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## **AT NIGHT'S END**

A play in eight scenes by

Motti Lerner

Translated from Hebrew by Yoni Oppenheim

©

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**CHARACTERS:**

AVNER: A Lawyer (60)

DALIA: His wife, A Lawyer (55)

ROEE: Their youngest son, a soldier in an elite infantry unit (20)

GADI: Their middle son, intern at his parent's law firm (26)

DORON: Their eldest son, lives in New York (28)

SHELLY: Roe's girlfriend, freshman in university (19)

EINAT: Gadi's fiancée, second year law student (25)

**TIME:**

The play's main plot begins on the afternoon of Friday July 28, 2006 and ends before sunrise the following day – at the peak of the Second Lebanon War. Three short scenes occur on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Doron's apartment in New York at the height of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza.

**SETTING:**

The main plot takes place in a spacious duplex apartment building in Haifa. The ground level, containing the living room, a balcony overlooking the port, part of the kitchen, and an exit to the bathroom is the primary performance space. On the second level there are three bedrooms: Gadi's room, Doron's old room, and Roe's room. Also on this floor: their bathroom which is located between Doron and Roe's room. The set isn't realistic. The rooms do not have walls, perhaps just doors. The design should not allude to the Lebanon War or the family's crisis. The short scenes set in Doron's apartment in New York do not require a defined space.

## **SCENE 1**

**DORON's apartment in New York. January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Night.**

**DORON: (To the audience)** Mom called me in the middle of the night. Come, she said. She didn't need to explain. I rushed to the airport and went straight to the funeral. I walked with them behind the coffin in silence. We sat shiva in silence. People came to console us. They too were silent. Every so often mom would step away to cry in the bedroom. Dad would go to the balcony. At night we'd hear one another tossing and turning in bed. On the seventh day, we went up to the cemetery and laid flowers on the grave. Mom and Dad drove me to the airport. We said goodbye in silence. I returned to New York.

## **SCENE 2**

**Friday afternoon, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The door opens. Enter AVNER, DALIA, DORON followed by GADI and EINAT. They have returned from the airport. GADI carries DORON's suitcase. DORON has just arrived from New York. DALIA turns on the light.**

**DALIA:** I told you there'd be power. The sun will also come out tomorrow. **(To DORON)** Do you want something to eat?

**DORON:** I ate on the plane. **(Playfully)** Hello house. How you doin'?

**DALIA turns on the TV. A press conference is being broadcast with updates about the battles in Lebanon. She turns off the TV and turns to the phone. GADI puts down the suitcases in the corner. AVNER places his camera on the sideboard.**

**GADI: (To DORON)** If you're up for it we can go downtown. Most of the bars are open. At night they barely shell.

**DALIA:** See, the phone is also working. **(Dials)**

**AVNER: (To DORON)** I don't understand why you didn't tell me. You're both a manager and a partner? What percentage?

**DORON:** I told you. Fifty-one.

**AVNER:** Fifty one?! How much did you pay for that?

**DORON:** I took out a loan.

**AVNER:** For how much?

**DORON:** Don't worry. I'm paying it back. **(To the couch)** Hey there couch. **(Jumps on it)**

DALIA: Take your shoes off! **(Everybody laughs)**

GADI: We'll show you our apartment too. We had hoped to finish renovating a month ago but...

AVNER: Eighty trucks, four hundred employees, and offices in New York comes out to at least ten million dollars.

GADI: That's America for you, Dad.

AVNER: How did you pull it off?

DORON: Easily. I mortgaged the trucks. The banks trust me. **(Taps the wall)** Hello wall. Remember me? When mom and dad were out, I'd play soccer with you.

DALIA: **(Hangs up)** They're not answering at the nursery either.

EINAT: I'll drive there and pick the flowers myself.

DALIA: You'll be the most beautiful bride in the world with the most beautiful bouquet.

**DORON smiles at Einat. She looks uneasy.**

EINAT: I'll get us something to drink. **(She exits)**

AVNER: Ten million dollars?!

GADI: Dad, enough.

AVNER: **(To DORON)** And we were sure you were schlepping furniture with Mexican movers to God knows where.

DORON: Well, sometimes I move my easy chair in my office to put my feet up on the table. **(Laughs)** Come and see. My apartment has a view of all of Manhattan. We'll ride my Harley all over town. By the way, isn't Roe supposed to come?

DALIA: **(Dialing)** He went with the C.O. to visit their wounded.

GADI: His C.O. is Rami Suissa, who was one of your men.

DALIA: He's always asking about you. 'Til this day he calls me "Doron's mom".

AVNER: **(To DORON)** I don't understand how you could afford that apartment. It's another two million.

GADI: He said he took out a loan.

DALIA: **(Hangs up)** The events manager also fled to Tel Aviv. Maybe the chef knows what the waiter situation is. **(Dials again)**

AVNER: **(To DORON)** Fifty-one percent!

DORON: The company went under, Dad. I bought it dirt cheap. We've opened an L.A. office. I'm working coast-to-coast.

**DALIA hangs up.**

DALIA: Why don't you call the hotel manager, Avner? His number's on the fridge.

AVNER: He's my tennis partner, Dalia. He won't run away.

DALIA: Please, don't argue about every little thing.

**AVNER exits to the kitchen. EINAT returns carrying a pitcher of water and glasses. DORON and GADI drink.**

GADI: **(To DORON)** He's sure that whoever plays tennis with him will do anything for him.

DALIA: He'll do the same for them. **(To DORON)** He's attended nearly every one of Roe's friends' funerals. At the battle in Bint Jbeil they had eight casualties.

DORON: Eight?!

GADI: He hopes that his eulogies at the funerals will help him win the Bar Association elections.

DALIA: He went to be with Roe.

GADI: Yesterday I dropped by the seamstress with Einat about the wedding dress, and I asked him to fill in for me at a meeting. But as luck would have it, he went to the funeral of some lawyer's son.

DALIA: **(To DORON)** You know how he takes it when soldiers are killed.

GADI: And we lost a client who is building a hundred and fifty apartments this year. **(To DORON)** And he still complains that I'm not competitive.

DALIA: That lawyer has been our friend for thirty years, Gadi. **(To GADI and EINAT)** If the manager isn't in, we'll drive to the hotel and speak with the chef about the waiters.

**She exits after AVNER**

DORON: They had eight casualties?!

GADI: He didn't even get scratched. You won't recognize him. He's built. Tanned. Not a trace of asthma. He killed three insurgents there.

DORON: Nice.

**Transition to Kitchen. DALIA enters after AVNER who is leafing through his phone book.**

AVNER: I can't find the number.

DALIA: Here it is.

AVNER: What do you want me to tell him?

DALIA: That we have a wedding on Monday.

AVNER: Of course we do.

DALIA: **(She dials, hears the answering machine and hangs up)** He's already fled too.

AVNER: By Monday the war will be over, Dalia.

**DALIA continues dialing. Back to the living room. DORON turns to GADI and EINAT.**

DORON: I wanted to tell you something. I probably should have said it a long time ago. I'm very happy that you're getting married. I don't blame anyone for anything. Let bygones be bygones. What happened was meant to be. **(To EINAT)** I hope there are no hard feelings. That we can all turn over a new leaf.

GADI: So do we.

DORON: I want you to know that I'm not angry with anyone.

EINAT: We're not angry either.

GADI: Like I said, it was a complete coincidence. When Einat went to live with you in New York I was still in the army.

DORON: I know.

GADI: We only met two years after she came back.

DORON: You don't need to explain anything. You don't need to apologize. I'll talk to Mom and Dad about it too.

GADI: They know.

DORON: They don't know anything. **(To EINAT)** This is for you. **(He gives her a piece of jewelry)**

EINAT: Wow. Thanks.

DORON: **(To GADI)** And this is for you. **(Hands him a tie clip)** For your tie.

GADI: Thanks.

DORON: **(Hugs him)** Congratulations. **(To EINAT)** I'm so glad to see that you're OK. That you're in school. That you found yourself a lawyer.

**He wants to hug her but changes his mind and shakes her hand.**

DORON: Congratulations. **(To GADI)** I call dibs on the shower!

**They both laugh. DORON takes his suitcase and heads to his room. EINAT inspects the jewelry.**

EINAT: He's crazy. Diamonds.

GADI: You see? I told you. What happened, happened.

EINAT: I didn't believe he'd actually come.

GADI: He's genuinely happy for us.

EINAT: It would also be nice of him to apologize.

GADI: He just apologized, didn't he? I wouldn't want to think that you're marrying me just to punish him.

EINAT: Are you nuts? I'm marrying you to work at your parent's firm.

**They laugh and hug. DORON reaches his room and sits on his bed. Lights up in the kitchen.**

DALIA: **(On the phone)** Thank you very much. Goodbye. **(Hangs up)** He's not sure if there will be enough waiters. We need to check with the hotel manager.

AVNER: We'll look into it tomorrow. I want us to clarify something with Doron. When I went with him to get the luggage cart, he asked about the pension fund that I set up for him when he was a kid. I think he wants to liquidate it.

DALIA: That's what's worrying you now?

AVNER: Stop being hysterical. There will be waiters. This war will be over in a day or two.

**Suddenly the front door opens. ROEE enters wearing a large backpack, a rifle across his chest. He has a crew cut. He sees GADI and EINAT kissing.**

ROEE: Don't stop on my account.

EINAT: Hey, sweetie.

GADI: How are you? Is everything ok?

ROEE: Everything's cool. I see you're not doing too bad yourself. **(Smiles)** Did Doron get in?

GADI: Yeah. Give me a hug. **(Hugs him)**

EINAT: We wouldn't get married without you. **(Hugs him)**

ROEE: Where is he?

GADI: In the shower. I tried calling you yesterday.

ROEE: Sorry. I was busy fighting a war.

**They both laugh. DORON hears their voices, yet takes a moment. DALIA and AVNER enter.**

DALIA: Roe! **(Hugs him)** You got a haircut.

AVNER: We were looking for you. Your C.O. didn't know where you were either.

DALIA: I made an appointment for you with dad's barber.

AVNER: We didn't make it to your friends' funerals yesterday.

DALIA: We knew you'd be there. But...

AVNER: We had to go to another funeral.

ROEE: Don't worry. We're gonna have many more. Can I go see Doron?

DALIA: Hold on a second. How are you doing? What exactly happened there?

AVNER: The C.O. told me about the three insurgents that you killed in Bint Jbeil.

GADI: You don't look like someone who barely made it out alive.

ROEE: You don't see a thing. I have a cavity that's killing me.

AVNER: Hand me your rifle.

ROEE: I'm just gonna tell him I'm here.

AVNER: He'll be down soon.

**AVNER takes the rifle from ROEE. ROEE puts down his backpack. DALIA gives him a glass of water.**

DALIA: Here. Drink.

AVNER: Where have you been until now?

ROEE: Visiting the wounded.

AVNER: Until now?

ROEE: Afterwards I was at the C.O.'s.

DALIA: We bought you a new suit for the wedding. **(Removes jacket from chair)**

AVNER: How could you have been at the C.O.'s? He's at the base.

ROEE: **(Surprised)** At the base?!

AVNER: When I spoke with him, he was already on his way.

ROEE: I was outside his house. I was waiting for him.

AVNER: What for?

ROEE: I wanted to talk to him.

**DALIA places the jacket on him.**

DALIA: What do you think?

ROEE: Matches the shoes. **(Laughs)**

GADI: They'll mistake you for the groom yet.

ROEE: I'll be right back.

**He returns the jacket to DALIA and turns to the corridor. DORON enter.**

DORON: Hey kid. **(Hugs him)**

ROEE: Hey Dodo.

