**The Successor / Goren Agmon**

**Translated from the Hebrew by Natalie Fainstein**

**Represented by:**

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***A large villa living room. The sitting area, dining room and piano are set apart by different levels. In the back wall, a large window facing a garden.***

**List of Characters**

**Malka –** The grandmother

**Noga –** Malka's granddaughter, a nurse. Engaged to Erik, Offer's sister.

**Offer -** Malka's grandson, Noga's brother, married to Gali.

**Erik –** Newly released from the army. Noga's fiancé.

**Gali –** Offer's wife. A lawyer.

**Scene 1**

**Offer:** *(Offstage)* Don't stop looking for a second! We only have one night, so stop shooting drunks, homeless is homeless. How to tell the difference? Homeless can be drunk, but drunk doesn't necessarily means homeless…

*Noga, wearing a doctor coat, enters the stage and signals him to stop yelling. Offer lowers his voice.*

**Offer:** *(Whispering to his cameraman)* I'm going in to see my mom for a second, I'll be down in five. *(To Noga)* What's she like today?

**Noga:** Bad.

**Offer:** I brought you a broccoli pie.

**Noga:** *(Snatches the tray)* You remembered…

**Offer:** *(About to go inside)* I'm going in to see her.

**Noga:** Wait, grandma's with her.

**Offer:** We're shooting a homeless documentary here. For a TV article… Primetime. Can you believe we couldn't even find one? *(looks at her)* If you don't get out from time to time, you'll collapse.

**Noga:** I'm not leaving mom on her own.

**Offer:** But grandma's here.

**Noga:** Grandma's running this place like a military base. She shows up every morning at zero-six-hundred sharp…

**Offer:** Let's hire a caregiver.

**Noga:** I don't need a caregiver, I need you.

**Offer:** I'm coming over tomorrow with Gali and the kids.

**Noga:** What the hell's wrong with you, Offer?

**Offer:** I want them to see her.

**Noga:** You don't. She looks awful.

**Offer:** I have a feeling she'll be all better by the wedding.

*Grandma enters the stage, she catches the end of Offer's line.*

**Noga:** I wish she could hang in there until my wedding.

**Malka:** *(Hard as a rock)* Hello, Offer. So, you finally made it?

**Offer:** *(Gets up)* I'm going in for a second.

**Malka:** *(Stops him)* No, you're not! Your mother is trying to sleep.

**Offer:** Just a quick hello.

**Malka:** You should have come at a more appropriate time. She's been up since 6 am.

**Offer:** Why would you wake her up at six? Have you no mercy, even for the infirm?

**Malka:** No one should stay in bed all day, even the infirm.

**Offer:** Sure, life according to Malka.

**Malka:** I'll go make you some coffee… *(She goes out to the kitchen)*

**Noga:** Resistance is futile. She's a lost cause.

**Offer:** Why? When we've been having such a great time fighting for the past 40 years…

**Noga:** *(Gets up)* I think she called me.

*Offer gets up as well to go inside with her.*

**Noga:** Wait, if I remember correctly you're one of those softies who faint…

**Malka:** *(Back with the coffee)* Sit down! If you want to see her, come in the morning.

**Offer:** I have work in the morning.

**Malka:** Sit down, Offer. I made you some coffee.

**Offer:** Thanks. *(He begrudgingly sits back down)*

**Malka:** We're going to have to take care of Noga. Her father…

**Offer:** She practically has a husband…

**Malka:** "A husband"! Don't count on it. In the meantime, he's become quite the politician, running around with his army buddies. Writing slogans, starting revolutions. True, we see more of him than we do of you, but you'd think he'd ask, once even, if we needed anything from the grocery store.

*Offer's cell phone rings. He can't remember where he left it, Malka points at it.*

**Offer:** You got it? Great! Wait, homeless or just some drunk? Of course there's a difference. Have them set up the lighting, don't charge at him all at once, I'll be right down. *(He gets up)* I'm going in to see my mom.

**Malka:** Don't you set foot in that room!

**Noga:** *(Coming out of the mother's bedroom)* She's sleeping.

**Offer:** I'll bring Gali and the kids tomorrow.

**Malka:** Not before 10 am and no later than 3 pm.

**Offer:** Yes, sir. Wait, no, I'm going up north tomorrow, I'll come the day after tomorrow, with the kids. I want her to see them. Come, Noga, let's go outside.

**Noga:** Now?

**Offer:** Come meet some nice guys, catch some air.

*Noga looks at Malka, waiting for her permission.*

**Malka:** It's fine. You can go.

*Noga is delighted that she got the permission, takes off the white coat and runs off to join Offer.*

**Malka:** *(Glances at her watch)* Half an hour.

**Scene 2**

*Six weeks later. Morning.*

*The living room is packed with boxes and cases. It's obvious that someone organized the place. Noga is packing, Malka is folding mother's dresses.*

**Malka:** I can't get over mom's funeral, half the country was there, I had no idea so many people loved her… Someone told me one of her students passed out.

**Noga:** Seriously?? I wish I'd seen that.

**Malka:** Don't do this on your own, Noga'le, you'll break your back, wait till Erik's here.

**Noga:** I invited Offer, he'll be here any minute.

**Malka:** Offer?

**Noga:** Why not?

**Malka:** Maybe not the cleverest thing, letting him deal with all the…

**Noga:** It's his property, too.

**Malka:** You shouldn't have invited him.

**Noga:** I'm going to tell him, grandma.

**Malka:** What on earth do you want? To get married peacefully and go to America, or to start World War III with your brother?

**Noga:** No one's fighting, it's your bourgeois anxieties acting out.

**Malka:** You have no idea how he'll react.

**Noga:** I know Offer, he couldn't surprise me if he wanted to.

**Malka:** Listen to me, Noga. You got into an excellent school, go to America. I'll tell him in due time.

**Noga:** *(Determined)* Sorry, grandma, but you won't say a word to Offer. It's my thing, and I'll be the one to tell him.

**Malka:** Why not let sleeping dogs lie?

**Noga:** So that they don't wake up when it's too late.

*They both continue working in silence for a moment.*

**Malka:** Look what I found, your mother's stage outfit, so elegant, she had such impeccable taste, she was so beautiful on stage in this dress. Would you like to keep it?

**Noga:** No. Donate it…

**Malka:** *(Finds something new)* I don't believe it! *(Emotional)* Mom's wedding dress, what a wedding that was, mom was so gorgeous you couldn't take your eyes off her. Even the Rabbi stammered, he was so flustered…

**Noga:** *(Puts down the box, approaches and feels the dress)* I want to try it on.

*Offer comes in carrying a few cardboard boxes.*

**Offer:** Hi, the mover has arrived! Good morning, grandma, how are you? *(He kisses her)*

**Malka:** Just fine, and you?

**Offer:** *(Goes over to the kitchen)* I'm gonna make me some coffee. *(From the kitchen, offstage)* Are you done with all the wedding arrangements?

**Malka:** Almost.

**Offer:** I understand Erik wants to invite his entire regiment…

**Malka:** That's nice but I want a family wedding.

**Offer:** *(Returns to the living room)* Family? That means we'll meet all those aunts we saw at the funeral again. Did you invite the twin spinsters from Shavey Zion?

