

The Ephemerals

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List of Characters:

Avot – A poet. And Channel 51's weatherman

Dudu – News desk manager at Channel 51

Tzlil – A middle-aged female flight attendant

Jules – An international art photographer

Nur – An insurance agent, married to Iggy

Iggy – A stamp collector, married to Nur

Avishag – A shiatsu therapist, married to Charlie

Charlie – A birthday party magician, married to Avishag

Lady – An old Boxer dog, belongs to Dudu

Act 1

Scene 1 – A Collage

Avot is in his apartment, holding a notebook of poems, filming himself on his phone.

Avot: Hi, what's up? Welcome to "How Avot It?". To those of you joining me for the first time – I'm Avot. I've been writing poetry since I was a kid and that's when I started winning awards, competitions, publications – a wunderkind, as they say. But why waste time talking prose when we can focus on poetry. Today I'll read you a sonnet I wrote. It has no title, just a number, like Shakespeare. Sonnet number 7...

Jules and Tzlil are having sex in the toilet on the airplane from New York to Tel Aviv. Sudden turbulence rattles the plane occasionally, bouncing them from side to side.

Jules: And from there, I, continue, yes, to Toronto, yes! There's! An opening! A retrospective, mine, if you'd like to, come, oh! I'll, let you in, yes! Oh! There's an, opening, next, month, yes, in Vancouver, oh! Yes! Want to??

Tzlil: What??

Jules: Opening!

Tzlil: Ah!

Jules: In Vancouver??

Tzlil: Yes!

Jules: Or Toronto?

Tzlil: Yes!

Jules: Yes what?

Tzlil: Ah!

Jules: Oh!!

Tzlil: Yes...

Jules: In Toronto?

Tzlil: Yes!

Jules: Or Vancouver?

Tzlil: Yes!

Jules: I don't follow!

Tzlil: No!

Jules: You're not coming?

Tzlil: Yes!

Jules: You are coming?

Tzlil: Yes!

Jules: Ah!

Tzlil: Ah!

Jules: Where??

Tzlil: Yes! Ah! Yes! Ah...!!

Avishag and Charlie's apartment. Avishag is in a lotus position on a yoga mat, performing meditative eye exercises. Charlie walks in dressed like a magician, carrying his performance gear, searching for something. He finally approaches Avishag.

Charlie: *(Whispers)* Avishag...? Shuggy...? *(She closes her eyes and hums)* There was a card here, a 'two of hearts, and now it's gone. *(She hums louder)* Can you hear me...? You can't hear me...? Where are you...?

Charlie is clueless, he taps Avishag on the shoulder.

Avishag: Charlie, I'm in the middle of practice! *(She gets up, Charlie checks under the mat. The card isn't there. They stare at each other. Avishag returns to her exercise)* When will you be back home?

Charlie: Straight after the birthday party. *(He pulls a flower out of his sleeve and offers it to her)*

Avishag: Ok, bye.

Charlie: Bye. *(He blows on the flower and it disappears)*

Dudu and Lady are in the car. Dudu is driving. Shlomo Artzi's song "[A New Land](#)" is playing.

Dudu: Down, Lady! That's final, and don't you wag your tail at me. Down! Anybody else would have closed this deal a year ago. *(They keep driving)* Fine, I get the manipulation, no problem, you're a bitch, just like all the others. *(They keep driving)* Yes, it's hard for me, too, but it's the right thing for both of us. You'll run around in

the field, smell the flowers, the earth, there'll be other animals there, birds, lizards, maybe you'll even hunt something, and when it's all over— it's over. In nature. In the arms of Mother Nature. That's life. *(They keep driving)* Fine, you just lay on the guilt. It's a shame you can't see my side of things. *(They keep driving)*

Nur and Iggy's apartment. Iggy is sorting and examining stamps with a magnifying glass. Nur is folding a little boy's clothes as she talks on the phone.

Nur: Hello, am I speaking with Mrs. Orlev? Hi, this is Nur with the Long Life Company, I'd like to tell you all about our new life insurance policy... I see. And do you also have private health insurance...? And personal accidents...? No, we don't have fires, no, no natural disasters either, I'm afraid, only personal catastrophes... But I'd love to interest you in a wonderful policy for rare and critical diseases not covered by any Medicare program. Oh, of course you should, there's a ton of rare diseases nowadays. *(She suddenly leaps from her seat)* Iggy!

Iggy: *(Raises his head from the desk)* What?

Nur: What are you doing here??

Iggy: I'm sorting the stamps in the...

Nur: Giddy!

Iggy: Giddy...?

Nur: *(On the phone)* Excuse me, I'll be right with you. *(To Iggy)* It's two o'clock! You have to pick him up from kindergarten!

Iggy: Oh! *(He rushes out)*

Nur: *(On the phone)* I'm so sorry, Mrs. Orlev... *(Hang-up. Nur Lets out a curse)*

Avot tries another take.

Avot: Hi, what's up? Welcome to "What Avot It?". To those of you joining me for the first time – I'm Avot. I've been writing poetry since I was a kid..."

Scene 2

Channel 51 News. Dudu is interviewing Jules. Avot is waiting in the corner for his segment.

Jules: Now, Dudu, it's no coincidence that a substantial part of my artistic corpus is based on the intricate relationship between light and shadow. After all, I am intrigued by the tension between objects, their contrast, relatively, likeness, difference, mutual reflection...

Dudu: Sure, sure, and if the camera zooms in we'll be able to see some of the photographs from your new exhibit in Berlin, "War without Filters". Here we see – a soldier, lying on a stretcher, he seems scared...

Jules: Notice the color palette, the gradient monochrome from blue to gray and vice versa.

Dudu: Absolutely. And what do we have here? Two bodies... Ripped apart...

Jules: The composition, notice, Dudu, of the objects, blends wonderfully in the gentle play of exposure, between the overt and covert, between the illuminated and the shadowed.

Dudu: Yes. And saving the not so best for last... A head?

Jules: The perfect circle. *(Silence)*

Dudu: Jules Ajulino – thank you very much for coming to our studio straight from the airport.

Jules: Thank you, Dudu.

Dudu: *(Turns to the camera, smiles broadly)* And in conclusion, is it finally time to let those umbrellas out of the closet? *(Smirks)* Avot, what tidings have you for us?

Avot: *(Pulls out an umbrella)* Indeed, Dudu, it seems we can dust off those umbrellas, because the first rain of the season is sure to visit us as early as this week.

Dudu: *(Smirks)* I hope the first "shower" doesn't take us by surprise.

Avot: *(Smirks)* Yes, surprise "showers" are no fun.

Dudu: Let's hope it only "showers" us with rain! *(He winks at Jules and Jules squirms in his chair)*

Avot: *(Smirks)* Yes, yes... *(Points to holograms of clouds)* Well, as we can see – precipitation is heading our way from the sea, and we may expect rain as soon as early morning Monday. The rain will increase over Tuesday and is also expected to clear the heavy fog we've experienced over the past few days.

Dudu: Thank you, Avot, and thank you at home for joining us, Channel 51 News, have a quiet night, everyone.

The closing theme music plays. Dudu motions to Jules to stay put until the music stops. When it's over, Dudu signals to Jules, he gets up and leaves the studio. Avot is also on his way out.

Dudu: Wuss. Get over here. *(Avot approaches him)* Listen, we're about to get a new pharmaceutical company sponsorship, Pedi-Mel, and we guaranteed we'd create related content, it could be any kind of tagline, jingles, texts...

Avot: No, no, I'm no good at that stuff, Dudu.

