

Sample Script: Librarian of Basra

THTR 353 and 354

Instructor: Deb Currier

The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq

By Jeanette [REDACTED]

Characters:

Narrator 1: Amanda

Narrator 2: Alec

Alia: Evaline

Anis: Trey

People of Basra/soldiers/ensemble – P1-8: Ashton, Austin, Carli, Olivia, Sylvie, Kayla, Natalie, William

N1: *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*

N2: Alia Muhammad Baker is the librarian of Basra, a port city in the sand-swept country of Iraq.

Alia: My library is a meeting place for all who love books.

P1: We discuss matters of the world –

P2: - and matters of the spirit.

N1: Until now – now they only talk of war.

P3: Will planes and bombs fill the sky?

P4: Will bombs fall here?

P5: Will soldiers with guns fill the streets?

P6: Who among us will die?

P7: Will our families survive?

P8: What can we do?

N2: Alia worries that the fires of war will destroy the books-

Alia: - which are more precious than mountains of gold –

N1: The books are in every language- new books and ancient books alike. She asks the governor:

Alia: Please, may I move the books to a safe place?

N2: He refuses. So Alia takes matters into her own hands.

Alia: Secretly, I bring books home every night, filling my car late at night.

N1: The whispers of war grow louder.

P1: Government offices are moved into the library.

P2 and P3: Soldiers with guns wait on the roof.

N2: Alia waits... and fears the worst.

Alia: Then, rumors become reality.

N1: War reaches Basra.

All P1-8: *ad lib no! etc.*

N2: The city is lit with a firestorm of bombs. Alia watches as library workers, government workers and soldiers run from the library.

Alia: Only I am left to protect the books.

N1: She calls over the wall to her friend, Anis Muhammad -

Anis: - who owns a restaurant on the other side.

Alia: Can you help me save the books?

Anis: We can use curtains to wrap them and crates from my shop.

P4: Can you use these sacks?

P5 and P6: The books must be saved!

N2: All through the night, Alia, Anis and his brothers, the shopkeepers and neighbors take the books from the library shelves –

Anis: - pass them over the 7 foot wall –

Alia: - and hide them in Anis' restaurant.

N1: The books stay hidden as the war rages on. Then, nine days later, a fire burns the library to the ground. Soldiers come to Anis' restaurant, but they do not search inside.

Anis: They do not know I have the whole library of Basra in my restaurant!

N2: At last, the beast of war moves on.

Alia: I know that if the books are to be kept safe, we must move them again while the city is quiet and the bombs are not falling.

N1: So Alia hires a truck to carry all 30,000 books to her house and the houses of friends.

P7: In Alia's house, books are everywhere-

P8: - filling floors and cupboards and windows-

P1: - leaving barely enough room for anything else.

N2: Alia waits.

Alia: She waits for war to end.

Anis: She waits, and dreams of peace. She waits...

Alia: And dreams of a new library.

N1: but until then, the books are safe –

All: safe with the librarian of Basra.