

HELEN

Scene 1

6.

Start

Bookshelf screwed to the galley: Gideon Bible, The Holy Bible, the New Living Translation, Union Prayer Book, Church Hymnal (The Red Book), 3 Left Behind novels, The House at Pooh Corner, and a ballet picture book.

He vacuums and his CELL PHONE RINGS. He squints at the I.D. Considers not answering but does.

DARRYL

Hey.

HELEN (V.O.)

Hiya, cowhand.

EXT. COUNTY COURT HOUSE - DAY - LAS CRUCES, NM

HELEN KAUFMAN, 27, business attire, bulging briefcase, Bluetooth in ear. Her accent is not long from Brooklyn.

HELEN

What's that noise?

DARRYL

What?

HELEN

You're vacuuming? Why do you let me vacuum the house when you're just going to re-vacuum?

INTERCUT: INT. RV AND EXT. COURTHOUSE

He turns the vacuum off. He puts her ON SPEAKER, puts his phone down, continues along the bookcase.

HELEN

I ran over for lunch, you weren't there, I ate some egg salad -- that wasn't for tonight, right?

DARRYL

I hope you didn't touch the broccoli chiffon mold.

Her attention is on a confab where 2 ATTORNEYS in cheap suits and cowboy boots flay (MOS) a YOUNG ATTORNEY, 26.

HELEN

Figured you'd be there, only half day of school. Where were you?

— Refuge —

1/8

HELEN

Scene 1

7.

DARRYL

I repaved the parking lot.

HELEN

Good for you. Hold it.

The Young Man from above whispers in her ear.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Now that they know I'm going to mop the floor with their \$150 Men's Wearhouse suits, they want to deal?

On a chair by the door: an open, upside down New Testament. Darryl picks it up, turns it over.

A PASSAGE streaked with red pen. We glimpse a few words.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Screw 'em -- no! Go, *vayáse*.

The Young Man goes up the steps to the Two Attorneys.

HELEN (CONT'D)

The *sheisters* from Noxious, Pompous, and Logorrhea think they're dealing with a *muchacha*.

DARRYL

Mm.

Darryl puts a finger to the open page, opens the flyleaf.

INSERT: FLYLEAF INSCRIPTION

To my angel Ame at 13. Dance for God, who is love. Your proud mother.

He replaces the New Testament as he found it.

HELEN

What's that noise?

DARRYL

Sandstorm.

HELEN

Where are you?

DARRYL

Place...Desert road...Café....Salad.

—Refuge—

2/8

HELEN

Scene 1

8.

HELEN

Eat some protein, some legumes. Eat a hamburger.

DARRYL

Okay.

HELEN

Get a pattie and a tomato...

DARRYL

(to his "waitress")

Yo, hold that salad; lemme have a burger, all the trim.

He opens a CUPBOARD, disapproves of the add-water-and-serve crap in there. There's a smudge of something; he wets his tongue, cleans the smudge away.

HELEN

I wouldn't eat onion with all the faces you gotta breathe on tonight.

DARRYL

(calling)

Hold the onions!

HELEN

So, the final count on entrees at my office: 3 filets, 4 salmon, 2 vegen.

DARRYL

(overlapping)

Three, 4, 2.

FROM THE COURTHOUSE COMES a handsome middle-age Latino who, as it happens, is known by the single name RIVERA, wearing a button with his face on it: "Viva Rivera, U. S. Congress." He is followed by REPORTER and CAMERAMAN,

Rivera talks to the Reporter, makes love to the CAMERA, but also does something else curious: He keeps cadging glances at Helen. For her part, she tries not to return those looks, but it not altogether successful.

Darryl peers at a PHOTO of a BOY [JACK] with Jimmy Swaggert and Jim & Tammy Faye Bakker. Beside the photo: a framed mail order "Doctor of Divinity Degree" from The Church of the Theoretic Sacrality. The name on the degree, Jack Lee Philips, tweaks Darryl.

A PHOTO of a GIRL [AMELIA] en pointe in tutu.

3/8

—Refuge—

HELEN

Scene 1 9.

A PHOTO of Jack tent preaching, Bible in his fist, Amelia doing an interpretive dance behind and to his side. Jack's looks closely at the photo; he knows that guy.

HELEN

Excuse me, Bumby: Café on which desert road in what sandstorm?

DARRYL

Excited about tonight; took a ride a few miles west.

HELEN

Are you on that motorcycle in a sandstorm?

HELEN (CONT'D)

Oh, Darryl. How few miles?

DARRYL

Can't say, really.

HELEN

How long have you been gone?

He glances at a basketball in a fruit bowl. Strange: Jack Philips. Basketball.

DARRYL

Few minutes.
(his watch)
Fifteen...Uh -- sixty.

