OBSERVANT

A full-length play

By Pamela Weiler Grayson

Contact:
Pamela W. Grayson
New York, N.Y.
(917) 848-5955
pwgrayson@icloud.com

©2024

CAST OF CHARACTERS

AMY, a 60 year-old woman

ZOE, a 26 year-old woman, Amy's daughter

FARROKH, a 27 year-old man, Zoe's boyfriend

SARAH, a 29 year-old woman, Amy's daughter

JOSH, a 30 year-old man, Sarah's husband

NANCY, an 81 year-old woman, AMY'S mother

Original production September 2024 in the EAT Theatre SPARK Festival at the Chain Theatre in NYC. The production was directed by Shellen Lubin; set design by C. Shea; lighting design by David Castaneda; sound design by Graydon Gund; costume, make-up, and hair coordination by Sophia Dorio; assistant director/production stage manager Aksel Tang; stage manager Michael Comp. The cast was:

AMY - Melissa Wolfe

ZOE - Arielle Flax

FARROKH - Fady Demian

SARAH - Arielle Beth Klein

JOSH - Yair Ben-Dor

NANCY - Rebecca Hoodwin

SETTING

A house in Scarsdale, N.Y.

TIME

2019

Note: Slashes in the dialogue lines indicate that characters are talking over each other, and the lines are supposed to be fast-paced. This family, like most, rarely lets the other person finish a sentence.

SCENE 1

A house in Scarsdale, New York. It's a contemporary design, with an open kitchen, Great Room, dining area, and at least one window. A very large, beautifully decorated and lit Christmas tree is prominently displayed.

AMY is unwrapping a new ornament from a box and hanging it on the tree. The Christmas carol, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" is playing. AMY sings along.

AMY
(Singing)
JOYFUL ALL YE NATIONS RISE
JOIN THE TRIUMPH OF THE SKIES
WITH ANGELIC HOSTS PROCLAIM
"CHRIST IS BORN IN BETHLEHEM!"
HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING -

The doorbell rings, interrupting her singing.

Alexa, stop.

The music stops. AMY answers the door.

ZOE and FARROKH enter, with suitcases.

ZOE
Hi!

AMY
Wow, you made great time!

ZOE
Happy Birthday, Mom!

AMY
Thanks! But save it for tomorrow. I’m not admitting to being 60 until the very last minute. Farrokh, welcome! So nice to finally meet you!

FARROKH
Thank you. Happy to be here.

AMY
(To ZOE)
Did you change your hair?

ZOE
No, I’ve just been too busy to cut it.

AMY
I really liked that cut you had last time I visited you. Shorter hair frames your face better -

ZOE
Already, Mom?

AMY
No, no, you look great! You guys want some wine?

FARROKH
Sure, thank you.

ZOE
Did you get vegan wine?

AMY
I didn’t know that was a thing, sorry. I just have Cabernet.

ZOE
It’s fine. I don’t feel like a drink right now.

AMY goes to fill a glass for FARROKH and one for herself.

ZOE
I didn’t think you’d have the tree up yet.

AMY
It’s a week before Christmas!

ZOE
Yeah, I know but -

AMY
You have to see this gorgeous ornament one of my clients sent me.

They head over to the tree.

AMY
He just won a National Book Award.

FARROKH
Congrats!/

ZOE
/That's great! Is that the book about the private equity guy who became a sheep whisperer?

AMY
That's another one of my writers.

ZOE
(Looking at ornament)
It's pretty.

FARROKH
You have a really beautiful tree.

AMY
Thank you.

FARROKH
I didn't expect it to be this big.

ZOE
I told you my mom's *obsessed* with Christmas.

AMY
I'm not obsessed!

ZOE
You totally are! Everywhere we traveled, she always bought Christmas ornaments.

FARROKH
I’m just still confused about it, because...

ZOE
Yeah, I know. Because we’re Jewish. Like 100% Jewish.

FARROKH
I didn’t realize some Jewish people had Christmas trees like this.

AMY
Lots do. At least Reform ones, like us.

ZOE
I wouldn’t say lots, but you definitely are over the top about it, Mom, come on. It’s not like we went to church, but we did the entire Christmas holiday. Presents, carols -

FARROKH
You didn’t tell me you sang carols.

AMY
I love those songs! And most of them were written by Jews.

ZOE
Mom played all the carols on our piano, and made us sing. Every time we had to sing anything about Jesus, my sister would drop out of the song. Maybe she sang “Jesus,” but she wouldn’t sing “Christ.”

FARROKH
Your father was okay with all the Christmas stuff?

AMY
My husband went along with it. To humor me.

ZOE
And we always had the big “Charles Dickens” Christmas dinner. Glazed ham/

AMY
Okay, he gets the idea/

ZOE
Farrokh doesn’t eat pork.

AMY
Oh, right./

FARROKH
/Actually, I did try it once./

ZOE
/When you were like 6 and your friend's mom put ham in the grilled cheese.

FARROKH
Yeah, that was a bad playdate.

ZOE
But otherwise he's more like a Cultural Muslim.

FARROKH
It's not that I don't respect my heritage, but I don't pray five times a day, or anything.

ZOE
I don't think you even pray once a day.

FARROKH
It depends. I mean, sometimes I do -

AMY
I think having the same attitude about religion, like whether it's a big or small or no real part of your daily life, is more important for a couple than being part of the same religion.

FARROKH
I totally agree.

AMY
You want a snack?

ZOE
I *am* starting to get a little hangry.

AMY
Should I bring out some fruit?

ZOE
No, I'll find something.

ZOE goes to the kitchen area.

AMY
So, Farrokh, I heard you do a lot of cycling.

FARROKH
Yeah, I love it.

ZOE
Everyone bikes in Berkeley. It’s not like here.

AMY
People ride bikes in Scarsdale, too.

ZOE
It’s not the same. Farrokh even got *me* to do it. I only did it at first so I could eat carbs. But now I’m actually really into it.

ZOE comes back with a bag of some snacks.

AMY
That’s great, Honey!

(To FARROKH)
You’ve been a good influence on Zoe.

FARROKH
Thanks, Mrs. Davidson./

ZOE
/Hey, it’s not like I was a basket case before we met./

AMY
/Please, call me “Amy.”

FARROKH
I think we’ve both been good influences on each other.

ZOE cuddles up to him.

The doorbell rings.

AMY
Be right back!

While AMY goes to the door, ZOE and FARROKH have a whispered, private exchange.

FARROKH
Your mom actually seems really nice!

ZOE
Nice to *you*! The hair thing?

FARROKH
Ignore it. You're gorgeous.

ZOE
Maybe I *do* need a cut -

FARROKH
Stop. Try to relax, okay?

ZOE
Okay.

SARAH and JOSH enter, with many bags, and a car seat with a sleeping toddler. SARAH is 8 months pregnant. JOSH wears a yarmulke on his head. They both take note of the giant Christmas tree.

SARAH
(Whispering)
Hi! Everyone, please be quiet. Daniel's sleeping and we don't want to wake him yet.

AMY
(Whispering)
Got it!

JOSH
(Quietly)
I'll take him upstairs.

JOSH exits with his sleeping son in the carseat.

ZOE
This is Farrokh.

SARAH
Nice to meet you.

FARROKH
And you!

ZOE
(To SARAH)
You look good.

SARAH
Thanks. So do you.

(Patting her belly)
This baby kicks like an NFL player. Your hair got long. I like it.

ZOE
I think I need a cut.

SARAH
(To AMY)
What’s that doing here?

AMY
What do you mean?

SARAH
The tree! The Christmas tree!

ZOE
Wait, Mom, you didn’t tell Sarah -

SARAH
You promised you wouldn’t have the tree up this weekend!

AMY
I didn’t exactly promise -

SARAH
Yes, you did!

AMY
I said I'd try to be sensitive.

SARAH
How is this sensitive to us?!

JOSH re-enters.

AMY
You're overreacting.

SARAH
It's like the freakin' Nutcracker tree!

ZOE
It's the same size she always gets.

SARAH
Not only does she keep putting up this Christmas tree, but she doesn't even celebrate Hanukkah.

AMY
Why does it matter so much to you?

SARAH
How hard is it to get the menorah out and light some candles, to honor your heritage?

AMY
So now you're going to "Hanukkah shame" me?

JOSH
I don't think that's a thing -

AMY
It apparently is now!

ZOE
Please don't do this in front of Farrokh.

FARROKH
Don't feel the need to act differently in front of me.

ZOE
No, they need to.

AMY
We’re all fine. And we’re all going to get along great this weekend, because nobody wants to ruin my birthday.

JOSH
It just might be confusing for Daniel to see the tree.

ZOE
He’s 14 months old! How can he be confused about religion?

SARAH
Children notice things at a very young age.

JOSH
He’s already started talking.

SARAH
Just in the past week his vocabulary has blossomed. He even knows a few Hebrew words.

AMY
You’re already teaching him Hebrew?

SARAH
You knew we were staying over for the weekend. The tree feels incredibly disrespectful.

AMY
It’s my house!/

ZOE
/Oh my God, Sarah! Just let Mom do her usual Christmas thing and stop making Farrokh feel uncomfortable.

FARROKH
I’m fine, don’t worry about me.

AMY
I resent that you’re making such a big deal out of something that makes me happy. On my birthday weekend. Just because you had a “conversion” -

SARAH
It’s not a conversion!

ZOE
Okay, but ever since the whole Orthodox thing/

JOSH
/The “thing”?

ZOE
/Sorry, Josh, it’s not about you - you grew up with it, but/

SARAH
/We’re *Modern* Orthodox!

AMY
We know, we know -

ZOE
I never said you were like the Haredim, but -

FARROKH
(To ZOE)
The what?/

ZOE
The Ultra-Orthodox Jews. Like the ones with the black hats.

AMY
Sorry, but those people are kind of crazy!

SARAH
Mom, stop!/

JOSH
We’re not like some fundamentalist sect or cult! You know we’re both feminists and very inclusive -

ZOE
You do sit separated at temple -

SARAH
Okay, yeah, but Modern Orthodoxy is progressive!

AMY
Honey, we know that/

SARAH
/And I’m still practicing law.

ZOE
You’re doing legal work for your husband’s family real estate business.

JOSH
What’s wrong with that?

AMY
(To FARROKH)
She used to be a big corporate lawyer.

FARROKH
Zoe told me.

ZOE
I didn’t say “big corporate lawyer.” She was an associate for like two years.

SARAH
It was my choice to leave. I didn’t want to work those long hours, and I didn’t want to work at a place where I had to constantly explain why I was taking so many holidays off.

FARROKH
I completely understand what it’s like for people to think you’re some kind of religious extremist.

Beat.
I’m just saying I respect your religious devotion. I have a lot of family members who feel the same way.