Dudu: You're a writer.

Avot: No, no...

Dudu: For you it's a piece of cake.

Avot: A poet.

Dudu: What?

Avot: I'm no good at that stuff.

Dudu: Listen, kid. When you're good with words, you're good with words. Don't bullshit a bullshitter and don't underestimate yourself...

Avot: I'm not underestimating my....

Dudu: Now you listen to me! Don't underestimate yourself, don't give me any bullshit and don't try to bullshit a bullshitter. Look, you'll get paid. Now, their main product is a heartburn drug called... "Pilpilor" *(He searches his pockets and finds a note)* "Pilpilor". Great drug. By the way, if you get heartburns – they'll be sending us free samples. I've been getting them for a year now, shit. Listen, scribble a couple of lines for the anchors, the network, some jingles, even a short story, for you, for the soul. Huh? *(Avot nods)* That's a good boy. *(Pats him on the back)* Wuss! But a good boy.

Dudu exits. Avot remains still.

Scene 3

Charlie is performing at a children's birthday party taking place at the "Heart of the City" public garden.

Charlie: Kids, kids, let's be quiet, kids, the magic won't work if there's noise, it just doesn't work if there's any noise... That's right... Just like that... it will work if you're quiet. What's in my hand? That's right, my hat, and what do we have here? A pigeon! Don't be scared, kids, it's a nice, friendly pigeon and it's even got a name. It's Leslie. Hello there, Leslie the pigeon. Say hi to Leslie. Now let's put Leslie in the hat... Oh, just a moment... Oh... Ok, Leslie doesn't seem to want to get in the hat... Just a moment... and there.... Leslie is in the hat... Nope, she doesn't want to... Ok, so Leslie is going to rest over here for a while... Kids, kids, please, let me remind you that the magic doesn't work when unless you're all quiet... No, don't punch, there's no punching at a magic show, please... No... Stop punching right now... Ok, who wants to see a flower squirting water? You do? I can't hear you, do you? Very good... Where... Wait a minute... Ok, who took the flower? Kids, I'm asking whoever took the flowers that were next to my suitcase to give it back to me right now. There was a flower in a pot right here, next to the suitcase and now it's gone. So please, will the boy or girl who took the red flower in the pot, please give it back to me, otherwise I won't be able to continue doing magic for you. *(The noise increases)* Ok, I'll continue, but I want whoever took the flower to give it back to me as soon as the show is over...

Scene 4

Avot's apartment. Tzlil is there with him. They're in bed, Avot is pleasuring her under the sheets, when suddenly he hurts her)

Tzlil: Ow! Ow! Ow!

Avot: *(Pokes his head out from under the sheets)* I'm a whore??

Tzlil: Stop it, Avot, just forget about him...

Avot: He's right! I *am* a whore!!

Tzlil: That was nice.

Avot: Every one of my life choices has been wrong. All of them. I felt like I'd be somebody, like I'd invent a cure, lead a revolution, that I'd be... Somebody. Something. A poet! And just like that, I'd humbly sign my poetry books, and just like that, I'd humbly get some award, all very humbly, a humble poet! And what do I do instead? I work for that stupid dog on a channel nobody's ever heard of... "It rained", "it didn't rain", "the rain will stop", "the rain will resume"... God, when's that meteorite going to hit us??

Tzlil: What's wrong with you?!! *(She gets up instantly and starts to get dressed. Silence)*

Avot: You're... leaving?

Tzlil: Flying.

Avot: Where?

Tzlil: Madrid.

Avot: Oh.

Tzlil: And then Paris.

Avot: That's... Not far.

Tzlil: Then New York.

Avot: Oh. *(Silence)* Ok, when you get back, I might come visit you for once.

Tzlil: What for?

Avot: I've never seen where you live.

Tzlil: There's nothing to see. It's an apartment.

Avot: *(His eyes light up)* A beautiful, ripe, coquettish flight attendant lives in a small apartment at the heart of the city. Everything in her apartment is laid out like in an airplane, efficient and compact, like an airplane, small like in an airplane: little rolls,

little pillows, little bottles, little toothpaste... *(He whips out a pen and paper and writes)* And when the night falls, she lays in her bed and fastens a seatbelt..."

Tzlil: *(Takes the pen and writes down)* I'm thinking of having a child.

Silence.

Avot: With whom?

Tzlil: Alone.

Avot: Oh.

Tzlil: Unless you have any suggestions.

Avot: Suggestions?

Tzlil: For a father.

Avot: Oh, I'll... Think about it.

Tzlil: You do that. *(She's dressed in her flight attendant uniform. Avot sees her to the door)* You know, I never asked you if you had any diseases.

Avot: Diseases...? You mean, like AIDS?

Tzlil: AIDS, Herpes, whatever.

Avot: I never asked you either.

Tzlil: Too late. *(She laughs)*

Avot: *(Laughs)* I don't have anything.

Tzlil: Me either. Nothing.

She leaves.

Scene 5

Avishag's apartment. Dudu lies on his stomach on a treatment mat. Avishag gives him a shiatsu treatment.

Dudu: Do that thing where your feet are on top of me.

Avishag: Pastchi-Mutten.

Dudu: Yes, that mammoth thing, where you push with your legs.

Avishag presses her feet against Dudu's thighs.

Avishag: How's your dog, Lady?

Dudu: That's it... So I found this open field, about 80km up north, near Yokne'am, I let her out of the car, gave her a nice big chunk of salami and told her: that's it, honey. You're on your own from here. We're not going to start paying for vets now, you do it right girl, on your own, you do it right.

Avishag: That sounds harsh, saying goodbye to someone you care about like that.

Dudu: Yes, it was.

Avishag: Someone you shared your life with. Someone you loved.

Dudu: It's tough, it's tough.

Avishag: Yes, and I can feel this toughness in your body. Let's roll over on the stomach. *(Dudu turns over)* And let's envision this field, in full bloom, next to Yokne'am and let's imagine it's inside your body, and it's growing and fills the entire room, it covers the wall, and continues beyond the walls, covering the dirty streets, the filthy roads, the whole city... and it doesn't stop, it's blossoming, growing, covers the sky, the world, the entire universe... *(Dudu farts)*

Dudu: Excuse me!! *(He laughs out loud)* Excuse me...!!

Avishag: That's fine, you're releasing toxins. It's all that processed food you're eating, I told you.

Dudu: Do my head.

Avishag: You have some serious energetic blockings in your back, you're carrying a lot with you.

Dudu: I haven't carried anything in years.

Avishag: Your soul does.

Dudu: Fine, first the head, then the soul.

Avishag: *(Touches his head. He closes his eyes)* I like your crow's feet. *(She gently touches his face)*

Dudu: Those wrinkles come with experience. Many years, many wars.

Avishag: *(Rotating Dudu's pelvis)* We're going to awaken the kundalini. *(She sits down behind him, embraces him and they both swirl their pelvises)* Breathe.

Dudu: Do you... With all your patients?

Avishag: Shhh... Breathe.

Dudu: I like...

Avishag: Shhh...

Dudu: Shiatzu.

Embraced, they both breathe deeply.

Scene 6

In the public garden, by the birthday show. Iggy is sitting on a bench, holding a kids' helium balloon. Avot passes him by, a camera strapped to his shoulder.

Avot: Iggy...?

Iggy: Avot.

Avot: *(Hugs him)* Where've you been? I never see you anymore!

Iggy: What? No, I...

Avot: I'm messing with you.

Iggy: Oh.