HELEN

Bumby, that's an hour.

DARRYL

Nah -- well, maybe.

HELEN

We got company in 4 hours. And you gotta get the filets and salmon.

The 2 Cowboy Attorneys try to stare her down. She shoots them a finger. One gives back. She fires a pair.

DARRYL

Okay, wind stopped; hitting the road.

HELEN

You haven't eaten.

4/8

Reduge

HELEN

Scene 1

10.

DARRYL
(calling)
Lemme have burger that to go!

He lifts a red-spattered scrub top with nametag: AMELIA.

RIVERA walks toward HELEN.

Darryl picks up the BASKETBALL from the FRUIT BOWL, presses the phone between his shoulder and ear and spins the basketball on his finger like a pro.

HELEN
You're not going to eat a hamburger on a moving motorcycle.

The Young Man comes at her again, indicating his watch. Rivera passes within feet of Helen.

RIVERA
Counselor.

HELEN
Mr. Mayor.
(to Darryl)
Okay, justice calls. Love ya! Helmet!

INT. RV - DAY

She's gone before he can finish his...

DARRYL
I lo...

He shuts his phone. Adjusts his necktie...and suddenly yanks the knot fiercely, his eyes bulging. He chokes, but continues what appears an effort to hang himself.

A LIGHT goes on.

Darryl turns to a woman in bra and scrubs. He lets his tie go, coughs, gasps for breath.

AMELIA
What are you doing here, mister?

DARRYL
What?

AMELIA
You heard me.

5/8

Refuge

HELEN

Scene 2

90.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

At some point, some instant while life's happening to us, surely we have a say so about it, don't you figure? Become whoever the heck it is we want to be and quit bitching about having to be whoever the heck we think we're supposed to be for some other person! You don't have to be a victim, Darryl. You can change. Change, man!

Darryl's cell phone rings. He answers.

DARRYL

Hello, Helen.

EXT. FARMERS' MARKET - DAY

Helen picks out some fruit.

HELEN

I have the money. What do I do with it?

INTERCUT INT. RV AND EXT FARMERS' MARKET

DARRYL

She has the money.

AMELIA

I don't want it.

DARRYL

Take it. Pay it back 10 bucks a month.
(to Helen)
Who knows about the money?

HELEN

Banker. Me.

DARRYL

No cops?

HELEN

I am a cop, Darryl. I am the law. Tell me where to go and I'll handle it from there. It's me, Bumby.

DARRYL

How do we know we can trust you?

HELEN

"We"?

Refuge
Start

6/8

HELEN

91.

Scene 2

DARRYL
How do we know?

HELEN
Sorry, I'm a little confused; for a minute you sounded...Playing the Stockholm Syndrome ruse -- good, got it. Tell her I'll come alone because I don't want the embarrassment and public attention this will bring.

DARRYL
You have to really come alone.

HELEN
And I will.

DARRYL
I mean really.

HELEN
Get the shit outta your ears, Bumby -- said I would.

DARRYL
(to Amelia)
She says she'll come alone.

AMELIA
If you trust her, I will.

DARRYL
Helen, she wants you...Hang on, lemme get this straight.

Hand over the phone, he tries to fathom his entrails.

DARRYL (CONT'D)
(phone)
She wants you to put the money in the ugly briefcase I gave you last Chanukah.

HELEN
I love that briefcase, Darryl.

DARRYL
Not really. You mostly use your beat-to-crap satchel with the Stanford Law logo so people will know...Petty, strike that.

HELEN
You think I carry my Stanford satchel --

— Refuge —

7/8

HELEN

Scene
2

92.

DARRYL

Yeah, but now's not the...She wants you to leave the briefcase at the northwest corner of the west grove.

HELEN

Grove, what gro...Are you...Your mom's --

DARRYL

Yeah.

HELEN

The cops think you're way the hell into Texas or Arizona --

DARRYL

We hit traffic. She wants you to leave the briefcase on the ditch bank that separates the orchards...

(his watch)

...at 11 AM sharp. Then you are to go back to our house. She'll call you there on our home phone when the money is delivered to her.

HELEN

Why can't I just hand her the...Who else is involved? Is her husband involved?

DARRYL

In a way.

HELEN

Did the two of them set you up?

OVEN DINGS.

DARRYL

Gotta go -- cornbread's ready.

He hangs up. ~~Gets the tin of cornbread out of the oven.~~ ← STOP

~~DARRYL (CONT'D)~~

~~Let 'em cool, put 'em in a ziplock.~~

~~They stare into each other, at a place beyond logic.~~

~~DARRYL (CONT'D)~~

~~What are you going to do without me?~~

AMELIA

Reinvent myself.

Refuge

8/8