DORON: Look at you. Someone's been working out. Why didn't you come with dad to visit me?

ROEE: I hardly made it home. I'll be on the first plane out as soon as I'm released. We'll go cross-country on your Harley.

DORON: Get on. **(Offering his back for him to jump on)** I've been waiting for this five years.

ROEE: **(Piggybacks on DORON)** Giddyup.

**DORON runs with him around the room neighing like a horse.**

ROEE: **(Pleading)** Enough, Dodo. I want to talk to you.

**DORON relents and lets him get off.**

AVNER: Picture time. **(Picks up the camera and snaps photos)** Please hug. **(To GADI and EINAT)** Now you. **(To DORON)** Now you with mom. **(To EVERYONE)** Now everyone together. **(To DALIA)** Smile, Dalia.

DALIA: Enough Avner. We want to eat. Go wash up Roe.

ROEE: **(To AVNER)** Are you sure my C.O. is at the base? **(AVNER doesn't have a chance to reply)** Why did you call him anyway? What else did he tell you?

AVNER: I told you. That you killed those insurgents.

ROEE: That's it?

DALIA: Go wash up. Dinner will be ready in a minute.

GADI: **(To EINAT)** Come.

**DORON puts his arm around ROEE's shoulder.**

DORON: What did you want to talk to me about?

ROEE: About Suissa, my C.O.

**DORON and ROEE exit followed by GADI and EINAT. AVNER and DALIA are left in the room. DALIA tidying up, picking up glasses, tray, pitcher, etc.**

AVNER: Did you see Doron? I have a feeling that he's decided to stay in America.

DALIA: He likes it there.

AVNER: Do you know why he asked about his pension fund? He wants to close his accounts here.

DALIA: He'll come back.

AVNER: When?

DALIA: In a year or two.

AVNER: Because he's raking it in there?

DALIA: He can earn a lot here as well.

AVNER: And why didn't he rush back when the war broke out? I was sure that as soon as he got off the plane, he'd contact his unit. They lost two of their C.O.s this week. **(She doesn't reply)** One day he'll meet a girl in New York. Get married. Have kids. He'll never come back. **(She doesn't reply)** Every morning I walk past his room, and open the door to see if he's there.

DALIA: Maybe he needs his space.

AVNER: When Einat flew to New York, I was sure they'd return with a baby in tow. They made such a beautiful couple. Maybe we need to find him someone here.

DALIA: Enough, Avner.

AVNER: I don't want him living there.

**They both exit with the tray, pitcher, and glasses. Siren. Followed by three rockets exploding. Blackout.**

### **SCENE 3**

**Music. Lights up on the apartment. The living room is empty. A shattered window has been replaced by a plastic square taped over the window frame. ROEE is in the shower. DORON is getting dressed in his room. GADI and EINAT are lying down in GADI's room. The TV broadcasts reports on the battles in Lebanon and the rockets fired on Israel's north. The doorbell rings. AVNER enters, places dinner plates on the table, and turns to open the door. The door is locked.**

AVNER: **(To the kitchen)** Where's the key?

DALIA: **(Enters carrying a tray of glasses)** In the door.

AVNER: No, it's not.

DALIA: Maybe it's on the other side. **(Puts the glasses on the table)**

AVNER: How is it on the other side if the door is locked?

DALIA: Maybe it's on the table.

AVNER: Where are your car keys?

DALIA: In my purse.

AVNER: Where's your purse?

**She finds the key on the table.**

DALIA: Here it is!

**She turns off the T.V. AVNER opens the door. SHELLY enters carrying a bag.**

AVNER: Hi, Shelly.

DALIA: How are you? How are your parents holding up?

SHELLY: They're in Jerusalem.

AVNER: We passed by your house this morning. It wasn't completely destroyed. Just the roof.

DALIA: Tell your dad we'd be glad to help with the property tax refund. **(Hugs her)** We won't let this war ruin anything.

SHELLY: Roe's in his room?

AVNER: In the shower.

SHELLY: I tried calling him all day. He didn't answer.

AVNER: His cell phone died. They were in the field all week. They had a fierce battle in Bint Jbeil. He killed three insurgents. His C.O. said that he saved the entire company.

SHELLY: I'm gonna go tell him I'm here.

DALIA: He'll be down soon. You look beautiful.

**DORON enters.**

DALIA: Doron, Shelly. Shelly, Doron.

DORON: Nice meeting you. **(Shakes her hand)**

DALIA: Her mom was your teacher in High School.

SHELLY: She still gushes over you.

DORON: Every time she got into class she'd say "and now Doron will take his ball and go play in the yard." **(Everyone laughs)**

AVNER: Regarding your pension fund, Doron.

DALIA: I asked you to hold off on that conversation, Avner.

AVNER: **(continues)** You asked, so I looked into it. **(Shows him a document)**

DORON: I want to donate it to the wounded soldiers.

AVNER: We saved up that money for school.

DALIA: Let him do whatever he wants with it.

AVNER: I won't force you. I just want to know. Yes. I wanted you to study law. But that was five years ago. How long will you hold that against me? Every time I come to New York you avoid me. We make plans to meet at a café and after ten minutes you run off. When I call you, you don't tell me anything. And suddenly I see that you've bought an apartment, you bought up a company. Aren't you coming home?

DORON: I'm not avoiding you, dad. You probably find out when I'm busiest and visit me then.

AVNER: We'll get you a bigger company here. Not eighty trucks. A hundred.

DORON: Sounds like a plan.

AVNER: If you don't want to do reserve duty we'll get you an exemption.

DALIA: (**Adamant**) Enough, Avner.

AVNER: After dinner we'll go out on the balcony and talk.

**GADI and EINAT, who heard DORON in the living room, got dressed and came down after him.**

GADI: Hi, Shelly.

SHELLY: Hi.

DALIA: Sit, dinner will be ready soon.

DORON: Can dinner wait a minute? I need to tell you and dad something.

GADI: Drop it, Doron.

DORON: I'm not sure you know why Einat and I broke up.

DALIA: Of course we know.

EINAT: I told them.

AVNER: You wanted to stay in New York, and she wanted to come back.

DORON: That wasn't it. I had a rough patch.

GADI: They know.

DORON: They think it's your fault I haven't come back.

AVNER: That's not true.

GADI: What do you care what they think?

DORON: I want us to be able to sit around the table and look each other in the eye.

DALIA: Of course we can.

DORON: We've got to put an end to this, Mom. It wasn't so easy in New York. I didn't always understand what I was doing there. I imagine the kind of rumors you heard.

DALIA: There's no need to rehash this, Doron.

DORON: That's what I'm trying to explain to you. They weren't just rumors. She really was unhappy there.

AVNER: She seemed perfectly happy to us.

DORON: That's why she left me. Not because of Gadi.

DALIA: We're not blaming anyone about anything.

EINAT: **(To DORON)** You're not to blame either.

DORON: **(To AVNER)** When you told me they were getting married, I saw that you were angry with him.

AVNER: What are you talking about?

DALIA: Just the opposite. We were very happy.

DORON: They deserve to get married. I know what an amazing couple they'll be.

GADI: Enough, Doron. It's all over. We are moving on. Getting married. Renovating the apartment. Einat's already pregnant.

EINAT: Gadi!

DALIA: You're pregnant? Congratulations.

DORON: Congratulations.

DALIA: What month are you in?

EINAT: Fourth.

AVNER: Congratulations.

DALIA: **(Hugging EINAT)** I am so happy for the two of you.

SHELLY: Congratulations.

DORON: **(Hugs GADI and shakes EINAT's hand)** You always wanted to be a mother.

AVNER: Hold that thought. **(Grabs the camera and turns to DORON)** Stand next to them. **(To DALIA)** You too. **(Takes a picture)**

DORON: **(to EINAT's belly)** If you need anything, just call me. I'll be the world's best uncle.

AVNER: Now stand next to her. One. Two. Bravo.

**He takes a photo. ROEE enters. SHELLY sees him first.**

SHELLY: Hi, Roee.

ROEE: Hey babe.

**They kiss. AVNER photographs them.**

SHELLY: You got a haircut.

ROEE: Yeah.

SHELLY: It suits you.

ROEE: Yeah, right. **(To DALIA)** When's dinner?

DALIA: Einat's expecting, Roee.

ROEE: Congratulations.

DALIA: **(Hugs him)** You lost weight. Your pants are big on you.

ROEE: Yeah, I'm starving. Can we eat?

DALIA: **(Noticing a scratch on his arm)** You got a scratch here.

ROEE: It's nothing. **(He slips out of the embrace)** Do you need help setting up?

DALIA: Go sit.

**Everyone sits down at the dinner table.**

DALIA: **(To EINAT)** Tomorrow we'll make a big breakfast. We'll invite your parents. **(To ROEE and SHELLY)** You'll join us too. In the evening we'll go dancing. **(To EINAT and GADI)** On Sunday we'll invite your friends over. **(To EINAT)** On Monday we'll take you to a bridal salon. You will be the most beautiful bride in the world.

AVNER: And you will have the most beautiful wedding in the world.

DORON: I'll hold up the chuppah.

DALIA: **(To EINAT and GADI)** When Gadi leaves for the army, you'll stay with us. After the birth I'll take time off. I'll take care of him. I'll wash him. I'll feed him. I'll take him for a stroll.

GADI: I hope you'll leave us something to do.

DALIA: I'll leave you to make more kids. **(Hugging EINAT)** Did you do an ultrasound already?

EINAT: It's a girl.

DALIA: A girl?! **(To AVNER)** They're having a girl!

AVNER: **(Excitedly)** A girl?!

DORON: **(To EINAT)** That's wonderful. You always wanted a girl.

DALIA: I was starting to think there was something wrong with us. That this family only pops out boys. **(To AVNER)** We have a girl.

GADI: **(Trying to calm her down)** Enough, Mom. *We* have a girl.

DALIA: When I was pregnant with Roe my stomach was small and round. I was sure that we were having a girl. Even in the ultrasound they didn't see anything. We had already picked out a name. It was only at the birth that we discovered that he was a boy. I almost switched him with the baby girl of the woman lying next to me. The next day the doctor came and showed me that he was pigeon toed. He was curled up inside me like this. **(She demonstrates)**

AVNER: **(Demonstrating somewhat differently)** Actually, it was more like this.

DALIA: The doctors all said we had to operate. I wouldn't let them. If I have a third son, let him be pigeon toed. We were deeply entangled in Lebanon at the time. Every day there were funerals. But Avner wouldn't give up. He brought him special shoes which turned out his feet. In a couple of weeks it was clear to me that I would have another soldier.

AVNER: Cheers!

**DORON GADI and EINAT answer "Cheers". Suddenly ROEE gets up and turns to DALIA.**

ROEE: Your car keys in your purse?

DALIA: Yes.

ROEE: We're gonna go out for a drive.

DALIA: I'm about to serve dinner.

ROEE: We'll be back in an hour.

AVNER: Go out where?

ROEE: I dunno. The beach. **(To SHELLY)** Do you have a bathing suit?

SHELLY: No.

ROEE: Doesn't matter.

DALIA: And what about dinner?

ROEE: Leave us something. **(To SHELLY)** Let's go.

**SHELLY hesitates. AVNER and DALIA get up.**

DALIA: What is it, Roe? Don't you want to eat with us?

AVNER: You can go to the beach after.

DALIA: We want to eat together tonight.

ROEE: You can eat. We're not hungry. We'll walk along the beach. In an hour we'll come back.

AVNER: So we'll wait for you.

ROEE: Don't bother.

AVNER: We're not eating without you.

DALIA: A moment ago you wanted to eat. **(To SHELLY)** What's the matter?

SHELLY: I don't know.

DALIA: Maybe we'll all go with you. We've barely seen you since you got home.

