

**Selections from ‘A Dress for Mona’ (Act II, Scene 1 – 2 females, 1 male)**

*Mona* 16; a Bahá’í prisoner, friendly and bright.  
*Zahrá* young, a non-Bahá’í prisoner, attached to Mona  
*Guard* a man who can be friendly and can also be quite cruel, shrewd

*Scene – Prison. The scene begins with Mona kneeling in a prison cell. She sways a bit, eyes closed, apparently praying. Another young woman, Zahra, lays in a corner, shivering. The Guard has entered quietly.*

GUARD

You aren’t praying, are you, little prisoner?

*MONA opens her eyes, but doesn’t say anything.*

GUARD

I suppose if you’re silent, it can’t do any harm. You know he wouldn’t have banned them if they didn’t work.

*[MONA nods.]*

GUARD

I’ve got something for you.

MONA

What is it?

GUARD

Happy Naw-Rúz.

MONA

It’s not Naw-Rúz, is it?

*[The Guard shakes his head. Mona unfolds the paper.]*

MONA

Does this means they're letting me go?

GUARD

Don't get your hopes too high, little prisoner. They always look for ways to catch you off-guard.

*[Zahra has heard this, and she walks over and looks at the paper.]*

ZAHRA

Oh, Mona, this is wonderful! Where is everyone? Shirin! Roya!

MONA

Most of them are still being questioned.

ZAHRA

So what are you going to do if they release you? Here, sit! sit!

MONA

I haven't had the chance to think.

ZAHRA

What else do we think about in here? I know the first thing I'm getting when I get out of here is a good meal.

MONA

Yeah?

ZAHRA

Yeah, and it's not going to be beans.

MONA

No beans!

ZAHRA

No more beans.

MONA

Never again beans!

ZAHRA

Then there's going to be rice.

MONA

Of course. And tadíg?

ZAHRA

Of course.

MONA

Good! I love tadíg!

ZAHRA

And kebáb. I love kebáb!

GUARD

Everyone loves kebáb.

MONA

But the way my father makes it!

GUARD

Chicken or lamb?

ZAHRA

*(She starts to answer and then...)*

Mona, they're letting you go! What do you want?

MONA

It depends.

ZAHRA

On what?

MONA

My father. I don't know if he's going to be released.

ZAHRA

Okay, we won't talk about food anymore.

GUARD

What about after you eat?

ZAHRA

Yeah, yeah!

MONA

They might not even call me.

ZAHRA

We're not going to talk about that.

MONA

And my father...

ZAHRA

Don't worry about the kebab.

MONA

I'm not talking about kebab!

ZAHRA

Good. So think about what comes next. Close your eyes. You just ate, what's next?

[A long beat.]

MONA

A shower.

ZAHRA

A shower!

MONA

A hot shower.

ZAHRA

Oh, yes, a hot shower!

MONA

A long hot shower with soap and a fresh, clean towel to follow.

ZAHRA

Stop, Mona, you're going to make me cry.

MONA

Oh, Zahra, this is sick!

ZAHRA

Keep going, and then?

MONA

I don't want to be the only one. How can I sleep in my bed when you are all here in the cold?

ZAHRA

We're not going to think about that.

MONA

This is not the way Baha'is think about it. We are here for God! We are in prison for our faith! What I want is what God wants for me! That's what we all want. (*Pause.*) It's just hard sometimes to figure out what God actually wants.

**1 Extra Male Part for Prison Scene (probably before other scene)**

*GUARD 2 – has a tendency to mock and abuse prisoners, but is not unaffected by the Baha'is' plight.*

*[GUARD 2 enters and hands GUARD 1 a piece of paper. GUARD 1 looks at it, nods and looks at Mona. He then takes a letter out of his pocket and hands it to Guard 2.]*

GUARD 1

Check this out.

GUARD 2

What is it?

GUARD 1

It's a letter she wants to get sent out of here.

*[Guard 2 opens and reads Mona's letter out loud.]*

GUARD 2

“Dear Farah, I put my trust in God to get this letter to you -- We're not supposed to write anything except for filling out all the forms they give us. I have only seen my father once since coming here. They have done horrible things to him, but he's just become more radiant. Like a candle that's had its cover removed. I wasn't cooperating, so they brought him in on a cart. His feet were bare so I could see dried blood around his toes. The soles of his feet had been beaten with a rod. The interrogator said that it took several days for the feet to start to bleed but when they did they bled from the nails, and had I ever seen any one's feet bleed? I almost lost it there, but my father said, 'Mona, they hit me and after a while I don't feel the pain any more. Love, Mona. Only love. You must not hate them or be angry with them. Answer them bravely and honestly. We have nothing to hide.' *(A slight pause.)* “Farah, don't worry about me. I have a wonderful family here with my fellow women prisoners, both Baha'is and Muslims. (The Muslims call me 'little prisoner.') With love, Mona.” *(Pause.)*

GUARD 1

Look on the back.

GUARD 2

Postscript: “Last night, I felt as though I were on a balcony getting closer to the moon.

But I kept seeing my mother's face. Farah, please go see her -- and my sister -- and hug and kiss them for me. They visit, but there's a barrier between us."

GUARD 1

What do you think?

GUARD 2

I'll get it out. (*He exits.*)