**Malka:** Of course, those poor women. A wedding is a wedding!

**Offer:** And the ones from Rishon… Who keep multiplying?

**Malka:** And if they are, is that at your expense?

**Noga:** *(Comes in wearing the wedding dress, Malka and Offer are stunned at the sight of her)* How's the dress?

**Offer:** *(Examines the dress)* Wowee! Amazing!

**Malka:** *(Can't bear the sight of it)* You look just like… Take it off, Noga.

**Offer:** *(Twirling Noga)* Wait a sec, grandma, let me enjoy my sister…

**Noga:** *(To Offer)* Something to drink?

**Malka:** I'll make him a cup of coffee. Three sugars.

**Offer:** And a half.

**Malka:** I'd cut down a bit if I were you.

**Offer:** I did, it used to be four.

*Malka exits to the kitchen.*

**Offer:** What do you want me to pack?

**Noga:** The books. I can't handle them. Give the encyclopedias to your kids.

**Offer:** Noga, everything's online now. Donate it to some library…

**Noga:** Ok, there's a couple of things we need to talk about before I go.

**Offer:** When exactly are you going?

**Malka:** *(From the kitchen, offstage)* Right after the wedding.

**Offer:** *(Surprised, he had no idea)* The same night?

**Noga:** School starts in three weeks, there's no time to spare.

**Offer:** You won't even get to open the presents.

**Noga:** There won't be that many, we can't throw a big wedding just six weeks after mom passed away.

**Malka:** *(Returns with the coffee)* Take off the dress, Noga.

*Noga steps outside to change.*

**Malka:** *(Whispers)* Noga's father wants to come to the wedding.

**Offer:** How does he even know there is a wedding?

**Malka:** He found out that mom died. He called and I somehow let it slip…

**Offer:** Does Erik know she has a father?

**Malka:** Absolutely not, he can't know.

**Offer:** This is so stupid, the whole world is online and Google won't let anyone keep a secret. He'll find out and it's going to be an epic fail. She must tell him the truth.

**Malka:** What truth? What could she possibly tell him about that man? I have a father, but he disappeared?

**Offer:** Yes, he's not the first father to go A-wall, and certainly not the last.

**Malka:** You know he never paid your mother alimony!!! Do you have any idea how much money he owes Noga?!

**Offer:** Maybe that's a good thing, maybe he'll pay her back at the wedding!

**Malka:** *(Sarcastic)* Sure… I'm afraid, Offer, that if he shows up at the wedding, he might very well ruin everything…

**Offer:** Give me his number, I'll call him.

**Malka:** Good, he's down in Eilat.

**Offer:** Don't you worry, that man won't set foot here - not at the wedding, and not after the wedding – before he pays back the alimony - with interest!!!

*Noga comes back in, wearing different clothes. Malka gives Offer the phone number behind her back.*

**Offer:** *(Improvises a new conversation item)* I have this new research piece, I have to go to Egypt…

**Malka:** What's the matter? Not enough homeless people for you here in Israel?

**Offer:** *(Laughs)* It's for something else, why don't you join me, grandma? You always wanted to see the pyramids.

**Malka:** To Egypt? I don't trust them. Meanwhile, I wouldn't mind an invitation to Switzerland, they're still neutral. Here, Offer, this is yours.

*She takes out a piece of paper and hands it over to Offer. He browses through it, amused.*

**Offer:** Mom kept all my report cards! *(Reads aloud)* "Offer has encountered some difficulties in school recently, you are hereby summoned". Here are all my report cards. "Very good", "Very good", "Very good", this is getting boring. Look, Malka. *(He offers her a glance at his report cards)*

**Malka:** Why, if it's so boring?

**Offer:** What did you want to talk about, Noga?

**Noga:** Look, mom… I have no idea how this happened…

**Malka:** *(She won't let them talk)* Where's our groom? He said he'd be here to help with the boxes.

**Noga:** He's throwing a farewell party for his army buddies.

**Malka:** I sincerely hope he manages to say goodbye to everyone in his regiment before the wedding, otherwise you won't be going anywhere anytime soon.

**Offer:** Has he decided on a university yet?

**Malka:** I bet he'll go looking for a prestigious one.

**Noga:** Again, grandma?

**Malka:** Prestigious! I know him!

**Offer:** *(Sarcastic)* What's wrong with that, grandma?

**Malka:** They're much more expensive! What did you think, he'd let her go to the Mayo Clinic and settle for some random university for himself?

**Offer:** They can't afford so much prestige. *(To Noga)* Seriously though, how are you going to live there?

**Noga:** I rented out the house to a doctor from my ward.

**Offer:** *(Surprised)* Wow, that was quick, why didn't you consult me?

**Malka:** She did wisely, it's always better to rent out to someone you know.

**Offer:** Don't rent out anything just yet, a house located in the center is worth a shitload of money. It might be best to sell, but it still won't be enough, America is super expensive.

**Noga:** Mom left me a couple of nest eggs.

**Offer:** *(Surprised again)* Mom had nest eggs?

*A short, tense pause.*

**Noga:** Um… I wanted to talk to you about the… There's a lot of stuff here. I'm not taking anything with me. Take whatever you want. Take her car.

**Offer:** I have a car.

**Noga:** So sell mom's.

**Malka:** *(Can't help herself, to Noga)* You sell it! You need the money and the car's yours!

**Offer:** How come it's hers?

**Malka:** She's the one using it… You already have a car.

**Noga:** I don't need it.

**Offer:** Ok, I'll take the car.

**Noga:** What about mom's piano?

**Malka:** Leave it here for now.

**Noga:** No, I don't want strangers touching it, take it, for the kids.

**Offer:** *(Sarcastic)* All of it? *(To Malka)* She'll take the white keys I'll take the black ones.

**Noga:** *(Short pause)* What about the microwave? The computer? The TV?

**Malka:** Sell them! You don't have a father to send you money!

**Offer:** *(Joyfully)* But she's got a millionaire grandma! *(Notices Malka's reaction)* What's wrong, granny? Did I say something wrong?

**Malka:** When did you get around to counting my money? Do you talk with my banker? Everything I have was self-made. No one ever gave me anything. When all my friends sat in coffee shops, I was running a company. Noga had a good mother, I hope she took care of her.

**Offer:** I'm sure she did, I'm sure she took care of me, too.

**Malka:** You need taking care of? What don't you have? You're all settled, your wife works, you have a job.

*Awkward silence.*

**Offer:** Noga, which books do you want?

**Noga:** Forget the books, Offer, I want to talk to you.

**Offer:** *(Dividing the books between them)* Ok, but just so grandma can relax, Amos Oz is mine, A.B Joshua is yours, War is mine, Peace is yours, Crime is mine, Punishment is yours…

**Noga:** I said I wanted to talk to you.

**Offer:** We're talking, aren't we?

**Noga:** Look… There's a lot of assets…

**Malka:** Sell!! Sell!!

**Noga:** Let me talk to Offer in peace, grandma!

**Malka:** We talked about everything. There's nothing more to talk about.

**Noga:** We did not talk about everything. *(Pause)* Mom left a will.

*Pause.*

**Offer:** *(Surprised)* Mom has a will?

**Noga:** Yes.

**Offer:** Why didn't you tell me?

**Malka:** Who dies without a will these days?

**Offer:** Can I see it?

*Noga hands him the will. He reads it, quite shocked, they are silent.*

**Offer:** Who wrote this?

**Noga:** Mom did. Here are signatures by the two witnesses, the date and her handwriting.

**Offer:** That's her handwriting, but… It's not her …

*Silence.*

**Offer:** You opened it without me? How come I wasn't invited?

**Malka:** We couldn't reach you at home, the paper couldn't find you… We couldn't wait forever.

**Noga:** The lawyer thought your presence wasn't essential.

**Offer:** Lawyers don't get to decide who's present, the family does, and it was your decision.

*A short pause.*

**Offer:** You do realize this document is unacceptable.

*Pause.*

**Offer:** *(To Noga)* How could you not tell me? I've been asking all week if mom left anything, if she said anything? You didn't say a word, why would you hide this from me?