SARAH
Thank you, Farrokh.

ZOE
But she looks down on anyone else who isn’t as religious. Like we’re not real Jews.

SARAH
You’re the ones who look down on *me*! Why can’t you stop making me feel so bad about it?

AMY
We don’t mean to. But you can be very militant.

SARAH
Are you kidding? I’m like the most tolerant!

ZOE
Um, no...

SARAH
I’ve been going to an Orthodox shul since I met Josh, and you still haven’t accepted it!

AMY
Could we not do this again? I’m getting some more snacks.

AMY goes to the kitchen area.

JOSH
(To SARAH)
I really wish you wouldn’t make it about me.

SARAH
But it’s a good thing, Joshie!

JOSH
(To FARROKH)
She’s even more observant than me.

SARAH
(To FARROKH)
When I started going to Hillel during college, my mom kept asking me, “Why?”

AMY
I was just surprised, since we didn’t raise you to be religious -

ZOE
I went to Hillel a fair amount, too. It was social, and they did great community service.

FARROKH
I joined a Muslim students group in college. I was the only Iranian Sunni there, but it was a nice way to meet people who had similar backgrounds.

SARAH
When I first went to Hillel, it wasn't even like we had similar backgrounds. Most people there had way more connection to their Jewish identities.

AMY
And she's blaming me again.

SARAH
It's not about that.
(To FARROKH)
I didn't have a good freshman roommate, and -

ZOE
Not the roommate story again!

SARAH
Not just my psycho roommate. I had trouble making friends that first year.

ZOE
Hard to imagine (rambles off, saying since you have such an open, warm personality).

AMY has arranged a bowl of snacks.

SARAH
The people at Hillel were so friendly. I looked forward to shabbos every week. It was the first place on campus I felt welcome and accepted.

ZOE
We've heard this a hundred times -

SARAH
Farrokh hasn't.

ZOE
Maybe he doesn't want to hear about it -

AMY
Yeah, let's talk about something else.

FARROKH
It's okay, Zo -

SARAH
And then when I met Josh there -

JOSH
I didn’t even go to Hillel that much.

SARAH
/But you were connected to Judaism in a way I was jealous of. It grounded you. I loved it. And I loved *you*. And instead of denying my Jewishness, which was kind of what we did growing up -

AMY
It was just more...secular. Have some of these pretzel things, they’re really good.

AMY starts to pass out the snacks.

SARAH
(To FARROKH)
I wanted to embrace my Jewishness. I didn’t just do it for Josh. I love all the traditions. Every time we do shabbos, I think about Jews all over the world, chanting the same prayers, lighting candles, and having a special meal, just like we’re doing with our family.

FARROKH
That’s nice, I get it.

SARAH
And not just Jews *now*, but our people have been saying these prayers, and observing these rituals, for over 5,000 years! There’s something so awesome about that! All you guys see are the restrictions we have to follow.

AMY
There *are* a lot of rules -

JOSH
I see them as traditions.

SARAH
I see them as creating a beautiful, meaningful life. And it just makes me sad that my family can’t share that with me.

AMY
Honey, I know it means a lot to you. But you can't impose your values on *me*. I don't even ask you to come over for Christmas dinner. Which is something I care about. And even though it's lonely for me, because now I have to go to a friend's house to celebrate because there isn't any other family to invite, and since Dad died, it's been really hard/

SARAH
/Okay, Mom, I know you have this thing for Christmas -/

AMY
/And Zoe isn't always able to fly in for Christmas, so -

ZOE
It's not like in undergrad, where I had normal vacations.

AMY
I'm not saying it's your fault, but -

SARAH
For someone who doesn't consider herself very Jewish, you're seriously laying on the guilt.

FARROKH
My mother feels the same way when I can't make it home for holidays. We don't celebrate Christmas, but since I'm off from school then, my parents still want me to come home.

AMY
So you don't do anything?

FARROKH
No. We have cousins who really celebrate it, but my parents always said that was the crazy side of the family, because one of those cousins dropped out of medical school to become an actor. The whole family treated it like he died. Anyway, they celebrate Christmas, with a tree and everything. My parents attribute it to the "crazy" acting gene. But it was really just about assimilation.

AMY
And that's what it's usually about, right? Wanting to be part of the predominant American experience. And Christmas is such a huge part of that.

JOSH
(To SARAH)
We should put the food away.

SARAH
Ugh, I almost forgot to put the food in the fridge. I have everything prepared for dinner tonight.

SARAH and JOSH get up to start unpacking their bags in the kitchen area.

SARAH and JOSH speak quickly and quietly off to the side.

JOSH
I can’t ask your mom for a favor today.

SARAH
Maybe later, after we do the birthday gift.

AMY
(Calling out to SARAH)
Sarah, the reservation for tomorrow’s dinner is at that kosher restaurant you recommended.

JOSH
Thanks, Amy. We really appreciate it.

AMY
I know it would have been easier for you if you didn’t have to drive up from the City today and stay over -

SARAH
It’s fine.

ZOE
(To FARROKH)
They can’t drive on shabbat, so -

AMY
Grandma’s going to meet us at the restaurant tomorrow.

FARROKH
She still drives at night?

AMY
Once she had her cataracts out she was fine. And she has more energy than all of us.

ZOE
(To FARROKH)
My grandmother’s very sharp. She remembers everything.

FARROKH
Can’t wait to meet her...And the restroom is...?

ZOE
Last door on the left.

FARROKH exits.

ZOE and AMY move to the kitchen area.

ZOE
So what do you think of Farrokh?

AMY
He’s great.

SARAH
He seems really nice...

ZOE
But-

SARAH
But what?

ZOE
There’s going to be a “but.”

SARAH
I didn’t say there was a “but.”

JOSH
If you stay together, what are you going to do?

ZOE
About what?

SARAH
You think you might marry him?

ZOE
We've talked about it. Things are getting pretty serious.

AMY
Oh, wow. Really?

ZOE
Yeah. We've only been together almost a year, but we really love each other.

SARAH
You know most people in his home country want to see Israel wiped off the map.

ZOE
Are you kidding?!/

JOSH
/Sarah, stop./

SARAH
/That doesn't bother you?/

JOSH
/Of course it does./

SARAH
/I was talking to Zoe!/

AMY
This is not happening! You're not allowed to discuss Israel this weekend.

SARAH
I just said his being Iranian *could* be an issue.

ZOE
First of all, that's incredibly racist and Islamophobic -

SARAH
You think everyone's racist!/

ZOE
/You just lumped a whole set of beliefs onto Farrokh because of his religious and ethnic background. How is that not racist?

AMY
We are not doing this!/

ZOE
/Do you think Farrokh's family assumes I'm anti-Muslim just because I'm Jewish?

SARAH
They can't be too happy about you!

ZOE
They're very nice to me./

SARAH
/In front of you, sure./

AMY
/Okay, girls, calm down./

ZOE
/And Farrokh is American! He was four when he came here. The Sunnis were treated like shit in Iran. His parents couldn't wait to leave.

SARAH
I'm sorry, but that doesn't mean he's not Anti-Israel.

ZOE
He's not Anti-Israel! You don't even know him! I mean, we're both against the occupation in the West Bank, but -

AMY
Oh, my God!/

JOSH
/The settlements are a very complicated issue./

SARAH
/It's much more nuanced than the way it's portrayed in the media./

AMY
/Stop this!/

ZOE
And I do care about Israel! I went on Birthright!

SARAH
Oh my God!/

AMY
/I said, “No Israel” today!/

ZOE
/But I wouldn’t be studying public policy if I didn’t also care about the Palestinians and social justice./

SARAH
You can’t just throw out terms like “social justice” without any understanding of the history -

AMY
That’s enough! Why did I think the two of you could get along for my birthday weekend?!...And I like Farrokh.

ZOE
Thank you, Mom.

SARAH
I didn’t say I didn’t like him as a person.

AMY
Of course I would have preferred if you were with someone who celebrated Christmas, but -

JOSH
He’s clearly very smart. Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering...

ZOE
Religion is not as important to Farrokh as other values. Otherwise we’d never be together.

JOSH
So maybe he’d be willing to convert?

ZOE
He’s not converting!

SARAH
Well, *you're* not!...Right?

ZOE
I don't think I would.

Beat.

AMY
Wait, what? You'd even consider becoming Muslim?!/

SARAH
/Okay, no, now you're just trying to stir the pot./

ZOE
/I didn't say that.

AMY
/You wouldn't wear a hijab, right?/

ZOE
/Mom, please. I'm just saying we're inclusive. Muslims and Jews. I mean we're from the same people, really.

SARAH
Just tell that to Hamas!

FARROKH enters.

FARROKH
Did I miss anything?

Beat.

ZOE
We're all just really enjoying being together again.

AMY
And we're going to continue making this family time really special for all of us. Aren't we?

SARAH
Yeah, sure.

Beat.
We have to start Shabbos now.

SARAH and JOSH get the shabbat items ready (candles, challah, wine).

FARROKH
Is Shabbos the same as Shabbat?

ZOE
Nobody I know except Orthodox Jews says “Shabbos.”

JOSH
“Shabbat” is the Hebrew, and “Shabbos” is the Ashkanzi Yiddish pronunciation.

AMY
I’ll turn off the Christmas tree lights.

JOSH
And there’s no Hebrew translation for *that*.

AMY turns off the tree lights.

FARROKH
I once went to this interfaith Shabbat in college. It was really nice.

ZOE
It might have been nice if we had done Shabbat when we were growing up.

AMY
I wouldn’t even have thought of doing it.

SARAH
This is my favorite time of the week. Daniel loves it, too, but I want him to sleep a little longer so he’s not cranky during dinner.

Everyone gathers around the table. SARAH lights the candles, covers her eyes, and chants the following blessing.

As she chants the blessings, ZOE knows some of it, so she sings along a bit, AMY knows only a few Hebrew words here and there, so she chimes in intermittently.

SARAH

BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHEINU MELECH HAOLAM
ASHER KID'SHANU B'MITZVOTAV
V'TSIVANU L'HADLIK NER SHEL SHABBAT.

In the interest of time and present company, we can skip to kiddush, it's fine.

JOSH holds the Kiddush cup of wine.

JOSH
(chanted in an undertone)
VA-Y'HI EREV VA-Y'HI VOKER

(Then chanted out loud)
YOM HASHISHI

Suddenly, we hear loud sirens.

VAY' CHULU HASHAMAYIM V'HA-ARETZ
V'CHOL-TZVA-AM.

More sirens.

AMY
That's a lot of sirens.

JOSH
VAY'CHAL ELOHIM BAYOM HASH'VI-I
M'LACHTO ASHER ASAH
VAY'YISHBOT BAYOM HASH'VI-I
MIKOL-M'LACHTO ASHER ASAH.