Avot: So, the wife, the kid, everything's good?

Iggy: What? Yes, no, everything...

Avot: That's the way it goes – you get a wife and kid – the friends all get fired.

Iggy: What? No, no, I...

Avot: I'm messing with you.

Iggy: Oh.

Avot: I'm telling you, it's all bullshit, Iggy. All of it. This life, the chase, the efforts, they can say whatever they want, the religious freaks, the spiritual hippies, the philosophers, nothing has meaning, nothing, Iggy, death – that's all we've got. It's awful, you're heading towards total elimination, not before you suffer from illness and pain and horror, horror, Iggy, and before you even get there – when you're still healthy, what have you got? Stress, pressure, worries, failures, self-centered shitty people who care only about their own asses, so do you get to have a little fun at some point? How much fun are you really having? How much is it compared to all that time you spend suffering? Maybe 5%, don't tell me I'm wrong, Iggy, I've known you since first grade, for me it's even less, no, you're more miserable, whatever, and even when you are having fun, what is it, really? A mere distraction from death. That's why you're having fun. You kiss a woman, you have sex with her, so you forget that your parents are going to die, well, they'll be dying first – and then they actually die, maybe a little Alzheimer's on the way, which I personally think is better, I'd forget who I am right now if I could, maybe not, whatever, you're swimming at sea? There's a nice breeze, the waves gently stroking your body? My ass. You just managed, for one moment, to repress the fact that tomorrow some douchebag doctor is gonna hand you some lab result, cancer, heart clog... Your kid – he's laughing, your heart melts he's so sweet, right? I'm not being cynical here, really sweet, your heart melts – so what? So for one second you forgot that this whole fucking world is just one giant turd? Other kids are blowing up, being tortured, sleeping in the garbage, not metaphorically, Iggy, sleeping in actual garbage pails, I

saw one in India, took a photo, and wars and air raids, and animals? Forget about it, it's Auschwitz, watch YouTube, whatever, so you forget all about that for a second and enjoy your kid instead of feeling guilty, so what? Forget about it, Iggy, this whole life thing is just waves moving closer and further from the acknowledgment of death... *(He suddenly goes quiet; his eyes light up)* That's a good analogy. *(He takes out a little notepad and writes it down)* So what's up with you?

Iggy: M-me?

Avot: *(Writing)* Yeah, stop milking me and tell me something about yourself.

Iggy: *(Straining)* Nur and I...

Avot: What? Getting a divorce??

Iggy: What? No...

Avot: Oh, what then? *(Continues to write)*

Iggy: We've... Sort of... *(Painfully)* Grown farther apart. She's upset... There are things... *(Every word is a struggle)* To do. And I try, but... It's never... good. Um... So, basically... That's it. *(Silence)*

Avot: Well, it... It is what it is.

Iggy: Yes.

Avot: Closer and further...

Iggy: Yes.

Avot: Women.

Iggy: Yes.

Avot: Yeah, I'm quite far away from many things right now, too, no one's heard of my poems, nobody knows who I am...

Iggy: They will, you're a good writer. Your poems are... Comforting.

Avot: *(Emotional, embraces Iggy)* I love talking to you, we should get together more often. Ok, I'm going to take a photo of this hideous sky and then do some writing, are you staying here?

Iggy: I'm waiting for Giddy. *(Pointing)* He's at the birthday party.

Avot: *(Glancing at the party)* That clown looks like he's in pain.

Iggy: It's a magician.

Avot: A magician...? *(Pensive)* I had an idea for a children's story once... About a dove and a rabbit who belong to this magician, sometimes the dove disappears, sometimes the rabbit, sometimes both of them, out the sleeve, or some hat, or a box, disappear and reappear... All the time... Disappearing and reappearing...

Iggy: And what happens?

Avot: I only had the beginning. *(He walks away. Iggy remains seated)*

Scene 7

Charlie is at the birthday party, he's tired and beat, on the verge of crying, crawling on all fours.

Charlie: Quiet, children... Quiet... And now I need a volunteer, a brave boy or girl who'd like to disappear to another planet and then come back to us. Who wants to disappear? To visit faraway stars? Come on, somebody has to volunteer, it won't hurt, you just disappear and then reappear, let's see a show of hands... Yes, here's a hand... No! No punching, why did you punch her...? Come on, kids, raise your hands to volunteer, not to hit each other... You! What's your name? Giddy! Give Giddy a hand, no, please be quiet, come here, dear, come here Giddy, you see that big tree? Good, go stand behind it so we can't see you, that's right, and stay there... Now I'm going to ask everyone to close their eyes and be quiet, the magic only works if it's quiet.

Scene 8

Nur, laden with shopping bags, misses the bus. She tries to catch a cab.

Nur: *(On the phone)...You must, it's a must, with three small children and one of them in karate class you can't afford anything less than the total injury package for children... if, God forbid, tomorrow the little one takes a strong kick to the collarbone and his little heart is damaged, Heaven forbid, you'd be lost, completely lost, and by the way, your little girl in chess class is nothing to sneeze at, either, anything could happen, God forbid that pointy Bishop gets in her eye and ruptures her retina, or Heaven forbid some crazy kid loses the game and hits her over the head with the board, intracranial hemorrhage, God forbid, you wouldn't want to face that on your own, you don't want to be alone...*

Scene 9

Dudu and Avishag have finished the session. They sit closely next to each other.

Avishag: And that's how I ended up married to Charlie at 22... At first, I was excited about the ceremony, the promise, the "being together forever"... But then... You know, I read a nice definition of boredom once. Want to hear it? Boredom – it's the passion for passion. *(A huge explosion is heard outside)* What was that?

Dudu: A terrorist bombing.

Avishag: Really?

Dudu: *(Laughs)* Scaredy cat.

Avishag turns on the TV.

Avot: *(Reporting from the field, in a panic)* And if, if the camera zooms in, we'll be able to see the damage, the great damage to the adjacent buildings...

Dudu: The wuss!

Avot: *(On air)* This is a terrorist attack, yes, most likely a suicide bombing, most likely...

Avishag: Who is that?

Dudu: The guy – the guy – with the rain!

Avot: I was there, here, with the camera, for the rain, I'll try to get a shot, visibility is limited due to the haze, it's cold, too, and the low heavy clouds that have been hanging over the city are also apparent...

Dudu: Idiot! What's with the bullshit about the clouds?

Avishag: *(Suddenly horrified, grabs Dudu's hand)* Charlie.

Scene 10 – A Collage

The scene of the bombing. Screams, cries, dog barks, ambulances. Nur is running in tears, Iggy follows behind.

Nur: Giddy?! Giddy?! Where are you?! Where are you?! Sweetheart!! Giddy?! Where are you?!

Iggy: *(Panting, pale, sweaty)* Nur... Nur... Nur...

Avot is interviewing Jules

Avot: We have here with us, uh, a man, who witnessed, witnessed the incident. *(To Jules)* Sir, could you please describe what you saw for us?

Jules: *(Panicked, holding his camera like a weapon)* I was crossing the street, right here, I saw someone walking really fast, he had a long coat, like blood, like tweed, but old, a dead color, beige, beige color, he stopped by the coffee place, then turned around, I thought that was weird, and then the explosion happened, a bright, shiny, savage-lemon light, in my eyes...

Lady walks around among the people, she barks faintly and howls in search of Dudu. Nur runs at her, followed by Iggy.

Nur: Giddy?! Sweetheart?? Giddy...??

Iggy: That's a dog... Nur... It's a dog...