ROEE: Thanks. I want to go alone.

GADI: What's wrong, Roe?

DORON: We said we'd visit Suissa after dinner.

ROEE: I'll drop by there now.

DORON: Don't you want me to come along?

ROEE: You can come.

DORON: We'll eat and go.

ROEE: I don't want to eat.

AVNER: Why are you so angry?

ROEE: I'm not angry.

AVNER: Then why are you going to the beach?

ROEE: Because I don't want dinner.

DALIA: Then what do you want?

ROEE: I don't want anything anymore. Start eating. I'm going to sleep.

DALIA: Now?

ROEE: Yeah.

DORON: **(To GADI)** Has he been like this before?

GADI: No.

DALIA: Fine. Go to sleep.

ROEE: Wake me when you're done.

DORON: Did you guys speak to him after they got back to the base? Did someone from his company tell you anything?

GADI: No.

SHELLY: **(To Roee)** Wait. I'm coming with.

DALIA: He said he wanted to sleep.

SHELLY: I won't bother him.

DALIA: It's best that I go with him. **(To Roee)** Come. I'll make your bed.

ROEE: Leave me alone already.

**He takes SHELLY by the arm and they both exit to Roee's room.**

DALIA: We spoke to him after the battle. He sounded fine. But after the funerals he went back to the base. He didn't visit the parents.

GADI: Give it a day or two and it'll pass.

AVNER: Tomorrow we'll take him to visit them. **(To DORON)** You always used to visit the parents.

**DORON, who is alarmed by Roee's condition, exchanges a look with EINAT. She lowers her eyes.**

DORON: **(To AVNER)** I've got to lie down a few minutes. Call me when you're ready to eat.

**He exits to his room. Silence.**

DALIA: **(Gets up)** I'm going to check on him.

AVNER: Sit.

**She sits. Silence. Music. Blackout. In the background three distant rocket explosions are heard.**

#### **SCENE 4**

**Music. An hour later. Evening. The living room is empty, The TV broadcasts reports on the battles in Lebanon and the rockets fired on Israel's north. DORON is in his room, with a pounding headache. AVNER, GADI and EINAT are on the balcony, using a pair of binoculars to see where the latest rocket has fallen. In ROEE's room are ROEE and SHELLY. ROEE lies in bed. SHELLY sits next to him. DALIA enters and turns off the TV. AVNER, GADI and EINAT enter the living room.**

GADI: **(To DALIA)** It fell right by the hotel.

EINAT: The guests are leaving.

AVNER: They are not shutting down. He repeated that three times. Even if all the guests leave. If they continue shelling, we'll have the wedding in the garage under the hotel.

GADI: In the garage?!

AVNER: If they continue shelling.

**GADI and EINAT are stunned and await a response from DALIA.**

DALIA: **(To AVNER)** Maybe you should call Roe's C.O. again?

AVNER: Why bother him?

DALIA: Roe waited by his house for five hours. Why?

AVNER: When he wakes up, ask him yourself.

DALIA: So we should just sit here and wait?

AVNER: How about we sit here and eat.

DALIA: We are not eating without him.

AVNER: Can't you serve something in the meantime?

GADI: I'm not sure I understand you, Dad. In the garage?!

AVNER: If there's more shelling, they won't have guests, and the garage will be empty. There's enough room there for a thousand people.

GADI: What's gotten into you both?

DALIA: We'll discuss it in the morning.

**DALIA takes the glasses of water and exits to the kitchen.**

GADI: **(To AVNER)** If there's more shelling, no one will show up.

AVNER: Of course they will. It's safer there than in their homes. By the way, the ceiling down there is a bit low. It's best if you keep the music down. **(To EINAT)** You've got a bun in the oven. You don't want her to be born deaf.

EINAT: Don't worry. She doesn't have ears yet.

AVNER: What do you mean, no ears? I already bought her earrings.

**EINAT does not laugh.**

GADI: The courts are closed, Dad. Most of the lawyers have moved to Tel Aviv.

AVNER: They'll come just to prove they didn't flee. **(To EINAT)** Think you can pop her out any sooner? I can't bear to wait five whole months.

GADI: Maybe we can still find a hall farther away.

EINAT: Avner, my parents are coming for breakfast in the morning. What are we going to tell them?

AVNER: That we are not running away. **(Affectionately)** And you should know that the moment you go into labor I'm coming with you to the hospital. I was away on reserve duty during all three of our births. When Gadi was born I was chasing terrorists in the Jordan Valley.

GADI: Dad, we know this story.

AVNER: Einat doesn't know it. Dalia was already at the hospital, but I couldn't leave my men. Two days later, I showed up at her room. Stinking. Filthy. Guilty. She didn't want to speak to me. I begged. I apologized. Nothing helped.

GADI: Dad.

AVNER: Then I opened the window. The entire company was standing in the parking lot. Sweaty reservists, who hadn't shaven in days, their eyes red from exhaustion. But every one of them was holding roses in his hands.

**AVNER laughs. GADI and EINAT are silent. Transition to ROEE'S room.**

SHELLY: But I also tried calling you on Wednesday night.

ROEE: We were still in the field.

SHELLY: And yesterday?

ROEE: In the morning, I had check-ups. I had ringing in my ears. I thought my eardrum was torn.

SHELLY: And everything checked out?

ROEE: Everything's fine.

SHELLY: So why are you so mad? Because I didn't come to your friends' funerals?

ROEE: I'm not mad. My parents just pissed me off a bit. That's all.

SHELLY: I couldn't come. I was in the kitchen when our house was hit. I wasn't hurt. But my dad was on the balcony. The blast threw him against the wall. Since then he's been silent. We don't know what to do with him. We've all been crammed together in one room for a week already. My brothers fighting, my mom screaming. **(He doesn't respond)** I can imagine what you guys went through over there.

ROEE: I'm not mad. I'm exhausted. I haven't slept since Monday. I come home and no one here can see beyond the tip of their nose.

**SHELLY:** What don't they see?

**He doesn't respond. She strokes his head. Transition to the living room. DALIA enters from the kitchen carrying a bowl of snacks which she sets down on the table.**

AVNER: That's what you want us to eat?

DALIA: If you want something else, get it yourself. **(To GADI)** Maybe you should go check on him anyway.

GADI: He's asleep.

DALIA: I can hear them talking.

GADI: Let them talk. Now I want to talk to you. Are you willing to have our wedding in a garage?

AVNER: It's not up for discussion, Gadi.

GADI: What do you mean it's not up for discussion? It's our wedding. **(To DALIA)** You have nothing to say?

DALIA: I said we'll discuss it tomorrow.

GADI: We'll discuss it right now.

AVNER: Now we are going to eat something. **(Rises and turns to the kitchen)**

EINAT: Hold on a second, Avner. My parents also invited people. And we did too.

**She follows him to the kitchen. Transition to ROEE'S room. SHELLY caresses him.**

SHELLY: Do you want us to get undressed? Do you want me to take off your clothes? **(He is silent)** Don't you want to sleep with me?

ROEE: Of course I do.

SHELLY: Good. Lie down.

ROEE: After we eat.

SHELLY: After we eat we're going to Suissa.

ROEE: Then when we get back.

SHELLY: What's happening, Roe? Every time you come home, we barely say hello and we're jumping into bed.

ROEE: Nothing's happening. I told you. I'm exhausted. I can't fall asleep. My folks pissed me off. The guys made me crazy. Suissa upset me. The fucker suddenly wants to kick me out of the company.

SHELLY: Kick you out? Your dad said you saved them.

ROEE: My dad doesn't get it.

SHELLY: Neither do I.

ROEE: I was getting fired on from all sides. I barely made it out alive. And now I'm getting it from him.

SHELLY: But why?

**He doesn't reply. She sits next to him caressing him. In his room, DORON opens his suitcase and searches for headache medicine. Transition to the living room.**

DALIA: **(Rises)** I'm going to check on him.

GADI: Sit. **(She sits)** If something happened, his C.O. would have contacted us.

DALIA: Maybe we should give him Valium.

GADI: He doesn't need any Valium.

**AVNER and EINAT return, setting bowls of salad, appetizers, etc. on the table.**

EINAT: **(To AVNER)** It's not the end of the world if we postpone for two weeks. We have friends in mourning who won't forgive us for celebrating.

AVNER: On the contrary, this wedding will prove to them that life goes on. **(To DALIA and GADI)** Dinner is served.

EINAT: How can I stand under the chuppa knowing that Gadi will be going off to war the morning after?

AVNER: **(In the direction of DORON's room)** Doron, dinner.

DORON: **(From his room)** Coming.

**DORON exits to the bathroom. He looks for headache medicine.**

DALIA: I think I'll just go check in on him anyway.

GADI: He's not a baby, mom. We all went through this. I've already served thirty-eight days this year during the worst of it. I've also seen my friends get killed.

DALIA: He hasn't eaten all day. How is he not hungry?

AVNER: **(Losing his temper)** He's asleep! Leave him alone!

GADI: Dad, please.

AVNER: Calm down already. Since this war has started you're in a constant state of panic.

DALIA: What can I do? I'm not brave like you. I've never led a regiment. I never won a battle, never conquered anything, never got a medal.

GADI: That's enough, mom.

AVNER: You don't know what you're saying anymore.

GADI: **(Angrily)** Dad!

DALIA: I know exactly what I'm saying. Since you started your election campaign, you see nothing but the lawyers who might vote for you. You can't even defend a client who received a speeding ticket.

AVNER: **(Shocked)** Excuse me?! Let me remind you who started this firm with his own two hands, and who managed it for thirty years, and, taught you everything you know.

GADI: **(Adamantly)** That's enough, dad.

**Meanwhile ROEE has grown irritated by SHELLY'S caresses and angrily gets up from the bed.**

ROEE: Are you trying to drive me crazy?

**He grabs the rifle which is lying on the chair, and stands it up in the corner with a slam. A bullet discharges and hits the ceiling. The shot rings out loudly throughout the house. SHELLY screams. ROEE grabs her and seats her next to him. DALIA is choked with fear. AVNER also gasps in horror. DORON stands frozen in his place in the bathroom. GADI, DALIA and AVNER rush into ROEE'S room, and see that ROEE and SHELLY are alive. EINAT who stayed alone at the table, sits huddled in fear.**

AVNER: What happened? Are you OK? **(ROEE and SHELLY don't respond)** I'm asking you, what happened?

ROEE: Nothing happened.

AVNER: Who fired? **(ROEE doesn't answer)** Who fired?

ROEE: No one fired. A bullet accidentally discharged.

AVNER: **(Still nervous)** How did it happen?

DALIA: **(To ROEE)** Are you all right? Answer me. **(To SHELLY)** Are you all right?

ROEE: I told you already that she just got frightened.

SHELLY: I'm fine.

**AVNER picks up the rifle from the floor and hands it to GADI. In the meantime DORON leaves the bathroom. He goes downstairs to the living room and sees EINAT at the table. When she sees him, her defenses crumble and she gets up and embraces him. After a moment she comes to her senses and separates from him.**

DORON: What happened?

EINAT: I don't know.

DORON: Everyone's OK?

EINAT: I don't know.

**She sits down at the table. He hesitates over whether to return to ROEE'S room, but decides to sit across from EINAT. Shaken up, they continue sitting. From time to time they look at one another without saying a word. In the meantime AVNER starts interrogating ROEE in his room.**

AVNER: Now tell me how it happened.

ROEE: Leave me alone.

DALIA: **(To SHELLY)** You had a fight?

SHELLY: No.

DALIA: Didn't you go to sleep?

SHELLY: We were talking.

DALIA: What about?

AVNER: How did it happen, Roe? Were you fooling around with the rifle?