More sirens, getting louder and more frequent.

ZOE
What's going on?

FARROKH
Maybe there’s a fire.

SARAH
(hushed voice)
You’re not supposed to talk during Kiddush.

ZOE discreetly checks her phone.

JOSH
VAY’VARECH ELOCHIM ET-YOM HASH’VI-I
VAY’KADEISH OTO
KI VO SHAVAT MIKOL-M’LACHTO
ASHER-BARA ELOHIM LA-ASOT.

JOSH raises the cup.

SAVRI

SARAH
(Gesturing to everyone to chime in)

EVERYONE

L’CHAYIM!

SARAH OR JOSH
BARUCH ATAH ADO-

ZOE looks at her phone.

ZOE
Oh my God!

AMY
What is it?

ZOE
Oh my God! No!

AMY
What’s going on?

ZOE
It’s the temple!

AMY
What temple?

ZOE
There’s been a shooting! At the temple!/

Everyone talks over each other.

SARAH
(To JOSH)
/What do we do?/

FARROKH
/Oh, no! Which temple?/

ZOE
/Here! At our temple!/

JOSH
(To SARAH)
We stop./

AMY
/Oh my God!/

FARROKH
/The synagogue you all belong to?/

AMY
/There was a shooting at Emanu-El?!/

ZOE
/Yes! That’s what it says!/There are fatalities./

FARROKH
/That’s horrible!

SARAH
/What happened?/

AMY
/There was a shooting at *our* temple?! The Reform temple!?...Grandma was there tonight!

SARAH
What?!/

ZOE
/Grandma never goes to services./

AMY
/Her friend Barbara was being honored for something!/

ZOE
/Holy shit! The one time Grandma goes to temple./

JOSH
/I can’t believe it./

AMY
/I don’t know what to do. I just...I can’t...

SARAH goes to comfort AMY.

SARAH
Oh, Mom -

AMY
I don’t want to be hugged right now!

ZOE
What are we going to do?!/

FARROKH
/Zoe, I’m so sorry./

JOSH
/We need to find Nancy.

AMY
I have to try to call her.

AMY gets her phone.

SARAH
I hope she’s okay. I can’t believe this.

AMY calls her mother.

AMY
Zoe, turn on the news!

ZOE turns on the t.v.

AMY
She’s not picking up.

ZOE
She might not pick up, even if she’s okay.

AMY
Maybe her phone’s off.

SARAH
Or maybe the cell service is bad there.

ZOE
I can’t find any local news. Probably more online.

FARROKH
I’m going to see what else I can find out on my phone. The t.v. news might not have anything yet.

AMY
She’s still not answering her phone.

SARAH
Try texting her.

AMY
I did! I’ve tried everything! I even messaged her on Instagram.

FARROKH
She does Insta messages?

AMY
Yes. My mother has a very active Instagram account...She’s not responding to anything.

More sirens blare outside.

SARAH
These sirens are definitely going to wake Daniel.

JOSH
I’ll go.

JOSH exits.

ZOE
What should we do?! Should we try calling someone else?

AMY
I've got to get to the temple. Find out what's going on.

SARAH
I feel sick.

FARROKH
It might not be safe there. It's a crime scene.

AMY
I have to find my mother!

AMY frantically gets her bag and keys.

ZOE
Mom, I'll come with you. I don't want you to be alone, or drive, being so upset about Grandma -

AMY
I'll be okay. And you're just as upset.

SARAH
I would come, too, but -

AMY
I know you and Josh can't drive on shabbat.

SARAH
This is clearly an exception! It's just with Daniel, and the pregnancy -

ZOE
You guys should stay here, it's fine.

FARROKH
I could go. Then you could stay with the rest of your family.

ZOE
You'd go with my mom? That seems a little weird-

AMY
Actually, I think that's a great idea.

ZOE
Really?

SARAH
Farrokh’s gonna drive you?

FARROKH
I’m happy to.

SARAH
I guess you could tell him where to go -

AMY
I don’t have time to debate this. I need to get out of here and find Grandma!

SARAH
I hope she ... (trails off)

AMY
Farrokh, if you’re coming, let’s go.

FARROKH
I’m coming.

AMY
If you all get hungry while I’m gone, just eat without me.

ZOE
Why are you worrying about food?!...Thanks for doing this, Farrokh.

FARROKH
I just want to help any way I can.

ZOE
I’m so sorry you have to deal with this.

FARROKH
Don’t apologize! I’m so sorry you all have to go through this horrible thing.

ZOE
Please be careful. We don’t even know if they found the gunman.

SARAH
I hope you can find Grandma.

AMY
I can’t believe this is even happening.

AMY and FARROKH exit.

ZOE
I’m surprised Mom wanted Farrokh to go with her.

SARAH
Maybe she just thought he’d be calmer.

ZOE
I’m calm! I mean I can be, when I have to be.

SARAH
We just have to pray that Grandma wasn’t hurt.

ZOE
Sometimes I really can’t believe how many hateful people are out there.

SARAH
Jew-haters!

ZOE
Maybe it had something to do with the impeachment.

SARAH
How is that relevant?!

ZOE
Maybe it just made the usual haters even more crazy!

JOSH re-enters.

JOSH
He’s still asleep, if you can believe it.

SARAH
Mom went to the temple. Farrokh’s driving her.

JOSH
I should have done it.

SARAH
He was there. It was easier.

ZOE
And she wanted him to go with her.

ZOE checks her phone.

CNN just posted an update.

ZOE turns up the t.v. We hear the video footage.

T.V. ANCHOR
...before sundown for shabbat services when the shooting started. It is believed there were two gunmen. Nobody knows how they entered the sanctuary.

WOMAN BEING INTERVIEWED
We heard shots, so many gunshots! It was terrifying!

SARAH
This is too upsetting.

ZOE
We need to know what happened.

OLDER MAN BEING INTERVIEWED
I've been a member of this congregation for over 40 years. My parents were Holocaust survivors. They would never believe this is happening in America in 2019.

SARAH
I just can't...

JOSH comes over to comfort SARAH.

JOSH
I know.

T.V. REPORTER
I'm here with the senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El.

RABBI
I told everyone to get down. I then immediately went to a room off the sanctuary, where I used my cell phone to call 911. That's what I was taught to do in the active shooter training that our staff had to take.

ZOE lowers the t.v. volume.

We hear the loud whir of helicopters.

ZOE
Helicopters!

SARAH
I'm so worried about Grandma.

ZOE
Grandma's not like some frail old lady. She's tough.

SARAH
She's still in her eighties.

ZOE
She takes kickboxing at her gym.

SARAH
What if she didn't make it out of there?

JOSH
Let's try to stay positive.

We hear a baby crying loudly.

JOSH
I guess he wasn't going to sleep through helicopters. I'll go.

SARAH
No, I want to see my son. I need to hold my baby.

SARAH exits.

ZOE
I'm ready for some wine. I'll drink anything right now. How about you?

JOSH

Absolutely.

ZOE gets some wine. Her phone rings and she runs to it.

ZOE

It’s Farrokh...Hi.Does anyone know where she is?...I can’t hear you!...Nobody knows yet if my grandmother is...That many? Those vicious bastards!...How’s my mom?...I feel so bad you have to deal with this...Call me when you have any news...Love you, too.

ZOE hangs up.

JOSH

They couldn’t find Nancy?

ZOE

No, they’re going to the JCC. The FBI set up this Assistance Center for the families... I just hope she’s...I can’t even think about it.

JOSH

I know.

ZOE

I just wish there was something we could do.

Beat.

I kind of feel like we should pray right now. What should we say?

JOSH

The Mi Shebeirach.

ZOE

Can you say it?

JOSH

Mi shebeirach avoteinu imoteinu -

ZOE

Wait, please. Can you say it in English, so I can understand it?

JOSH

May the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless and heal those who are ill, and all the victims of this terrible tragedy, including Grandma Nancy. May the Blessed Holy One be filled with compassion for their health to be restored and their strength to be revived. May God swiftly send them a complete renewal of body and spirit, Amen.

ZOE

Amen.

Lights dim, except for the Shabbat candles, which continue to burn, and we hear the music of Mi Shebeirach.

SCENE 2

The following afternoon. Lights up on the house. The tree lights are off. The t.v. is on CNN, very low volume. JOSH is reading. SARAH is pacing and checking the t.v.

SARAH
Why isn't CNN doing more coverage of this?

JOSH
They've been covering it non-stop since last night.

SARAH
I haven't seen anything about the shooting for at least a half hour.

JOSH
You really want to see that video footage over and over again?

SARAH
Of course I don't! I just want the media to stay on this, so that people realize we're not being paranoid about antisemitism.

JOSH
They'll have more coverage when they have more information.

SARAH
Maybe the media thinks killing Jews isn't even big news anymore.

JOSH
Come on, Sarah. You have to try to calm down. And stop pacing, already! Maybe you should take a rest.

SARAH
How can I rest with what's going on?!

JOSH
I know, but you didn't get any sleep last night, and -

SARAH
None of us slept!

JOSH
I’m just worried about you and the baby -

SARAH
What about all the victims? Shouldn’t we be more worried about them?

JOSH
Of course we’re worried about them!

SARAH
And don’t even think about bringing up your book to my mom, now.

JOSH
Obviously that’s not happening this weekend.

ZOE enters.

ZOE
I think I exhausted Daniel.

SARAH
Where is he?

ZOE
I put him in that Pack N’Play thing. I gave him a toy.

SARAH
Did you hear anything else from Mom?

ZOE
Not yet. Farrokh said he’d text me when they were leaving the hospital.

JOSH
I hope they’re able to leave soon.

SARAH
Mom’s probably driving him crazy.

ZOE
He said she’s been really appreciative.

SARAH
I should put Daniel down for a nap. It’s going to be crazy once they get back.

ZOE
I can do it.

SARAH
You know how to do that?

ZOE
I babysat all through high school.

SARAH
Oh yeah, I forgot. But you have to give Daniel his Bloopy.

ZOE
What the hell is a Bloopy?

JOSH
His stuffed bear. He can’t sleep without it. It’s on the dresser in there.

ZOE
Okay. Be right back.

SARAH
And don’t sing to him. Music just revs him up.

ZOE
Got it. No singing, just give him the Bloopy.

SARAH
It’s not “the” Bloopy. It’s just “Bloopy.”

ZOE exits.

SARAH
I still can’t believe Grandma got shot.

JOSH
I know. At least it was just her lower leg -

SARAH
Just her leg?!

JOSH
It could have been so much worse.

SARAH
Yeah. But still, even just being there when it happened/

JOSH
I know/

SARAH
/She must be so traumatized.

JOSH
I can’t even imagine. But we should try to stay as calm as we can when they get here. Don’t let her know how upset you are.