Jules: *(To Avot, who's filming)* This can't go on like this, the government just sits there, detached, and we're out here like sitting ducks...!

Charlie is badly injured. He's lying on the ground in the corner of the street.

Charlie: My legs...! My legs...! My legs...!

Avishag and Dudu are watching TV

Avishag: Charlie!!

She rushes out of the apartment, Dudu is left alone.

Tzlil is on the road, in her flight attendant uniform.

Tzli: *(Crying, on the phone)* I'm on my way, they've blocked the roads here, there was a bombing, if somebody could replace me at check-in I'll definitely make it for take-off, I'm on my way...!

Nur: Giddy, Giddy, sweetheart... *(She falls to the ground)* Where are you...? Where are you...?

Iggy: Nur... The police... I told them...

Nur: *(To Iggy)* Where is he? Where is he??

Iggy: He's gone... gone... he's lost.

End of Act 1

Act 2 (Two Days Later)

Scene 1

Avot is in his apartment, holding a notebook of poems, filming himself on his phone.

Avot: "How Avot It". Two days after the harrowing bombing, where I was at the scene, the bombing I broadcast live and was actually the first in the country to broadcast straight from the field. It wasn't easy. I stared death in the eyes, part of my inner-child was lost for good. But in all that difficulty there's also some solace – you – my viewers – everyone who's been watching the videos I've been posting here the last couple of days, everyone who's been exposed to my poetry for the very first time, everyone who sent a good word, and shared – thank you, you give me strength. So here we go, a new poem, another sonnet, look out, Shakespeare, and it's dedicated to you – my viewers – Sonnet number 21...

Scene 2

Dudu is driving, Lady is in the back seat. Shlomo Artzi's song "Under the Mediterranean Sky" is playing on the radio.

Dudu: You're happy, aren't you? You think this is a game? You think I have time to take you to a different shithole every couple of days? Do you have any idea how much gas costs these days? *(They continue driving)* That's it, it doesn't get any farther than this, this time. Any farther and we're in Gaza. You want to end up in Gaza?! Phew.... You smell like death. *(He opens the window, they continue driving)* There's no sense dragging it out like this, the house stinks, you can barely move, you throw up, fall off your feet, it's useless, it's not going to get any better and most of all it's sad. *(Silence)* I know, you wag your tail from time to time. But not nearly as much as you used to. And slowly. So don't wag that in my face. *(They continue driving)*

Scene 3

Evening. Iggy and Nur are in their apartment. Iggy sits in front of the TV. Nur is sitting in front of a huge stack of newspapers, occasionally cutting out a story. On TV: "... Two critically injured, three severely injured, four moderately injured, and five with minor injuries. At this time, police forces are still searching for the missing child and according to the Chief of Police the search will expand in the next few hours. He further added that the explosion was caused by the combustion of a gas tank at a nearby coffee shop. More reports on the leak at the petrochemical plant after this short commercial break. " Iggy turns off the TV. Silence.

Iggy: They're looking for him. That's what they said. The Chief of Police said. *(He takes out a stamped envelope)* There's a stamp called "Upside down Jenny". Upside Down Jenny was also hard to find. People have been searching for her for a hundred years. Every stamped Upside-Down Jenny is worth 300,000\$ today. There are still a few missing Upside Down Jennys out there, but there are also a few that were found.

Nur's phone starts ringing.

Nur: Hello...? What...? No... No, I'm sorry... No... I don't have insurance! *(She hangs up)*

Scene 4

It's late in the evening. A midtown hospital. Charlie is lying in bed, hooked up to all kinds of machines, completely paralyzed except for his eyes, which move occasionally. Avishag is standing over his bed.

Avishag: What are you feeling? Are you in pain? Are you hungry? I can't feed you... I don't get it, the doctors want you to eat through a tube, up your nose, what kind of food is that? That's no food. Food is something you eat through your mouth. The nose is for breathing. *(She glances to both sides)* I have a banana here. A good one. Ripe. Organic. Will you eat that? *(She peels a banana and brings it close to Charlie's mouth)* Yummy banana. One tiny bite. *(He stares at her and doesn't respond)* Don't you want any? Sure? A tiny bite. No? Ok. That's fine. We don't have to force it. We eat when we want to. You'll eat when you want to. *(Silence)* Can you hear me, Charlie...? You can't hear me...? Where are you...?

Scene 5

Early evening. Jules' apartment. All the shades are closed, he stands at the mirror.

Jules: War without filters is an Avant-garde political exhibition... War without filters is extraordinary... War... Guerre... Guerre sans filtres... Comment vous vous appelez? Je m'appelle Jules. Jules Ajulino!

There's a knock at the door.

Jules: Who is it?

Tzlil: *(From outside)* Tzlil. *(Silence)* From the flight. The flight attendant.

They speak on either side of the door.

Jules: What are you doing here?

Tzlil: I was late. For the terminal.

Jules: So?

Tzlil: It was my first time. I'm never late.

Jules: I'll call you a cab. Where do you live?

Tzlil: It was nice back then on the plane, remember? Toronto... Vancouver...

Jules: I'm in bed.

Tzlil: Why don't you write a poem about it? Or a short story? About a woman who was never late and yet she was late... For life.

Jules: *(He cracks open the door)* I don't write poems.

Tzlil: That's right, it's not you.

Jules: It's not? Do I look weird?

Tzlil: It's hard to tell. It's dark. *(Jules pulls her inside and quickly shuts the door behind her)* It's just that my next flight is in three days and I... My apartment's getting renovated.

Jules hands her some photographs.

Jules: What do you think? It's for a new exhibition... "War without Focus"...

Tzlil: I can't really make out...

Jules: Do they cry out? The photos?

Tzlil: *(Struggling to make something out)* They're powerful, the soldiers here, yes, they... Yell...

Jules: Listen! Can you hear the screams?

Tzlil: Listen? *(She brings the photos closer to her ear)*

Jules: Careful! *(He yanks her aside)*

Tzlil: *(Releasing herself from his hold)* Look at me, Jules, remember? New York – Tel Aviv, layover in Zurich, Tzlil. You told me... You asked me to... We laughed! Don't you remember we laughed?

Jules: Touch me.

She reaches out to touch his face, he aims her to his chest.

Tzlil: Really? The heart?

Jules: Is it... Is it...

Tzlil: Yes.

Jules: Still...?

Tzlil: Yes.

Jules: Beating.

He leads her to his bed.

Scene 6

Avot is in his apartment.

Avot: *(Filming himself)* "How Avot It", special live broadcast, I'm taking questions, there are lots of questions, lots of comments, I'll do my best to answer as many as possible. *(He reads off the computer screen)* Gaby from Kiryat Malachi wants to know if I was scared when I was live streaming from the scene. The answer is yes, Gaby, I was, but I still kept my cool on the air. A brave person to me is not someone who is fearless, but rather one who overcomes fear. I hope I answered your question. *(He glances at the computer again)* What else... Yaron from Hod Hasharon, a rhyme, asks how come he'd never known my poems until today, Yaron, I suggest you ask yourself that question, my blog has been up for over five years now, you would have if you had a bit more curiosity. *(He glances at the computer again)* Yes... Ruth, 16, writes "I was moved to tears when I read your moving poem "Sleepless Days" how come no one's written music to it?" *(Emotional)* That's a very...moving question, Ruth. I don't have an answer for you, it's truly... inconceivable.

