**Mishy Harman:** Hey and welcome to the very first English episode of *Sipur Israeli*, or Israel Story. I’m Mishy Harman, hi hi, and well… .

**Mishy Harman (narration):** That’s how, back in August 2014, we started our show. It was the first episode of Israel Story, and - as some of you might recall - we reached out to Ira Glass, the host of *This American Life*.

**Ira Glass:** I said to you, like, oh, are you the Israelis who are ripping off our show? *[Mishy laughs]*. I had heard about you.

**Mishy Harman:** And is that how you felt, that we were the Israelis that were ripping off your show?

**Ira Glass:** Well, it isn’t a question of how I feel. That’s just a statement of fact. You *are* the Israelis who are ripping off our show.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** And as such, I asked him for some guidance.

**Mishy Harman:** So Ira, we’re pretty new at this whole radio world. Any… any advice for us starting off?

**Ira Glass:** *[Ira laughs]* Oh my goodness. I think the only advice I would have is just try to sound like you’re calm, even when you’re not. I feel like for me that’s a constant battle of trying to sound like I know what I’m talking about, and I’m not freaking out. Because we’re close to deadline, and I don’t know if things are gonna work and… that that seems important.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** So taking Ira’s advice to heart, I bought one of those red “Keep Calm and Carry On” posters and put it up on the wall next to my desk.

**Mishy Harman:** And do I sound calm to you? *[Mishy laughs]*.

**Ira Glass:** You did until you laughed there at the end of that sentence.

**Mishy Harman:** Oh, OK, good to know. Not to be self-conscious or anything.

**Ira Glass:** Honestly like I don’t even know if I want to give you the advice not to be self-conscious, because I’m hugely self-conscious and… you know, what can you do about that? Are you actually asking for advice because I feel I… you know, it’s… I don’t know what advice I would give. I feel like making the show, like is so hard still. It’s hard to come up with stories, it’s hard to make them work. Like like it hasn’t gotten ummm… It hasn’t gotten easier.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** That didn’t sound all that encouraging, to be honest. But we were determined and had a lot of team spirit. What we didn’t have, at least not at first, was any idea as to whether anyone would actually listen, or be interested. But somehow it didn’t matter. We just worked around the clock. And even in that, it turned out, we were following in *This American Life*’s footsteps.

**Ira Glass:** You know we just basically worked every minute that we were awake, I and the three people I was doing it with. Like like I really remember that. And I remember asking somebody who’s on public radio here in the States who had an established show like “how long is it going to be like this?” And he thought for a second and he said, “five years.” And that turned out to be pretty true.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Ira and I had this conversation five-and-a-half years ago. And it’s been a long, unlikely journey ever since. There have been many ups and downs, many sleepless nights, a lot of uncertainty, and a lot of joy. Wonderful people have joined our original team, and together we’ve tried to tell the story of a more nuanced Israel. A real one. Not the imaginary Israel people love, or hate. An Israel in which we could recognize and celebrate the humanity of everyone. We've worked nonstop, as Ira had warned us, been extremely lucky and enjoyed the generosity and trust of many folks along the way. And here we are, today, releasing our fiftieth episode, which is also the final episode of our fourth season.

Hey, I’m Mishy Harman, and this is the Season Four finale of Israel Story. Israel Story is brought to you by PRX, and is produced together with Tablet Magazine.

Our episode today - “**Keep Calm and Carry On**.”

The story we’re about to hear is about a woman who must have had that same red poster up on *her* wall. A woman who is determined. Who doesn’t take no for an answer.

**Jordan Hannink:** What I want, I figure out how to do. I’m a very strong believer in willing something into being.

**Esther:** Jordan is very... How do you say? When she wants something she will have it.

**Jordan Hannink:** Persistent.

**Esther:** Persistent, yes.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** So, for our last story of this season, here’s our producer Yoshi Fields.

\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Jordan Hannink never quite fit in, and honestly? She never really tried to.

