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**AMERICAN JACK**  
A short play

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## AMERICAN JACK

A short play

*Note: The mood of this play should be dream-like, a waking-dream through the darkest of days.  
Music and movement should be woven throughout to complement the tone.*

### PROLOGUE:

PROJECTION: An American City. City sounds.

MAN

My name is Jack Argo.  
My name is Jacob Argo  
My name is American Jacob Argo.  
My life is in an American apartment in an American city.  
A “pre-war”, as they call it.  
What did they call it when life was actually “pre-war?”

My name is American Jacob Argo  
And it is 1973  
I am thirty-six  
And I can understand these bricks, these doorknobs, these arches and windows  
Because I am American  
Because I breathe, somewhat labored, from smoking since I was twelve  
Breathe the dirty American city smoke  
That presses dense between these four walls  
Brick brick brick air brick brick brick  
And inside them I am a man of thirty-six years  
An American man

My name is American Jacob Argo  
My name is American Man Thirty-six  
But it is not.  
It is Something Else.  
Something smokier. And hoarse. Something that was eaten by flames.  
Iakovos Argopoulos.  
Sounding like it is forever being eaten by flames.  
Iakovos Argopoulos.  
My name is. Not.  
Iakovos. Argopoulos.  
It is not.

### ONE:

PROJECTION: A turquoise sea.

WOMAN is standing, arms out, bathed in blue light. She is Greece.

A belltower behind her shows 2:34, which is seen throughout the entire play. A high-pitched melodic line is heard.

December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943.

MAN

MAN approaches WOMAN.

MAN writes on her heart the word TRIPOLIS. He writes over her left eyebrow PATRA. He writes over her right eyebrow AEGION. He writes on her left shoulder PIRGOS. He writes on her mouth the word KALAVRYTA.

He writes the word GERMANY across his own body.

MAN

We see you are frightened. Please do not be frightened. It is a time of war. Many things are precarious. Precarious is the nature of war.

He places a finger on PATRA and runs it to her mouth, smearing the word. Places his finger on her lips.

MAN

We are not going to hurt anyone. But we have to take your guns. You understand. Things are precarious. Guns are precarious. It is a time of war. Thank you.

He places a finger on AEGION and runs it to her mouth, smearing the word. Places his finger on her lips.

MAN

We are not going to hurt anyone. But we must set a curfew at four pm. The streets are littered with our soldiers. We are carrying your guns. Guns are precarious. Your children are safer inside. Thank you.

He places a hand on PIRGOS and runs it across her neck up to her mouth, smearing the word. Places his fingers on her lips.

MAN

You are still frightened. I can feel you trembling. This is for your own protection. We cannot let you leave your town, Kalavryta. It is too precarious in the rest of the country. The land is precarious. It will swallow you whole. Stay inside and you will not be harmed. It is a time of war.

He places a hand TRIPOLIS and runs it between her breasts up her neck up to mouth, smearing the word. Places his fingers in her mouth.

MAN

We have burned down the homes of those who have taken part in the national resistance. But no one has been hurt. We will not hurt you, Kalavryta. But things are precarious. We must castigate those who may cause us harm. You are safe.

He places his mouth to WOMAN and kisses her, holding her to him. He pulls away. Her mouth is bloody.

Bells begin to toll.

**TWO:**

PROJECTION: Holiday season.

Christmas music from the time is heard.

WOMAN

December 13, 1943.

Nine-thirty AM.

WOMAN throws a blanket over her shoulders. MAN does the same and drops to his knees, holding her hand. They walk in place. It is winter, they are cold.

MAN

Who was that, Mama?

WOMAN

A german soldier.

MAN

Did he speak Greek?

WOMAN

Very little

MAN

What did he say?

WOMAN

He said things are precarious right now.

MAN

What is precarious?

It means we're at war. WOMAN

Why couldn't we get our coats? MAN

He's in a rush, Iakovos. WOMAN

But what's he doing? MAN

Looking for things WOMAN

What things? MAN

I don't know WOMAN

The other ones yell a lot but he was a nice one. I'm cold. I don't like war, I think. I want to go back to school. MAN

We're going to the schoolhouse right now. WOMAN

Yippie! Will Daddy be there? MAN

No. Daddy was taken to the field with the other Daddies. WOMAN

I can read really fast. Like this! MAN

He runs in place, pretending to read fast.

And Me and Voula have a club. It's new. And no one else is in it.

What kind of club WOMAN

I can't tell you. Okay. We pretend we are giants. And we eat people. Did you pack me some chicken and meatballs and baklava and cheese and baklava and milk and... um... MAN

We won't be there long, Iakovos. WOMAN

MAN

I can stay there for a really long time, at least seventy hundred years. If Voula's there. Will Voula be there?

WOMAN

All the children and Mommies will be there.

MAN

Good. Voula's my best friend. Besides you and Daddy. You can be in our club too, when Daddy gets back. We'll all get really big and open our mouths and the Germans will fall on top of our teeth and we'll chew them up until they promise to go home. Okay Mama?

WOMAN

Okay.

MAN

I'm, six, Mama. Six six six.

WOMAN

I know, Iakovos.

MAN turns around to look behind him.

MAN

Mama! Our house on fire!

WOMAN turns around to look. She turns back.

WOMAN

That's someone else's house.

MAN

It's ours!

WOMAN

It's Kirios Sotiri's house. It just looks like ours.

MAN

Kirios Sotiri's house doesn't look like ours...

They continue to walk.

Mama?

They continue to walk.

WOMAN

Not ours, Iakovos.

**THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**  
**Contact the author ([sheila.callaghan@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.callaghan@gmail.com))**  
**to read more...**