**Noga:** I tried to spare you…

**Offer:** What? The fact that I'm not even mentioned here? *(Or: So even before you opened it you already knew I wasn't in it)*

**Noga:** Yes. *(She is silent)*

**Offer:** *(Tries to control his inner turmoil)* This piece of paper is bullshit! *(He gets up)* I'm going to look into this.

**Malka:** What's there to look into? This is the will. As you can very well see, it was written a long time ago.

**Offer:** I have to look into it because as far as I can remember, my mom kinda liked me and this will is simply unacceptable.

**Malka:** Listen to me, Offer, this will isn't against you. Noga has no one else in the world. And she's just starting out. You're settled, your wife is a successful lawyer, her father is a diamond dealer, and if you ever needed anything, someone's there to back you. If you look at it this way, it's actually quite reasonable.

**Offer:** What's so reasonable? This will, which has no mention of me, has been lying around for five years and no one says a single word… Yeah, that's reasonable, necessary even…

**Noga:** *(To Malka)* Leave us alone.

*Malka scowls.*

**Offer:** She won't leave us alone, because God forbid she misses anything. *(He gets up)* She also knows more than she lets on, don't you granny? I'll be back.

**Noga:** Wait a minute, Offer. You can have whatever you want. I don't care about this will.

**Offer:** But I do! She'd never write this kind of will on her own!

*Offer leaves.*

**Noga:** *(Yelling after him)* Wait, Offer!!!

*He's gone.*

**Malka:** *(Gets up angrily)* What do you mean "you can have whatever you want?" Everything that belonged to your mother now belongs to you! That's what mom wanted and that's the way it's going to be.

**Noga:** But he doesn't want anything. Did you see he didn't want anything?!

**Malka:** He'll want the house. Is he made of stone? Don’t you think he has his own dreams?

**Noga:** Dreams or no dreams, Offer won't take a thing from me.

**Malka:** Azoy!!! You think he wants to cover the homeless for the rest of his life?? The man went to study communications to one day start his own startup, and for that you need money.

**Noga:** Some things are more important than a career, grandma.

**Malka:** He wanted me to invest!

**Noga:** I don’t believe you.

**Malka:** He asked me for a loan…

Naga: And I bet you gave it to him…

**Malka:** Absolutely not! What am I, a bank? This inheritance, that's his chance. And he won't let you get away with a nickel. I know Offer, mother did too, there's a reason she wrote this kind of will. You have to be able to stand on both feet, on your own merit. Trust no one. Offer's father left, then yours did too. And you're about to marry a guy I'm not sure is right for you.

**Noga:** What's your beef with Erik?

**Malka:** You have to put them in place from day one! I kept your grandfather on a very tight leash, and it was for his own good. It won't work with Erik, he's playing you. He's all over the place. And he doesn't provide for you.

**Noga:** He got out of the army like a minute ago.

**Malka:** If he had any work ethic, he'd have found a job before his release. Whose job is it to provide for him? Start taking care of yourself! You know the kind of life mom had. How many jobs she had to work to keep this house going. And you.

**Noga:** *(Aggressively)* I know exactly what kind of life mom had, I don't need to be reminded three times a week! I'm not going to live her life!

**Malka:** God forbid! Yours will be much better. No one will ruin your future, not a brother or a husband.

*Erik enters, singing, kissing Noga.*

**Erik:** I closed the deal with the DJ. You've got three wedding march options: classical, Hebrew songs or Brazilian music…

**Malka:** *(Gets up, passes him on her way to the kitchen)* Hello Erik, nice of you to show up.

**Erik:** Oh, wow, that's some welcome… Did I miss anything?

**Noga:** I told Offer about the will.

**Erik:** Finally, I'm glad you did.

**Noga:** What's there to be glad about?

**Erik:** What did he say?

**Noga:** That he couldn't believe mom wrote it.

**Erik:** Rightfully so. I wouldn't believe it either. If you have half a heart, you ought to split it with him, 50-50.

*Malka returns to the living room, listening in, irate.*

**Malka:** 50-50? I'm sorry, is it your property to give away?

**Erik:** He's Leah's son, too. Half of it belongs to him! *(To Noga)* I don't know why you're so scared, if the house is worth 4 million, half of it should be more than enough for the rest of your life!

**Malka:** No one is selling this house. It's the only thing in the inheritance that's actually worth anything.

**Erik:** So they'll split things another way.

**Malka:** There is no other way! You think she left behind oil wells?

**Noga:** Relax, both of you. I'll talk to Offer, and we'll both decide what to do.

**Erik:** *(Cynically, to Malka)* Will you at least let them talk with each other?

**Malka:** Why do you keep meddling, what business is this of yours? Was she your mother? Why are sticking your nose in?

**Erik:** I want a quiet wedding, Malka.

**Malka:** And you will, if you keep quiet. And keep in mind – this isn't your property, you're not part of this family yet. And don't call me grandma, I’m not your grandma!

**Erik:** I'd die on the spot if it happened to me. If my mom had sent me a letter from the grave saying she actually couldn't stand me, I'd just die.

**Malka:** No one dies so quickly. You have to suffer a little first.

**Scene 3**

*The same day. Noon. Gali's office.*

*Gali is on the phone. Offer waits for her to finish her call.*

**Gali:** What's the rush? Who's pressuring you?

**Offer:** No one.

**Gali:** It's true that we at Naamat Women's Organization take care of women, but by no means are we against men, all I'm asking is, for your sake, that once we draft an agreement you'll come here with your husband and we'll go over this agreement together, why would you want the Rabbinical court hassle? *(Listening)* The question is are you looking for a deal that will help you live and support the children, or are you just seeking revenge… And believe you me… *(Whispers to Offer)* Noga didn't say anything? Listen, Yael, you can have a civil divorce, or you can fight. Which do you prefer? *(Listening)* You're not making it easier on him, you're making it easier on yourself… Hello? Hello??!!! *(To Offer)* She hung up… the little dummy. *(To Offer)* Noga didn't say anything?

**Offer:** Grandma wouldn't let her get a word in edgewise…

**Gali:** *(Her phone rings)* Yes? Not to allow him in the house? Why? Did he hit you? The kids? Then why not let him in the house? I beg your pardon? *(To Offer)* She hung up again.