DALIA: Please, Roe. We won't make an issue out of it. **(Turns to SHELLY)** How did this happen, Shelly?

ROEE: I want to eat, Mom.

AVNER: First tell us how it happened. Why was the magazine loaded?

ROEE: I dunno.

AVNER: What do you mean you don't know? And what about the safety? Why was it off?

ROEE: I told you already, I don't know.

AVNER: Tell me!

ROEE: I want to eat first. **(To SHELLY)** Let's go downstairs.

AVNER: Now suddenly you want to eat?

ROEE: I wanted to before, too.

AVNER: Hold on a second, I'm talking to you.

DALIA: Fine, we'll go eat.

**ROEE takes SHELLY by the hand and they head to the living room. GADI goes downstairs ahead of them and hides the rifle on top of the closet. He is surprised to see EINAT and DORON sitting across from one another. He takes EINAT by the arm and seats her on the sofa. ROEE and SHELLY enter. AVNER and DALIA follow. ROEE and SHELLY sit at the table, next to DORON whose headache gets worse and worse**

AVNER: I want to understand what's going on here, Roee. Why the hell was the magazine loaded? Why the hell was the safety off? I've told you a hundred times to remove the magazine before entering this house.

DORON: **(To DALIA)** Got anything for a headache?

DALIA: In a minute.

AVNER: **(To ROEE)** I'm talking to you. Answer me.

ROEE: I said I want to eat.

DALIA: Fine. Start with the salad.

AVNER: You're not eating anything now. I want to understand what happened.

ROEE: Nothing happened. I'm hungry.

DORON: Enough dad, leave him alone.

DALIA: **(To AVNER)** Let him eat.

AVNER: First I want to talk to him!

DORON: **(To AVNER)** Why are you yelling?

AVNER: He could have killed someone.

GADI: **(To AVNER)** What are you getting excited for? Every day dozens of soldiers accidentally discharge bullets.

DORON: **(To ROEE)** Even your C.O. Suissa accidentally discharged one. Right next to me. **(Massages his temples)**

AVNER: **(To ROEE)** Speak!

DALIA: **(To AVNER)** First he eats!

ROEE: **(Rises and turns to SHELLY)** Let's go to the beach.

SHELLY: The beach?

AVNER: You're not going to any beach.

ROEE: **(To SHELLY)** Let's go.

SHELLY: I don't have a bathing suit.

ROEE: We don't need bathing suits.

AVNER: It's already 7:30. Who goes to the beach at this hour?

ROEE: (**Ignoring him**) Come.

SHELLY: Shouldn't we take towels?

ROEE: No need. Let's just go already.

AVNER: Sit down!

DORON: Actually, Suissa's bullet saved us. He was lying next to me in ambush. It was near Bint Jbeil.

AVNER: Not now, Doron.

DORON: We were dead tired. All of us had passed out from exhaustion. At 4 AM I wake up and hear him snoring.

AVNER: I said not now.

DORON: I kick his leg. He keeps on snoring. I kick him harder, and he fires off. Everyone wakes up, no time to figure out who's against who, and suddenly we come under fire from fifty meters.

DALIA: Doron, Please!

DORON: We storm and kill a gang of eight who were crawling towards us. Within ten seconds it was all over. We went back to search the area and discovered Suissa lying between the rocks. I was sure that he'd been shot, but there he is. Asleep. (**Laughs**) Could you believe it? The man didn't even wake up.

**DORON grows silent and goes back to massaging his temples. SHELLY senses ROEE'S pain and she gets up to join him.**

SHELLY: Ok. Let's go.

DALIA: I'm coming with you.

AVNER: Where?

DALIA: With them.

AVNER: What do you mean, with them?

DALIA: I'll drive them.

ROEE: You're not coming with us.

DALIA: I won't bother you.

ROEE: We want to talk.

DALIA: So do I. We'll find a nice quiet café.

SHELLY: We want to talk alone.

AVNER: I want to talk to him too.

ROEE: I don't want to talk to you.

GADI: **(To ROEE)** Why? It's all because of that stupid bullet? We want to eat. **(To DALIA)** Start serving dinner!

DALIA: Don't you tell me to start serving dinner!

GADI: You're not going with him!

AVNER: Don't yell at your mother, Gadi!

GADI: She's not going with him!

AVNER: She's not going with him, because I want to talk with him.

GADI: About what? What for? Nothing happened!

SHELLY: **(To AVNER and DALIA)** He's telling you he doesn't want to talk to you.

AVNER: I don't understand, Shelly. Can't you see that there is a problem here?

GADI: God, enough with the hysteria.

AVNER: **(Angrily)** What hysteria? **(Adamantly to ROEE)** Why did you pull the trigger?

GADI: **(Angrily)** Now listen here everyone. This madness ends right now. We're going to enjoy a nice evening together. We'll eat, drink and celebrate. I want to remind you that

we invited Einat's parents for breakfast. **(To ROEE)** After my wedding I'm shipping off to this fucking war. I want to get there with peace of mind.

**He takes ROEE by the arm and leads him to the table. ROEE struggles and heads for the door. GADI rushes after him. DALIA tries to block GADI'S path. He bypasses her and again grabs ROEE'S arm. AVNER loses control. He lifts the water pitcher from the table.**

DALIA: Avner!

**AVNER smashes the pitcher into the wall. ROEE is startled as if a mortar shell fell next to him. Complete silence. No one moves. DORON stops massaging his temples. He approaches ROEE and puts his arm on his shoulder.**

DORON: You're not the first one to discharge a bullet in this house. See? Beneath the paint. **(Shows him a mark on the wall)** I came home one day, with my M-4. The Flat-Top. I was one of the first to get it. Someone here got excited by the new toy and started playing with it. Suddenly "Boom". **(Laughs)** The bullet hit here. And then here. **(shows him)** and then went out through the window.

**His headache overpowers him. He rubs his temples. He takes a towel and wipes the sweat off his face. DALIA takes headache medicine from one of the drawers and hands him a pill. He swallows.**

AVNER: **(To ROEE)** I'm afraid what happened just now is completely different.

ROEE: I'm telling you nothing happened.

AVNER: Nothing?!

SHELLY: Just tell them already. Tell them and we'll go.

AVNER: What should he tell us?

SHELLY: That they want to kick him out of the company.

AVNER: Who wants to kick you out? **(ROEE is silent)** Who wants to kick you out?

ROEE: The C.O.

DALIA: You?!

AVNER: Just this morning he said you killed three insurgents.

GADI: He didn't even hint at a problem.

ROEE: That's why I went to his house.

AVNER: Why does he want to kick you out?

DALIA: He said that you saved your friends.

AVNER: **(To SHELLY)** Why do they want to kick him out?

SHELLY: He wouldn't tell me.

DALIA: What does it mean to kick you out? Where?

ROEE: Laundry support.

GADI: But why? What happened?

ROEE: **(To DALIA)** And then I miss out on the officers' course.

AVNER: You are not missing out on any officers' course.

SHELLY: He told you what happened. Now leave him alone. **(To ROEE)** Let's go.

AVNER: You're not going anywhere.

SHELLY: He doesn't want to talk anymore.

AVNER: **(To ROEE)** What did the C.O. tell you? What does he want from you?

SHELLY: Let him go. Don't you see that we want to be left alone?

DALIA: Please, Roee. Tell us what happened. Before I go out of my mind.

**DALIA hugs ROEE. ROEE calms down.**

ROEE: It's because of one of the insurgents I killed.

AVNER: What about him? How did you kill him?

ROEE: I was in a platoon that stormed into...

AVNER: Where?

ROEE: Into one of the houses.

AVNER: Where?

ROEE: In Bint Jbeil.

AVNER: And?

ROEE: The insurgents in there didn't see us. We threw grenades in through the windows. And then we broke down the door. Then suddenly...

AVNER: Suddenly what?

ROEE: Suddenly we came across one of them, who was lying stunned on the floor.

AVNER: And?

ROEE: And we tied him up.

AVNER: And?

ROEE: And we notified operations that we have a captive.

AVNER: And then?

ROEE: And then we got an order to guard him. The C.O. told me to put him in a corner and to keep a lookout through that window.

AVNER: Good.

ROEE: And the guys leave the house and move on to the next one. And after two minutes to the third. By then I lose sight of them. Suddenly I'm under fire. And I see some of the bastards approaching. And I'm all alone. And I don't have a radio. And they have an R.P.G. and one of them is already aiming it.

DALIA: Oh God.

ROEE: And I know that if I don't get out of there, I'm finished.

AVNER: And your C.O doesn't see this?

ROEE: And if I take the captive, I won't get anywhere.

AVNER: So what did you do?

ROEE: I shot him and got out of there.

AVNER: Very good.

DALIA: What did your C.O. want you to do? Stay there?

GADI: Of course you had to shoot him.

ROEE: He wanted to interrogate him.

DALIA: He wants to kick you out for this?

ROEE: And after the war he will file a complaint against me.

DALIA: A complaint?

AVNER: That you shot the fucking captive?

ROEE: If they had they interrogated him, we would have known the location of their ambush, and we wouldn't have lost those eight guys.

DALIA: Is this what the bastard is accusing you of? That it's your fault they were killed?!

**Silence. DORON opens the drawer, takes out the headache medicine, and swallows another pill.**

AVNER: Don't worry Roe. It's just talk. You know very well that no one was killed because of you.

GADI: Had you stayed, the insurgents would have killed you, and taken him.

DALIA: They shouldn't have left you alone.

GADI: The C.O. should have given you a radio.

DALIA: We are a bit more familiar with military law than him.

GADI: It's his fault they were killed.

AVNER: I'll have a talk with the Colonel. His dad was my client. I've gotten him out of hot water several times already.

DALIA: We'll demand to see the report. If they complain against you, we'll take it to court.

AVNER: We're the best lawyers in the country. We know that you can't try a soldier for actions done during combat, when his life is in danger.

DALIA: We'll take it all the way to the Supreme Court, if we have to.

AVNER: And you'll come out a hero. **(To DALIA)** I think it's about time we made a toast in this house.

GADI: No speeches, Dad.

AVNER: **(To ROEE)** Remember the day Doron enlisted? We saw him off to the Processing Station.

GADI: He's heard it a thousand times.

AVNER: We were waiting in the parking lot, by the busses. It was hot and humid. And you were still a little kid. Suddenly you had an asthma attack, and you started choking. Your mother and I tried to resuscitate you, and you nearly died in our arms.

GADI: And then Doron ran to find a doctor.

AVNER: And Gadi suddenly saw someone using an inhaler. And brought it to you. And a second later Doron arrived with a doctor. And the doctor gave you a cortisone shot.

GADI: And then you started breathing.

AVNER: I've never forgotten that day, Roe. Don't forget it either.

GADI: Dad, we're starving.

AVNER: Cheers!!!

**Dalia, Gadi and Einat answer "cheers" and drink. Blackout. In the background distant rocket explosions can be heard.**

## **SCENE 5**

**DORON's apartment in New York. January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Night.**

DORON: **(To the audience)** After dinner, we sat in the living room. Dad screened home movies he made when we were kids. We all laughed. **(Pause)** He was literally rolling on the floor laughing. Suddenly he said he was tired and went to bed. Shelly joined him and they asked that I wake them an hour later, so we could drive together to Suissa. I thought he had calmed down a bit. After the war, we found out the details of the battle in Bint Jbeil. We discovered that he had told us only a fraction of what happened to them. His guilt over his company being ambushed because of him was too much to bear. He couldn't sleep.

## **SCENE 6**

**Midnight. The living room is empty. DORON is in his room. ROEE and SHELLY are in ROEE'S room. The front door opens. AVNER enters frustrated and worried. He slams the door shut behind him, absentmindedly inserts the key all the way in the lock.**

AVNER: Dalia? **(No answer)** Dalia?