Scene 7

Nur: *(Approaching Iggy and laying a pile of paper clippings over Iggy's stamps)* I think, Iggy, I think I'm starting to understand, stay with me... At first they said terrorist bombing, now they're saying gas tank, tomorrow they'll be saying something different, it's not random, there are special interests involved here, we mustn't be naïve, Iggy, this is a dark world we're living in. Maybe it serves someone's interest that Giddy's gone missing? That the police is after him? Maybe it's diverting the attention from something else, but what? Listen to this, a week before the bombing, a story in "Maariv" – "A new natural gas reservoir found in the Mediterranean next to the Leviathan reservoir." The usual suspects – tycoons, government ministers, they all want a piece of the pie, right? Now, pay attention, November 2nd, three days before the bombing, a story in "Israel Today" – " Hamas threatens to disturb the peace in the south." Why are they suddenly making threats? Are they really making threats? Or is that a planted article? Something to think about. Next. Ynet, the day before the bombing – "Suspicion of corruption in the Nes-Tziona municipality". And five minutes later – "A biker killed near the Gedera intersection", very close to Nes-Tziona, and a minute later, sorry, a minute earlier, 9:43 – "The number of fatalities in Syria has risen to 500,000", and here, on the evening of the bombing, Walla website, half an hour before... just before Giddy... Giddy... *(Without noticing, she stabs the palm of her hand with the scissors).*

Iggy: No, Nur, stop that.

Nur: It's fine.

Iggy: Stop it, Nur.

Nur: Just a little, it's fine.

Iggy: Stop it, Nur. *(He tries to take the scissors away from her)*

Nur: I'm checking... I'm just checking... *(They struggle and Iggy takes it from her)*

Iggy: Do you need a band-aid?

Nur: I know, that's a lot of information to process, and it's a little hard to connect all the dots, but the general picture - is clear, very clear – we have to find Giddy ourselves. *(She sucks the blood from the wound)* Are you coming? *(She leaves the apartment, Iggy follows her outside).*

Scene 8

Channel 51 Evening News.

Dudu: ... A few severely injured people remain in the hospitals as the search for the missing child continues. According to the Chief of Police, investigators are looking into the possibility that the fatal explosion was the result of a combusted gas tank at a nearby coffee shop. As stated, the investigation continues. *(He attempts a smile)* And the investigation we'd like to conduct now – is of the weather. Avot, I'm sure you'll be able to help us with that.

Avot: Just one note, Dudu – this was definitely a terrorist attack. As someone who was there and was the first one to cover the story, I can undeniably confirm the witness reports of a terrorist who...

Dudu: Thank you, Avot, for this confirmation. Nevertheless, at this point, I suggest we rely on the Chief of Police's statements and would love to hear your forecast of the weather.

Avot: It will be pleasant. *(Silence)*

Dudu: I beg your pardon?

Avot: The forecast. It will be pleasant.

Dudu: Very well. *(Silence)* Any... sign of rain in the next few days?

Avot: No. There's no need to look for clouds, Dudu, when the skies are clear. Let's just enjoy it. *(Silence. Dudu turns red)*

Dudu: Thank you, Avot. And thank you for...

Avot: Just one more thing, if I may, Dudu, regarding the bombing. It's terrible. I was there. On the scene, I saw the sights, I heard the sounds, the cries of terror...

Dudu: Thank you, Avot, for this vivid image...

Avot: And I wrote a poem. A poem about the incident.

Dudu: *(Trembling with rage)* Well... That's... Out time is...

Avot: And I'd love for you to read it.

Dudu: *(Sweating, his gaze moves restlessly between Avot to the camera)* Me...?

Avot: Yes, Dudu, it's too difficult for me, too close to home. *(He hands Dudu a piece of paper, whips out a classical guitar, gently strumming the chords to 'Blowing in the Wind')*

Dudu: *(Sweating, grins nervously, looks at the camera and reads aloud)*

"How many casualties does... An anchor... Report... before the commercial break..."

Avot: It's a question, every line ends with a question mark. *(Silence)*

Dudu: "How many condolences... Does a politician send... Before he starts his smearing...?"

Avot: That's right, great...

Dudu: "How many bombings does a new hero make, 'cause the last one was deemed just a man? The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind, the answer... is blowing in the wind." *(He folds the paper)*

Avot: Other side! There's another side. *(Silence)*

Dudu: *(Stares frozen at the camera. Goes back to the page)* "How do you argue on the right or left signal when you're speeding towards the abyss at 200km an hour with no brakes...? What exactly do you hear out there after the explosion and before everyone yells...?"

Avot: Yelps, not yells, whatever, go on...

Dudu: "How many versions of this refrain will they write before it finally sinks in...?"

Avot: Yes, yes...

Dudu: "The answer, my friend... is blowing... The answer..."

Avot: *(Sings aloud)* The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind, the answer is blowing in the wind."

Dudu gets up with a cry, snatches the guitar from Avot's hands and swings in the air to hit him. The closing theme music starts playing loudly. They're both stunned.

Dudu: *(Confused, to the camera)* We... Thank you... We... Channel...

The music fades out. Avot leaves the studio, distraught. Dudu clutches at his chest in pain. Lady walks in and approaches Dudu, he notices her.

Dudu: What are you doing here...? How did you get here?? You want me to kill you?? *(He grabs her forcefully)* You bitch! I'm gonna throw you out the window!! Right now, you fucking bitch!! *(He drags her out of the studio)*

Scene 9

Night. Tzlil wakes up in Jules' apartment.

Tzlil: Jules? *(She's suddenly not quite sure where she is. She looks over the apartment) Avot...? (She tries to remember) Marcello...? (Jules comes in from the nest room. He's wearing a coat)*

Jules: I'm going out. Are you coming?

Tzlil: Where?

Jules: Where am I or where are you?

Silence.

Tzlil: They've hired a replacement. A toddler who was just released from the army. Because I was late. Once. My first time. I won't be going back... and I... I don't have an arrangement down here. I never needed one, I'd always sleep on flights, in hotels, and if there was ever a one-nighter, there would always be someone who...

Jules: I'm sorry, it's too crowded for me here and I'm alone.

Tzlil: I'm hardly ever home.

Jules: There's no room, there just isn't...

Tzlil: So just till tomorrow, I'll be out of here by...

Jules: I could just suffocate! We can't be crammed in here together like sardines, we're human beings, this isn't a tank! How many objects can you cram into one frame? If you cut the edges of the photo, if the objects spill over, then the whole composition is screwed! The government can send four guys inside an APC (*armored personnel carrier*), eight guys inside an APC, it's not like it's them stuffed in that furnace! We've gotta widen the frame, let some space in the shot, color, light, I can't, let me out of here! Let me out! I'm sorry, I need space, I have to breathe.
(Silence)

Tzlil: Let's get out of here, then. *(She puts on her flight attendant's uniform again)*
Let's get out of the tank.

Scene 10

At the hospital. Evening. Avishag is seated next to Charlie. Dudu comes in, hesitant, nervous, holding a cheap bouquet.

Dudu: Avishag.

Avishag: *(Startles)* What are you doing here...?

Dudu: I came... I heard. I came. *(To Charlie)* Hello. *(Charlie stares at him)* I'm Dudu. I'm a... patient. Of Avishag's.

Avishag: It's hard for him to talk now.

Dudu: Sure. *(Referring to the flowers)* I brought... *(Avishag looks away from him, concentrating on Charlie. Dudu is left standing there with the flowers)* I'm... So sorry... This must be very difficult... I also... It's not the same, of course, but... Lady, my dog, she came back again and I... You know, I took her to some... And it's not easy... The look... And now on air... Excuse me... I just... I don't know what's wrong with me... I have this... Pain... The heartburn... Excuse me. It must be... very difficult for you. *(Silence. He approaches her)* Avishag? *(He comes even closer)* Avishag? *(He strokes her hair. They kiss)*

Avishag: He needs me.