**Offer:** It doesn't even mention the kids, her only grandchildren…

*The phone rings. Gali answers it.*

**Gali:** Yes, there's no other lawyer, I'm the only one here. You can try another branch. Google it. Google never lies. Just know that revenge won't lead you anywhere.

*A short pause.*

**Gali:** Did she leave you anything? A letter, a note.

**Offer:** Nothing. I couldn't bring myself to go back to the office.

**Gali:** That's ok, you can have one day off.

**Offer:** I don't want a day off, what are we going to do, Gali?

**Gali:** *(Concludes)* You know what, fuck it! We're not beggars. We don't need that house, we don’t need her money…

**Offer:** Why make it easy for her?

**Gali:** *(Cuts in)* You sound like my client… We did just fine up until now. I make a great living… We'll tap into our savings account for your startup and we'll get by.

*He tries to scratch his legs. Gali notices it.*

**Gali:** What's wrong?

**Offer:** My feet are all pins and needles. I can't feel my toes, it's driving me nuts.

**Gali:** Let's go outside, I'll close here, we'll get in the car and just drive.

**Offer:** Do you think she had any idea what she was doing…? was she out to hurt me…?

**Gali:** What do you want me to say?

**Offer:** The truth.

**Gali:** If a person writes this kind of a will, and they're not stupid, they had to assume it might hurt somebody...

**Offer:** She had no reason to want to hurt me.

**Gali:** I don't get your mother. Sorry, but all I can offer you is… Don't give a crap about this will, just like she didn't give a crap about you.

**Offer:** I don't… What's giving a crap? What does that mean? Is there a toilet around here? My feet itch, it's driving me mad…

**Gali:** Let's leave it for now.

**Offer:** Why? You've got another dummy on the line?

**Gali:** Come with me, let's get some air outside.

**Offer:** What about the kids? They'll come home and…

**Gali:** I made lunch, they'll be fine. Come on.

**Offer:** Who'll pick up Mika from preschool?

**Gali:** We'll be back by four.

**Offer:** I don't feel like going anywhere. I want to be alone. I gotta talk to someone, I have to figure this out, don't I? Gali…

**Gali:** Right now, there's only one thing we can do…

**Offer:** Wait, Gali, who's "we"?

**Gali:** You, you, if you feel like you have to do something, then you have to do something.

**Offer:** Such as?

**Gali:** Noga must have filed a probate of will request.

**Offer:** How do you know that?

**Gali:** That's how it works. There's a procedure.

**Offer:** And…?

**Gali:** So you have to file a contention of will form before she…

**Offer:** I don't get it.

**Gali:** When a person dies, and their will is unreasonable, there's justification for a lawsuit. You try to prove that it wasn't willingly written, which means that there was undue influence.

**Offer:** Whose influence over whom?

**Gali:** Of someone from the family over your mother.

**Offer:** And how can you go prove that?

**Gali:** You look for documents, interrogate neighbors, family members, a doctor.

*Pause.*

**Gali:** Did she have any documents?

**Offer:** She's got closets filled with paperwork.

**Gali:** There are other options. Noga took care of her. I have no idea what kind of relationship they had. Maybe she pressured her, influenced her.

**Offer:** Noga? Noga has no idea what happened there.

**Gali:** Your grandmother used to wake your mother at 6 am, right? Why did she agree to that? Why did she let her take over her life? Maybe she was afraid of her… There's room for plenty more questions. We'll have to investigate…

**Offer:** Hey, wait a sec, investigate what? Who?

**Gali:** Not investigate, look into. The family sat down to read the will without you, realized just how unjustly you were treated and then asked you over to carry out the boxes. If you find the will unreasonable, you have to contest it. They can't do something like this and still play nice. You have to try to prove it's illegal.

**Offer:** But it is legal! What are you saying, that there's actual foul play here?

**Gali:** I'm not saying anything. You have to draft a contention form and submit it to the court. The judge will rule on it.

**Offer:** I can't. I can't draft anything right now.

**Gali:** I can write it for you.

**Offer:** Don't you do a thing!! Please. I want to think it over, I need time.

**Gali:** That's the one thing you don't have. We can appeal in 30 days, but Noga is leaving in a couple of weeks.

**Offer:** Let her!!! Gali, you stay out of it.

**Gali:** We're in this together, aren't we? Your feet are pins and needles, you're losing your toes, and now 'Gali, stay out of it'?!

**Offer:** You're charging four miles ahead when I'm still trying to figure out who's who.

**Gali:** Ok. I won't say another word.

**Offer:** I'm off… Don't know where to. Where am I off to?

*Gali signals that she can't speak.*

**Offer:** Give me a break!!!

**Gali:** *(Pleased with herself)* Go talk to your dad. Maybe he'll remember something.

*Offer leaves.*

**Gali:** *(Yelling after him)* Wait, I have a meeting at four, pick up Mika from preschool.

**Scene 4**

*Erik is making an omelet as Malka walks in.*

**Malka:** Who's home?

**Erik:** I am?

**Malka:** Where's Noga'le?

**Erik:** At the hospital, can I offer you some scrambled eggs, Malka?

**Malka:** I have breakfast at seven, not at eleven. But I’m glad to see you can cook, this will leave Noga more time to finish her residency.

**Erik:** Don't you worry, Malka, I'll be cooking from morning to night.

**Malka:** *(Sits across from him as he eats)* I just hope you'll have something *to* cook.

**Erik:** Me too. I promise that if we get hungry, you will be our first phone call.

**Malka:** Listen carefully, Erik. I raised two daughters. Each had a brilliant career ahead of her until a man showed up.

**Erik:** And…? What's the lesson here??

**Malka:** Noga isn't just any girl. She's a doctor. If you're going to America, you'll have to look for a good job, not a university.

**Erik:** In four or five years I'm bringing her back as a professor. Relax, we'll both study and work, a lot of young people live like that.

**Malka:** There's no "we both" here, Erik! Neurosurgeons aren't foot doctors. The family will be your responsibility. If, God forbid, you have any children, you'll be the one to take care of them.

**Erik:** What do you want from me, Malka? We'll be fine.

**Malka:** No, you won't! If you don't have the house, you're broke. If you understand me, you'll help me make sure that Noga keeps the house.

**Erik:** Sorry, I don't do shady business *(Under his breath)* Grandma…

**Malka:** I'll do whatever it takes to get Noga where none of my daughters ever got, and no one will stand in my way, including you!

*Noga comes in wearing mixed outfits, a doctor's shirt and jeans.*

**Noga:** Good morning. You up? Bon appetite.

**Malka:** Noga'le, where'd you put mom's photo albums?

**Noga:** I don't remember, one of the boxes.

**Malka:** You don't remember?

**Noga:** I can't remember where I put every little knick-knack.

**Malka:** Your mother's photos aren't knick-knacks. What is this attitude? You can't throw an entire life in a box just because you're going to America. This is your home, and this is where you'll come back.

**Erik:** I hate to spoil your picture-perfect fantasy, but if it hadn't sunk in yet, Noga and I are getting married. I'm her home.

**Malka:** We'll just see about that. I don't want to lose my temper, I have a concert tonight. You'll find those albums and give them to me today. Goodbye, doctor.

*Malka storms out.*

**Erik:** This is a grandmother? She's the wolf!! "No one will stand in my way". I'm in your way? Tell me, maybe I didn't notice, am I in your way?