SARAH
I’m supposed to pretend I’m not upset that my grandmother was shot at her temple? I mean what the fuck?!

JOSH
That’s not what I meant!

SARAH
I know, I’m sorry.

A Breaking News flash appears on the t.v.

JOSH
They’re saying something else about the shooting.

T.V. ANCHOR
We have breaking news on the tragic Scarsdale temple shooting. Corey?

T.V. REPORTER
As we reported earlier, one of the gunmen is in White Plains Hospital, in stable condition. The man has now been identified as Thomas Clark , a resident of upstate New York. The other gunman was just apprehended by the F.B.I. and identified as Lucas Denton, also of upstate New York. We don’t have any further information. The names of the victims and survivors have not been released yet, but so far we know that 7 people were killed and at least 10 were injured. We’ll bring you more news as the story unfolds.

T.V. ANCHOR
Now we take you back to the other breaking news, at the National Zoo in Washington, where they're celebrating the birth of their new baby panda, Ting-Ting.

SARAH
I don't want to hear about Ting-Ting again!

SARAH goes to the kitchen and looks for something to drink.

At least they got both gunmen...If only I could drink wine right now.

SARAH pours herself a glass of something non-alcoholic. JOSH watches t.v.

ZOE enters and sits down.

ZOE
Mom texted me. They should be here in like 5 minutes.

SARAH
How's Grandma?

ZOE
Mom said she's doing okay and is on painkillers.

JOSH
They got the other gunman.

ZOE
That's good.

SARAH
Looks like two white supremacist pieces of shit.

ZOE
What a shock.

SARAH sits next to ZOE.

SARAH
Sorry I said those things about Farrokh. He's sweet.

ZOE
He is. Sometimes I feel like...

SARAH
What?

ZOE
He’s just so calm and nice. It makes me feel like...maybe I’m not nice enough for him.

SARAH
You’re nice!

ZOE
Sometimes he looks at me like I’m this anxious, negative person who...maybe he doesn’t want to be with.

SARAH
He looks at you like he’s in love with you.

ZOE
You can tell?

SARAH
Of course! Josh looks at me that way all the time. Like, “I’m in love with you, even if you’re a little crazy.”

They laugh, sharing a moment.

ZOE
And you? With the new baby coming?

SARAH
I’m excited, but it’s gonna be a lot having a toddler and a newborn -

ZOE
You’ve always been able to do like ten things at the same time. You’ll be fine...I need something to drink.

ZOE pours herself some wine. SARAH starts arranging pillows on a chair.

ZOE
What are you doing?

SARAH
Putting some extra pillows on the chair so Grandma can be comfortable. I don't know what else we can do.

ZOE
Mom wanted me to cancel the dinner reservation for tonight, so I did that. I guess we'll just order in something. Or I can go get food...Should we get a cake?

SARAH
A cake?!

ZOE
It's still Mom's birthday. It's not like anyone feels like celebrating, but shouldn't we do something?

SARAH
I don't know. Josh? Should we still get a cake?

JOSH
You think she'd still want a cake?

SARAH
Have no idea. There's not exactly a playbook for this...And now I don't even know what to do with the painting.

ZOE
Where is it?

SARAH
It's in the car. I didn't want to bring it in until we celebrated Mom's birthday...And we're going to say it's from all of us.

ZOE
Yeah, that's what you're *supposed* to say. But I'm still just paying $50 right?

SARAH
I thought it was 75. But 50 is fine. The painting was 600.

JOSH
She loves that artist, and for her 60th, we thought, you know -

SARAH
Maybe we need something for Grandma to put her leg up on?

JOSH adjusts the coffee table, closer to the chair.

ZOE
I hate feeling like I owe you guys. But fifty dollars is already a lot for me to spend.

JOSH
Forget it. We know our financial situation is different from yours right now.

ZOE
Not like I'm going to be able to spend that much more for Mom's next big birthday. I'll probably always be the poorer sister. Even though the most educated.

SARAH
I have a J.D.

ZOE
Ph.D. is actually higher.

SARAH
I don't think so. But if pretending you're intellectually superior makes you feel better -

ZOE
Nobody can be better than you in anything, right?

SARAH
That's bullshit.

ZOE
Whatever.

ZOE checks her phone. She rummages in her purse and pulls out a bag of gummies.

SARAH
Gummies?

ZOE
CBD.

SARAH
Since when do you do CBD?

ZOE
Everyone does.

SARAH
No, not “everyone.”

SARAH
But if you’re spending money on edibles, you probably could have coughed up a little more for Mom’s gift.

ZOE
Oh, my God!

ZOE goes back to her purse and pulls out her wallet and some cash.

Here! Here’s $60, okay?

SARAH
Forget it. Just do the 50.

ZOE
No, I’m giving 60. Just take it.

SARAH
We can’t.

ZOE
What do you mean you can’t?

JOSH
We aren’t supposed to handle money today. And you don’t need to -

ZOE
You won’t have to touch it.

ZOE goes to SARAH’s purse and stuffs the cash into it.

I'll just put it in your purse.

SARAH
You can't just open my bag and stuff cash in there!

ZOE
Now you get $10 more than you expected, so I hope you don't spend it all in one place!

SARAH
What is your problem?!

JOSH
Everyone needs to calm the fuck down! Jews were shot in cold blood at their shul, in your own neighborhood!

The door opens and AMY enters.

AMY
We're back.

AMY turns around and talks behind her, outside the door.
Now Mom, remember these steps are kind of steep.

We hear NANCY and FARROKH talking outside the door.

NANCY
I'm not on that many pain meds that I can't remember you have big steps leading to your front door.

AMY
I know, but your leg -

NANCY
I'm fine. Farrokh is helping me. We're going very slowly.

FARROKH
You're doing great, Mrs. Gordon.

NANCY
I'm trying.

NANCY and FARROKH enter. One of NANCY's legs is wrapped in a large bandage. She looks exhausted, but her makeup is freshly applied.

NANCY is walking unsteadily with a cane and she holds FARROKH's arm with her other hand. They very slowly make their way across the room.

AMY
Mom, you sure you're okay?

NANCY
Stop asking if I'm okay!

AMY
I can't say anything right.

NANCY
Don't make this about you, Amy. Not today.

AMY
Mom, I'm trying my best, I really am. I haven't even said once that today's my birthday. My 60th birthday. I know that's inappropriate to bring up right now, after everything that's happened, but I'm just saying...

NANCY
I'm sorry I got shot on your birthday!

AMY
Oh my God, that's not what I meant.

NANCY
(To FARROKH)
I'm okay now, thank you.

(To ZOE)

Zoe, I missed you, sweetie...Your hair looks different.

ZOE
It's longer.

NANCY
Looks good. You have to have a certain kind of face to pull off short hair.

SARAH
Grandma, I put these pillows on the chair for you./

AMY
/She might be more comfortable on the sofa./

SARAH
/I kind of spent some time setting up this chair for her./

NANCY
/It’s fine. I’ll sit here./

FARROKH
Can I help you sit down?

NANCY
No, I can do it, thanks, Farrokh. You should sit too and get some rest. You’ve gone above and beyond.

ZOE
He’s great, isn’t he?

SARAH
Josh would have taken Mom in the car, but -

AMY
I’ll make you some tea.

NANCY
I don’t want any tea.

JOSH
How are you feeling, Nancy?/

ZOE
/You okay there?

AMY
Don’t ask her if she’s okay. She hates that./

NANCY
/It’s alright.

SARAH
/We can’t just pretend nothing happened!/

ZOE
/Trauma victims need time to process/.

SARAH
I know, I know, I just -

JOSH
Let’s just let her sit and -

NANCY
Everyone stop talking about me like I’m not here...This is a lot of pillows.

SARAH
I wanted you to be comfy.

ZOE
We should turn off the t.v. It could be really triggering for Grandma to see the footage.

AMY
Oh my God, yes! I’m turning it off.

AMY turns off the t.v.
We are not going to ask Grandma anything about what happened until she’s ready to talk about it.

ZOE
Yeah, only when she wants to.

NANCY
Could you stop saying “She”?

ZOE
Sorry, Grandma.

JOSH
What do you think we should do?

AMY
Talk about something else. Anything else.

Long Beat. Nobody knows what to say. This may be the quietest this family has ever been. SARAH looks at her watch.

SARAH
I didn’t realize it was so late. We should get ready to do Havdalah soon.

AMY
Can we do it a little later tonight? Like right before we eat? It’s just the candle and the spice thing, right?

SARAH
It’s a spice “box.”

AMY
It doesn’t look like a box. It looks like a silver ornament.

SARAH
Everything looks like an ornament to you. Maybe we should hang it on the Christmas tree.

NANCY
Now we’re starting in on the tree?

AMY
We all just sat down. And Grandma’s comfortable in the chair -

NANCY
It’s fine, whatever she wants to do.

SARAH
Grandma, you don’t have to get up for it. But sunset is at 5:15.

JOSH
Just sometime after sunset is fine.

SARAH
If we wait too late, we can’t do it right -

JOSH
You can actually do it up until the Tuesday after Shabbat -

ZOE
I didn’t know you could wait that long -

SARAH
Don’t try to make me look like I don’t understand *halacha*, Josh.

JOSH
I’m not saying that -

SARAH
I know we technically can wait, but then we can’t use the candle and the spices, and those are really important to me.

NANCY
I never even heard of Havdalah until I was maybe 40. Someone in my tennis group told me about it.

AMY
I only knew when Sarah invited me over for it.

ZOE
I first learned about it on Birthright.

FARROKH
What is it?

ZOE
It’s how you end shabbat. It’s actually really nice.

AMY
But we don’t have to do it right now. Since my birthday dinner is ruined anyway, why can’t we do one thing that *I* want, which is for us all to just sit down here together for a little while, so I can enjoy spending time with my family without turning it into a whole religious thing. I’m exhausted.

SARAH
Mom, I know it’s your birthday, and we’re all exhausted -

AMY
We?! I’m the one who’s been up all night at the hospital, with my mother, after an unspeakable tragedy!

NANCY
Farrokh was up with us, too. Even when you took a nap in that chair, he was awake.

AMY
I only slept for like 20 minutes!

NANCY
And Farrokh drove us home. He was really wonderful. So calm. I don’t know what I would have done without him.

AMY
Why do you keep saying how great Farrokh is?! I’m the one who had to deal with signing all the papers, talking to the doctors, worried sick over you. It’s not like I don’t appreciate what you did, Farrokh -

FARROKH
/I understand, I just wanted to help/

ZOE
/Mom, what the hell?/

AMY
/But couldn’t you just give me a little credit, Mom? I can’t ever do enough for you.

NANCY
It’s always about you, Amy. Even now. I never said you weren’t helpful./

SARAH
/We can do it quickly -

AMY
I don’t want us all to have to jump up and down, twice. Is that too much to ask?