She grew up in a conservative, Christian family in rural Arkansas. The ki nd of place where people went to Church every Sunday and never traveled much farther than the next town over. Where you do things because that's how you've done them before, and that's how you’re going to keep doing them moving forward. But Jordan was on a track of her own. After reading the Old Testament when she was eleven years old, she announced to her family that she was Jewish. She even convinced her mom to keep a kosher home. For college, she chose Wellesley - a liberal all-girls school in Massachusetts. And then, after finishing her Freshman year, she decided to travel by herself to Israel, for a summer of adventure. It was 2012. Jordan was nineteen, a lanky girl with clear blue eyes. And she moved fast, taking it all in. She visited the sights, began Hebrew classes, made new friends. But then, in a matter of seconds, everything came to a screeching halt.

Just three weeks after she arrived, she was hit by a bus in Jerusalem. In fact, she was hit by two buses, that slammed into each other, with her in between.

**Jordan Hannink:** I was horizontal with the ground parallel below me. With my head sticking out. But my legs were *[clap]* between the buses.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** She remembers flashing lights, yelling, and thinking she was going to die.

**Jordan Hannink:** I looked down and saw the innards. The meat and the tendons and the ligaments.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** She was rushed to the hospital. For weeks, she slipped in and out of consciousness, and was wheeled in and out of surgery. Her pelvis was held together by a large metal brace. But for Jordan, there was something even worse than the physical pain.

**Jordan Hannink:** The second you enter the hospital you lose all sense of autonomy. As somebody who is not very vulnerable and very independent in real life to go into playing the role of the patient was very difficult, because it was losing all of the parts of me that I felt were essential to me being me.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Gone were the spontaneous meetups with friends, the new foods, and the excitement of discovering a new country. Instead, she was confined to her bed. All day long doctors and nurses told her what to do. Every hour was seemingly scheduled - breakfast, shower, rounds, physical therapy, lunch, rest, and on and on. But even in this state, Jordan was not willing to give up her independence.

**Jordan Hannink:** I very much so felt tortured. I was trying to reduce my own pain.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** But asthe hospital staff saw it,her resistance was slowing down her recovery and her problematic attitude quickly earned her a bad reputation.

**Esther:** She doesn’t let nurses to take care of her. She has a very bad character.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** That is, until one person came into her life. A nurse who would change everything.

 **Esther:** My name is Esther.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Actually, Esther isn’t her real name, just the one she asked us to use for this story. You’ll soon see why. At the time, Esther was fifty-six, with smiling eyes, a short-cropped haircut and a no-nonsense attitude. On the very first day she was assigned to Jordan, she walked in...

**Esther:** *[singing]* Hello Dolly.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Singing.

**Esther:** *[singing]* It’s me Dolly…

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** And it was magic from the get-go.

**Jordan Hannink**:There was something different about her, that she was very upbeat. She has this very mischievous smile. And so I said, that's who I want to be my nurse.I knew that this is somebody that's going to be good for me.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** But that didn't mean that Jordan was suddenly going to follow orders.

**Esther:** From the beginning I knew that it was a challenge for me. And, I like it.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Take the day Jordan was finally supposed to stand up for the first time since her accident. Esther calmly stepped into her room, and said:

**Jordan Hannink:** “OK, you're going to stand up and we're going to put you on this chair and then we're going to go to the shower.” And I said, “no.”

**Esther:** She was very afraid. Terrified.

**Jordan Hannink:** I couldn't feel my legs under me. I knew that if I was dropped, my hips would just shatter into a million pieces.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** But Esther matched Jordan’s stubbornness with an unrelenting sunny demeanor.

**Jordan Hannink:** She goes “no, it's going to be fine. I do this all the time. Don't worry, grab here grab here.”

**Esther:** The hand here, and to just push on my hands. **Jordan Hannink:** “Let’s go!”

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Esther’s firm grip gave Jordan confidence. She shifted her weight into Esther’s hands - and her feet cautiously pressed against the floor.