Dudu: Yes. *(They kiss again)*

Avishag: *(Stops)* I canceled all my sessions. *(She turns back to Charlie)*

Dudu: Sure. *(He places the flowers next to Charlie's bed. He unwittingly picks up the banana and takes a bite)* Is there anything I can do to help?

Avishag: *(Tears up)* It's his.

Dudu: Oh. Sorry. *(He hands her the half-eaten banana. Avishag steps out of the room, crying. Dudu is left alone with Charlie, still holding the banana, staring at Charlie)* Can you hear me...? *(Charlie stares at Dudu. Dudu stares at the IV bag, in a haze)* Once... A long time ago... My dad... bought me a balloon. Helium. With a picture of Mickey Mouse... And I held it in my hand, held it fast, but... I loosened my grip for just a second and it flew away... went up to the sky... drifted farther and farther away, became smaller and smaller... turned into a dot... until it disappeared... Just – vanished. And I... after the sky, I looked at my dad, and my dad looked back at me, and then I realized... I realized... *(Emotional)* What did I realize? *(Silence, as if waking from a dream)* I don't know why I remembered that. Maybe because you're a magician. *(He rests his hand on Charlie's shoulder)* Get well. *(He turns to leave. Lady appears in the doorway, he looks at her and shrugs feebly, they exit together. A moment later Charlie opens his eyes and looks around. He moves his fingers and then takes his hand out of the bandages, like a butterfly coming out of his cocoon. Avishag comes back. In a snap decision, Charlie puts his hand back in the bandages and pretends to be unconscious. Avishag sits down and turns on the TV. Charlie opens his*

eyes and peeks at her, he reaches out his hand and takes one flower out of the Bouquet. He places the flower next to Avishag. Avishag notices the flower)

Avishag: Charlie...? How did that flower get here?? Did someone come in here? *(She concentrates on Charlie)* No... No. No. The wind blew it. *(She puts the flower back in the bouquet)*

Scene 11

Nur: *(Walking down the street, searching for Giddy, Iggy follows behind her)* Giddy...? Giddy...??

Iggy: *(Stops, kneels down)* Nur... I'm in pain... I'm in pain...

Nur: *(Comes closer to him. Quietly)* How did you not watch him, Iggy? That's all you had to do, watch, that's all, watch over Giddy, our son...

Iggy: It's... The magician said... To close our eyes...

Nur: The magician said? The magician said...?? You were supposed to watch over him, Iggy. You're his father. You didn't have to move, you could have sat there, just the way you like it, sitting in a chair, not walking, not straining yourself, not wanting anything, not doing anything, just sitting and watching, but you didn't... You didn't watch...! *(Iggy's grimaces)* What? What's wrong? *(Iggy opens his eyes wide, as if something exploded inside of him)* What's wrong with you...?? Iggy...?

Iggy: *(Whispers)* You don't love me anymore.

Nur: What...? Why would you say that...? *(She cries)* Why would you say that to me...? Iggy...? *(Silence)* Are you coming?

They look at each other. Iggy stays put. Nur continues on her own.

Scene 12

It's 4 am. The scene of the bombing. Avot sneaks out of one of the nearby alleys, carrying a rustling backpack, holding a flashlight, furtively looking either way. He carefully takes out a pair of gloves and wears them, pulls a black spray can out of his bag. Suddenly footsteps are heard. Avot puts the spray can back in the bag. Jules passes by him.

Jules: You... From the bombing...!!

Avot: *(Startles)* M-me...?

Jules: You interviewed me, we were here.

Avot: Yes... Jules.

Jules: Are you still doing it? The bombing?

Avot: Still doing it?

Jules: For a series of stories.

Avot: Oh, yes, no, there's plenty of options.

Jules: You should – "Back to the scene of the crime..." *(He takes photos)*

Avot: What are you doing??

Jules: *(Photographing)* The terrorist, he might come back, or his accomplices...

Avot: *(Stops him)* He doesn't have any accomplices!

Jules: So it's just us coming back.

Avot: I have to get back.

Jules: Good night.

Jules leaves. Avot whips out the graffiti spray again. He looks either way and then sprays a huge slur: "Judeo-Nazis. Whores and thugs' posses. The city will collapse. Signed, Muhammad the boss".

Jules: *(Who's been watching him all along)* Genius!

Avot: *(Glues himself to the wall with fear)* T-that's... T-that's...

Jules: Whores and thugs. Judeo-Nazis...! You're a genius!

Avot: I... I... It's, for a show, of the channel, it's...

Jules: A terror attack reality show!

Avot: No, no, it's' not a reality show, it's private... It's just to keep the story going!

Jules: Yes, keep it going! Let them kill each other, "The city will collapse...! Muhammad..." Yes! Let it collapse, let it blow up, let us die already...! *(He grabs the spray can from Avot and starts spraying on the wall)*

Avot: Die...? What are you talking about...? We don't have to die...!

Jules: *(Sprays enthusiastically)* You got any more? Colors? *(He rummages through Avot's backpack, takes out different colored spray cans and gives one to Avot)* Spray! Spray! Cover me! Spray! *(Avot sprays, Jules paints passionately)* Shake! Shake! Advance! Spray! Move! Move...! *(He sprays with two cans in both hands, heaving passionately)* Aaaahhh!! *(A huge, colorful graffiti of an Israeli-Nazi soldier with a Hitler mustache with an arrow the colors of the Palestinian flag piercing his heart. Avot's offensive writing)*

Avot: That's... Nice.

Jules: Thank you... Thank you... Thank you! *(He kisses Avot hard on the lips. He runs back home. Avot is exhilarated and takes out a camera. He gets ready to go on air)*

Scene 13 – A Collage

Nur and Iggy walk down the street searching for Giddy separately. Tzlil carries a suitcase and an address book. Charlie slips Avishag flowers and she, like in a game, puts them back in the bouquet. Jules runs excitedly back home.

Avot: *(Mounts the camera on a tripod. He dials this cell phone)* I'm sorry to call so late, this is Avot, I was a reporter for Channel 51, I'm a freelance now, I've got something big, exclusive, I'm at the scene, at the "City Center" Park, there's hate graffiti, advocating terror...

Dudu arrives at the Channel 51 news studio. Lady is by his side. The door is locked. He presses the intercom.

Intercom: Hello?

Dudu: Dudu. *(He waits for them to buzz him in. Presses the button again)*

Intercom: Hello?

Dudu: It's Dudu. Open up. *(He waits for them to buzz him in. Presses the button again)*

Intercom: Hello?

Dudu: Who is this??

Intercom: Who's this?

Dudu: Dudu! Who is this? The janitor?

Intercom: There's no Dudu.

Dudu: You idiot! I'm the news desk director!! Don't try to bullshit a bullshitter!! Open the door!! *(He presses the button)*

Avot: *(Filming himself)* ...We're here with an exclusive story about racist graffiti sprayed here tonight, by the scene of last week's bombing, the blood on the sidewalk has yet to dry, and here, this is how it reads: "*Judeo-Nazis. Whores and thugs' posses. The city will belong to Hamas. Signed, Muhammad the boss*".

Dudu continues pressing the intercom button.

Intercom: Hello?

Dudu: Give me your name! Give me your name right now!!

Intercom: Sir, I'd like to ask you to stop buzzing.