**Doesn't find her on the ground floor, goes up to the second floor, discovers that she is not there. He passes ROEE'S room, and stops a moment. He knocks on the door.**

AVNER: Roe?

ROEE: What?

AVNER: I want to talk to you.

ROEE: I'm busy.

AVNER: It will only take a minute.

ROEE: I said I'm busy.

AVNER: I'll be waiting for you downstairs. **(ROEE doesn't respond)** You hear?

**AVNER tries opening the door. The door is locked. He gives up and returns to the living room. Picks up the phone and dials. He gets the answering machine.**

AVNER: Dalia, where are you? Call me back.

**Hangs up the phone, pours himself a glass of wine, sits on the armchair, turns on the TV, watches a report about the military activities in Lebanon and the rockets fired on Israel's north and he shuts off the TV. Meanwhile DORON exits his room. He knocks on the door of ROEE's room.**

DORON: Roe?

**SHELLY looks at ROEE, he signals for her to open the door. She opens it. DORON enters.**

DORON: Are we going?

ROEE: We haven't gotten a hold of him yet.

DORON: Did you speak to the Sergeant Major?

ROEE: He's looking for him.

DORON: He's probably asleep. Otherwise he'd answer my messages.

SHELLY: **(To ROEE)** Maybe he's at the Forward Command.

DORON: I probably know a few officers there. They'll look for him.

ROEE: And what will you tell him?

DORON: Not to file a complaint.

ROEE: That's it?

DORON: I'll explain to him what happened.

ROEE: What exactly will you explain to him?

DORON: That he can't blame you for any of it. On the contrary.

ROEE: What contrary? That he should send me to the army shrink?

DORON: Isn't what happened enough?

ROEE: If I go to the shrink I'll be disqualified from the officers' course.

DORON: What do you need the officers' course for? You'll have to re-up for two more years.

ROEE: So I'll re-up.

DORON: You don't even need to finish this year. I told you. I'll buy you guys tickets to New York. You'll stay with me. If you want to study, I'll put you both through college.

ROEE: Don't do me any favors.

DORON: You've got to get discharged. The easiest way is the psychologist.

ROEE: Get out of my room.

DORON: You don't need to go through what Einat and I went through.

ROEE: You're starting up with that again?

DORON: Don't you get why I'm living over there?

ROEE: No. **(Silence)** I came home thinking you'd help me get my head on straight, and you're dumping me with the army shrink?

DORON: I'm not dumping you. I want to take you with me. Look what's happening to you.

ROEE: Get out!

DORON: Fine. Don't go to the shrink. Go to sleep. I'll drive to Suissa and talk to him. He owes me big time.

ROEE: Of course he owes you. We've all heard of your "famous" battles. But now he probably needs to find a scapegoat. That's why he's blaming me. That's why he's not answering your calls either.

**DORON gives up, and exits. AVNER rises from the armchair and exits to the bathroom. A moment later a key is inserted from outside in the lock of the front door. The key stuck in the inside lock prevents it from opening. A knock at the door followed by the doorbell ringing. The ringing stops, AVNER exits from the bathroom. The phone rings. He answers. The caller is DALIA who is on the other side of the door.**

AVNER: **(In the receiver)** Hello.

DALIA: **(On her cell phone)** Why won't you open?

AVNER: Where are you?

DALIA: Here. I can't get in.

AVNER: Where here?

DALIA: Outside the door.

**AVNER hangs up the receiver, turns to the door and opens it. DALIA enters, carrying her purse. She places it on the table and pours herself a glass of water.**

DALIA: Were you sleeping?

AVNER: I was in the bathroom.

DALIA: You're dripping sweat.

AVNER: Where were you?

DALIA: At the pharmacy.

AVNER: **(Surprised)** At midnight?

DALIA: I got him something for his headache.

AVNER: It passed, Dalia.

DALIA: Five years ago we also told ourselves that it passed.

AVNER: He hadn't slept for twenty-four hours.

DALIA: Didn't you see how he's sweating?

AVNER: I sweat too.

**Silence. They both sit. Worried.**

AVNER: I spoke with him.

DALIA: With whom?

AVNER: With the Colonel. I called him from his dad's. He's ready to help.

DALIA: Who needs help?

AVNER: Roe does. The Colonel says this isn't the first time.

DALIA: The first time that what?

AVNER: That he's broken down like this.

DALIA: Roe broke down?!

AVNER: But I convinced him. Roe will remain in the company and they won't file a complaint against him.

DALIA: Roe never breaks down.

AVNER: In January he was guarding a checkpoint. A taxi approached them. He thought it was a car bomb and opened fire.

DALIA: Very good.

AVNER: In June a group of stone throwing children surrounded them. He shot at them. Two were killed.

DALIA: From his bullets?

AVNER: The Colonel said he loses it when he is under pressure. That he can't function. That's why he's itching to pull the trigger.

DALIA: Then why didn't they court-martial him? Why didn't they kick him out?

AVNER: Because it's hard to prove that he wasn't following protocol.

DALIA: Of course he was following protocol.

AVNER: By the way, the prisoner he killed was a senior Hezbollah officer.

DALIA: So it's good he killed him.

AVNER: The army doesn't think so.

DALIA: I know the legalities of war well enough. Roe did exactly what he was supposed to do. What did you want? That they return him to us in a coffin?

AVNER: The Colonel says that he wasn't there alone. The C.O. was behind the house.

DALIA: He thought his life was in danger. That's enough.

AVNER: He wasn't in danger. He was in a panic.

DALIA: He didn't panic. He never panics. I've known him from before he was born.

AVNER: I want to hear it from him.

DALIA: Now he's tired. Let him sleep. Let him calm down. Let him cry over his friends. All these stories are lies made up by someone to explain how eight soldiers got killed there. No court will accept them.

**AVNER doesn't respond. He gets up, takes his wineglass and sips from it. She sips from her glass of water. Transition to ROEE'S room. ROEE sits dressed on his bed. SHELLY, who has undressed, sits next to him.**

SHELLY: And here's another scratch. **(He's silent)** and here another. **(He's silent)** Why did you get that haircut?

ROEE: My hair was singed. **(She doesn't understand)** I was firing a LAW Rocket.

SHELLY: When? Where? **(He's silent)** How did you shoot him?

ROEE: Who?

SHELLY: The captive.

ROEE: In Bint Jbeil?

SHELLY: Yeah.

ROEE: How did I shoot him?!

SHELLY: From a distance?

ROEE: Why do you ask?

SHELLY: Did he talk to you? Did he try telling you anything?

ROEE: Stop it already. Why the hell are you even thinking of that piece of shit? **(She's silent. Suddenly he searches his pockets)** Where's my inhaler? I just used it a minute ago. Where did you put it?

SHELLY: Here it is. **(She hands it to him)**

ROEE: **(Uses it)** And don't ask about him ever again.

**Silence. Transition to the living room.**

DALIA: When he left for America I asked him about these headaches. He said that everything was fine. I called him every week for an entire year just to be sure. You visited him so many times. You didn't notice anything?

AVNER: No.

DALIA: In the morning I'm taking him to the doctor.

AVNER: What doctor? I don't understand what you want from him. He took a pill and it passed.

DALIA: Back then we also gave him pills and said that it passed. Back then we also didn't ask why.

AVNER: We did ask.

DALIA: Maybe it continued in New York. Maybe that is why Einat left? Maybe he really did beat her because there wasn't enough sugar in his coffee. Because she didn't go down to get him cigarettes.

AVNER: Those are rumors that we heard third hand from someone we don't even know.

DALIA: Did we look into them? **(Gets up)** I'm going to talk to him.

AVNER: Don't bother with him right now. Roe's problem is much more urgent. Soon rumors will start to spread.

DALIA: Roe doesn't have a problem. His commanders do. **(She sits)** You don't want to talk to Doron because you know exactly why his head hurts.

AVNER: His head hurts because he just flew for twelve hours. Because he landed right into this insanity.

DALIA: The look in his eyes is unmistakable, Avner. That's why he refuses to move back here.

AVNER: I don't see any look in his eyes. I'll talk to him about all this on the balcony tomorrow.

DALIA: Back then you also talked to him on the balcony. And what did you do? A day before he was discharged, you enrolled him in Law School without asking him. He hadn't even started yet, and you'd arranged an internship for him at the Supreme Court.

AVNER: So now it's my fault he won't come back?!

DALIA: Yes.

AVNER: You need to see a doctor. Not him.

**Meanwhile ROEE gets up from the bed and goes to shine his army shoes.**

SHELLY: What are you doing?

ROEE: Let's go now.

SHELLY: Without Doron?

ROEE: We don't need Doron. We'll look for him ourselves.

SHELLY: It's best that he comes along.

ROEE: I'm not so sure about that.

SHELLY: Why?

ROEE: I'll tell you on the way. Come on, get dressed.

SHELLY: Tell me now.

ROEE: Fine. Don't do me any favors. I'll go alone.

SHELLY: You're not going alone.

ROEE: I'm not asking you.

SHELLY: Don't talk to me like that.

ROEE: I don't want you to come with me.

SHELLY: Why?

ROEE: You just don't get it.

SHELLY: So explain it to me.

ROEE: I don't want to. Get dressed and I'll drive you home.

SHELLY: What home?

ROEE: Wherever.

SHELLY: **(Frustrated)** What's wrong with you, Roe?

ROEE: Get dressed. I won't wait for you 'til morning.

SHELLY: If Suissa was going to accuse you of something, he wouldn't have let you go home. He wouldn't tell your dad that you saved the entire company.

ROEE: Do you want me to throw you out like this?

SHELLY: **(Adamantly)** You won't throw me out. Leave the shoes alone. **(He persists shining)** Leave them alone. **(She grabs them from him)** Let's go out. Let's forget this war for a couple of hours. The clubs downtown are still open. Let's get smashed. **(She gets dressed)** When we wake up, we'll know what to do. **(He's silent)** You don't want to go out? Then what do you want? **(He's silent)** To sleep? Okay. Get undressed and go to sleep. **(She undresses him)** Take off your shirt. Take it off. Now the pants. Take them off. I can't watch you torture yourself like this.

**She lays him down and lies down with him in bed. In the meantime, DORON puts on his jacket and stuffs several items into the pockets. Transition to the living room. AVNER hears the voices from ROEE'S room.**

AVNER: It's Roe and Shelly. Maybe I'll go have a talk with him now.

DALIA: No you won't.

AVNER: Why not?

DALIA: Because I believe his every word.

AVNER: Fine. I won't go. Let's go to sleep.

DALIA: You've been asleep a long time.

AVNER: Are you looking for a fight?

DALIA: Yes.

AVNER: What for? Doron won't even remember he had a headache by tomorrow morning.

DALIA: He took four pills.

AVNER: So what?

DALIA: What's wrong with you, Avner? It's not enough that you've saddled me with the firm, now you're dumping the kids on me as well? I'm asking you to pull yourself together, and don't turn your back on me, and don't go to sleep, and don't run off to the Bar Association.

AVNER: I didn't run off to the Bar Association. We made the decision together, in the best interests of the whole family.

DALIA: If you're so concerned about the family, help me out a bit with the kids. They're yours too. We will treat Doron until his headaches go away once and for all. We will help Roe until he is discharged. And we will try harder to get Gadi out of this war. He is sure you despise him. That you don't care that he is going there the day after his wedding.

AVNER: Gadi wants to go there.

**Silence. Suddenly ROEE'S voice is heard. He's grown fed up with SHELLY'S caressing.**

ROEE: (**Angrily**) Shelly please, that's enough. I can't fall asleep like this.