SARAH
You’re acting like I want everyone to get up and dance the hora! I just want to do this very simple ceremony, at a certain time -

ZOE
But you don’t need to be so rigid about it -

SARAH

I’m not rigid!

JOSH

We can be more flexible.

SARAH

I’m just trying to maintain some sense of normalcy right now! What it means to end Shabbos the way we always do, at the right time, no matter how horrible things are. To bring a little bit of joy and light into a really shitty situation! If we don’t have our rituals, then what do we have, as Jews? Just complete chaos, and the constant fear we’re going to be wiped out.

AMY

Doing it two hours later isn’t going to change any of that!

SARAH

But doing it on time tonight, of all nights, sends a message that we won’t let those antisemitic bastards make us do Havdalah even 15 minutes late. And that’s what Jews have always done. No matter how many times other people tried to stop us from practicing our religion. Even before our ancestors fled Egypt, they sat and ate their meal.

ZOE

Jews always have to eat.

AMY

Why does everything in this house have to be about being Jewish?!

NANCY

Because right now it is! It’s all about being Jewish - whether we like it or not!

Everyone is silent now.

Sarah, I know you feel you have a special connection to Judaism. But let me tell you something: You can practice all the rituals you want, read Hebrew, celebrate every single holiday, even the ones almost nobody else has heard of, never eat lobster or a BLT. But none of you knows what it’s like to be hunted down, shot at, like an animal, just because you happen to be Jewish.

SARAH

Grandma, I'm sorry/

NANCY

/I could never have imagined something like this happening to me. Not in a million years.

JOSH

That's what the congregants at the Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue thought last year -

SARAH

And at the Poway synagogue in April, and the kosher grocery store in Jersey City this week. American antisemitism is getting worse. That's why I keep talking about Israel, because we can't even be safe in our own country anymore!

ZOE

It's really scary. But it's not just Jews. It's *all* the shootings! The Black worshippers at the Charleston Church even prayed with their killer before he shot them!

FARROKH

And the New Zealand mosque massacres -

NANCY

But you still think it won't happen to *you*. Or to anyone you know.

Beat.

It was such a beautiful service, too. I bought a new suit for it.

AMY

It was a gorgeous suit, Mom. I just knew you'd want fresh clothes when you got out of the hospital. That's why I drove to your house this morning to get something else for you to wear. I didn't think you'd want to wear that suit home after -

NANCY

No! I never want to wear that suit again. Never.

SARAH

Of course not.

NANCY
But I’m not crazy about these pants you picked out.

AMY
What’s wrong with them?

NANCY gives a sour look.

AMY
I wanted you to be comfortable with that bandage on your leg. I just grabbed what I could from your closet, so I could get back to the hospital/

NANCY
/I know, I know...They’re just a little summery for December.

AMY
Are you cold?

NANCY
No, I’m fine. I know you tried your best.

AMY
Jesus, Mom. Really?

ZOE
Grandma, we’re just so grateful you’re okay. I mean, physically, anyway.

NANCY
I just keep seeing the temple, and how lovely it all was before...

SARAH
You really don’t have to talk about it. It’s still way too traumatic for you.

JOSH
We don’t want you to keep re-living it.

NANCY
So you don’t want to know what I went through?

ZOE
Of course we do!

AMY
We just didn’t know if you were ready to tell us -

ZOE
But if it helps you process it -

NANCY
Now everyone’s a therapist?

AMY
It’s not about that, Mom.

NANCY
Stop jumping all over me, please!

Beat.

We had all been standing, and the cantor was singing. Barbara and her family were on the bima. And then... these loud popping noises. One after the other. We didn’t know what it was. I felt a slight pinch in my leg, but I didn’t think anything of it. At my age I get little pains everywhere, for no reason. Then people began to scream, and a few of them were running. I saw two men coming down the aisles with guns.

AMY
Oh, my God.

NANCY
The rabbi yelled, “Get down!” I was standing next to Sandy, from my bridge game, and we both dropped to the floor. We were trying not to say anything.

JOSH
You must have been terrified.

NANCY
I thought I was going to die.

ZOE
I can’t imagine what was going through your head.

NANCY
The floor was freezing cold. I kept looking at the different colored stone tiles. All these years, I never really noticed them.

Sandy grabbed my hand so tightly, her ring was digging into my skin.

The shooting stopped. We heard more running. Then it was very quiet. I pretended I was dead...I kept worrying I was going to sneeze or cough...I don't how long we were down there. Felt like forever...I heard sirens. I was so cramped from sitting in the same position, that I had to adjust my legs a little.

And then Sandy and I both saw it. The blood. On my lower leg. This red stain on my pantyhose. Soaking through, above my ankle. I couldn't believe it, because it didn't even hurt. Sandy took off her shawl. She started to wrap it around my leg. And let me tell you, that was a gorgeous shawl, silk and cashmere. It had a beautiful pattern on it, all these colorful birds.

ZOE
You remembered what was on the shawl?

NANCY
I did, because I told her when we first got to the service how much I liked it. She said she had a friend who sells them, and she was going to give me her number. So when she wrapped the shawl around my leg, I was so shocked. All I could think about was how the blood was going to ruin her shawl. I never even liked Sandy that much, although she's a very good bridge player. But she really came through for me. I'll never forget it.

SARAH
When did the police come?

NANCY
Wait, I'm not there yet...I kept wondering, "What happened to Barbara? Is she okay? What about her family?" I had no idea what really happened to anyone...And then I started panicking about Lucy -

AMY
You thought about Lucy?!/

FARROKH
/Who's Lucy?/

ZOE
/Her dog./

NANCY
/Yes! I thought about Lucy!/

SARAH
/Not about us?/

NANCY
/No. I mean later, yes. But down there on the floor, I thought about my Lucy. Who would take care of her if I was gone?

AMY
I would have taken her.

NANCY
You never got along with Lucy.

AMY
That’s not true. I mean it doesn’t help that you’re always kissing Lucy and telling her in front of me that it’s so much easier to love a dog than your own children -

NANCY
Much easier. But you don’t need to be jealous.

AMY
I’m not jealous of your dog!

NANCY
You got me so off track, I don’t even know where I was...

SARAH
You were on the floor -

NANCY
Eventually a paramedic came over. I told them I was okay, but they could see the blood. And then I felt it. It was like a hot burning pain. Almost like someone put a match through my leg. It hurt like hell.

SARAH
It’s so horrible.

NANCY

I was pretty out of it by the time they put me in an ambulance. In the E.R., they said the bullet had passed through. I was lucky. This very nice-looking young doctor said if it had been an assault weapon hit, there would have been much more damage. He told me that it didn't hit any bones, just muscle. I said it's a good thing I've been working out at the gym. We both laughed, but then I started to cry. I think I was laughing and crying at the same time. He told me how brave I was, but I didn't feel brave at all. I was just hiding and trying not to get killed. I didn't try to save anyone. Not that I could have...

SARAH

You didn't need to save anyone. There was nothing you could do except try to save yourself.

NANCY

I just still can't believe this happened, I really can't. Emanu-El isn't even a very Jewish temple. You know, we always called it "the church," it was so Reform. The windows look like Notre Dame. So many interfaith marriages, very inclusive...But no matter how much we assimilate, there will always be people who hate us.

JOSH

That's true.

NANCY

I hardly ever go to temple. Just for the High Holy Days, and once in a while for a wedding or bar mitzvah. I just happened to be there yesterday. For my friend. You know being Jewish isn't really an important part of who I am. But now I don't know if I'll ever be able to not identify with it. Or not have others identify me with it. My name's going to be all over the media. "Nancy Gordon was one of the injured Jewish congregants." I don't want that kind of attention, I really don't...I might tell them not to use my name.

SARAH

You can't do that!

ZOE

It's going to be public record. It was a crime.

NANCY
I don’t want my name to be associated forever with this horrific shooting! I’ve lived a very full life that’s had nothing to do with being Jewish. I don’t want the first thing that shows up on a Google search of me to be this. This tragedy. This hate crime against Jews. I’m sorry, maybe that’s wrong, but I just don’t.

Long beat. Nobody knows what to say.

AMY
Wow, Mom. I didn’t even think of that.

NANCY
I had a lot of time to think about it while I was lying in bed at the hospital.

ZOE
That’s what you were thinking?/

AMY
/I understand why you feel that way, but -

SARAH
What do you mean you understand?!

AMY
The media has to respect that you were injured and you might not be ready to talk about it -

NANCY
A reporter already left me his card at the hospital.

AMY
That’s disgusting!

FARROKH
I’m not surprised.

ZOE
That’s what they do. They knew the victims were there.

NANCY
Stop calling me a “victim.”

SARAH
You're a survivor. You don't have to use the word "victim."

JOSH
Either way, you're not going to be able to avoid being part of this.

ZOE
I can't even believe you're worried about how you're going to appear in a Google search.

NANCY
I'm just saying that I went to this *one* shabbat service, and I don't even keep shabbat, but now -

SARAH
You think all the Jews who died in the Holocaust were religious? It's not about that!

AMY
Don't lecture your grandmother!

NANCY
Stop it! All of you!

AMY
Mom, don't get agitated.

NANCY
It's a little late for that.

AMY
I'm going to get you some tea.

NANCY
I told you I don't want any tea!

AMY
I thought you like that mint tea I once gave you.

NANCY
Fine, fine, you can make it for me. If it will make you less jumpy.

AMY goes to the kitchen area to fill up a mug of tea from the boiling water dispenser.

NANCY
Plenty of other people will be willing to talk to the press. It doesn't have to be me.

FARROKH
I'm sure if you don't want to talk, you won't have to.

ZOE
But the thing is, this is bigger than that, Grandma. Like you said, this is a hate crime. And it's now part of our collective history, Don't you feel a responsibility to say something about it publicly? To raise awareness of what the divisiveness in this country has done to people?

NANCY
No, I don't. I told all of you what happened, and I'm done.

Amy comes back with NANCY'S tea.

AMY
Be careful with the tea, Mom. Let it cool off.

NANCY
It's fine.

AMY
I'm getting you some ice. You'll burn yourself on it.

NANCY
Stop infantilizing me!

AMY
I'm just worried about you!

SARAH
Grandma, I don't mean to keep stressing you out about this/

NANCY
/But you will anyway/

SARAH
/And I know you've been through something horrific -

ZOE
Maybe she doesn’t want to talk to the media because she doesn’t want to re-traumatize herself -

SARAH

But it just feels like you’re more worried about not wanting to be identified as Jewish. Is that true?

NANCY
I said I don’t want to be publicly known as a victim of a Jewish hate crime.

SARAH
Would it make a difference if it was another kind of hate crime?

NANCY
I don’t know how to answer that.

ZOE
You don’t?

SARAH
So it *is* the Jewish part.

