

## **“The Band’s Visit**

A small Egyptian police band, attired in sky blue uniforms trimmed in gold braid, ventures into Israel where they are scheduled to play at an Arab Cultural Center. Strangers in a strange land, they get on the wrong bus and end up in a bleak Israeli settlement town in the Negev. When they ask a local café owner where they can find the Arab Cultural Center she informs them that there is no culture in the town either Arab or Israeli. But she kindly arranges accommodations for them until they can find a way home.

They are only in town for a short time but during their stay they and their various hosts come to see each other as ordinary human beings with more in common than they would have suspected. I saw the film years ago but one scene has always stayed with me. One of the band members is at a skating rink with a shy young Israeli boy who is afraid to approach a girl he desperately wants to meet. The young Egyptian, who is more experienced in such matters, gives him brotherly advice. It is but one of many scenes of people connecting in unexpected ways.

Given the problems in the Middle East, “The Band’s Visit” is a fable to be sure. But it is a most entertaining fable which contains some valuable truths about our common humanity.

(Amazon Prime)