Dudu: You idiot!! I have to get on the air!!

Intercom: We've called the police. *(Silence)*

Dudu: Who is this...? *(They hang up. Dudu finds Avot broadcasting from the field on his cell phone)*

Avot: ...And as you can clearly see, the poem... I mean... The writing, this atrocious writing, is accompanied by an illustration of an IDF soldier with the moustache of the Nazi dictator, and an arrow the colors of the Palestinian flag stuck in his heart...

Jules comes running into his dark apartment. He sprawls on the floor. Sweating. Panting. Happy.

End of Act 2

Act 3 – One Month Later

Scene 1

Avot is in his apartment. He watches and listens to himself intermittently on the different devices.

On TV: *(Avot's voice)* Yes, Tzvika, we're here with an exclusive breaking story of yet another hate graffiti sprayed tonight, the fifth one sprayed across the city this month alone..."

On the Radio: *(Avot)* "Mirit, the sight before us reveals another hate graffiti, the seventh of its kind, the seventh sign I'd call it..."

On the Cell Phone: "A cruel, conquering army for hire, the city streets are on fire, Hitler is the ultimate man, the best book is the Quran..."

On the Computer: *(Avot)* "... Yes, indeed, Motti, it's covered in swastikas, the familiar artistic style we know from previous graffiti writings..."

On Tv: *(Avot)* "... Yet another attempted lynching, this time on a young Arab man leaving a hardware store carrying several brushes of different sizes, as well as paint colors among them white, green, black ..."

On the Radio: *(Avot)* "...Abu-Jekyll and Judeo-Hyde, we're living in Apartheid, Hava NagilHEIL, Hava NagilHEIL, Hamas = Shawarma, Bibi = gentile."

On the Computer: *(Avot)* "...Exclusive broadcast – Day 30 of the rhyming terrorism..."

There's a knock on the door. Avot goes to the door and opens it. Dudu stands in the doorway with Lady by his side.

Avot: Dudu.

Dudu: May I come in?

Avot: Y-yes. *(Dudu enters)*

Dudu: Nice place you've got here.

Avot: Thank you.

Dudu: *(Points)* You should fix that socket.

Avot: Yes.

Dudu: It's dangerous. *(We hear Avot on the computer: "...And this base, offensive, writing is being painted over as we speak, but there's no doubt it is already branded on the national mind..." Avot closes the laptop)*

Dudu: Wherever I go this past month – there you are. A celebrity.

Avot: Yeah, you know, it's a matter of being at the right place at the right..."

Dudu: Right. *(Silence)* I know these texts, Avot.

Avot: Wha-what texts?

Dudu: The texts. "The Rhyming Terrorism". Don't you remember? A few years ago, on your job interview, you wanted to be the cultural reporter, you read me a poem, a ballad, what was it?

Avot: The Ballad of the Suicidal City...?

Dudu: Bingo. *(He takes out a flask)* Absinth?

Avot: They're just words, Dudu... they don't kill anyone.

Dudu: *(Takes a sip)* Twenty-five years I've worked for the channel. I lose my temper once – no more Dudu.

Avot: I'm sorry, if it's because of that poem...

Dudu: Twenty-five years I spat blood for these people, now they won't even pick up the phone.

Avot: Yes.

Dudu: Won't return my texts.

Avot: Uh-huh.

Dudu: Blocked me on Facebook.

Avot: Hmmm.

Dudu: I sent a friend request under an alias.

Avot: Yes?

Dudu: They didn't confirm.

Avot: Oh.

Dudu: It's offensive.

Avot: Yes.

Dudu: Humiliating.

Avot: Yes.

Dudu: Degrading.

Avot: Sure.

Dudu: I've made a bomb.

Avot: Yes.

Dudu: I'm going to blow it up in the garden tonight.

Avot: Sure.

Dudu: With you.

Avot: What??

Dudu: I don't need much in life, you know, an audience, just to be there for my people. Just me and the viewers.

Avot: Did you say a bomb?

Dudu: *(Laughs)* What a great world this is, you can get anything online, they'll be sorry for what they did to me, tomorrow morning my face is going to be plastered on every screen in the country, yours too, the wuss and the boxer, number one headline, first in the country, assisted by platoon 51.

Avot: I'm not a murderer, Dudu.

Dudu: You're not? And the death all around you, you have nothing to do with that?

Avot: With me...? With me how...?

Dudu: *(Strong-arms Avot, badgers him)* The taxes you pay, directly and indirectly, the drugs you consume, legally, illegally, the food you eat, the water you drink, the shoes you wear made by some brown kid who earns four bucks a month...

Avot: *(Moves away from him)* Oh, come on...

Dudu: *(Follows him around, continues to provoke him)* The cotton you wear drenched in the blood of Pakistani children... Wake up, poet-boy, we're all murderers here, the countries, the armies, the corporations, the pharmaceutical companies, the candy, you too, a murderer, wake up, you bleeding-heart...

Avot: Stop it, Dudu, come on...

Dudu: *(Intensifies)* You're an accomplice, a murderer, an accomplice, it's written all over you, murder...

Avot: Enough!!! *(He lunges at Dudu with unbridled violence, they beat and strangle each other, Lady is going crazy with excitement all over the apartment, they struggle and yell till they're both exhausted)*

Dudu: *(Lying spread out on the floor, bleeding, laughing with joy)* You liked that, didn't you? Did you like that? *(Avot is excited, also laughing)* Come, come, Shakespeare, let's write a new play. *(He reaches out to Avot. Avot takes his hand and helps him off the floor. They leave together, followed by Lady)*

Scene 2

Jules is in his apartment, dancing embraced with his camera. The camera suddenly flashes, Jules screams in pain, the camera keeps flashing, Jules struggles with it and it continues to assault him. He hears sounds of war. All of a sudden Lady enters his apartment.

Jules: *(Begging for his life)* I'm a photographer! An artistic one! Jules Ajulino, my exhibits are showing all over the world, people know about me, they've written about me, in French, English, German, I've been interviewed, Jules Ajulino, Google me! Jules Ajulino!! *(He screams, stares at Lady, as if waking from a nightmare, laughs in relief, strokes her)* That's a good dog... That's a good dog... *(He whispers in her ear)* Gil. Gil Azulay. *(He laughs)* Gil Azulay. I never planned on being a photographer. I lowered my physical fitness profile because I wanted to serve close to home, but then they assigned me to be unit-photographer because they were short, and so during the war I took pictures of everything, constantly, for fear... I couldn't look at things plainly, through regular eyes. And then the war was over and suddenly everyone wanted the photographs, and someone said I was an artist and they put up an exhibition and then another one and another, and then in France, then Toronto, Berlin and they wanted me back with a new exhibition, so I blew up the photos and it worked, and then I made them smaller and that worked, and then I changed the exposure, then the color, something different every time... War in Colors, War without colors, War with Filters, War without Filters, nothing new, nothing alive, the same war, the same horror, all these years... Until that night. The explosion. The dead came back. All my dead came back. *(He looks at Lady and laughs)* You have no idea what I'm saying. That's ok. If you did, I wouldn't have said a word.

Avot: *(In the doorway)* Jules.

Jules: *(Alarmed, for a moment he thinks it's Lady who spoke, then notices Avot)* Avot.

Avot: We're going out to write a new poem. Dudu's joining us.

Dudu: *(Enters the apartment holding the explosive device, to Jules)* War without Limits.