**Back to AVNER and DALIA.**

AVNER: It's Roe again. You can't imagine how the Colonel managed to scare me. I was sure they're going to pin the entire battle on him.

DALIA: He needs to be really stupid to try. It will be very easy to prove that he didn't check before the battle who was waiting for them in that village. And you didn't even have to call him. I wish they would throw Roe out of the company. I wish they would transfer him to Laundry support. You should have asked them to extend his leave, instead of calling in favors so he can keep fighting in this stupid war.

AVNER: The war will be over in a couple of days. His company won't be called up again. (**Silence**) The Colonel didn't say he's responsible for the death of these eight soldiers, but he won't approve him for the officers' course.

DALIA: So he won't approve him. Gadi also didn't go to the officer's course and nothing happened.

AVNER: Roe wants to go.

DALIA: Because you are forcing him. Because he knows that if he does not go, you will despise him as well.

AVNER: I'm not forcing him to do anything. But if he wants to go to the officers' course, I will help him. I haven't forgotten how you were bursting with pride at Doron's Officers Course graduation. (**Angrily**) And I am not running off to the Bar Association. I am fighting to run it, because I have obligations that go beyond the tip of my nose. And I didn't saddle you with the firm. I transferred it to you. We spent an entire year on it, and from the very moment you took over, you've done everything in your power to keep me away. (**Angrier**) And I sure as hell didn't dump the kids on you. I help them out much more than you do. You haven't visited Doron even once this year. And if Roe wants to stay in the company, I'll help him stay there. You hear? And if his C.O. files a complaint against him, I will take it all the way to the Chief of General Staff. And I do not despise Gadi. I pity him. I pity him because he has fallen into your clutches, and he will become

the same type of lawyer as you. I'm not blind. I see how you get up every morning and start running around, chasing and pushing, and shoving, and haggling. Like some little shopkeeper. How you shamelessly filch clients from lawyers who fled to Tel Aviv. **(Falls silent)**

DALIA: I won't argue with you about what I do in the little shop. If you want to help Roee, tell him to leave the unit. He's asthmatic. If you hadn't pulled strings for him, he wouldn't have been accepted.

AVNER: He went to that unit because he wanted to.

DALIA: He went there because of your pride. Because you couldn't bear the thought of having a pigeon-toed son.

AVNER: I wanted a son who was happy and healthy.

**She doesn't respond. They continue to sit in silence. Meanwhile, in his room, DORON gets ready to go out. ROEE rises and sits on his bed.**

SHELLY: What's up?

ROEE: Maybe I'll try calling his parents.

SHELLY: Whose parents?

ROEE: The C.O.'s. Maybe he's finally home.

SHELLY: It's one in the morning.

ROEE: They won't mind.

SHELLY: A moment ago you wanted to sleep.

ROEE: That son-of-a-bitch sees all my messages on his cell.

SHELLY: **(Sits beside him)** Let's talk once more with Doron. He's the only one who's got a clue what happened there. Your folks are sitting downstairs chatting. What are they thinking? That I know what to do with you?

ROEE: I'm not talking to Doron.

SHELLY: Why? What has he done? **(He doesn't answer)** Fine. Don't tell me. You've done enough. Let's go with him to America. I'm willing to start college over.

ROEE: I'm not going with him!

**He lies down in bed and covers himself. A moment later he sits up.**

ROEE: But in the morning you're coming with me.

SHELLY: Where?

ROEE: To the base.

SHELLY: Sure.

ROEE: And on the way back we'll go to the beach.

SHELLY: Sure.

ROEE: We can stay there to sleep.

SHELLY: Sure.

ROEE: We don't have to come back for Gadi's wedding.

SHELLY: No. We don't.

ROEE: We can make our own wedding.

SHELLY: Our own?

ROEE: We'll buy rings and do it on our own. We don't need to wait until I finish the army.

SHELLY: Ok. Sure. Why not?

ROEE: Great. I wanted to make sure you agree.

SHELLY: Of course I agree.

ROEE: Afterwards, they'll give me a few days leave. Maybe in the meantime the war will end.

SHELLY: Yeah. **(She is silent)**

ROEE: This morning, as I was waiting for the C.O., I sat on the fence by his house. Every so often one of his neighbors would come out. One brought me water. Another brought a sandwich. Suddenly, some kid came, sat down next to me, and started playing with his Game Boy. When he saw my rifle, he asked: "You got bullets?" I said "Yeah". Then he said: "Would you be willing to kill Tomer, the neighbors' kid? He beat me up

yesterday.” **(Laughs)** “Would you be willing to kill Tomer?” This kid sure knew who to ask.

**He laughs. SHELLY is horrified and hugs him. A moment later she turns off the light, and they both lie down in bed. Transition to the living room. AVNER and DALIA notice DORON crossing the room, heading for the front door. His jacket is in his hands.**

DALIA: Where are you going?

DORON: Nowhere. To friends.

DALIA: At this hour? To which friends?

DORON: From the army.

DALIA: Where are you meeting them?

DORON: Don't worry. I'll cab it.

DALIA: I can take you. Are you ok? I bought you some headache medicine. **(Hands him the bottle)**

DORON: I'm fine. Thanks. **(He takes it and stuffs it in his pants pocket)** I want to get some fresh air.

DALIA: I didn't know you have friends from the army. Do we know them?

DORON: Is this an interrogation? Should I get a lawyer? **(To Avner)** Know anyone?

DALIA: I'm not sure there are cabs at this hour, Doron. You shouldn't be wandering the streets at one in the morning.

DORON: In New York I also go out sometimes at one in the morning.

DALIA: And if there's shelling?

DORON: I'm going to friends, mom. I'm going for a walk. To look around.

DALIA: I'll take you.

AVNER: What do you want from him?

DORON: Are you afraid I'll get lost?

DALIA: I'll drop you off downtown. Come.

DORON: Do I need a body guard? What's the problem?

DALIA: There's no problem.

DORON: It seems that there is a problem.

AVNER: Your mother and I were talking about you tonight. Your headache worries her. She thinks you need to see a doctor. I told her that perhaps you got dehydrated during the flight.

DORON: I don't have a problem. I had a headache. I took a pill. It went away. I didn't get dehydrated. I'll bring you a note from my parents. But while we're on the subject, I think that Roe has a problem.

DALIA: We know.

DORON: We must tell his C.O to send him to the Army Psychologist.

DALIA: We'll speak with him in the morning.

DORON: Good night.

**DORON turns to leave. Suddenly DALIA grows suspicious.**

DALIA: Doron, wait. You're leaving without a key? We're going to bed soon.

DORON: I meant to ask you.

DALIA: But you didn't.

DORON: May I please have a key, mommy?

AVNER: Yes. **(Looks for a key)**

DALIA: When will you be back?

DORON: In an hour or two.

DALIA: Here.

**She gives him her key.**

DORON: Thanks. I'm still worried about Roe. You can imagine what he's going through. He needs help. The army doesn't want anybody talking about what happened there. That's why they won't help him.

**Suddenly DALIA grabs the jacket from DORON's hands, searches through his pockets and finds a toothbrush and toothpaste.**

DALIA: Why are you taking a toothbrush? **(DORON doesn't answer)** Answer me. Why are you taking toothpaste? **(DORON doesn't answer)** Where are you going to sleep? **(DORON doesn't answer)** Don't you plan on coming back tonight? **(To AVNER)** Why don't you say something?

AVNER: Leave him alone. Let him sleep where he wants.

**DORON take the pill bottle out of his pocket, swallows a pill and places the bottle on the table.**

DORON: Give me my jacket. **(She doesn't answer)** Give it to me.

DALIA: Let's talk first.

DORON: About what?

DALIA: Where are you going?

DORON: I'm going to find a bar. Drink a bit. Smoke. Maybe I'll meet up with some friends from the army.

DALIA: Why a toothbrush?

DORON: If I stay out late, I'll check into a hotel.

DALIA: A hotel?!

DORON: I want to wake up in the morning New York time.

DALIA: We won't wake you.

AVNER: Give him the jacket. He'll come back when he wants. We'll talk about this tomorrow.

DALIA: **(To DORON)** I want to know why you are going to a hotel.

DORON: I need some quiet for a couple of hours. That's all.

AVNER: Do you want to chase him away? Do you want him never to return?

DALIA: Is it because of these headaches? Is it because of them?

DORON: I don't want to discuss this right now. Give me my jacket.

DALIA: **(Stubbornly)** When did they start up again?

DORON: They didn't.

DALIA: What happened at dinner?

DORON: I don't know. They disappeared a few months after I got to America. I've forgotten about them already.

DALIA: I want us to see a doctor. You're also constantly sweating.

DORON: What sweat? What are you talking about? Give me my jacket!

AVNER: Don't yell, Doron.

DORON: I knew I shouldn't have come here. There's no one to talk to here. There never was. From the moment I got here the interrogation began. A few more hours in this house and my head will explode. If you don't give me my jacket, I'm catching the next flight back to New York tonight.

AVNER: You're not leaving tonight.

DORON: You both don't get why I'm over there. When I'd come home from the army, the walls understood more than you. And when Gadi came back you didn't understand what had happened to him. And now another war has broken out, and you still don't have a clue. Roe is stuck in his room, just like I was. And all you care about is that they don't file a complaint against him.

AVNER: What didn't we understand?

DORON: You didn't understand because you didn't want to understand. What happens there, stays there. Just as long as it complies with protocol. How were you not ashamed of yourselves to play this fucking game?

AVNER: What game, Doron?

DORON: And I, being a complete idiot, kept my mouth shut. That's why these headaches started. That's why I ran away. That's why I can't come back here. That's why I dumped Einat. Yeah, the rumors were true. I did everything they say I did to her. **(To DALIA)** Now give me my jacket!

AVNER: **(Stops him)** Doron!

DORON: You'll regret this for the rest of your life, mom!

**He turns to the hall and enters his room.**

AVNER: Let him go. He'll come back in the morning.

DALIA: He's already run away once for five years.

AVNER: He won't run away. He had it a little tough in the army. We probably don't know the whole story. At least he started talking about it.

DALIA: I don't want him to go.

**DORON returns, carrying his suitcase. He marches to the door.**

AVNER: Wait.

DALIA: Ok. Take it. Call when you wake up. We'll pick you up and take you to the doctor.

**DORON sets the suitcase down. He takes the jacket from DALIA and puts it on.**

AVNER: Now give me a hug, Doron.

DORON: I need to go to the bathroom.

AVNER: Wait a minute. **(Hugs him)** You can sleep in a hotel. Come back when you want. But I want to know why you are so angry. What didn't we understand? What game did we play? I don't recall us ever saying "what happens there, stays there." Just the opposite. That's the reason you won't come back here?

DORON: I told you I need to go to the bathroom.

**DORON exits to the bathroom on the living room level. AVNER is at a loss. Suddenly SHELLY turns on the light in Roe's room.**

SHELLY: You're crying?

ROEE: I'm not crying. I coughed.

SHELLY: Do you want me to bring you some water?

ROEE: I'm fine.

SHELLY: Do you want me to open the window?

ROEE: Leave me alone already.

**ROEE turns off the light. Suddenly the front door opens. GADI and EINAT enter.**

GADI: Good thing you're up.

AVNER: We thought you were in your room.

DALIA: Where were you?

EINAT: At my parents.

GADI: We are moving the wedding to Tel Aviv.

DALIA: What happened?

GADI: Didn't you hear the rockets? There were two casualties. All the hotels are closed. All the clubs, the restaurants, the bars. The police have announced that there won't be any more functions. Not even in underground parking lots.

**EINAT: (Noticing DORON's suitcase)** What's his suitcase doing out here? Is he leaving?

DALIA: He was looking for something.