NANCY
I just...It’s not what you think -

SARAH
I think it is. And that makes me really, really sad.

AMY
Sarah, this is not appropriate today!

SARAH
When else is it appropriate?!/

JOSH
/Don’t harass your grandmother. She obviously has some issues about her Jewish identity -

NANCY
Are you insulting me?

JOSH
No, I'm...honestly, I've been having trouble with what you said, too.

NANCY
Wonderful. Now I have to defend myself?

SARAH
I knew *Mom* wasn't really comfortable being Jewish, but I didn't know that you felt like that too/

NANCY
It's not about being comfortable/

AMY
/Just because I don't really care about it, doesn't mean I'm in denial!/

SARAH
I just don't get where all this self-hatred is coming from.

NANCY
Oh, my God!

NANCY tries to stand up from the chair with great difficulty.

I don't need to hear this. Not after what I've been through. You can't possibly understand.

SARAH
I want to understand/

ZOE
We're here for you, Grandma./

AMY
/Mom, what are you doing?

NANCY stands up.

NANCY
I'm leaving. I'll call an Uber to take me home.

FARROKH
I could drive you if you want -

AMY
She’s not going anywhere! Mom, please -

NANCY
I can’t take this kind of abuse from my own family. Especially right now. I haven’t even heard anything yet about Barbara. I know her injuries were very bad. She was in the ICU.

AMY
(to SARAH)
See what you’ve done?!

SARAH
This is really hard for me, too! I’m 8 months pregnant! You think I need this kind of trauma? This is really bad for the baby -

ZOE
This isn’t about you! /

AMY
/Mom, sit down. You’re not in any condition to go home right now.

SARAH
Grandma. I’m sorry, but -

NANCY
/I’m the one who got shot! One of my closest friends is in the hospital and I don’t even know if she’ll make it out alive! What right have the rest of you got to judge me?

AMY
We’re not judging you. Everyone stop it! Grandma is not leaving. We all need to stick together.

JOSH
You’re right. This isn’t the time to argue.

AMY
And I don’t want to celebrate my birthday without you.

NANCY
You’re still doing that?

AMY
Am I still doing what? Am I celebrating my milestone birthday with my family, at a nice restaurant, the way I had planned? No, I’m clearly not doing that! It’s obviously already been a horrible birthday. Beyond anything I could possibly imagine.

NANCY
Are you serious?

AMY
I know it’s selfish to feel bad about that, given what’s happened, so I wasn’t even going to mention it. But I’m really, really disappointed! I’m not going to pretend I wasn’t looking forward to this weekend for months. And I haven’t seen Zoe since the summer -

ZOE
Mom, I’m sorry -

AMY
My husband didn’t even make it to 60, so this is already an emotional birthday for me. It’s only been two years since he’s been gone -

NANCY
I wasn’t trying to pick on you./

SARAH
/You’re not the only one who’s been grieving for Dad. My kids will never know their grandfather./

JOSH
/Maybe we should get the gift out?/

AMY
/I’ve been up all night in a hospital. I’ve been so worried about my mother. About Barbara, about everyone! My acid reflux is back, I’m nauseous -

ZOE
/My reflux is really bad, too. I’ve already taken like 6 Tums today./

SARAH
/Try being pregnant! I get reflux like every other hour./

AMY
/Why does everyone else get to complain except me?!

Beat.

(Starting to break down)
Mom, I'm not saying that anything we've been going through can compare to what you've had to deal with. But for like over an hour, we didn't know if you were alive. You're the only parent I have left...and I still need you to be part of my life.

NANCY sits back down.

NANCY
Okay, I'm staying.

FARROKH
I'm happy to pick up some food for your birthday, if you let me know where to go.

AMY
Thanks. I'm sorry you have to see us like this, but -

FARROKH
I get it, this is all incredibly stressful -

NANCY
We can still celebrate your birthday.

AMY
It's okay. We don't have to.

NANCY
Turning 60 is a big deal.

Beat.

JOSH
Nancy, even I had times when I struggled with being identified as Jewish.

SARAH
You did?

NANCY
I thought we were off that topic.

AMY
Yeah, me too.

JOSH
I wanted to say that it's not always easy to be so obviously Jewish. When I was in high school, there were a couple of antisemitic attacks in my neighborhood. Some kids were punched and taunted a few times, so our parents told us that when we were out in public, we should wear baseball caps over our kipppah.

NANCY
They wanted you to hide your yarmulkes under your caps?

JOSH
We didn't want to call attention to being Jewish.

ZOE
That's really upsetting.

SARAH
I'm sorry, Joshie.

JOSH
Sometimes I'm still not comfortable wearing my kippah in public.

FARROKH
My sister feels that way about her hijab.

Beat.

Right after 9/11, all I wanted to do was fit in. But with a name like "Farrokh" it was kind of hard. Everyone looked at me like a potential terrorist.

AMY
That must have been horrible for you.

FARROKH
When I was a kid, and people asked if I was Muslim, I just said I was American. I grew up here.

But I remember one day, about 6 months after 9/11, I was walking with my mom, and some teenaged boys shouted at us, "Go back to your country, you dirty Arabs!" I was so angry. I decided I wasn't going to hide who I was, and let someone else make me feel bad about it.

AMY
I never really thought about what it must be like to wear your religious identity so publicly. When I'm in the City, and those Chabad people stop me on the street and ask, "Are you Jewish?" I think, "Why are they asking *me* that? Do I look more Jewish than the woman in front of me?"

FARROKH
They actually ask you if you're Jewish?

AMY
Yes! Then I feel bad for being upset, because I was kind of offended by them targeting me as a Jewish woman.

NANCY
Those Mitzvah Tank people are so intrusive! \

SARAH
I know they can be annoying, but -

NANCY
It's none of their business if you're Jewish or not.

AMY
That's what I mean -

ZOE
So you tell them you're not?

AMY
I usually just try to walk by quickly and say something like, "No, thank you."

SARAH
No, thank you?

JOSH
It's not like they're selling you stuff.

AMY
They’re selling Judaism. And Jews are not supposed to be proselytizing!

ZOE
But they can if it’s to other Jews.

JOSH
They’re just trying to get other Jews to fulfill -

AMY
But my point is how do they know I’m Jewish?

NANCY
I agree with you, Amy.

AMY
For once.

NANCY
No, not for once! I may think it’s a bit over-the-top that your Christmas tree is Rockefeller Center sized -

AMY
That’s a huge exaggeration/

NANCY
/But we were never showy about being Jewish. When I grew up, there wasn’t all this identity flag-waving. Especially for Jews. My father’s family was always afraid of looking or acting “too Jewish.”

ZOE
That is messed up.

SARAH
But why were they so uncomfortable with it?

NANCY
They were Old German Jews. Way before The Holocaust. My grandfather changed his name from “Rosenstein” to “Ross.”

AMY
Like a hundred other Rosensteins.

JOSH
My grandfather’s brother changed his name, too. They were the only “Johnsons” at my bar mitzvah.

NANCY
We were very secular. When I grew up on Fifth Avenue, there were only certain buildings that weren’t restricted.

FARROKH
“Restricted”?

NANCY
They didn’t allow Jewish families. In my private school I was very low-key about being Jewish. There weren’t many of us.

ZOE
Did they know you were?

NANCY
Some did.

SARAH
Did they give you a hard time?

NANCY
I guess I experienced what they now call “micro-aggressions.” People would say things like, “You don’t look Jewish,” or “I didn’t know you were Jewish.”

JOSH
What about your mother’s family?

NANCY
They were from Russia. The “shtetl” Jews.

FARROKH
Like *Fiddler on the Roof*.

NANCY
The German Jews considered the Russian Jews poorer and less refined. They didn’t want to be associated with them.

ZOE
That’s pretty shitty.

AMY
But it was a real thing back then.

NANCY
My friend Linda’s golf club still only likes the old German Jews.

SARAH
So ridiculous.

NANCY
My maternal grandparents were in the “schmatta” business. It was a successful clothing company. But they spoke a lot of Yiddish. My German grandparents really looked down on them. At my wedding, my father told my mother’s parents not to speak Yiddish. That it would be embarrassing to their friends. My parents were obsessed with assimilating.

FARROKH
That’s what my family wanted, too.

NANCY
Even when the Holocaust refugees tried to come here, my family thought it would make life more difficult for American Jews. They argued over how much to support these refugees.

ZOE
It’s disgusting they were even worried about doing that!

NANCY
They did donate. And after the War, they all supported Israel. But there was always tension.

ZOE
Sounds like more of a classist thing.

JOSH
I think that’s only part of it.

NANCY
I never felt connected to Judaism in a positive way.

SARAH
So why raise your kids in Scarsdale?

NANCY
Grandpa wanted a house and had friends here. I became very involved with bridge, as you know. I played with all kinds of people, not just from the Jewish clubs.

ZOE
So maybe that was like your community.

NANCY
I love my bridge ladies. I go to their Christmas lunches, too.

AMY
See, I’m not the only one who likes Christmas!

NANCY
You take it to a whole other level.

AMY
My two closest friends from middle school always invited me to their Christmas services, and I fell in love with the music. They had the most beautiful Christmas trees.

SARAH
Maybe that was part of the problem, Mom. You didn’t find the joy in our own holidays.

AMY
Yeah. The Jewish scene didn’t do it for me.

JOSH
(joking)
So you moved back to Scarsdale.

AMY
It was an easy commute for us. And the schools are great.

ZOE
Remember when I was like 15 and said I wasn’t Jewish because I didn’t believe in religion?/

SARAH
/That was crazy./

FARROKH
/You said that?/

AMY
I told Zoe that you can't just say you're not Jewish, even if you don't believe in the religion. You can say you're a non-practicing Jew, but -

ZOE
I know. It's an ethnicity, too. These days everything is about how you identify. But if I told people that I don't "identify" with being Jewish (which isn't true), that wouldn't change anything about my ethnicity.

FARROKH
That's kind of like that white woman saying she identified as black. Doesn't change her actual ancestry.

AMY
That's a good point.

NANCY
(To ZOE)
He's a keeper.

AMY
Yeah, he really is.

JOSH
And even if a Jewish woman decided she wanted to practice Islam and said she "identified" as a Muslim, that wouldn't change the fact that her kids would still technically be considered Jewish.

FARROKH
What do you mean?

JOSH
Under Jewish law, if children are born to a Jewish mother, even if the father isn't Jewish, and even if the mother converts to something else, they're still Jewish.

ZOE
We don't need to get into this. And things aren't that clear-cut anymore.

JOSH
But Farrokh should know about that, if you guys have kids one day.

FARROKH
I get that you're very religious, but how Zoe and I might raise our kids is not up to you.