Jules: *(Takes the bomb in his hands, embraces it while tears run down his face)* My dead... *(Dudu leads the whole group out of the apartment)*

Scene 3

Iggy still stands where Nur left him. Tzlil comes up from the street across, sits exhaustedly on her suitcase and browses her address book. Iggy stares at her.

Tzlil: *(Notices him)* Is everything ok?

Iggy: Yes. *(He bursts into an abrupt laugh and immediately reins it in)*

Tzlil: What's so funny?

Iggy: Nothing. *(Silence. Tzlil looks at him)* What you asked. Just now. If... everything's ok. And I said... Yes. Everything's not ok. I mean... Everything... isn't ok. I mean... Maybe everything is ok, but with me... It's not, I mean, everything is not ok... with me. I'm sorry. I didn't get any sleep. *(Tzlil bursts out laughing)* What's so funny?

Tzlil: *(She laughs)* You are.

Iggy: *(He laughs)* Oh, yeah? I'm funny? *(His laughter grows. Tzlil's laughter turns to sobs. He goes quiet)* Is everything ok?

Tzlil: *(Crying)* Yes, everything's ok... *(She laughs)*

A plane cuts through the sky. They both watch it.

Iggy: It's weird that there are people inside... And we can't see them, only the plane. And they can't see us, just a city that gets smaller and smaller... Like it's made of Legos... Buildings, roads, lights... And finally, just shapes and colors...

Tzlil: And then the sea.

Iggy: Yes, the sea.

Tzlil: Why didn't you get any sleep?

Iggy: What?

Tzlil: Earlier. You said. You didn't get any sleep.

Iggy: I'm waiting... For my child and my wife.

Tzlil: Where are they?

Iggy: Gone. About a month ago. *(Silence)* Because I wished for it.

Tzlil: Why would you wish for that?

Iggy: We were at a birthday party... There was a magician... And my kid, he hid behind a tree, and suddenly... deep inside, I suddenly wished... that he'd stay there, like that, gone, hidden behind the tree... Not that he would get hurt, that he'd stay alive and well, and happy and laughing, but... that he wouldn't come out, that he wouldn't come out and that we wouldn't go back... home, that we wouldn't go back home and wouldn't continue with... all the... I think she felt it. That I had wished for it. She... knew. And then she also... She also...

Tzlil: Disappeared.

Meanwhile, on a side-street. Dudu is marching, followed by Jules who's embracing the bomb, Lady and Avot.

Avot: *(Whispers)* Somebody's going to get hurt, you'll see, a little boy, will get hurt, injured, or a little girl... *(He stops Dudu)* You went overboard with the explosives, I saw, this is insane, we'll spend the rest of our lives in prison for this... *(The other three go past him, to himself)* Coffee, I want coffee, my coffee shop, air conditioning, a nice-looking waitress, the smell of coffee, that's all. *(He comes to his senses, finds that the group has moved on without him, he runs after them)* This is insane, life in prison, life! You have any idea what that's like? It's crazy...

Iggy: Yes. Disappeared. My home is empty now. *(Tzlil starts crying)* Don't you have a home?

Tzlil: I do... kind of... *(She points to her head)* up here.

Iggy: And... I mean... A family...?

Tzlil: No.

Iggy: You didn't want one or... Didn't have one?

Tzlil: Had one. Didn't want it. And when I wanted one, there wasn't one to be had.

Iggy: I bet they all wanted, they were all crazy about you.

Tzlil: I've had my share of crazies. Lots of them. But there was... One... Who really wanted me. Way way back, when I was very young... A teenager...the kind that is always laughing, that talks in clichés, that would look at herself in the mirror every night before bed, looking deep into her own eyes and it was all there, in some kind of twinkle. Back then – way way back – one night, in the street, he suddenly kneeled before me and asked – if I wanted to. Just like that. Eyes wide. And I laughed. I cracked up... No way...! I still had to finish the army, and study, and travel, and see the world... And have dreams... *(Through her tears)* Dreams...

Iggy: I only ever dreamt of getting married.

Tzlil: And you did.

Iggy: It wasn't...

Tzlil: What you thought it would be.

Iggy: There was always something...

Tzlil: Missing.

Iggy: Missing.

Tzlil: So is the world.

A plane cuts through the sky. They both look up.

Scene 4

Nur is on the edge of a bridge, looking down. She's bleary-eyed, pale, extremely weak. Her phone rings. She stares at it a while then answers with a faint voice.

Nur: Hello...? Yes... Hello... Mrs. Orlev...? Yes, Nur. Yes... Long-Life. *(She listens)* Which... Insurance...? Critical... Rare diseases. I remember. *(She listens)* I understand, you're afraid you'll get sick, yes, everyone around you is sick. *(Silence)* Mrs. Orlev, I'd like to offer you another... Insurance policy. A new one. A very important one. The most important one I know... *(She listens)* No, it's not for diseases, or death, no, it's one for... Hope. It's an insurance policy... In case the well of hope inside you dries up, if it goes empty because something terrible has happened, or nothing at all... You don't have to provide us with any explanations or proof, all it would take is... for us to look you in the eyes and see – that your eyes are broken, that the despair inside you is tremendous, that the loneliness... is ripping out your heart. *(Silence. She listens)* Oh, you've already got that? With our competitors. *(She listens)* Fine. So check with them and we'll talk again soon... *(She listens)* Thank you, you too, Mrs. Orlev... Best of health. *(She hangs up, looks down)*

Scene 5

At the hospital. Night time. Avishag is asleep, Charlie's bed is empty.

Charlie: *(Standing in the doorway wearing a magician's outfit)* I found the card.

Avishag: Charlie...?

Charlie: *(Pulls a card out of his sleeve)* A two of hearts. *(Approaches her)*

Avishag: How can you... walk?

Charlie: You're right. *(He smiles peacefully and starts to dance)*

Avishag: Charlie... Your legs... You lost the...

Charlie: "Sleeping Limbs", a classic!

Avishag: Am I dreaming?

Charlie: You just woke up, my darling.

He extends his hand to her and they dance. Ella Fitzgerald's "Imagination" is heard from afar. In the meantime, Lady is in the park, dancing as she embraces the bomb. Charlie pulls out a dying flower and breathes new life into it. Avishag holds it close to her heart.

Charlie: I love you, Shuggy.

They kiss.

Scene 6

Dudu call out: "No, Lady!". Lady throws the bomb in the air. There's a massive explosion. There are many wounded, we hear screams, ambulances. All the characters lay dead on the floor.

Avot: *(Broadcasting alone, trembling)* It's a tough morning... Very tough... A few minutes ago... *(Silence, his teeth chatter)* A bombing... I'm sorry to report a bombing... here at the park, the heart of... heart... There are burning benches here... Swings... Burned to a crisp...

(He breaks down. Cries. There's a drizzle. Avot looks up to the sky)

The first rain.

The characters come to life, look at the sky then gather the raindrops. Charlie begins a spectacular magic show with Avishag by his side. They all watch the show as children.

Lady: *(Sniffing the air, to the audience)* Can you smell it...? We're nearing the end. The end of the play. *(She laughs, to the audience)* So how was it? Interesting? Funny? Thought-provoking? A little too long...? Well, the theater's always a little too long. I prefer stand-up comedy myself. *(She smiles)* Why do boxer dogs have scrunched up noses? Because they chase parked cars. Where will you find a legless dog? Where you left it. One last joke, last one... Why do dogs lick their own butts? Because they know they'll be licking your face next. *(Silence. Quietly)* Good night... Gut nacht... Bon soir...

She slowly joins the rest of the characters watching the magic show.

End of Act 3

The End.