

SEVEN JEWISH CHILDREN
a play for Gaza

by Caryl Churchill

No children appear in the play. The speakers are adults, the parents and if you like other relations of the children. The lines can be shared out in any way you like among those characters. The characters are different in each small scene as the time and child are different.

SEVEN JEWISH CHILDREN

1

Tell her it's a game

Tell her it's serious

But dont frighten her

Dont tell her they'll kill her

Tell her it's important to be quiet

Tell her she'll have cake if she's good

Tell her to curl up as if she's in bed

But not to sing.

Tell her not to come out

Tell her not to come out even if she hears shouting

Dont frighten her

Tell her not to come out even if she hears nothing for a long time

Tell her we'll come and find her

Tell her we'll be here all the time.

Tell her something about the men

Tell her they're bad in the game

Tell her it's a story

Tell her they'll go away

Tell her she can make them go away if she keeps still

By magic

But not to sing.

2

Tell her this is a photograph of her grandmother, her uncles and me

Tell her her uncles died

Dont tell her they were killed

Tell her they were killed

Dont frighten her.

Tell her her grandmother was clever

Dont tell her what they did

Tell her she was brave

Tell her she taught me how to make cakes

Dont tell her what they did

Tell her something

Tell her more when she's older.

Tell her there were people who hated jews

Dont tell her

Tell her it's over now

Tell her there are still people who hate jews

Tell her there are people who love jews

Dont tell her to think jews or not jews

Tell her more when she's older

Tell her how many when she's older

Tell her it was before she was born and she's not in danger

Dont tell her there's any question of danger.

Tell her we love her

Tell her dead or alive her family all love her

Tell her her grandmother would be proud of her.

3

Dont tell her we're going forever

Tell her she can write to her friends, tell her her friends can maybe come and visit

Tell her it's sunny there

Tell her we're going home

Tell her it's the land God gave us

Dont tell her religion

Tell her her great great great great lots of greats grandad lived there

Dont tell her he was driven out

Tell her, of course tell her, tell her everyone was driven out and the country is waiting for us to come home

Dont tell her she doesnt belong here

Tell her of course she likes it here but she'll like it there even more.

Tell her it's an adventure

Tell her no one will tease her

Tell her she'll have new friends

Tell her she can take her toys

Dont tell her she can take all her toys

Tell her she's a special girl

Tell her about Jerusalem.

4

Dont tell her who they are

Tell her something

Tell her they're bedouin, they travel about

Tell her about camels in the desert and dates

Tell her they live in tents

Tell her this wasnt their home

Dont tell her home, not home, tell her they're going away

Dont tell her they dont like her

Tell her to be careful.

Dont tell her who used to live in this house

No but dont tell her her great great grandfather used to live in this house

No but dont tell her Arabs used to sleep in her bedroom.

Tell her not to be rude to them

Tell her not to be frightened

Dont tell her she cant play with the children

Dont tell her she can have them in the house.

Tell her they have plenty of friends and family

Tell her for miles and miles all round they have lands of their own

Tell her again this is our promised land.

Dont tell her they said it was a land without people

Dont tell her I wouldnt have come if I'd known.

Tell her maybe we can share.

Dont tell her that.

5

Tell her we won

Tell her her brother's a hero

Tell her how big their armies are

Tell her we turned them back

Tell her we're fighters

Tell her we've got new land.

6

Dont tell her

Dont tell her the trouble about the swimming pool

Tell her it's our water, we have the right

Tell her it's not the water for their fields

Dont tell her anything about water.

Dont tell her about the bulldozer

Dont tell her not to look at the bulldozer

Dont tell her it was knocking the house down

Tell her it's a building site

Dont tell her anything about bulldozers.

Dont tell her about the queues at the checkpoint

Tell her we'll be there in no time

Dont tell her anything she doesnt ask

Dont tell her the boy was shot

Dont tell her anything.

Tell her we're making new farms in the desert

Dont tell her about the olive trees

Tell her we're building new towns in the wilderness.

Dont tell her they throw stones

Tell her they're not much good against tanks

Dont tell her that.

Dont tell her they set off bombs in cafes

Tell her, tell her they set off bombs in cafes

Tell her to be careful

Dont frighten her.

Tell her we need the wall to keep us safe

Tell her they want to drive us into the sea

Tell her they dont

Tell her they want to drive us into the sea.

Tell her we kill far more of them

Dont tell her that

Tell her that

Tell her we're stronger

Tell her we're entitled

Tell her they dont understand anything except violence

Tell her we want peace

Tell her we're going swimming.

Tell her she cant watch the news

Tell her she can watch cartoons

Tell her she can stay up late and watch Friends.

Tell her they're attacking with rockets

Dont frighten her

Tell her only a few of us have been killed

Tell her the army has come to our defence

Dont tell her her cousin refused to serve in the army.

Dont tell her how many of them have been killed

Tell her the Hamas fighters have been killed

Tell her they're terrorists

Tell her they're filth

Dont

Dont tell her about the family of dead girls

Tell her you cant believe what you see on television

Tell her we killed the babies by mistake

Dont tell her anything about the army

Tell her, tell her about the army, tell her to be proud of the army. Tell her about the family of dead girls, tell her their names why not, tell her the whole world knows why shouldnt she know? tell her there's dead babies, did she see babies? tell her she's got nothing to be ashamed of. Tell her they did it to themselves. Tell her they want their children killed to make people sorry for them, tell her I'm not sorry for them, tell her not to be sorry for them, tell her we're the ones to be sorry for, tell her they cant talk suffering to us. Tell her we're the iron fist now, tell her it's the fog of war, tell her we wont stop killing them till we're safe, tell her I laughed when I saw the dead policemen, tell her they're animals living in rubble now, tell her I wouldnt care if we wiped them out, the world would hate us is the only thing, tell her I dont care if the world hates us, tell her we're better haters, tell her we're chosen people, tell her I look at one of their children covered in blood and what do I feel? tell her all I feel is happy it's not her.

Dont tell her that.

Tell her we love her.

Dont frighten her.