**Noga:** Don't take it personally, that's how she is.

**Erik:** How should I take it? Publicly? Where does all this man-hating come from?

**Noga:** Grandma is the incarnation of the witch on the broom! She's been selling this beautiful love affair with grandpa for years now, when everyone knows he led a double life. He even died at that woman's house, but the family quickly moved him to his bed to keep people from talking. But she'll be out of our lives in just a few days.

**Erik:** I don't have any American dreams, on the contrary, I've got some plans I want to realize here, we started a reserve soldiers' organization and we're going to show the army what's what.

**Noga:** Erik, we've been talking about America for a year now.

**Erik:** Well, a lot has been going on in the meantime.

**Noga:** Like what?

**Erik:** Offer, the inheritance, I don't know how we're going to work that one out. Your school is expensive, we're broke, and we sure as hell can't afford two universities in the States…

**Noga:** We'll figure out the financial stuff when we execute the will… And the will is between me and Offer, we'll split everything 50-50. Why don't you trust me?

**Erik:** Interesting question… As long as old grandma is the real star in your life… But forget about that and look at me. I have crappy English, no profession, we don't have a house…

**Noga:** In short, my grandma managed to scare the shit out of you?

**Erik:** *(Continues)* I'm leaving a diabetic father here, I don't know how he'll do on his own. You're an orphan, things are way simpler for you.

**Noga:** *(Cuts in)* His diabetes isn't dangerous, he could come visit us.

**Erik:** But he thinks it is. If a 75-year-old man thinks his diabetes is dangerous, it's dangerous!

**Noga:** So wait, what are you saying? I can kiss the "Mayo Clinic" goodbye?

**Erik:** God, no… We're going. But I get off the plane, what do I do? Where do I go? Who do I talk to? Who talks to me? We find a house, awesome. You go to work. I paint the doorposts. You come back in the evening. I make dinner. Day two… Day two. What do I do on day two? I pull out the weeds. I water the plants. You're at the hospital. You're coming home late today, there's a staff meeting. Day three…

**Noga:** *(Cuts in)* On day three you start calling universities, gathering information, deciding on one and enrolling for the second semester. In the meantime, you take a crash course in English.

**Erik:** And what do we eat? How do I pay for stuff at the grocery store? Ok, I have a little money saved up from the army…

**Noga:** Don’t worry about the money.

**Erik:** I'm super worried about the money, I gotta find a job. But who will hire me? Maybe a security company, they seem to like Israeli officers.

**Noga:** We have money, Erik.

**Erik:** Maybe you do. I got nothing.

**Noga:** Why the cold feet suddenly? What's going on with you? Are you really worried or did something happen that you're not telling me about…

**Erik:** *(Sits on the sofa)* I have a bad feeling.

**Noga:** That's it? Just a feeling??

**Erik:** I couldn't sleep the last couple of nights…

**Noga:** *(Embraces him)* It's only human, you just got out of the army, you have no idea what you want to do with your life, while I'm headed in a very clear direction. But you have all the options in the world, because you're smart *(She kisses him)* and sweet, *(She kisses him)* and brilliant, *(She kisses him)* and I'm the most extraordinary girl you could ever hope to find.

**Erik:** Too extraordinary.

**Noga:** *(Cuddles with him like a cat)* No one ever loved me like you do. Not even me.

*Erik laughs.*

**Noga:** I don't even see this house anymore, these people. All I see is the two of us in America. A new house. A small house, with a yard and some sprinklers. A red picket fence around the house, new people… In the morning I get into our Ferrari and drive off to a new hospital. New doctors, new equipment. *(Giddy)* We're already there.

**Erik:** Tell me, do you also see me in there, between the sprinklers and the Ferrari?

*Offer walks in on them having an intimate moment.*

**Noga:** *(Startles)* You could have knocked.

**Offer:** *(Takes out a piece of paper)* I've got something interesting to show you. This is the original will. It was written when my dad and our mom got divorced, he's giving her the house and in return, she promises to leave me 50% of her property.

**Erik:** I'll go pack up the computer.

**Noga:** *(Looks over Offer's document)* Where was this?

**Offer:** At the notary's, who also signed it. According to the letter of the law you were supposed to invite me to the reading of the will, but I don't care about that. All I care about is how my mother went from a will where she pledges to leave me half of everything she owns to a will where my name isn't even mentioned.

**Noga:** *(Sarcastic)* Ask the notary. It was in his safe. I'm sorry, Offer, I really have no idea. But who cares, take whatever you want.

**Offer:** I don't want anything, I'm asking you to do some thinking.

**Noga:** I have done. I don't know.

**Offer:** You gotta help me figure this out… I've been racking my brain trying to remember, to recreate things. I can't comprehend what could have made her… We would talk about everything, we used to go for fish dinners every week… On Saturdays, we'd take the kids and go hiking… She never mentioned a will.

**Noga:** She wrote it five years ago, when they just discovered her condition. Who knows what went through her head. She was medicated.

**Offer:** So how come the medication only worked against me?

**Noga:** Maybe she was upset…

**Offer:** With me?

**Erik:** *(Cuts in)* Where's the duct tape, Noga?

**Noga:** *(flummoxed)* What?

**Erik:** Duct tape.

*She gives it to him and he continues packing.*

**Offer:** *(unrelenting)* Did you ever come across similar cases?

**Noga:** What cases?

**Offer:** Where a sick parent snubs one of the children.

**Erik:** I'm sorry to butt in.

**Offer:** Give me a break, Erik!!

**Noga:** I don't know what to tell you, Offer. And let me say this again, take whatever you want.

**Offer:** Somebody must know. You lived here, you were with her.

**Noga:** *(Carrying a cardboard box, then halts)* That's right!! And you weren't.

**Offer:** Don't start, I didn't take care of her like you did, but I was here.

**Noga:** When? In the evenings? When she went to sleep?

**Offer:** What would you have me do? Quit my job?

**Noga:** Of course not, but don't tell me you were here! You didn't change the sheets, you didn't chase the drips, you didn't get up in the middle of the night or go to treatments with her. You weren't here!

**Offer:** I came whenever I could, I have a family, a wife…

**Noga:** *(Cuts him off)* You had a mother, too.

**Offer:** I got three kids!!

**Noga:** And two dogs and a bunny and…

**Offer:** I don't work ten to five.

**Noga:** You could have made the time, if your wife had let you.

**Offer:** Noga, lay off the "your wife" stuff, ok?

**Noga:** She's using you.

**Offer:** I don't feel like she does. Besides, what business is it of yours?

**Noga:** Maybe our darling lawyer is the one pushing you to make this useless investigation?

**Offer:** I won't hear another word about my wife! You've got any complaints? Talk to her. I'm not sure you ever even tried.

**Noga:** Never had any reason to.

**Offer:** So try looking in the mirror before you go criticizing others. If there's a decent person in this family, it's Gali.

*A short pause.*

**Offer:** Did mom ever mention me or the kids in the final few weeks?

**Noga:** Of course she did.

**Offer:** In what context?

**Noga:** Must I really remember that, too?? *(She turns to walk away)*

**Offer:** Where do you think you're going, I'm talking to you!! (*She stops)* Did she ever accuse me of anything? Of her condition? Anything else?