**Esther:** And like this, she stand up.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** They made for an odd duo, really. Jordan was an American college student. Esther a middle-aged nurse. Jordan came from a conservative Christian family in the Bible Belt. Esther from an orthodox Jewish family who had fled Tunisia and moved to France when she was a child.

So yeah, they didn’t share much in terms of their backgrounds, but somehow it was just what the doctor ordered. With Esther’s help, Jordan made rapid progress. She started roaming around the hospital hallways in a wheelchair. She even ventured outside. And after three long months in the hospital, Jordan was finally ready to go back home to Arkansas and continue her recovery there. Before she left, as a way of saying thank you, Jordan gave Esther a small gift. Perhaps recognizing just how demanding a patient she had been, it was... an orchid.

**Jordan Hannink:** They’re incredibly difficult to nurture.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Esther didn’t come empty handed either.

**Esther:** And for Jordan, I gave her *The Little Prince*. One of my favorite books. And that’s all, and I thought that I would never see her again.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** On September 30th, 2012, Jordan left the hospital. Esther had done her job. It seemed like this would be where their paths would part.

But then, a few days later, Esther sent Jordan a Facebook message. She was just checking in, she wrote, to see how the journey back home had gone. This wasn’t all that unusual. Even though it wasn't something the hospital necessarily recommend that nurses do, Esther had kept up with other patients as well.

Jordan replied, and shared some updates about her rehab. She was incredibly bored, she said. So Esther sent her some French movie recommendations to keep her mind off things. And so, they went back and forth.

Over the next few months, they started chatting more and more. At first about the recovery, or the other people in the ward. Jordan sent Esther a video of her walking for the first time without support. Esther cried when she saw it. And then, gradually, they moved on to other topics. Esther told Jordan about the places she had traveled to, and her large Tunisian family. Jordan shared tales of Arkansas, and once she returned to college, of her studies.

Soon, they became friends. And, as this went on, Jordan started to feel as if - at least for her - it was more than just friendship.

**Jordan Hannink:** I had this sensation of being a Whirling Dervish. Just totally mesmerized by this one thing. And kind of dizzy, but not in a sickening way, in a very entranced way.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Though she’d never quite felt this way before, she knew what it meant.

**Jordan Hannink:** I was in love with her.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Like so many people these days, Jordan fell in love online. But unlike most, it was with her nurse - a woman thirty-seven years older than her, who, as if all that wasn’t complicated enough, lived halfway across the world. And, on top of everything else, Jordan didn’t even know if Esther was interested in women. But she had a feeling that Esther was, just maybe, flirting with her. So she scoured their chat history, looking for hidden clues. She took note of her movie recommendations...

**Jordan Hannink:** All lesbian movies. Just, you know, casually. Like is that the only type of movie you watch?

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Ofher suggestive art references.

**Jordan Hannink:** Whenever you bring up O'Keeffe, where are you going from there?

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** And reread the seemingly more intimate texts:

**Jordan Hannink:** I am falling asleep. I would like to stay all the night speaking with you.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Thesigns *seemed* to be encouraging. And Jordan was secretly giddy with excitement. She reasoned her way around all the potential logistical difficulties.

**Jordan Hannink:** Yeah, we have an age difference. OK, so what? Like that seems so insignificant as a measure of who a person is. Yeah, we have a physical distance. But I can travel that's not a problem. Language? I’ll learn Hebrew one day, don't worry. Culture? OK, we'll figure it out. That's not an issue.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** But one difficulty remained unresolved, and kept gnawing at her dream. The ethical one.

I spoke to a few medical ethics experts in Israel who said that patients and medical staff are not allowed to have sexual relations while in the hospital. There are clear cut rules about that. But once a nurse and a patient are no longer in their official roles, it all becomes much more murky. Was this simply classic transference? Was she projecting her feelings onto Esther? Jordan couldn’t tell for sure.

