

Selections from ‘A Dress for Mona’ (Act I, Scenes 4 & 5 - 2 males)

Áqá Husayní (M) *Middle-aged; a religious cleric, adamant*
Mr. Alízádeh (M) *Middle-aged; charismatic, Mona’s teacher*

Scene 1 - A Mosque in Shiraz. AQA HUSAYNI addresses a congregation.

AQA HUSAYNI

Praise be to God! We stand today at the threshold of a new Iran! We were cursed with a tyrannical government, now the love of the Islamic Revolution is spreading! The Shah is dead and Ayatu’llah Khomeini has returned, leading us into this new day, into this new Iran! (*Pause.*) Let us talk about Baha’i. Baha’i says it is a religion. Islam says Baha’i is a political sect. The Twelfth Imam has returned, Baha’i says. My friends, if the Twelfth Imam had returned, I should not be standing here. He should be here, and I should be on the floor in humility like you. But here I am, and I ask: Where is Imam? (*A beat.*) This plague will be eradicated from this land. Starting now. And you will do it. (*He exits.*)

Scene 2 - A Public Secondary School for Girls in Shiraz. MR. ALIZADEH’s English class. The students speak the "English" phrases with a Persian accent.

MR. ALIZADEH

And again... (*Repeating along with class.*) "I would like to buy a kidney pie for my wife." Not "vife"! Wa-wa-wa. Wwwwwwife! Speak it like an Arab! "I would like to buy a kidney pie for my wife." Now what about this word ordering? Notice that the subject comes first. Now, class, is it necessary to include the word "I"? ("Yeeeeesss.") Class, is it not like Persian where you can just add the pronoun if you feel like it? ("Nnnoooo.") The English are very impatient, you know. They don't want to wait til the end of the sentence before they figure out who's doing what. Notice, the verb comes next! Those English are so impatient they need to know right away what's happening and who's doing it. Where's the poetry in that, I ask you?! Persian, you see, is a circle. You need the whole of it to understand any of it, but the English, the English are in such a hurry, they hear the headline, the "who" and the "what" and, bam, they're off to colonize another part of the world, and you're not even finished with your sentence! (*Student raises hand.*) Yes, you have a question?

[A voice comes over the intercom speaker.]

AQA HUSAYNI

Mr. Alizadeh?

MR. ALIZADEH

(Shouting at the intercom speaker.)

What do you want, disembodied voice?!

[The class laughs.]

AQA HUSAYNI

Please come down to the main office.

MR. ALIZADEH

Disembodied voice! I finally get a student to ask a question and you interrupt!

AQA HUSAYNI

Come down right away.

MR. ALIZADEH

I'm a-comin! Miss Mahmudnizhad, watch over the class while I'm gone. (*He exits.*)

[Scene shift. MR. ALIZADEH reenters followed by AQA HUSAYNI.]

MR. ALIZADEH

That girl is as much a spy for Israel as I am.

AQA HUSAYNI

The Baha'i sect is an illegal organization in this land and that girl is actively propagating it.

MR. ALIZADEH

Teaching a class of six year olds.

AQA HUSAYNI

Poisoning their minds against Islam.

MR. ALIZADEH

If you ask me, the clergy is the real threat to Islam.

[Aqa Husayni gives him a dangerous look.]

MR. ALIZADEH

Why do you come to me? I'm a foreign-language teacher. Why do you need my approval to kick out one harmless girl from school?

AQA HUSAYNI

It has to do with a certain teacher's union you belong to.

MR. ALIZADEH

Oh... that.

AQA HUSAYNI

Alizadeh, you stand there with your cocky, Marxist politics and hollow European values, and think you can judge the rest of the world from your perch. But you are not my judge. We're in the midst of a revolution... The Judgment, when the righteous and the sinners are separated, and those in the middle -- who fail to take a side -- are hacked in two by the sword of God. (*A beat.*) But what I'd like to know is if this girl is expelled, the teachers will show up for school tomorrow.

MR. ALIZADEH

The people who unlock the doors are not in our union.

AQA HUSAYNI

You should know that this is not my only recourse to action.

MR. ALIZADEH

What if you just let the girl alone?

AQA HUSAYNI

The girl is part of a much larger problem and I think you know what I mean.

[End of scene.]