**DORON exits the bathroom and enters the living room.**

DALIA: Ok. Go to sleep, both of you. We'll discuss this tomorrow.

GADI: Didn't you hear what I said? We are moving the wedding to Tel Aviv. We've found a hall. He only wants a hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

EINAT: We've already closed on a menu. They have great starters: Chicken skewers, stuffed figs with chopped liver, caviar with pomegranate.

GADI: The entrees are much better than what we were offered here. Rib Steak, Marinated Cornish Hens, Duck a l'orange.

EINAT: Their cakes are really great.

GADI: And the band is included in the price.

DALIA: We'll discuss it tomorrow morning.

GADI: Tomorrow morning we're going to close the deal.

DALIA: We can't go anywhere tomorrow morning.

GADI: What do you mean we can't?

AVNER: We're not doing the wedding in Tel Aviv, Gadi.

GADI: Didn't you hear what I said?

DALIA: We're taking Doron to the doctor in the morning.

GADI: Take him to the doctor in the afternoon.

DALIA: Don't be stubborn, Gadi.

GADI: We need to close on the hall. We need to call eight-hundred people. And you're taking Doron to a doctor?

DALIA: Doron has a problem.

GADI: I don't care about Doron's problem.

AVNER: When we finish with the doctor, I'll have a word with the mayor. He knows the garage under the hotel.

DALIA: But first of all, we will take Doron to the doctor.

GADI: What's his problem? We can't drop everything the moment he arrives.

EINAT: **(To GADI)** You know exactly what the problem is. They saw it at dinner. **(To DORON)** You don't have to go to the doctor. Take a hot shower. I'll wrap an icepack in a towel for you, and make you some strong coffee...

GADI: **(Interrupts her)** You want to ruin our wedding because of this?

DALIA: We don't. We might have to postpone it by a few days.

GADI: Because of him?!

AVNER: We're not postponing the wedding. And we're not doing it in Tel Aviv either. We're holding it here in order to prove something to you. To you and your two brothers.

DALIA: Avner, enough.

AVNER: Why 'enough'? They should listen to me. What else do I have to give them? The firm? If they fold so easily, the firm will shut down before we even retire.

GADI: Not another speech, Dad.

AVNER: I am trying to explain something to you. Roee panicked there. You are panicking here. **(To DORON)** You too. Five years ago you ran away from here in panic. There's absolutely no reason for this.

GADI: Dad, I understand that you need votes for the Bar Association elections...

AVNER: **(Interrupts him)** Nonsense. I'm doing this for you.

EINAT: **(Forcefully)** We're getting married in Tel Aviv, Avner.

GADI: Please, don't get into this.

EINAT: Why shouldn't I? The only reason we agreed to getting married here was to please them. **(To DALIA and AVNER)** I'm not deaf. I hear you whispering: "Gadi is a good guy. Gadi is hard working. But he's not Doron."

GADI: Einati, please.

EINAT: He doesn't fight like Doron. He doesn't dare like Doron. He won't manage the firm like Doron. If we tell him to get married in the garage, he'll get married in the garage". **(To GADI)** I've told you a hundred times. Leave the firm. Every other firm will snap you up in minutes. **(To AVNER)** You know why we aren't taking a honeymoon after the wedding?

GADI: Please, Einati.

EINAT: Because Gadi knows you will never forgive him if he doesn't fight in this war.

GADI: **(Angrily)** Stop it already.

EINAT: Until today I haven't felt even once that you are happy about our wedding. And not because you wanted me to marry Doron. But because you don't care about Gadi. Gadi is taken for granted. **(To GADI)** We are not postponing the wedding or hiding it underground. So no one has any doubt. So everyone knows that you can't be taken for granted. **(Starts crying)**

GADI: Of course I won't be taken for granted. **(Wrathfully at his parents)** I saw he had headaches in New York. I didn't tell you because I knew the moment I opened my mouth, you would drop everything to fly off and see him. Because only Doron is on your minds. I discovered that the day I was born. **(Collecting himself)** At 8 AM we're leaving to close on the hall. Good night.

**He takes EINAT by the arm and turns to his room.**

DALIA: You're leaving?

DORON: I think I'll go take a shower.

**He wipes the sweat off his face, takes his suitcase and exits to his room. Silence. Blackout. In the background rockets exploding can be heard.**

### **SCENE 7**

**2 AM. Music. Two more windows that have cracked are covered with packing tape. DALIA and AVNER are in their bedroom which is not in view. EINAT and GADI are in their room. GADI pretends to be asleep. EINAT lies awake next to him. DORON, tense, is sitting on his bed in his room. ROEE is sitting on his bed in his room, his nerves are frayed. SHELLY, dressed only in an undershirt, is in the living room searching for sleeping pills in the various drawers. She finds a bottle and returns to ROEE'S room and hands them to him.**

ROEE: I said I don't need it.

SHELLY: We'll take 'em together. If we sleep, we'll feel better.

ROEE: I feel great.

SHELLY: It's just a sleeping pill. **(He doesn't answer)** Were you crying?!

ROEE: No.

SHELLY: Could we just sit and talk?

ROEE: Suddenly everybody here wants to talk.

SHELLY: Fine. We won't talk. Take the pill and we'll go to sleep. **(Desperately)** Please.

ROEE: You walked around the whole house like that?

SHELLY: Like what?

ROEE: In your underwear?

SHELLY: No one's around.

ROEE: My parents are in their room. My brothers could've gone downstairs.

SHELLY: You can't see anything.

ROEE: I don't want you walking around like that. We've already had one brother stealing his brother's girlfriend.

SHELLY: Are you nuts?! I'd let someone steal me?!

ROEE: I don't know.

SHELLY: I've been begging you all night.

ROEE: I thought Doron would understand. You should hear the crazy stories that go around about him in the brigade. Do you know how many soldiers from his company got killed?

SHELLY: Because of him? **(He doesn't answer)** You know that the soldiers from your unit didn't die because of you. Even I get that. **(He doesn't answer)** Want me to touch you?

ROEE: No.

SHELLY: I can do it with my mouth.

ROEE: I said no!

**Silence. She sits down next to him at a loss. In the meantime EINAT has left GADI'S room and walks to the bathroom. DORON hears her and tenses up. When she enters the bathroom, he rushes out of his room, and before she manages to lock the door, he goes in after her. She is shocked. In the meantime GADI sits up. He becomes suspicious and goes out to the hallway and listens in.**

EINAT: Don't you dare touch me.

DORON: Don't be afraid.

EINAT: I need to pee.

DORON: I've got to talk to you, Natti.

EINAT: I don't want to talk to you.

DORON: Hear me out a minute.

EINAT: And don't call me Natti.

DORON: Thanks for the icepack. I thought we'd have coffee together.

EINAT: The headache's gone. That's what matters

DORON: Yeah. I've been out of this hell for more than a year. I bought the company. I bought a place in Manhattan.

EINAT: Doron, please.

DORON: Not long ago you wanted to live in New York.

EINAT: I have other plans now, Doron.

DORON: Remember that fortune teller in the East Village?

EINAT: Doron, one more second and I'm gonna pee my pants.

DORON: Remember what she told us?

EINAT: I don't remember anything. I'm pregnant, and my uterus is pressing on my bladder.

DORON: She was right about what happened to us, and she was also right about what will happen. **(He takes her hand)**

EINAT: Enough, Doron. **(Pulls back her hand)**

DORON: I never gave you up, Natti. Since you left, I haven't been with anyone else.

EINAT: Don't call me Natti!

DORON: You never gave me up either. I noticed how you hugged me.

EINAT: I freaked out from the gunshot, that's why I hugged you.

DORON: You hugged me because you want me. **(He takes her hand again)**

EINAT: Get your hands off me!

DORON: Let's get away from here. By evening we'll be in New York. If I stay here another day, my head will explode.

EINAT: Do you want me to scream?

DORON: It's time we stopped deceiving ourselves. Human life isn't worth much here. That's why everyone's so eager to slaughter each other.

EINAT: I'm not deceiving myself. You deceived me. And don't make me propositions. It took me two years to rebuild my life.

DORON: I didn't deceive you.

EINAT: And if you carry on like this, I'll tell everybody about the other pregnancy. About how you took me to the hospital, and forced me to get an abortion. How you left me there all alone.

DORON: When I saw you at the airport, I understood that I can't live without you.

**Grabs her and holds her. GADI who is standing outside tenses up.**

EINAT: Stop it, Doron!

DORON: I'm so sorry, Natti. For everything I did to you. You know that it was stronger than me.

**She now gives in to his embrace. A moment later she frees herself.**

EINAT: You shouldn't have come back here in the middle of a war. Maybe somewhere else your head won't throb like this. I can't help you. I tried. **(Silence)** I want you to do something for me. **(He looks at her)** Leave. In the morning. Don't come to the wedding. Don't stay in the country. I don't want to know where you are.

**DORON understands. He hugs her again and exits. GADI rushes back to his room, but DORON notices him, and understands that he overheard. EINAT sits on the toilet. She pees and cries. DORON returns to his room. Lights up in ROEE'S room. SHELLY sits next to him on the bed.**

ROEE: I always thought that you were someone I could talk to.

SHELLY: Of course you can talk to me.

ROEE: I'm not getting a sense that you want to hear what I have to say.

SHELLY: I'm constantly begging you.

ROEE: You don't want to hear it. You want to fuck. You think that if I fuck you than I'll forget everything, and you won't have to hear any of it.

SHELLY: I wanted to sleep with you so you'd feel more comfortable talking.

ROEE: You say you want to hear it, just so I'll agree to fuck you.

SHELLY: I want to hear what you have to say, because I love you.

ROEE: You just say that, so I'll fuck you.

SHELLY: I really love you.

ROEE: You came over because you're lonely. Cuz you're tired of playing with yourself. And you think that if you jerk me off, then I'll agree to fuck you.

SHELLY: I wanted to make it easier for you to fall asleep.

ROEE: Yeah, right, to fall asleep. So you won't hear what I have to say.

SHELLY: That's not true.

ROEE: You just want to fuck me.

SHELLY: Enough. Stop it. If I thought that you meant what you're saying, I would have left ages ago.

ROEE: I mean every word.

SHELLY: Two hours ago you wanted to marry me.

ROEE: Yeah, you looked thrilled.

SHELLY: I was. Honest. **(He doesn't answer)** You can insult me all you like, Roe. I'm not leaving. I won't let you go crazy. **(He doesn't answer)** Let's get married now. We'll go downtown. Buy rings. We'll sleep on the beach. Come.

**She sits down next to him at a loss. EINAT leaves the bathroom, passing by DORON'S room, she hesitates, but decides to go into GADI'S room and lies down next to him. He continues to pretend to sleep. Lights up on the living room. DALIA, is dressed in a robe. She enters carrying dirty clothing which she removed from ROEE's backpack. AVNER enter from their bedroom dressed in pajamas.**

AVNER: What on earth are you doing?

DALIA: I want to do the laundry.

AVNER: At this hour?!

DALIA: Roe's clothes are covered in blood. They need to be soaked in cold water.

AVNER: I'll bring them to the cleaners in the morning.

DALIA: In the morning I want to iron.

AVNER: They do ironing as well. **(Pours a glass of liqueur)** Drink and we'll go back to bed. **(She doesn't respond)** It's 2:30 in the morning already. We have a wedding in two days.

DALIA: **(Cynically)** Sure.

AVNER: Fine. If you all are so insistent on having the wedding in Tel Aviv, I won't stand in the way.

DALIA: **(Takes the clothing)** I knew this would happen one day.

AVNER: What?

DALIA: What happened to them.

AVNER: What happened to them?