**Jordan Hannink:** It's difficult because you're in a really weird position. That was your nurse, you know, you don't want to develop feelings with somebody and appreciation for someone because they helped you through a very difficult time.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** But Jordan isn’t one to shy away from controversy or to wallow in uncertainty.

**Jordan Hannink:** There were so many unknowns but at some point I said, ‘you know what? If I don't say this I never will and that's not being honest.’ And I’m sure of myself, I feel it in my stomach.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** So she sat down and wrote a love poem to Esther.

 **Jordan Hannink:** It’s super cheesy.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** It was ten days after her twentieth birthday and, filled with fear and fantasy, she pressed send.

**Esther:** I was in shock. This is the first thing I say, ‘I hope, I hope that she’s not in love with me.’ Because I really didn’t want.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Esther says that the thought had never even crossed her mind. And receiving Jordan’s poem made her concerned.

**Esther:** She could love me because maybe she think that I could... an image of the mother, of somebody with authority, or who gave her something at one moment that she was needed.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Speaking of mothers,Esther was a full decade *older* than Jordan’s actual mom. But none of this mattered anymore. Esther had made it clear. She was not interested in a romantic relationship.

**Esther:** It's not normal. I cannot do this. I cannot. I felt very very responsible. Very guilty.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** While most people might respond to such an unequivocal rejection with hurt and resignation, Jordan somehow remained unperturbed. She wasn’t going to take no for an answer. It was a love story. And she wasn’t going to let anyone, not even her would-be-lover, turn this into anything else.

**Jordan Hannink:** I was very confident that it would work out, because I had my gut feeling telling me that this is something that you need to pursue, that this something that's going to be good for you.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** So Jordan chose an interesting tactic. A tactic that demonstrated just how confident she was that Esther would ultimately come around to her point of view. She didn’t bother trying to convince Esther. She didn’t make any demands. Instead, she essentially ignored Esther’s rejection altogether.

Over the next few months, she just kept on texting her. And Esther would text back.

To be fair, Esther wasn’t exactly pushing Jordan away. They had formed a close friendship. A friendship Esther didn’t want to give up. And she hoped that just continuing the conversation could get it back to its previous path.

**Esther:** She will forget. Like I didn't take serious.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** But despite what she thought was right, Esther was beginning to feel some desire towards Jordan. She was hesitant to admit it so, she reminded herself, time and again that Jordan was just a young girl and lived far far away.

But she wasn’t far for long. A few months later, Jordan told Esther that she was coming to Israel.

\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey guys, it’s Mishy. We’ll get back to the story in just a minute, but I wanted to tell you about our new members only, private Facebook group. You all know we have a public Israel Story Facebook page, that’s where we post links to our episodes, make announcements about shows, and all kinds of things like that. That page has more than ten thousand ‘followers’ and will continue to operate just as it has thus far. But that page is more like an online billboard, a place where we talk *to* our fans. And we wanted to add a place where we talk *with* our fans. A place for a conversation to happen.

Israel Story began as a podcast for friends and family, and we still see it that way — the only difference being that our family has now grown by a few hundred thousand people. And we want you, our community of listeners, to have an Israel Story home - a closed Facebook group where you can safely discuss new episodes and old ones, ask us questions, and form connections with fellow listeners from around the world. It’s sort of the exclusive club of Israel Story fans.

So check out our new Israel Story Community group on Facebook! We can't wait to meet you and for you all to meet each other. Just head to Facebook, search for Israel Story, look for the pinned post at the top of our news feed and join the group. See you there!

And now, back to the story. Right before the break Jordan notified Esther that she was coming to Israel.

**Esther:** She gave me a date on the sixteen July. And she doesn’t ask me.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Esther didn’t know how to respond. But, frantic and nervous, on July 16th she found herself waiting in the arrivals hall at Ben Gurion Airport. She scanned the passengers coming out of the baggage claim. And then, her heart skipped a beat.