**Noga:** *(Faces him)* Do you feel guilty?

**Offer:** Don't start with semantics, Noga, a woman knows she's critically ill, she's got a will, and one of her kids isn't even mentioned in it.

**Noga:** She didn't know she was critically ill…

**Offer:** I specifically asked you to tell her.

**Noga:** Well, excuse me, but you don't get to order me around, especially when it comes to terminally ill patients.

**Offer:** When did you become such an expert? Is there a guideline?? A new research published that I somehow missed?? You fucking hack!!!

**Noga:** Why should I have told her?

**Offer:** So she'd know! You were prancing around like a professor with that white robe of yours. You wouldn't let my kids say goodbye to her. No one dared make a cup of tea, take her out for a stroll without your permission, not even me… She had a right to know!!

**Noga:** She didn't want to know!!

**Erik:** You know what, Offer…

**Offer:** Don't give me that bullshit, Erik.

**Erik:** Don't you talk to me like that!

**Offer:** Why not?

**Erik:** Save it for after the wedding. Let's go get a drink.

**Offer:** I'm not thirsty, thanks.

**Erik:** Why not?? What's wrong? *(He touches Offer's shoulders)* Wow, you're tense. In a couple of hours you won't be able to move your back…

**Offer:** So you're a doctor now too?

**Erik:** Alternative doctor. Let's go get a drink, you'll come back later and interrogate her all night if you want.

**Offer:** Some other time.

**Noga:** Leaving a son out of a will isn't liver cancer, it's soul cancer.

**Offer:** What did you just say??

**Erik:** *(To Noga)* You really are something else when it comes to human interaction, God bless you two. *(He continues packing)*

*Noga is silent.*

**Offer:** What did you mean by that, Noga?

**Noga:** You never know what people keep bottled up inside.

**Offer:** What are you talking about?

**Noga:** When there's damage to the lobes, people experience flashes, they see images from the past, start hearing voices.

**Erik:** *(Coming back from the kitchen)* Want a beer?

**Noga:** Maybe she had some harsh memories of you, unfinished business. We all have that, what's so hard to understand?

**Offer:** Anything in particular?

**Noga:** Your father left her. Maybe the memory of that re-appeared…

**Offer:** *(Pouncing)* What's that got to do with me?

**Noga:** He was her first love, she never got over it.

**Offer:** Now you listen and listen well, they just didn't get along and he walked away.

**Noga:** You don't have to protect him.

**Offer:** That's right, especially since your father left, too.

**Noga:** *(Alarmed)* He died. And she didn't love him.

**Offer:** You're fucking with me on purpose. Your father, your wife, medications, flashes. You're not giving me any straight answers.

**Noga:** I can't make up answers just because you want them.

**Offer:** You've been avoiding me ever since mom got sick.

*Noga turns away from him.*

**Offer:** Why are you walking away from me? What did I ever do to you? I raised you, God dammit!

**Erik:** *(Goes back in the living room)* I'm going out.

**Noga:** Where?

**Erik:** What's it matter where? I have people waiting.

**Noga:** Erik, don't leave me here by myself.

**Erik:** I can't handle the vibes here.

**Noga:** Please don't go, Erik…

**Erik:** *(Takes a moment to look at them both)* I'm going to pack up the bedroom, but I'm giving you ten minutes to wrap up this third degree.

*Erik goes to the bedroom.*

**Offer:** A real superhero you've got there, things get a little heated and he's gone. By the way, when did your father die? If he's really dead, like you keep telling Erik, they must be giving him the preferential treatment down at the cemetery, they let him make a phone call. *(He relishes on Noga's stunned expression)* He asked to come to the wedding.

**Noga:** *(Shocked)* He did not!

**Offer:** Did so, ask grandma.

**Noga:** What are you going to do?

**Offer:** Me?

**Noga:** You promised!

**Offer:** Promised what?

**Noga:** You promised to look out for me forever and ever.

**Offer:** I'm not in the mood to keep any promises right now.

**Noga:** He can't come here! That man will not set foot at my wedding.

**Offer:** Why? Because Erik thinks he's dead? Just tell him that you made a mistake and that he's still alive, what's the problem?

*Noga is silent.*

**Offer:** How can you live with all these lies? What are you hiding? Silent, just like your mother…

**Noga:** *(Threatening)* Shut up, Offer!

**Offer:** If two men left home, maybe it's worth looking into the woman.

**Noga:** *(Taunts him back)* Three men!

**Offer:** What do you mean three?

**Noga:** Three men left this house!

**Offer:** Who's the third?

**Noga:** If you stir the pot, you'd better be willing to lick the spoon.

**Offer:** What spoon?

**Noga:** You don't want to know.

**Scene 5**

*The following evening at the same location.*

*They're clearing out the house. Erik piles up the furniture and carries them outside. Offer comes in and sees Erik.*

**Offer:** Excuse me, is that yours? No chair is leaving this house before I…

**Erik:** Good evening, Offer, aren't you early???

**Offer:** You've always been exceptionally sharp.

**Erik:** I'm sorry, I thought you were done with all that.

**Offer:** Quite the contrary, we're just beginning.

**Erik:** Look, I was just as attached to my mom as you were. I never interfered with her property and her wills. She gave all her jewelry to my sister when she was still alive… So she did.

**Offer:** *(Cuts in)* Erik, I've got enough on my plate with my own mother, please don't burden me with your mother's jewelry. And if the property is so insignificant to you, where were you when you two rented it out to the doctor?

**Erik:** What do you mean "you two"? I don't own this place, I don't rent or lease it.

**Noga:** I rented it out.

**Offer:** You two are in this together, aren't you? Or only when it's convenient to you? It's very convenient to think that without even breaking a sweat you win a big house and money in the bank.

**Erik:** That's bullshit.

**Offer:** And look at you, whizzing off to America! With such confidence. A saint! See no evil, hear no evil. Just pick up the inheritance and go! Sure! Now you can roam the States, coast to coast on my mother's dime!

**Erik:** I can't believe this, your mother screwed with your heads and you're making me the culprit. What the fuck is wrong with you? Are you nuts? *(He swears with his hand, pretty drunk by now)* I wouldn't touch a nickel of your mother's inheritance.

**Offer:** I don't believe you! Loading, unloading, loading, is this your house?

**Erik:** *(Pointing at Noga)* It's her house.

**Offer:** *(berates him)* When my mother was sick, how hard you tried, you wouldn't stop hovering over her, I was working my butt off at work… while you were here, celebrating your release from the army. Did you two have any interesting conversations??

**Erik:** We sure did, *(Drunk and cynical)* I dictated the will to her!

**Offer:** I'm not sure that's not true! How will you get by without all this money in America?

**Erik:** You're insane! *(To Noga)* And you're not too far behind. What a fucking inheritance, your mom's sitting up in the sky, cracking open a can of beer, looking at the two of you and laughing her ass off. *(He opens a bottle of beer)* Don't forget that you don't own crazy, I can be crazy if I want to *(Climbs on the sofa and starts dancing)* Here, a Turkish Debka.

