose. Jewish dead are everywhere. Everywhere. And as a people, a nation, we need to act.

MORRIS: Six million?

ABBA: Six million.

HELLER: After the war, some of us in the Brigade wanted to continue the fight. Even if we failed -- to charge into Germany and Austria and wreak mayhem. I was among them. We had to stop. Why? The Zionists were against it. The lack of support from America and Britain.

PAUL: This was true during the War. The quotas. And they didn't bomb the trains or the tracks or the camps.

ROSA: Yes! Exactly!

HELLER: Anti -Semitism – the urge to kill Jews, it's in the soil and in the air we breathe. The smoke of our families went into the air. We are breathing their remains.

(A wailing, keening sound from ROSA.)

ABBA: STOP. We are organizing now to take revenge. We can mourn the dead for the rest of our lives. Now we must make our mark.

ROSA: That's a fantasy. We won't last through it.

PAUL: Only if we worked quietly, in pairs.

ABBA: No. Six million. All at once.

HAIM: It's a closed system. The weather, the rain. I am breathing in my family. 43 people, I am tasting their ashes.

PAUL: Take it easy.

HAIM: No, you take it easy.

ABBA: Someone sit next to him.

HAIM: Get away from me.

ABBA: Hold his arm.

HAIM: No need for that. Let's get back to the plan.

ABBA: Yes. Nakam.

HELLER: We don't have enough firepower.

ROSA: We have two guns.

HELLER: We buy, we steal, we'll get some help -- hopefully -- from the Brigade. And we'll need those.

ABBA: The Brigade is disbanded.

PAUL: They have a hidden cache. Am I right?

HELLER: I believe so, yes.

ROSA: Where?

HELLER: In Poland, in the Ukraine.

ROSA: And you have access?

HELLER: Yes.

ABBA: But that's not my thinking.

HELLER: What are you thinking?

ABBA: Six million Germans.

HELLER: Forget about it.

PAUL: Let's get one. One officer. One Nazi policeman. One Ukrainian guard. I'll kill him with my bare hands. And we'll go on from there. One at a time.

ABBA: That's enough for you?

PAUL: Yes. I'll feel a lot better.

ABBA: An eye for an eye.

PAUL: An eye for an eye. Heller, tell us about the Brigade.

HELLER: In '45 some of us filtered into Germany. We had a list. We knew who they were. We got to some. Others fled. It's amazing, the human factor of denial, of egoism the size of God. I had a gun on one German Colonel, hard against his head – I was trying to convince him how wrong he was about Reality. He would not relent. He insisted how nothing could touch him because in his mind he was correct.

ABBA: What happened?

HELLER: I shot him through the head.

ROSA: Excellent!

HELLER: His brains splattered all over the walls. Thousands were fleeing and we couldn't keep up. And then it got dangerous. The military police. English and American. We finally disappeared, back home. The U.S., Palestine.

ABBA: But you weren't satisfied.

HELLER: No.

ABBA: And you never will be.

HELLER: No.

PAUL: Bombs?

ABBA: Maybe.

PAUL: Fire and flood.

ABBA: Yes!

ROSA: Poison.

ABBA: Yes!

MORRIS: Civilians.

ABBA: Yes!

MORRIS: You're out of your minds.

HELLER: Abba --And then what?

ABBA: And then nothing. I don't care what happens after we succeed. Probably I'll go home to Palestine.

MORRIS: I'm out of here.

HAIM: Goodbye. (*MORRIS Exits. Pause*)

ABBA: Heller?

HELER: Yes?

ABBA: Go after him. (*Exit HELLER.*)

HAIM: It might be better to leave this life, this horrible life, where monsters roam around killing and gnashing their teeth.

PAUL: He has a point.

ROSA: This ancient animus towards our people. We did not kill the son of God. Fuck that shit.

PAIL: That's not what the Germans were up to. They wanted to eliminate us from the face of the Earth for genetic reasons. Moral reasons. Why? We represent conscience. the pain and suffering of conscience.

HAIM: And commerce. And Reason.

ABBA: We don't need reasons. We need a plan, and then we need to execute it.

PAUL: It's impossible. Fifty men against a nation?

HAIM: What does the Irgun have to say?

PAUL: I'm here, aren't I? The problem right now is getting the British out of Palestine. Then many more will join us. Soon, we will be fighting the Arabs.

HAIM: What are we anyway? A bunch of animals, fucking and eating and putting people into gas chambers and then burning them. It'll never end. One day the planet will have had enough. You'll see fire and flood and massacre like has never been seen on Earth. Why? Land and air and water will be scarce.

ABBA: That's okay with me. I don't care. I think what's been done to us must be answered in kind.

ROSA: Yes.

ABBA: In kind.

HAIM: I'm not sure.

ABBA: Of what?

HAIM: If I want to live anymore.

ABBA: Listen, Haim.

HAIM: No. I've had enough.

ROSA: The Rabbis insisted on Kosher. Unbelievable. Kosher. In the face of certain death. Whole families. Whole villages.

ABBA: Poison.

HAIM: My entire bloodline. Forty or fifty people. All gone. I'm the only one left.

ABBA: True for many of us.

HAIM: One thing I did. One thing I'm glad of. In the town was a German notary. When I tried to go home. An empty town, except for the Goyim, who closed their doors to me.

ROSA: The notary?

HAIM: I left the camp and walked. I walked for many days. Walking. I wanted to go home. Hungry and thirsty and filthy. I'm the only one left. *(Weeps)*

ROSA: Yes. All right. I'd weep with you, Haim, but my eyes are dry, my mouth is dry. I need the water of revenge, the peace of revenge.

HAIM: I too want revenge, but there will be no peace.

ROSA: Finish the story. The Notary?

HAIM: For everyone.

ROSA: Of course.

PAUL: And the notary?

HAIM: A middle-aged man, bald, crooked teeth, a bachelor. I had to rouse him out of his house. I beat him, and beat him, his face was bloody. He kept saying what a friend he'd been to the Jews. But he'd been a Nazi informer. He told the SS where people were hiding. I remember very well the feeling I had – it was like riding a tiger, riding a tiger – until finally he collapsed, and then I hit him again with a pipe, a plumbing thing, a wrench. I hit him twice. And that was it.

ROSA: And how do you feel now?

HAIM: I'm enraged. Enraged. And sorry I killed a man.

ROSA: Still?

HAIM: Enraged. And sorry still.

ABBA: And that's why people are killing themselves and running away.

HAIM: People are running from existence itself. It has been contaminated with Evil.

ABBA: We must continue. We are obligated.

HAIM: To kill?

ABBA: We are the Jewish people, a nation, murdered in plain sight. No one will help us with this. We must show our ferocity and our pain so History will understand the story and not feel contempt for us.

HAIM: Fuck History. There may not be any more history. History is over. There is no such thing. It's a delusion.

ROSA: I agree.

ABBA: But we can finish this terrible episode. Restore our honor with Nakam.

HAIM: I doubt it.

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ABBA: Nakam.

ROSA: Poison?

ABBA: It's a thought. We poison the reservoirs. The lakes and wells and streams.

ROSA: Yes!

Well, they did it, took bags of arsenic around Germany. People got sick, but no one died. Same with the POW camp of S.S. Poisoned bread. Of course, I was seven or eight years old at

the time. People don't talk about it much anymore. Some people deny it. When I was five, my father walked me down DeKalb Ave to the Brooklyn Paramount where I saw the first footage of the Genocide. My claim here is to put my face down in the horror of it all, and hope it is not forgotten by the kill-hungry human race.

Blackout, then a loud gunshot.

Murray Mednick
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2022