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JOSHUA OF JERICHO STREET: THE UNTOLD STORY

By Maralyn Lois Polak

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FADE IN

UTSIDE "JERICHO HOUSE," PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL REHAB CENTER,
DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA, 25 YEARS FROM NOW - NIGHT

A man, aging but still movie-star handsome - HINT! - tumbles
out of a police van onto the asphalt. He curses, picks
himself up, dusts himself off and smoothes his hair back.

MAN

Bleeping Tribbishers. I bet they
run this place, too.

COP

Watch it, buddy. You're gonna tick
off the wrong person. Someone whose
granny was made into an end table,
a plastic statue, or even
vaporized.

MAN

Yeah, right. Keep it up, Officer
O'Witzsky, you'll get free tickets
to my Alien Invasion theme park.
See how cheerful you stay.

COP

Don't forget your Oscar. It'll make
a great centerpiece for Alien
worship. In prison. YOU keep it up.

The man begins whistling. He drops his baggage on the
sidewalk, curses some more. An alarm goes off.

At that, a plumpish, pleasant-looking woman in her early 50s,
holding a little sausage of a yappy dachshund under her arm,
opens the front door of a small neat townhouse.

Don't be fooled by the dog. Sioux - matronly in baggy T-
shirt, voluminous Bermuda shorts, clogs, frosted hair, red-
framed spectacles - means business.

MAN

Greetings. I'm Joshua of Jericho
Street. And who's this?

He chucks the dog under its snout. It growls. The man turns around and gives a showy wave to the cop.

WOMAN

Hi, I'm Sioux. I'll be your hostess during your stay. May I call you Josh?

JOSHUA

Sure, if you genuflect first.

SIOUX

And this is Norbert! Life is easy. Rehab is hard. Welcome to Number Nine Jericho.

Kneeling, the man fixates his gaze on the little dog and begins talking doggy baby-talk.

JOSHUA

Poochie-pie. You're made for the movies. Wanna elope?

SIOUX

Nah. He just had his walk. Listen, my neighbors think I run a respectable bed and breakfast here, so please let's keep your visit on the QT. I don't need any trouble with Licenses and Inspections. Norbert! Behave!

JOSHUA

I hope you're not Tribbish. Are you? My daddy says Tribs cause the worst wars. And my daddy's always right. On the other hand, they say Tribbish girls are -

SIOUX

Oh, please! Don't start! And here I thought you were just misquoted. Silly me.

Suddenly, several neighbors materialize out of nowhere, congregating on the sidewalk. They turn their attention to the newcomer and seem to recognize him.

NEIGHBOR NO. 1

OK, it is you! I was right. How about an autograph? Please? I've seen all your movies. Over and over.

JOSHUA

No autographs today, guys. Trying to be here anonymously. It's hard. Otherwise I'd be paparazzi'd to death.

NEIGHBOR NO. 2

Forget autographs. I saw "TOAD WORRIER" and it rocked. I just want your buzz. Hide your bubble-gum and canned soda around Sioux. She's a health nut. I think she's onto me.

Looking a little peeved, Sioux ambles back over. She's balancing her little dog in one hand, and a water ice in the other. Through an act of sheer will, her frown becomes a dazzling smile, and her whole face lights up. She pats Joshua's midsection.

SIOUX

Hey, Josh, ice cream's in the freezer, for whenever. Looks like you don't have to worry. Again, welcome to Jericho House, pal. We're all real people here ...

At that, the neighbors stop whatever they're doing and give big grins. One holds out a pen, indicating Josh sign his forearm.

SIOUX

Yo, gang. Please, no bothering Josh now. Don't annoy him. Leave him alone and let him do his thing, OK?

JOSHUA

Shema Yisroel ... Loaves and fishes ... Pastrami and rye, hold the Russian. Tallyho!

SIOUX

... Josh, this is a no-smoking house but we all smoke. Out back. What can I say? You get half the second shelf in the fridge, and please write ~~(MORE)~~ name on all your food, a corner of the kitchen pantry, one small shelf in the bathroom medicine cabinet, half a bureau in the bedroom,

SIOUX(cont'd)

and an inch or two of the hall closet to hang your baseball jackets, wrestling jerseys, running shorts, whatever. Oh, and air-raid drills are mandatory! Homeland Security, yanno.

JOSHUA

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me ...

SIOUX

After you unpack your stuff, Josh, come back downstairs and join our little theatrical production. The Number Nine Jericho Players. Get ready. We use lots of ketchup. Today we're re-enacting the Crucifixion scene from "The Transfiguration of the Alien." I'm sure you haven't forgotten those lines. And bring your crown of thorns, if you packed it.

FADE OUT

Maralyn Lois Polak is a Philadelphia-based journalist, screenwriter, essayist, novelist, editor, spoken-word artist, performance poet and occasional radio personality. With architect Benjamin Nia, she has just completed a short documentary film about the threatened demolition of a historic neighborhood, "MY HOMETOWN: Preservation or Development?" on DVD. She is the author of several books including the collection of literary profiles, "The Writer as Celebrity: Intimate Interviews," and her latest volume of poetry, "The Bologna Sandwich and Other Poems of LOVE and Indigestion." Her books can be ordered by contacting her directly.