**Noga:** Get off the couch.

**Erik:** Why?

**Noga:** I don't want to start a fight with you too!

**Erik:** So don't.

**Noga:** It's pissing me off.

**Erik:** Be pissed off and get a grip.

**Noga:** Don't you ever tell me that.

**Erik:** Why not?

**Noga:** The slightest bit of aggression and you're all over the place. Life isn't a happy song, you can't live like this!

**Erik:** You two go at it like a couple of hyenas and I can't be all over the place? I'll be all over the place for as long as I like and whenever I get the chance. I'm under no obligation to live the rest of my life at Atten-hut.

**Offer:** I've got a splitting headache.

**Erik:** *(Comes off the couch)* Grab a beer, Offer, you've been sitting around all day reminiscing, what'd you expect? To not have a splitting headache? The thing is that I also got a splitting headache and I’m not even part of this thing. It ain't my mama, as that weird old lady says. I don't belong here. *(Suddenly, to Noga)* I don't feel like doing all this moving now, let's get outta here. *(Sarcastic)* The night's still young.

**Offer:** That's why I came early!!! You're not going to America. No America before you all take the stand and testify under oath! There was an undue influence here. There's going to be a trial and you're all going to be there, whoever knew my mom would be at this trial, and that includes your father.

**Erik:** *(Stares stunningly at Noga. She's also stunned by Offer)* Your father…? You said your father passed away.

**Offer:** Depends how you look at it, spiritually he did die. Physically, he's alive and kicking in Eilat.

**Erik:** *(Looking at her)* Wait, I don’t get it, let's start over.

**Noga:** I don't have a father, Erik. I didn't lie to you, he left when I was five. And I haven't seen or heard from him since, he bailed… I have no idea who he is and he has no idea who I am. He's dead to me.

**Erik:** Why did you have to say he passed away?

**Noga:** Because to me, he's dead.

**Erik:** But he's alive.

**Noga:** So what? I didn't feel like going into this saga and I don't have to walk around with my can of worms all my life…

*Malka enters, sees what's going on, stops her momentum and stays close to the door.*

**Erik:** Couldn't you tell me 'I have a father but we lost touch.' I don't get this lie. What, is he some kind of psycho that you had to keep him a secret? *(Laughs)* I can't believe you've been keeping a father from me for the past three years. You all seem like a cartoon to me, all of a sudden. I'm about to spend the rest of my life with you and you keep things from me, why?

**Noga:** It's my life, not yours.

**Erik:** But I…

**Noga:** You're what? I know, you'd like to get to know him, be his friend. Because you have such a wonderful relationship with your father, sister, army buddies. Because family is above all else to you.

**Erik:** That's right! Family is extremely important to me, it doesn't really coincide with your little gene pool, but that doesn't necessarily make it wrong.

**Noga:** He gave me up to get off alimony. Some compliment, huh? A deep connection. But I don't have to deal with it.

**Erik:** *(Surprised by the story)* I don't care about the details… You do realize that it's a matter of trust??

*Malka walks in, she's figured out what's going on here. Erik sees here and gets flummoxed.*

**Erik:** Father, no father, it's all bullshit. I'm such a stickler. Any other surprises before we tie the knot?

**Offer:** Plenty more, but don't you worry, you won't miss out on the big show.

**Noga:** Where are you going?

**Erik:** I feel like moving around… May I?

*He exits. Malka comes in, lunges at Offer.*

**Malka:** How dare you come between them a week before the wedding, is nothing sacred to you?

**Offer:** Nothing! We're done with the secrets and lies. I have two wills, something happened somewhere in between. And I'm going to find out what.

**Malka:** You will find nothing, because nothing happened.

**Offer:** You all ganged up against me, each with your own agenda. If I don't get any answers, I’ll see you all in court.

**Malka:** You've got all the time in the world, go to court, you're not scaring anyone.

**Offer:** *(To Noga)* And you, I'm warning you, stop packing up the house.

*Offer leaves the house. Noga gets ready to go quickly after Erik. Malka stops her.*

**Malka:** Where to?

**Noga:** I'm going to look for Erik.

**Malka:** Don't run after him!! He'll be back. I'm much more concerned about Offer. He's losing it.

**Noga:** He's out of his mind, grandma, and with good reason!!!

**Malka:** Now you listen to me, you go to America right now.

**Noga:** What??

**Malka:** You have no idea what you're in for… Get married in America.

**Noga:** What are you saying, grandma, that I should cancel my own wedding?

**Malka:** Don't cancel, postpone, otherwise there won't be any wedding. He's got demons in his eyes. He won't leave you alone. You can't see what I see.

**Noga:** I'm not canceling my wedding.

**Malka:** Get married in America, Noga'le, peacefully, quietly. At the end of the day you two love each other. Who cares where you hold the ceremony?

**Noga:** I do, I don't want to get married in America, all alone, like a couple of orphans, in some strange synagogue, without even… a familiar face in sight. It's important to Erik, he's invited his army buddies…

**Malka:** I'm buying you two tickets. We can tell people that school got pushed early… Or some other bluff…

**Noga:** *(Sits down, hurt and upset)* Why can't at least I start off on the right foot?

**Malka:** What do you mean 'at least'?

**Noga:** Mom's marriages were shitty, yours was shitty. Say, grandma, have you noticed that all the men seem to run away from this house?!

**Malka:** Where is this coming from?? I had a wonderful marriage and yours will be too. No one ever ran anywhere.

**Noga:** That's a lie.

**Malka:** Stop fussing about the past. You're risking the future now, specifically your career. Offer is standing over your head with an ax. You have to go as soon as possible.

**Noga:** And if Erik wouldn't or couldn't come…?

**Malka:** *(Gets angry)* Erik, Erik, Erik, find yourself another Erik!!

**Scene 6**

*At home. A few hours later. Night.*

*Offer is going through his mother's paperwork. He is going over each and every document.*

**Gali:** It's me…

**Offer:** Oh… Is everything alright?

**Gali:** Not quite, where were you last night?

**Offer:** I couldn't sleep.

**Gali:** Why didn't you wake me? I've been looking for you since 3 am, where were you?

**Offer:** Around.

**Gali:** And today? Where were you all day?

**Offer:** I was in Eilat… You have no idea the kind of dirt Noga's father told me, but he'll come to the wedding…

**Gali:** What for? You filed the contention forms. Now let the court do the work. *(Pause. He's busy looking at a piece of paper)* Now what? You're planning on squatting the drawers like that till the end of days?

**Offer:** Gali, I gotta keep searching.

**Gali:** Searching for what? You're not going to find your mother's lost love in this house. She's gone. There's no one to talk to. In fact, there never was.

**Offer:** What are you saying??!! There was never love, wow, why? You never liked Noga or my mother. And you were pissed at me every time I'd go for a visit!!

**Gali:** You were never here for a visit, you were always providing a service. Carpenter, glazier, accountant and plumber. They were using you.

**Offer:** How's that your business? You were the one using me. What gave you the right to call me back home every time I'd come here?

**Gali:** You're more devoted to her death than you are to your children.

**Offer:** Wow, you'll say anything, won't you?

**Gali:** You didn't pick up Mika from preschool. You forgot her.

**Offer:** *(Alarmed)* When?

**Gali:** Yesterday.

**Offer:** What happened? Who picked her up?

**Gali:** The preschool teacher took her home with her. She tracked me down in the evening.

**Offer:** *(Stunned)* That never happened to me before… I can't concentrate, can't you see how restless I am, even at night?

