

## **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.