SARAH
We know that -

JOSH
It's actually kind of important to *us*, though -

AMY
Hold on, Josh/

ZOE
/Yeah, what the hell?!/

NANCY
/Why are they talking about children already?/

JOSH
Of course it's your choice, but it would just be hard for us to see kids in our extended family not being raised Jewish at all, because we're already losing so many of us to inter-marriage, so I'm just trying to explain the importance -

SARAH
(To JOSH)
I agree, but this isn't the right time -

FARROKH
I'm not trying to be disrespectful, but this feels really inappropriate to me/

AMY
/Totally inappropriate!/

ZOE
/Yeah, really!/

JOSH
(To AMY)
/Do you think Steven would have been okay with his grandchildren being raised Muslim?

FARROKH
Are you kidding me?!/

ZOE
/We didn’t say they would be raised Muslim!/

AMY
/Josh, you are way overstepping, here!/

NANCY
/They want to raise their kids Muslim?/

FARROKH
/Why are we talking about this?!/

ZOE
/This is bullshit!/

AMY
/And my husband was very open-minded -

JOSH
He didn’t seem that open-minded to me -

AMY
That’s because he wasn’t thrilled about you being Orthodox -

SARAH
/Mom, don’t!/

JOSH
/Yeah, and he wasn’t very subtle about it. He blamed me for Sarah becoming *ba’alat* -

AMY
I told him that she was already going in that direction anyway -

SARAH
/Why are we bringing Dad into this?!/

JOSH
/You both never saw me as anything but this alien religious guy/

AMY
/I’m not discussing this, and especially not on my birthday./

ZOE
/Let it go, Josh!/

JOSH
/You don’t acknowledge me as a whole person! Like belonging to a running club, or playing in a rock band -

NANCY
Oh for God’s sake -

AMY
/I downloaded your songs, I told you they were good!/

JOSH
/And I was going to tell you about this book I’ve written, but what’s the point?/

SARAH
/Josh, not now!/

AMY
/You wrote a book?/

ZOE
/What book?/

JOSH
/You hate that your grandchildren are being raised Orthodox -

SARAH
/Well that part’s true./

AMY
/I never said I hated it./

JOSH
/But Muslim grandkids are just fine with you!

FARROKH
Wait, what?!/

ZOE
/This needs to stop!/

JOSH
/You’re treating Farrokh a million times better than you’ve ever treated me!

AMY
Maybe he’s just easier to get along with!/

SARAH
/How can you say that?!/

FARROKH
(To ZOE)
/What is happening?!/

ZOE
/I don’t know, this is crazy! I’m so sorry./

FARROKH
(Getting up)
I think I should leave.

ZOE
(Getting up)
If you’re leaving, I’m leaving.

AMY
You can’t leave! Please!/

SARAH
(To JOSH)
/You said too much!

JOSH
I didn’t mean to -

ZOE
I told you my family was difficult.

FARROKH
It’s way more than that./

AMY
/You told him we were difficult?

NANCY
You *are* difficult, all of you!

FARROKH
You know, I thought my mother was wrong for giving me a hard time about dating Zoe, and I told her I was sure Zoe's family would be much more accepting of me, that you wouldn't be like that -

AMY
We're really not like that!/

ZOE
/I thought your mom loved me!/

FARROKH
/She kept trying to fix me up with all these daughters of people she knew. But I told her that Zoe was the one for me, and that she needed to be nice to her, and we would work it out.

ZOE
You told your mom that?

FARROKH
But you're all more xenophobic and insular than my mother is. And what's worse, you *pretend* you're so inclusive!

SARAH
That's not true!

FARROKH
I heard you yesterday, when I was coming back from the bathroom.

SARAH
Oh...I'm sorry, I -

ZOE
You didn't tell me you heard all that!/

FARROKH
/There was no time./

ZOE
/Oh my God, shit!/

AMY
I kept saying “No talking about Israel,” but nobody listened to me -

FARROKH
You think people don’t see who *you* really are, Josh? How do you think I’ve been feeling, sitting here, trying hard to be liked, trying to be supportive of everyone, when I know how you really feel about me?

JOSH
It’s not about you *personally* -

FARROKH
That’s even worse! I could take it if you didn’t like me, *personally*, but it’s because you think I might somehow taint the family line!

ZOE
If you want to go, we can.

FARROKH and ZOE begin to leave.

JOSH
Look, I’m sorry.

ZOE
You were way out of line!

SARAH
It’s just all this stress right now, with all of us feeling so vulnerable -

AMY
(To FARROKH)
Please don’t go.

Beat.

FARROKH
It’s a horrible time for everyone -

NANCY
Yeah, it’s beyond horrible! I’m trying to recover from the most traumatic thing that’s ever happened to me, and now I have to listen to this endless bickering!

Farrokh, we all like you, and we really want you to stay...And Josh, we know you play the guitar. You're no Keith Richards, but you're good.

JOSH
Thanks.

NANCY
Farrokh, please sit down.

Beat, as FARROKH considers.

FARROKH
Okay.

FARROKH sits. ZOE puts her hand on his.

NANCY
I need to check my phone. I thought maybe somebody would text me about Barbara's condition.

NANCY checks her phone.
Nothing about Barbara...But I have so many messages from friends who want to know how I am.

AMY
I wrote to most of them while you were in the hospital.

NANCY
Can we turn up the news?

SARAH
At least they found the other gunman.

JOSH
But there's always going to be another guy somewhere, just like him..

ZOE
Thanks for the reassurance.

ZOE turns up the t.v.

T.V. ANCHOR
We have more updates on the shooting at Temple Emanu-El in Scarsdale, New York. Here’s Corey Lewis with the story...

T.V. REPORTER
A vigil will be held tomorrow, Sunday night, at the nearby Westchester JCC. There will be tightened security in the entire area.

ZOE
We have to go to that. The vigil.

SARAH
Of course.

T.V. ANCHOR
And they’re expecting a big turnout, right, Corey?

T.V. REPORTER
Yes. Many rabbis from neighboring congregations, and other religious and government leaders, including Senator Chuck Schumer, will also be there. The Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs is flying in to assist the Scarsdale Jewish community. And today both chief rabbis of Israel condemned the attack, calling on the global community to do more to root out antisemitism.

T.V. ANCHOR
Thanks, Corey. We’ll be right back after these messages.

AMY
I’m going to lower the volume.

SARAH
This baby’s going to be permanently traumatized by all this stress.

ZOE
It won’t, don’t worry.

SARAH
Stress affects babies in utero. They’ve done studies.

JOSH
The baby’s going to be okay.

SARAH
Don’t count on it.

NANCY
It’ll be fine...Speaking of babies, where’s my great-grandson?

JOSH
Daniel’s napping. He should be up by dinnertime.

ZOE
He must really love that Bloopy.

AMY
(Watching t.v.)
They’re saying something about a vigil *tonight*!

ZOE
Tonight?

AMY
I need to turn it up.

AMY turns up the t.v.

T.V ANCHOR
We just got news that some community activists and students are holding a vigil near the temple tonight at 6:30. That’s in addition to the larger one being held tomorrow.

AMY lowers the t.v. volume.

SARAH
6:30 is way after the end of Shabbos, which is why I wanted to get Havdalah ready earlier.

ZOE
So does that mean we should go tonight?

FARROKH
I’ll go with you if you want to.

NANCY
I’m not up to going anywhere.

AMY
Of course not, Mom.

NANCY
If any of you want to go the vigil tonight, I don’t want to stop you.

SARAH
No, we should stay together tonight.

AMY
We can just do my birthday another time -

ZOE
We’re not going to bail on your birthday dinner.

AMY
What’s the point? I don’t even care anymore.

NANCY
We said we would do it, so we’re doing it! That’s enough already.

ZOE
Mom, we should give you your gift.

AMY
You can wait, it’s okay.

ZOE
No, let’s do it now. We need something to make us all feel better.

JOSH
I’ll go out to the car and get the present.

SARAH
It’s still shabbos, but, fine. And we can order food for tonight.

FARROKH
And Zoe and I can pick it up at the restaurant.

JOSH exits.

AMY
I guess it’s not a cruise.

ZOE
You wanted to go on a cruise?

AMY
I did hint about that Mediterranean cruise -

SARAH
/You never said you wanted a cruise!/

ZOE
/I never heard anything about a cruise./

AMY
/It’s fine. I’m sure whatever you give me will be wonderful.

ZOE
Seriously, Mom?

NANCY
I don’t know why you wanted a cruise. I hate cruises.

AMY
It wasn’t for you! It was for me.

SARAH
We didn’t get you a cruise!

AMY
(Turning up t.v.)
Wait, there’s more on t.v.

T.V. REPORTER
There are still some people at White Plains Hospital who were injured during the shooting.

ZOE
Did they list the names of the injured, too?

AMY
I didn’t see names.

NANCY
I didn’t give any permission for that!

T.V. REPORTER
In terms of fatalities, we know of 8 people so far who have died.

NANCY
I thought it was 7.

AMY lowers the t.v. again, as JOSH enters with a large, wrapped, painting.

JOSH
Here it is. Happy Birthday!

AMY
Wow, I can’t wait to open this!

SARAH
We wanted to get you something really special for your 60th.

ZOE
It’s from all of us.

SARAH
Yeah, Zoe chipped in what she could -

ZOE
You had to say that?!

SARAH
Sorry -

AMY
It doesn’t matter, I’m sure I’ll love it!

NANCY
Something’s not right about that number.

AMY
Mom, don’t worry.

NANCY
I should check my phone again.

AMY
I know you’re upset, but can you just wait a minute?

NANCY
No, I need to check it now.

AMY
Okay, just check it, and then I'll open the gift.

NANCY checks her phone.

NANCY
Oh, no! No!

AMY
What happened?

NANCY
It's Barbara! She died!

AMY
/Oh, my God!/

ZOE
/Oh, shit./

FARROKH
/I'm so sorry./

SARAH
Grandma, this is just...I don't know what to say.

NANCY
Barbara's heart stopped in the ICU. They couldn't revive her.

NANCY starts to cry.

AMY
Oh, Mom.

ZOE
So sorry, Grandma.

NANCY
(Through her tears)
It's all so unfair. She was the most wonderful person. Her poor family...I don't know what to do.

SARAH
This is horrible.

NANCY
I should have tried to see Barbara while I was in the hospital.

JOSH
She was in the ICU. They probably wouldn't have allowed non-family members.

AMY
And you were dealing with your own medical issues.

NANCY
Not like this! I mean what I suffered is nothing compared to this!

AMY
I know, but that doesn't mean you didn't suffer. You can't feel bad about that.

ZOE
It's natural to feel survivors' guilt, but -

NANCY
I don't want to hear that right now! I'm upset enough.

ZOE
Sorry, I was just trying to make you feel better.

NANCY
Nothing is going to make me feel better.

Lights fade.

