

## ***Firestarter***

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**A Short Play by Hassan Abdulrazzak** Arab Stages,  
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#### **Scene 1**

**A** We have to get the man on the hill.

**B** What? Why?

**A** Don't you know what he does to his household?

**B** Oh, that.

**A** He mistreats the people in his big house. Anyone he doesn't like; he locks them up in his cellar. No one dares to open his mouth against him.

**B laughs.**

**A** What's funny?

**B** Nothing.

**A** What's funny?

**B** It's just...this sounds ironic coming from you.

**A** There is nothing funny about the situation. The man on the hill must go. We can't let him carry on abusing the poor people of his house.

**B** What do you propose to do?

**A** You'll see.

**Scene 2**

**B** What the hell have you done?

**A** What do you mean?

**B** The big house is on fire!

**An** Ah, so it is.

**B** Did you have a hand in this?

**A** Of course not. The people of the big house got fed up from the bad treatment of the man on the hill. They did this themselves.

**B** Where did they get so much gasoline? And why would they burn their own house down?

**A** I grant you the situation is perhaps getting a little out of control.

**B** Look you can see it from here, there are people jumping off the roof!

**A** That's unfortunate.

**A** You should give them shelter.

**B** I don't have enough room in my house.

**B** Did you pay arsonists to set the big house on fire?

**A** Arsonists?

**B** Yes, did you fund the arsonists that did this?

**A** I don't deal with arsonists.

**B** This is a professional job. It's clearly not the doing of the people of the big house.

**A** It's all the man on the hill's fault. If he didn't punish his servants so severely, they wouldn't have rebelled against him. Now the situation has escalated. Most unfortunate.

**B** There is nothing the man on the hill has ever done that you haven't!

**A** How dare you!

**B** You live in the valley house and the only difference is that your paper over your abuses with money because you've got lots of it.

**A** The valley house is nothing like the big house. We have plenty of green and my servants ask for nothing.

**B** If any of them speak out against you, you put them in the flying chariot.

**A** The flying chariot is a myth,

**B** They disappear behind the sun where they are never heard of again.

**A** Lies and exaggerations. The most important thing I value in my household is stability. Murmuring servants spread sedition. But the flying chariot is a lie spread about me by my enemies.

**B** So what difference is there between you and the man on the hill?

**A** You know damn well what the difference is.

**B** No I don't. Both of you run your households with an iron grip.

**A** How dare you compare me to the man on the hill?!

**B** I would say you are worse than him. You hired the arsonists to set his house on fire. Imagine if he had done that to you.

**A** He's a pink!

**B** What?

**A** He's a pink and we are reds.

**B** That's really what's bothering you about him?

**A** of course. Does it not bother you?

**B** You set his house on fire because he is a pink?

**A** Pinks cannot be trusted. They have deviated from our color.

**B** What are you talking about? Pinks are essentially just dilute reds.

**A** You cannot seriously compare reds to pinks

**B** They are not even pink, actually. When you look at them, you realize they are only slightly off-

red reds, that's all.

**A** They are pinks!

**B** I'm telling you, they're off-red reds.

**A** They are pinks and pinks cannot be trusted.

**B** You deal with other colors. Colors so very different from red. Why don't you attack the light blues for example?

**A** The light blues is not my concern,

**B** The light blues have a garrison stationed right next to the big house. They threaten both the hill and the valley and yet you deal with them.

**A** Let's not open the file of the light blues. That file is closed. I cannot tolerate pinkness spreading in the valley as well as the hill. I cannot allow for reds to be diluted or humiliated by pinks.

**B** Did you see that?

**A** What?

**B** The roof just collapsed in the big house.

**A** Good.

**B** You burned down the big house. It was so beautiful.

**A** It's all the man on the hill's fault. He should have managed his affairs better. He deserves what he gets.

### **Scene 3**

**A** Do something!

**B** What do you want me to do?

**A** My house is on fire!

**B** So it is.

**A** Help me, get some water!

**B** The wells are dry.

**A** Since when are the wells dry?

**B** The arsonists pumped all the water out of the wells.

**A** They didn't tell me they would do that.

**B** The arsonists have their own agenda.

**A** My house is burning. We have to save it! My servants are running wild. They've abandoned me so quickly.

**B** Your servants only tolerated you because of your money. They had no stake in your house. You didn't make them feel this was their home so at the first sign of trouble they fled. It's only to be expected. You, my friend, are no different from the man on the hill.

**A** I've always suspected you were a closet pink.

**B** I'm leaving this place. Soon all these fires will turn this land to desert. Hot, scorching, inhospitable desert.

**A** Please you have to help me! If we put out the fire together, I'll start afresh. I'll do things right this time.

**B** You are a man of faith, are you not?

**A** Yes, I'm the most devout red you'll ever find.

**B** Then pray for rain.

**THE END.**

**Hassan Abdulrazzak** is of Iraqi origin, born in Prague and living in London. He holds a PhD in molecular biology and has worked at Harvard and Imperial College. Hassan's first play, Baghdad Wedding, was staged at Soho Theatre in 2007 to great acclaim. It went on to have productions in Australia and India and was also broadcast on BBC radio 3. Hassan's play The Prophet was performed at The Gate Theatre in 2012 with revolutionaries and soldiers, journalists and cab drivers. More recently he was commissioned by the Kevin Spacey Foundation to write Dhow Under The Sun, a play for 35 young actors, which was staged in Sharjah, UAE (Jan. 2015). He was also commissioned by Untold Theatre to write Catalina, the story of the Moorish slave of Catherine of Aragon (Ovalhouse Theatre 1-4 April 2015). His comic monologue play Love, Bombs and Apples was selected out of 114 scripts to be part of the PlayWROUGHTS Festival, was staged at the Arcola Theatre (21-25 July 2015) as part of the Shubbak Festival and returned to the Arcola for a full run from 31 May-25 June 2016 as part of a UK wide tour. His short play Lost Kingdom was selected out of 75 scripts to be part of San Francisco's Golden Thread ReOrient 2015 Festival. He is currently working on a number of theatre, TV and film

*projects. Firestarter, written toward the end of 2015, was inspired by the recent bombing in Saudi Arabia.*

*(from the Abdularrak web site: [www.abdulraazk.weebly.com](http://www.abdulraazk.weebly.com))*

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