**Esther:** I just want to look at her because I was so surprised.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** OK, back toYoshi.

\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** It had been ten months since Jordan left the hospital with a swollen face and unable to stand. But now, Jordan strode in, confident, skinny and beautiful with newly-dyed bright red hair. They hugged, got in the car, and went out for dinner.

**Esther:** And it was the most horrible restaurant that we could have.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** They sat there, overwhelmed, looking at each other with disbelief.

**Esther:** And Jordan with her feet push me and touch me and tease me and seducing me like this. And I couldn't say nothing and do nothing.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Jordan’s poise, her resolve, her willingness to display her affection in public like that, it all left Esther in a frenzy. After dinner Esther dropped Jordan off at her hotel. Jordan said goodnight and got out of the car. But Esther couldn't bring herself to drive away.

**Esther:** I stayed in the car there and I was like, ‘no, I should call Jordan to tell her to come back.’ And, ‘no, what should I do? Well, why she should come back?’

**Jordan Hannink:** And I get this message of, you know, “come downstairs.” And I'm downstairs and when I get to the bottom of the elevator I get a message back going, “no, no, no, no, no, don't, don't, don't. I'm leaving. Don't. I'm already gone.” And I walk outside, you know, like see Esther still sitting in her car. And write back, “you didn't leave,” you know, like ‘come on, let's be honest here.’ And go to the car and that was really the first time that we looked each other in the eye. Neither one of us said anything.

**Esther:** We just kissed and kissed and kissed, and...

**Jordan Hannink:** It just felt like bodies didn’t exist anymore. And it was just like melting into the car seat.

**Esther:** It was incredible. Andafter I say, “OK, I cannot, I cannot you have to go. You have to go. Just go.”

**Jordan Hannink:** She eventually kicked me out of the car and like literally pushed me away and said “go!” It was just *so* dramatic. But she explained it that she had just too much feeling.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Esther drove off, leaving Jordan shocked, ecstatic and mainly… confused. And Esther, she was so flustered that she got lost driving home.

**Esther:** Totally lost. I didn’t know where I go.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Esther kept on thinking about what others would say. About the hushed whispers that would follow her, and the raised eyebrows. And also about what her bosses would do, if they ever found out. This was well before #metoo became a global phenomenon. But still, Esther knew that this wasn’t going to go over well. After all, she was a much older nurse fooling around with a much younger patient.

But a line had been crossed, and Esther realized she could no longer deny the attraction she felt. For the next twenty-four hoursshe excitedly prepared her apartment for Jordan to visit.

**Esther:** I bought a new mattress, yes. Bought flowers and I put flowers on the floor and into the bed and candles and it was very beautiful.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Esther had gone from saying no to any romantic involvement whatsoever to transforming her apartment into a love pad. But she was still torn. Unlike Jordan, she can’t pinpoint the exact moment she knew she was smitten, or the moment she relinquished her ethical concerns. It was more gradual, with many doubts and questions along the way.

**Esther:** I didn't expect this. I didn't expect this. And by the same time I was saying to myself, ‘it's impossible. You should not. You should not.’ But all the time I said, ‘you should not,’ but I couldn't do nothing else than to... to fall in this.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Jordan’svisit was magical. They spent the next week together in the apartment, sharing a space for the first time since the hospital.

It seemed like Jordan’s determination had paid off. Well, to an extent. As she packed her things to go home, Jordan was already talking about *another* visit. But, deep down, Esther doubted they would have any future.

**Esther:** It doesn’t work.Who I am to think that she can be in love with me so much that she could leave her place - Boston, Arkansas, everything - and come for me, to stay with me? To love me? For me it was not possible.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** See, it wasn’t just the age difference and the long distance. Jordan’s dream of a joint future felt like naive, juvenile musings from a world Esther couldn’t totally understand. Esther had grown up in a traditional family with rigid rules. And while she had often pushed against them, there was a limit. She was unmarried, that her family obviously knew, but she had never come out to them as gay.