DALIA: We never asked what price they're paying. We never asked if they can pay it.

AVNER: They'll get over it. I got over it.

DALIA: You got over it because they gave you a medal and **everyone else** kept their mouths shut.

AVNER: They'll get over it even without medals. A few more years, and they won't remember any of it.

DALIA: And if they don't get over it? What if we're deceiving ourselves? What if we've deceiving them as well? What if they realized we had deceived them, and that's why they broke down?

AVNER: They didn't break down.

**She exits to the laundry room. A moment later she returns without the clothing.**

DALIA: All these years I thought I could be a mother. That I know how. That I understand. That it's possible.

**She sits on the sofa. He sees that she is crying. He sits next to her and hugs her. Transition to ROEE and SHELLY.**

ROEE: You really love me?

SHELLY: Yes.

ROEE: You'd do anything for me?

SHELLY: Yes.

ROEE: Then I have something to ask of you.

SHELLY: What?

ROEE: Come with me to the base tomorrow.

SHELLY: I told you I'm coming.

ROEE: And then we'll go together to speak to the C.O.

SHELLY: Sure.

ROEE: And if he says that he's throwing me out, then...

SHELLY: Then what?

ROEE: Then I want you to...

SHELLY: To what?

ROEE: (**Hesitantly**) Persuade him to let me stay.

SHELLY: Persuade him? How?

ROEE: You know how.

SHELLY: No, I don't.

ROEE: You know. (**She looks at him**) Do it with him for me.

SHELLY: You're kidding.

ROEE: People do it all the time. Even without a reason. And you have a reason.

SHELLY: Are you crazy?

ROEE: If he throws me out, I'll put a bullet in my head.

SHELLY: Why? Because you survived? Because you got out of there with just a few scratches?

ROEE: If you love me then you'll do this for me.

SHELLY: Don't speak to me like this!

**To her shock he hits her hard in the face. She falls to the floor. He approaches her threateningly. She thinks he plans on kicking her.**

SHELLY: No Roee! Don't! Please, don't!

**Her screams are heard in the living room. AVNER and DALIA tense up. A moment later SHELLY manages to reach the door. She opens it and escapes to the living room. ROEE chases after her.**

DALIA: What are you doing?

AVNER: Leave her alone!

ROEE: (to SHELLY) You'll do as I say!

AVNER: Don't you dare hit her!

ROEE: We'll drive to the base now, and we will go to his room, and we'll talk with him.

AVNER: Don't touch her!

ROEE: And you'll stay with him and do it with him. You hear?

DALIA: What will she do with him?

ROEE: And you'll do it the best you know how. And he better give you his word that he's not throwing me out.

AVNER: Roee.

ROEE: And make it clear to him what happens if he does.

DALIA: Roee!

**Having heard the yelling, GADI, EINAT, and DORON enter the living room. ROEE looks at them. DALIA tries to hug ROEE. He eludes her and turns to his room. AVNER rushes after him, but ROEE manages to lock the door.**

AVNER: Open up. Open the door. (Waits) Open the door.

**ROEE sits on his bed. Avner waits another moment near the door.**

AVNER: I talked to the Colonel, Roee. He said you have nothing to worry about. You're a good soldier. He doesn't hold you responsible for anything. **(Waits)** Open the door. I want to talk with you.

**ROEE doesn't answer. He sits lost on his bed. A moment later he gets up and begins donning his uniform and putting on his shoes. Meanwhile in the living room, DORON can't take the pressure and approaches DALIA.**

DORON: Where are the pills you got me? I left them here.

DALIA: Not now, Doron.

DORON: I'll take a pill, and go talk with him.

**AVNER returns to the living room, and catches the end of DALIA and DORON's conversation.**

AVNER: Wait 'til he calms down a bit. **(Checks on SHELLY)** Does it hurt?

SHELLY: It's nothing.

AVNER: What came over him?

SHELLY: I don't know.

DORON: I'll go up to him. Just please stop yelling.

SHELLY: I'm coming with you. He didn't really mean it. It was a joke.

DALIA: **(To DORON and SHELLY)** Wait. **(To AVNER)** I think we should call a doctor.

AVNER: What doctor?

DALIA: From the psych ward at the hospital.

AVNER: The psych ward? Are you nuts?! You want them to commit him?

DORON: Stop yelling!

GADI: He doesn't need a psychiatrist, Mom. He's stressed out because he's exhausted.

DALIA: I'm not so sure it's just exhaustion.

GADI: He needs a valium.

DALIA: We've made too many mistakes already.

SHELLY: (To DORON) Let's go to him.

**DORON joins her and they turn to ROEE'S room. GADI rushes to stop DORON.**

GADI: You are not going to him.

DORON: I want to talk with him.

GADI: You're not talking with anyone in this house.

**In the meantime DALIA goes to the phone and dials. AVNER rushes to her, grabs the phone from her.**

DALIA: Avner!

DORON: Stop yelling!

AVNER: He's not going to the psych ward.

DALIA: The boy has lost it, Avner.

AVNER: When he realizes there is nothing to be afraid of, he'll come to his senses.

DALIA: What if he does have something to be afraid of? What if his friends really were killed because of him.

**She covers her face and chokes back her tears. ROEE dressed in his uniform, backpack in hand, descends the stairs and enters the living room. Silence. SHELLY gets up and approaches him. He ignores her.**

ROEE: Where's my rifle?

DALIA: Where are you going?

ROEE: Where's my rifle?

DALIA: It's two thirty in the morning.

SHELLY: I'm not mad, Roe. I swear.

ROEE: Where's my rifle?

AVNER: What do you need your rifle for?

ROEE: It's none of your business.

DALIA: You're not going back to the army now.

SHELLY: I'm coming with you. **(He avoids her)** I'm willing to go with you to the C.O. I'll do with him anything you tell me.

**She tries hugging him. He pushes her away, lays his backpack on the ground, and starts searching for his rifle underneath the sofa, under the armchairs, under the closets.**

DALIA: You're not well, Roe. We're going to call the doctor.

ROEE: I don't need any doctor.

AVNER: You've got leave until after the wedding. You have three more days.

ROEE: Where's my rifle?

**ROEE thinks that the rifle isn't in the living room and goes out to look for it on the second floor. AVNER and DALIA rush after him. SHELLY follows them, stopping at the hall entrance. DORON's headache worsens. He gets up to look for his pills. ROEE enters DORON'S bedroom and searches for the rifle.**

DALIA: Fine. We won't call the doctor. I'll give you a valium. We'll talk in the morning.

AVNER: Where do you want to go? To the base? They're all busy with the war.

**ROEE has completed his search of DORON'S room. He moves on to GADI'S room. AVNER and DALIA follow.**

DALIA: We'll talk to the C.O. in the morning. He owes Doron his life.

**ROEE has completed his search of GADI'S room and goes towards the bathroom. AVNER and DALIA follow.**

AVNER: After the wedding, we'll go together to the Colonel. I spoke to him already. It's not your fault that your company walked into an ambush. It's his fault. It's the Intelligence's fault.

**ROEE can't find the rifle and exits the bathroom. DALIA hugs him. He gives in to the hug. Meanwhile, in the living room, DORON found the pills. He swallows two, and turns to GADI and EINAT.**

DORON: We need to tell him the truth. He cracked out there. But anyone in his place would have cracked. Me too...

GADI: I don't want to hear about you anymore.

DORON: And so would you.

GADI: **(Removes the gloves)** And don't bother staying 'til morning. You can get the hell out of here now. I don't want you at the wedding either.

EINAT: Stop it, Gadi.

GADI: **(Puts his hand on EINAT)** *This* didn't happen by coincidence.

EINAT: **(To Gadi adamantly)** Stop it. I'm not even sure we can get married like this.

GADI: Why? What happened?

EINAT: Don't you see what happened?

GADI: Roe will be fine. I'll give him a valium and he'll calm down,

**He takes valium out from one of the drawers. Meanwhile in the hall near the bathroom ROEE frees himself from DALIA'S hug. He gives up on the rifle and goes down to the living room. SHELLY rushes to him.**

SHELLY: Hug me, Roe. **(She hugs him)** Hug me.

**ROEE doesn't give in to her embrace. She holds onto him with all her might. He breaks away from her, picks up his backpack and drags it over to the front door. AVNER and DALIA follow after him.**

DALIA: Wait a minute, Roe.

**AVNER rushes to lock the front door and keeps hold of the key.**

ROEE: Open the door!

DALIA: You've done enough there, Roe.

ROEE: No one died because of me!

DALIA: No one is blaming you.

ROEE: Way more were killed in Doron's company because of him.

AVNER: They won't file a complaint against you. Over my dead body.

ROEE: I did what needed to be done. Exactly what needed to be done.

DALIA: Everybody knows that.

ROEE: **(To AVNER threateningly)** Open the door!

**GADI rushes to ROEE.**

GADI: What's come over you?

ROEE: He should open the door.

GADI: In a couple of days everyone will forget what happened there. They'll even give you a medal. Just like dad. Do you have any idea how many people got killed in the battle dad got the medal for? **(ROEE doesn't answer)** Take a valium and go to sleep. Put it in your mouth.

**ROEE separates from GADI. DALIA rushes to him and holds him.**

DALIA: If you go back there, they'll convince you that you're to blame.

ROEE: They know exactly what happened there. How we came under fire. How we headed for cover on the ground. Between the rocks. Bullets whizzing by. The wounded crying. Screaming. Dying in our arms. No time to think. Grenades exploding among us. Shrapnel in the face. In the neck. My body covered in blood. A round of bullets and then another round. A grenade and then another grenade. Killing one. And another one. And another one. We killed forty. Tomorrow, we'll kill a hundred.

**ROEE manages to free himself from DALIA'S hands and turns to the front door. AVNER blocks him.**

AVNER: You're not to blame for this, Roe. You're not to blame.

**ROEE takes the key by force, and heads for the front door. DALIA rushes after him and grabs him.**

DALIA: You're not going back there anymore. They can't force us to die here every day of our lives. Let others fight. Let others kill. Let others get killed. I want you alive.

**ROEE evades her and heads to the door. DORON rushes to the closet. Grabs the rifle lying on top of it, loads the magazine, and shoots ROEE in the foot. ROEE groans in pain.**

DALIA: Doron!!!

AVNER: What did you do?! Why?

DORON: He'll limp a bit. For a few weeks. That's all.

**DALIA kneels by ROEE in order to inspect the wound. AVNER tries to get the rifle out of DORON's hands.**

AVNER: (to DORON) Give me the rifle. Give me the rifle.

DORON: Someone had to save him.

AVNER: By shooting him?!

DORON: You should have shot me too.

**Meanwhile DALIA has removed the shoe from ROEE's wounded foot.**

**DALIA:** Enough with the god damned rifle! We need to stop the bleeding. (To GADI) Get a towel. (To AVNER) Get dressed. We have to take him to the hospital. Get your car from the garage! (To EINAT) Get the elevator!

**They all exit carrying Roee, except for Doron who stays behind. In the background a distant rocket explosion can be heard. Silence.**

## **SCENE 8**

**DORON's apartment in New York. January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Night.**

DORON: (To the audience) Mom and dad took him to the hospital. They reported that a bullet was discharged from his rifle. In the morning I returned to New York. He was released from the hospital two days later. A month later, he was released from the army. After Gadi and Einat's wedding, he rented an apartment with Shelly and started Law School. We thought he was getting better. But the nightmares returned. He refused to go to therapy. Refused to take meds. At the end of the year, Shelly left. (Silence) And then another war broke out. He locked himself up in his apartment. That night his neighbors heard him scream. They called mom and dad. He wouldn't open the door. They broke it down and found him in the bathtub. He slit his wrists.

**END**