

FROM IN FLIGHT: THE STORY OF SABINE VAN DAM

JOHN

Well, good evening, everyone. I see that I've interrupted a nice little family gathering.

(to ROSA)

I'm a friend of your husband.

SABINE

A friend of Papa?

JOHN

A very good friend. He asked me to come and see you.

ROSA

Where's my husband?

JOHN

He got held up at the market. Doesn't seem like any of you are starving, I must say. He goes there a lot, doesn't he?

ROSA

What do you want?

JOHN

A meal would be nice. Do you know how long it's been since I've had a good home-cooked meal?

ROSA sits for a moment in silence, then signals to HADASSAH, who brings JOHN food.

JOHN

And you know, this will be the first time I've ever eaten - what's the word - Jewish food. You don't mix meat with milk, isn't that right? Don't want to put the baby in the mother's milk, is that right? See, I don't like that either. I don't like that at all. Nothing should happen to babies and mothers, should it?

ROSA

I'm not sure what you mean.

JOHN

You know how much money I'll get to tell everyone there's a Jewish family hiding in this house?

ROSA

We aren't Jewish, sir.

SABINE

But Mama, you said —

HADASSAH claps a hand over her mouth.

Pause.

JOHN

No?

ROSA

No.

JOHN

You look Jewish to me. And there's no place for Jewish filth in this town and that's why they're paying responsible people to clean it up.

ROSA

So that's what you're doing here? Being responsible?

JOHN

I'm just saying, maybe there's something you could do that would change my mind.

He comes around behind her and acts like he's going to caress her, but instead rips off her necklace.

ROSA

Get your hands off me.

JOHN

They'd pay me ten dollars. Do you have ten dollars to give me instead?

Pause.

ROSA

No.

JOHN

But you do have something to give me, don't you?

Pause.

JOHN

Don't you?

Pause. ROSA slowly reaches under her shirt and draws out a diamond necklace. JOHN takes it and weighs it in his hand.

JOHN

I don't think this is worth ten dollars. For this thing I couldn't get a pound of flour.

ROSA

That's not true. That was my grandmother's necklace.

JOHN

A Jewish necklace passed from one dirty Jewish neck to another. Worth even less. Well?

ROSA draws out another necklace from beneath her shirt. John gestures that she needs to come closer to hand it to him. When she does, he grabs her hand and spins her so that her arm is pinned against her back.

JOHN

Is that all?

Rosa quickly gives him her last necklace from under her dress and John throws her against the table.

John is standing with his hands full of jewelry.

JOHN

But I can't go through town looking like this, can I? A fine fellow I'd look, wearing paste and cardboard.

ROSA

Those are diamonds. They are everything we have.

JOHN (*looking at Hadassah*)

Oh, surely not everything.