CHARACTERS

EDWIN (late 30s) is an irreverent and street-wise Latino man who is basically a good guy; MARCIA (mid-30s) is a bit uptight, but knows it. Both are attending the funeral of her aunt, a much beloved nun and teacher.

SCENE

In and around the Ortiz Funeral Home, Harlem

TIME

The present

EDWIN: Hello, sorry for that. I'm, uh, Edwin Velasquez.

MARCIA: Marcia Cook, could you open up that window, please?

EDWIN: It's closed 'cuz of the A.C.

MARCIA: So smoke outside! I'm sorry, but I'm an asthmatic!

EDWIN: Ass-what?

MARCIA: Asthma? Hello! I have asthma. I mean the sign says: "Prohibido Fumar," right? But, of course, I'm the bitch, just because other people don't give a hoot about anyone else except themselves, so they have no goddamned——

EDWIN: Hey, look——

MARCIA: I mean, I could die! Okay?! I could literally have an asthma attack and drop dead right here! So I'd appreciate it if you would stop gawking at me and open the damn window before I start to really get upset!

EDWIN: It's open, it's open!

MARCIA: I'm really sorry——

EDWIN: Apology accepted.

MARCIA: Apology? See, that's the whole problem right there. I shouldn't have to go off on people and get labeled some kind of overreacting person just to get them to obey a damn law which they're supposed to just obey because it's the goddamn law! I shouldn't have to even ask!

EDWIN: You're very right——

MARCIA: I mean, I didn't put up that "No Smoking" sign.

EDWIN: No, you didn't.

MARCIA: 'Cuz if there was a sign here that said "Smoking: Mucho Gusto!!" I would've just not said a word and suffered silently and possibly died; or I would've just found another place to sit, like outside in the stifling humidity or something, okay, because—Don't look at me like that!

EDWIN: Like what?

MARCIA: Like I'm some kind of lunatic, or bitch, or rabble rouser!

EDWIN: What's a rabble rouser?

(MARCIA collapses.)

MARCIA: Oh, my God!

EDWIN: What's wrong?

MARCIA: Palpitations!

EDWIN: Palpi-who?

MARCIA: Danger! Danger!

EDWIN: What should I do?

MARCIA: My inhaler…please…my bag!

EDWIN: What? This?

MARCIA: Oh, God…Yes…Thank…

(MARCIA inhales deeply several times.)

EDWIN: Should I call 911?

MARCIA: No! Oh, God! Danger! I'm—count ten, Marcia—ten, nine, five——

EDWIN: Eight!

MARCIA: Eight?

EDWIN: (Helping her) Seven…

MARCIA: Six?

EDWIN: Dass right——
Marcia and Edwin: Five...four...three...two...one.

(Pause.)

Marcia: Oh, my God.

Edwin: That was scary.

Marcia: Oh, my God.

Edwin: It's okay.

Marcia: Hold me?

Edwin: Yeah...yeah, sure.

(Edwin cradles Marcia. A beat.)

Marcia: You saved my life.

Edwin: Actually, I was one of the smokers that caused your conniption.

Marcia: Look, I rarely feel grateful for anything, so could you just shut up and let me be grateful for a second?

(Pause.)

Edwin: You're a very strange lady.

Marcia: Ssh.

Characters

Bassam (late 20s), a Palestinian engaged in the Intifada against the Israelis;

Fatima (17), a Palestinian girl

Scene

Warehouse Headquarters

Time

Winter 2002

Fatima has dreamed of becoming a writer. Now her brother has been killed by the Israelis, and she is desperate to find the means to get her parents out of the Middle East.

(Bassam takes off his scarf, and uses it to demonstrate how and where the vest will be placed. She allows him to touch her; there is great intimacy in this.)

Bassam: I will place it...here. And...

Fatima: Go on.

Bassam: There will be no pain. It will explode into your heart. You will be gone the moment it detonates.

(Fatima winces.)

Are you certain?

Fatima: (Beat.) How many soldiers can I kill?

Bassam: There will be nails, shrapnel, bullets outside in the belt. The wider you open your arms, the more of them will find a target. Once the... detonator...is unlocked...you have only to touch one wire to it, open your arms and...

Fatima: Can I do it now?

Bassam: You must prepare yourself.

Fatima: I am.

Bassam: You cannot be too emotional, Fatima.