**Esther:** This was something that I cannot go against. It’s my barrier.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** She’d never even lived with someone before.

**Esther:** I always had an apartment and my partner had her own apartment and we dated, but I was never living with somebody in the same place, the same room.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** So the thought that a relationship with Jordan could actually blossom into something, was just out of the question.

Back in the States, Jordan began telling people about her new relationship, with mixed reactions. But Esther told almost no one. She was afraid that she’d be judged. And despite her growing infatuation, she herself wasn’t at ease with the situation.

Still, they spoke almost every day. Before they knew it, days turned into months, and months into a year. And just as Jordan had envisioned, they did end up visiting each other whenever possible.

 **Esther:** I was always surprised. Always surprised.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** They were very much in love, but also very much living in contrasting realities. Jordan’s - one of certainty. Esther’s - one of doubt.

A year after their first kiss in Jerusalem, they were sitting together by the lake at Jordan’s college. There, Jordan proposed to Esther. And Esther, to her own amazement, accepted. Even so, she never thought it would actually happen.

The closer they grew, the more apparent their age difference became. No matter how much Jordan liked talking about age being “just a construct,” and teasing Esther about how immature she was, they couldn’t escape the indisputable fact that when Jordan reaches Esther’s age, Esther will be almost a hundred. While death isn’t something people often think about at the beginning of a relationship, for this couple, it was hard to ignore.

**Jordan Hannink:** Of course I think about it, and I'll be devastated. I think anybody that looks at losing their partner is devastated about it. It will be painful if it happens tomorrow. It'll be painful if it happens in sixty years. So… Now I’m gonna cry… But I think that you have to be appreciative of the time you do have. I know that I'll probably be the one that's left alone. And I just take each day as it comes, because, you know, the reality is I was hit by a bus when I was nineteen and it could very well also be me.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** There’s something infectious aboutJordan’s approach to life. She just wills things into existence. She… keeps calm and carries on. A year after Jordan’s proposal, Esther was invited to her niece's wedding in France. Her entire family was going to be there and - taking a page out of Jordan’s book - she decided to ‘seize the opportunity.' She'd had enough of hiding such a big part of her life. It was time to come out.

**Esther:** And I say, “Jordan you come with me.” And she said, “no you are crazy.” I say, “no, you come with me. We go to Paris.”

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** The wedding was going to be...

**Jordan Hannink:** In the middle of nowhere at some château. And if this goes south, we're going to be sleeping with the cows.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Butthey went. Esther wore a silver tank top with a chain embellishment, and Jordan a black and gold sleeveless dress.

**Esther:** Classy and very beautiful.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** And, as they walked up to the castle, holding hands, for all the family to see...

 **Esther:** Everybody knew that she was my partner.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Ironically, perhaps, it was now *Jordan* who was filled with anxiety. But Esther? Despite some stares from bewildered aunts and cousins, felt a sense of calm.

**Esther:** With Jordan I feel very proud. I feel very happy and I want to show this. I want people to know that I’m the most happiest woman in the worldest.Jordan gave me the force, the strength to come out and go against everything. Like I feel very, very... I feel strong.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** And it was in that moment that she “knew.”

**Esther:** I wanted to get married *[Esther giggles]* with Jordan. It was the first time that I felt inside myself that, this emotion that I would, would be very, it would be good for me. It would be... It was exciting.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Backin the hospital,Esther had shown Jordan how to stand up. Now, it was Jordan who had shown Esther how to stand tall.

**Esther:** You want an omelette?

**Jordan Hannink:** How are you making the omelette?

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** It’s been over four years since Esther came out to her family.

**Jordan Hannink:** You put a little mayonnaise?

**Esther:** Yes. No, but you make with mayonnaise. I make with yogurt.

**Jordan Hannink:** But it’s not good!

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Jordan has, in the meantime, graduated college, and they now share a cozy apartment in Jerusalem.