SCENE 3

A half hour later. Lights up on the house. It's almost dark outside. A funereal mood. The wrapped painting is propped against something, unopened. NANCY is sitting in the same chair, occasionally checking her phone. ZOE and FARROKH are sitting near her, on and off their phones. JOSH is setting up Havdalah items and tableware.

ZOE
Is there anything we can do?

NANCY
No. I'm just waiting to find out the arrangements for Barbara.

AMY enters, on her phone.

AMY
Mom, what dressing do you want with your salad?

NANCY
I can't think about food right now.

AMY
I'll get you the blue cheese.

NANCY
I'll take balsamic vinaigrette.

AMY
(Into phone)
Balsamic vinaigrette...

(To NANCY)
They just have regular Italian. Is that okay?

NANCY
I'll take Honey Mustard.

AMY
(Into phone)
Do you have Honey Mustard?...

(To NANCY)
They don't have that.

NANCY
For God's sake, I don't care!

AMY
I know you care. And you have to eat something.

NANCY
Fine. I'll take blue cheese on the side.

AMY
(Into phone)
She'll take blue cheese on the side...Thanks...That's so nice you're bringing food to the JCC. I'm sure the families appreciate it...Yes, my mother's doing okay, but she's very shaken up, of course -

NANCY
You told them about me?

AMY
I had to explain why we couldn't come to the restaurant.

(Into phone)
My daughter Zoe will pick up the order. And that's very sweet of you to include the cake...Yeah, not much of a birthday, but thank you.

AMY hangs up.
Zoe, do you know where the restaurant is? It's called "Oscar's."

ZOE
I have no clue where the kosher restaurant is, but I'll just Google it.

FARROKH
We'll find it.

NANCY
I hope Barbara's daughter got my message. I'm sure she's too busy to write back, but -

AMY
She's definitely too busy...I still can't believe this happened. Barbara co-hosted one of my bridal showers.

SARAH enters.

SARAH
I have no idea how Daniel could still be napping, with everything going on.

JOSH
Let him nap a little longer. He'll be more alert at dinner.

NANCY
(checking phone)
They're going to have Barbara's service on Tuesday. And then the shiva at her daughter's home.

ZOE
They probably can't do the service at Emanu-El, since it's a crime scene.

AMY
Oh my God, I didn't even think of that. They'll have to do all the funeral services at another temple. I don't know which one -

NANCY
I'm so upset.

AMY
I know. Maybe you should have a drink?

NANCY
I'm on painkillers!

AMY
Right, sorry.

ZOE
I have some CBD gummies in my bag, but/

AMY
/You can’t give Grandma CBD!/

SARAH
/Are you serious?/

ZOE researches on her phone.

NANCY
I haven’t smoked pot since the 70’s./

ZOE
/CBD’s not weed. And you don’t smoke it./

FARROKH
(To NANCY)
/You smoked pot?

NANCY
A few times, at parties.

ZOE
(Reading on phone)
It says CBD could interact with certain medications.

SARAH
That surprises you?

NANCY
It’s okay, you were just trying to help.

AMY
Everyone’s just trying to help right now.

ZOE
I don’t know, are they really? Is everyone?

AMY
What the hell does that mean?

ZOE
I’m not talking about us...I’ve been checking social media a lot. And I’ve seen very few posts about the shooting from anyone I know who isn’t Jewish.

AMY
All my good friends, many who are not Jewish, have checked in on me.

NANCY
Mine, too.

ZOE
Of course your *friends* checked! I'm talking about everyone else - all the progressive people I'm connected to. Where's the outrage about this temple shooting? Where are the messages of support?

SARAH
From people who are supposed to be "our allies."

JOSH
Exactly.

ZOE
The silence is deafening.

AMY
I didn't really think about it that way.

ZOE
Every time something horrible happens to another minority group, everyone posts about it and has no problem speaking out. But if something bad happens to Jews? Who cares about them?

AMY
I think you're being oversensitive.

ZOE
I actually did see a post today from someone in my climate justice group. She said Jews bring this kind of hatred on themselves because of Israel, which she says has no legitimate right to exist.

JOSH
Great.

SARAH
Nobody gets the whole history.

FARROKH
I’m sorry, Zo.

ZOE
Maybe the Left really *is* becoming antisemitic.

SARAH
You just realized that? College students are afraid to admit they’re Jewish.

JOSH
Everyone thinks Jews aren’t oppressed enough to merit support.

AMY
I don’t know what it’s about...But I’ve never felt more Jewish than I do now.

NANCY
That’s for sure.

AMY’s phone buzzes. She picks it up and looks at it.

AMY
Oh, my God!

NANCY
What now?

AMY
“Scarsdale Temple Gunman, Thomas Clark, is Jewish”!

SARAH
What?!/

ZOE
/No!/

NANCY
/How can that be?/

FARROKH
/He’s Jewish?/

JOSH
/Who’s saying that?/

ZOE grabs her own phone.

AMY
(Reading from her phone)
The New York Times!

NANCY
Why would a Jewish man shoot up a temple?

ZOE
(Looking at phone)
I got it, too. Oh, my God.

AMY
(Reading)
His first cousin, Diane Clark, told the Times that Clark’s mother is Jewish. His father is Christian.

SARAH
Wait, what?

AMY
(Reading)
Tom was raised with many Jewish observances until his parents divorced when he was 9. Tom’s father, my uncle, became very bitter about his ex-wife, telling Tom that Jews were bad people. He kept bombarding Tom with all this antisemitic rhetoric. It was relentless.

NANCY
This is sick.

AMY
(Reading)
He told Tom that he’d never amount to anything as long as he was part-Jewish. Tom loves his mom, but he desperately wanted to be close to his dad. He even converted to Christianity, but it wasn’t enough for my uncle.

SARAH
I can’t even imagine -

AMY
(Reading)
Then a few years ago, Tom joined a white supremacist group. But we never thought he would act out in such a violent way.

ZOE
This is so disturbing./

JOSH
/It's beyond that./

SARAH
/It's one thing to not want to practice Judaism, and say you want to celebrate Christmas -

AMY
Wait, are you talking about *me*?!

SARAH
No, I just mean who could imagine someone who's even part-Jewish committing a mass shooting at a temple -

ZOE
He must have internalized all those hateful things./

AMY
/His abusive, antisemitic father pushed him to the brink!/

SARAH
/That's what I'm saying! He killed Jews, because he was taught to hate the Jew that still lived inside of him!

Beat.

NANCY
(Getting up from the chair)
Okay, that's it. I can't just sit here. It's bad enough that *other* people want to kill us, but this is so much worse.

SARAH
What are you going to do?

NANCY
Where's my purse?

NANCY starts looking for her purse.

AMY
Mom, you're gonna fall! Sit down!

NANCY
I don't want to sit anymore!

ZOE
But your leg -

FARROKH
Can we help you find it?

NANCY finds her purse.

NANCY
I need to find that card.

SARAH
What card?

NANCY
The business card from that reporter!

ZOE
Really?

NANCY
I'm going to email him.

NANCY gets the business card out of her purse.

AMY
You sure you're ready to talk about it?

NANCY
Yes. I have to. I have to do *something*. And what I can do is tell my story. I've been thinking about it since I heard Barbara died. But now...I just have to.

AMY
That's good, Mom.

SARAH
I'm proud of you, Grandma.

ZOE
You’re doing the right thing.

NANCY
But I’m not consenting to any photos.

NANCY takes out the card and starts to type an email on her phone.
Beat.

NANCY
We’ll see what he says.

AMY’s phone buzzes. She reads the message.

AMY
One of my writers is having issues with her book...I’ll deal with it later.

ZOE
(To JOSH)
So are you really writing a book?

JOSH
Yeah -

SARAH
It’s so good.

AMY
Tell us about it.

JOSH
Is this an okay time?

AMY
Yes, it’s fine. I’m really curious.

JOSH
It’s... about this Jewish summer camp.

AMY
I’d love to read it.

JOSH
Thanks. I'll send it to you after shabbos.

SARAH
This is the perfect time to do Havdalah.

AMY
Yeah, let's do it.

Everyone moves over to the dining table. JOSH fills the cup of wine.

AMY
Can I light the candle?

SARAH
Really?

AMY
Yes, I want to.

AMY lights the Havdalah candle.

AMY
Aren't we supposed to say the candle blessing now?

SARAH
First we thank God for the wine. Anyone can sing along.

SARAH AND JOSH
(Singing)
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

Everyone tries to join in.

ALL
(Singing)
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

SARAH AND JOSH
BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA’0LAM
BOREI P’RI HAGAFEN
BOREI P’RI HAGAFEN.

ALL
(Everyone joins in as much as they can. The following is repeated).
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

SARAH
The spices remind us of the sweetness and flavor of Shabbos. I’ll pass the spice box around if you want to smell it.

SARAH passes the spice box as she and JOSH sing.

SARAH AND JOSH
BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA’0LAM
BOREI MINEI V’SAMIM
BOREI MINEI V’SAMIM.

ALL
(Sing twice)
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

SARAH
This blessing over the glow of the fire represents the first light of the new week. You hold your hands up like this, so you can see the reflection on your fingernails and palms.

ZOE
Let’s all do it.

SARAH holds up the candle, and everyone puts up their hands to catch the flame’s light.

SARAH AND JOSH
BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA'OLAM
BOREI M'ORE HA'EISH
BOREI MO'ORE HA'EISH.

ALL
(Twice)
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

SARAH
Next we thank God for making the distinction between Shabbos and other days, between the sacred and the profane.

SARAH AND JOSH
BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA'0LAM
HAMAVDIL BEIN KODESH L'CHOL
BEIN OR L'CHOSHECH.
BEIN YISRAEL LAAMIN
BEIN YOM HASHVI-I
L'SHEISHET Y'MEI HAMAASEH.
BARUCH ATAH ADONAI
HAMAVDIL BEIN KODESH L'CHOL.

ALL
(Twice)
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
YA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.

AMY
I'd almost do this every week just for the songs.

FARROKH
The music is beautiful.

ZOE
It really is.

SARAH
It's just as good as "White Christmas," right?

AMY
I wouldn't go *that* far.

NANCY
You know, Irving Berlin’s father was a cantor.

JOSH takes a sip from the cup.

NANCY
Can we please all have a moment of silent prayer for Barbara?

ZOE
Of course.

SARAH
And all the other victims.

AMY
And the survivors.

Beat for silent prayer.

SARAH
As we end Shabbos, we think about the coming week. And all the work we need to do.

SARAH lifts the cup and the candle, as the lights start to fade. We see the night sky behind the house, with the glow of many flickering lights, representing the candles from the vigil. As SARAH dips the lit candle into the cup, the stage lights go to full black, and in the darkness, we hear the hiss of the candle being extinguished.

End of play.