They’ve come a long way from the hospital room where they first met. But the ghosts of the past still remain. While they tell their story with the same light-heartedness as the next couple, there’s also a certain guardedness. A lingering sense of an ‘original sin’ - of a relationship born of a place it shouldn’t have. Esther, remember, still doesn’t want her real name out there.

**Esther:** I very often ask myself, ‘how it happened?’ ‘Why it happened?’ ‘What was the trigger?’

**Jordan Hannink:** You know, I hate this question. And if I were in your shoes, I would ask the exact same question, because we want to understand what makes something work. But does anybody really know why they fall in love with someone, or how they fall in love with someone? And does that experience of why and how in any way discredit that there's a huge amount of love that's here? So you’re… you have your results.

**Esther:** I can say thanks God that I met Jordan. I'm sorry that it's in this kind of circumstances. But at the same time, I know that I would never meet her '*acheret*,' another way.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** Jordan’s bus accident was more than seven years ago now. Life has, in every way, moved on. Proudly displayed on their shelf in their living room in Jerusalem, are a single orchid and a copy of *The Little Prince* - the gifts they gave each other when Jordan left the hospital and they thought they would never see each other again.

Their love has bridged continents, cultures and social conventions. It guided them through a heroic recovery and sustained them as they started a new life together. And just as it has since the very beginning, the sesawing of their relationship continues. Esther still cycles between doubt, self-assuredness, overwhelming love and concern. She questions herself, Jordan’s feelings, and the ethics of their relationship. Incessant doubt can be kryptonite to a relationship. But not this one. While Jordan’s unwavering certainty may at times appear to be naive, or even arrogant, it was also the only thing that could keep this relationship afloat.

**Esther:** How can you continue to stay with me?*[Esther laughs].*

**Jordan Hannink:** Oh, this I have answers for.

**Yoshi Fields (narration):** And whenever these doubts arise, Jordan is there, with clear and comforting answers.

**Jordan Hannink:** You're the kindest person I know. You have this incredible ability to do things that you think you can’t do. That you love me so much. That you still talk about the same movies with me years later. You want me to keep going? *[Esther giggles]*. We can be here all night. We can be here until next week.

**Esther:** Only?

**Jordan Hannink:** Oh, next year.

\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Yoshi Fields. Zev Levi scored the piece with music from Blue Dot Sessions. Thanks to Judah Kauffman for editorial help.

OK, so as this is the last episode of the season, it’s also the last time, at least for a while, that I’m going to ask you to help us reach new ears. I’m not totally sure how the algorithm works, but the bottom line is that the more ratings and reviews we have, the more visible we become. It has totally worked this season, and we’ve nearly tripled our monthly audience. So if you want to help us continue to grow, all you have to do is go to Apple Podcasts, give us those five shiny stars, and write a rave review. It’s that easy, and it really does work.

During the off-season, you can catch up on all our fifty episodes, on our site, israelstory.org, or by searching for Israel Story on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, or anywhere else you usually get your podcasts. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, all under Israel Story. And don’t forget to join our new Facebook community, where vibrant conversations will continue to happen even when we are not on air.

If you want to sponsor episodes of Israel Story’s next season email us at sponsor@israelstory.org.

Israel Story is brought to you by PRX - the Public Radio Exchange, and is produced in partnership with Tablet Magazine.

Our staff is Yochai Maital, Zev Levi, Yoshi Fields, Joel Shupack, Shai Satran, Maya Kosover, Roee Gilron, Sharon Rapaport and Rotem Zin. James Feder and Niva Ashkenazi are our wonderful production interns. Jeff Umbro, from The Podglomerate, is our marketing director. Adam Milliner and Sela Waisblum mixed the episode.

I’m Mishy Harman, and it has been a real honor and pleasure to spend the last six months together. We’ll be back, probably in the early summer, with Season Five. So till then, from all of us here at Israel Story, Happy New Year, *shalom shalom* and *yalla bye*.