**Gali:** When are you coming home?

**Offer:** What difference does it make? I don't know when!

**Gali:** Why are you lashing out at me? I'm not your enemy.

**Offer:** For the first time in 15 years I'm taking some time for myself, can I do that? I never went anywhere, I never left home, I need some alone time… To be alone with myself…

**Gali:** Take as long as you need… Just don’t shut me out of your life.

*Erik and Noga walk in, the two couples face each other for a moment.*

**Noga:** Get out of my house.

**Scene 7**

*Home. Evening.*

*The house is all packed, it appears it has been cleared either for a departure of for the arrival new tenant.*

*Noga is sitting by the piano, fiddling with the keys.*

**Noga:** Did you tell your dad?

**Erik:** Are you nuts? Tell him what? Dear dad, the wedding's off but we're going to America! America has lakes, landscapes, endless possibilities – especially for Noga. So who cares if the wedding's on or off…

**Noga:** Go talk to him, we have standby tickets.

**Erik:** No! Grandma has tickets. It's grandma who's going to the Mayo Clinic, grandma who likes to pry in people's brains, grandma who's getting the diploma, plus I'm going to marry grandma.

**Noga:** I have this crappy feeling that if we don't go now, we never will.

**Erik:** *(Hugs her)* We will! Will you please trust me for once?! We will. But just like we planned.

**Noga:** We have to go now!!!

**Erik:** We will, after the wedding, Noga. Only after the wedding.

*Gali comes in.*

**Erik:** What a distinguished guest!!

**Noga:** We're kind of in the middle of something here…

**Gali:** Me too…

**Erik:** *(Points to a chair)* Have some coffee?

**Gali:** No, thanks.

*Silence.*

**Gali:** Offer wasn't prepared for that will, he didn't get a thing… You have to realize we can't take this for granted and there's no one we can ask about it… It's what we call a delay of justice…

**Noga:** And…?

**Gali:** This not knowing could drive anyone mad!! And I’m not even talking about the insult… know what, I *am* talking about the insult, look at him… He stopped working, stopped functioning, our family's falling apart…

**Noga:** I'm sorry…

**Gali:** That won't cut it this time. How would you feel if the tables were turned?

**Noga:** Are you here to do some role-playing?

**Gali:** Doesn't his insult mean anything to you?

**Noga:** It does, a great deal.

**Gali:** Then why are you quiet?

**Noga:** What do you expect me to say?

**Gali:** The truth…

**Noga:** But that's the truth, it's the will.

**Gali:** Then make something up… Make up some plausible story for his sake… Something to soothe him… Something that… That might justify your mother's actions…

**Noga:** So you're asking me to lie?

**Gali:** I'm asking you to unburden Offer of this uncertainty…

**Noga:** This isn't uncertainty, it's a very clear-cut certainty, maybe not a particularly pleasant one…

**Gali:** *(Cuts in, deriding her)* Unpleasant?? That's it?? Just unpleasant? This is a cruel, unreasonable, incomprehensible, illogical will, written without a shred of compassion… And you watch him running around like a headless chicken and…

**Noga:** Compassion? He's been riding my tail for two weeks now and you're talking about compassion?

**Gali:** You used to be such good friends…

**Noga:** That's right, the best… Until you came along.

**Gali:** Me?

**Noga:** Offer and I were practically inseparable. We went out together, hung out together, we used to cook, go hiking… He was my friend, father, mentor… Everything… One day you showed up and he disappeared from my life, and my entire existence just changed…

*A short pause.*

**Gali:** You have one brother… In this world, that's all you've got…

*Offer comes in carrying a large suitcase. He looks around at the packed-up house. The house is entirely void of furniture.*

**Noga:** What's this? What are you doing here?

**Erik:** *(To Offer, pointing at the suitcase)* Where are you going?

**Offer:** *(Peacefully)* I'm moving in! Legally, this house still belongs to the both of us. As of this moment, mom's bedroom will be my office. *(Scours the living room. He doesn't notice Gali)*

**Gali:** Offer??

**Offer:** Oh, I’m glad you're here.

**Gali:** Glad I’m here?

**Offer:** Yes, because I want you and the kids to move in here, too…

**Gali:** What?

**Offer:** It's a big house, there's a great yard, the kids love it here. I'll put up a hammock between the trees. We'll barbeque on the lawn. What's the matter, it's their grandmother's house…

**Gali:** This is too much for me, Offer, I think it's best if at least one of us stayed sane. I'm sorry. *(She leaves)*

*A short pause.*

**Offer:** *(To Noga and Erik)* I see you cleared the house after all.

*Noga stares at him, he comes inside to settle in.*

**Malka:** *(Storms inside)* There are two seats available on the flight to New York tomorrow… *(Notices Offer)* What's all this? What are you doing here?

**Offer:** *(Laughs bizarrely)* Eloping. God, the three of you are such a telenovela…

*Noga is silent.*

**Offer:** That's too bad, because I actually met with Eilat and he has quite the present for you. I'd stick around if I were you.

**Malka:** There's no wedding, they're leaving tomorrow!

**Offer:** There will too be a wedding, her father will show up and until he does, I'm moving in.

**Malka:** You can't move in here, she already rented it out.

**Offer:** I can live here, I can work here, I can jump around here, I can do whatever. *(He starts unpacking his suitcase)*

**Erik:** Let me save you two the trouble, we're not going.

**Malka:** What do you mean?

**Erik:** It's not working out.

**Malka:** *(Heated)* What's not working out?

**Erik:** What do you think we are? Partisans to chase out of the woods? That's enough of that! We're not pushing the flight forward, and there's going to be a wedding. Ok, grandma?

**Malka:** You're getting on that plane tomorrow!!

**Offer:** They're not getting on anything, not now, not after the wedding, maybe even not at all.

*Short pause.*

**Offer:** My contention has been submitted, we have summons. *(Shows her a piece of paper)*

**Noga:** What is it?

**Erik:** *(Browsing through the document)* It's the date of the first hearing. We can go, but you'd have to come back, and the go back again… If you don't show up at the hearing, you get nothing.

**Malka:** What do you think you're going to prove?

**Offer:** I'm going to prove that you had undue influence over my mother.

**Malka:** Me?

**Offer:** I'm going to detail, at length, about the codependent relationship you two have, about your iron fist! And about the fact that my mom didn't buy a toothbrush without your permission. You were in charge of life here, and you're guilty, granny.

**Malka:** I was in charge of life here? Whose life? Your mother wouldn't have lasted a week If I hadn't supported all of you!

**Offer:** There's a man in Eilat who's willing to testify on my behalf, he's willing to tell how you forced mom to kick him out of the house, too.

*Noga looks at Erik, puzzled. This is news to her.*

**Malka:** Just look how low you've sunk, all the way down to Eilat to that bastard you always hated… But that doesn't scare me, I have four stories to tell for each of his lies.

**Offer:** My father is also going to testify, so I already have two witnesses.

**Malka:** Oh, your father is willing to testify, so please make sure to ask him what happened to your mother after he left her for another woman…

**Offer:** And for that, you can't forgive him!

**Malka:** Fool!

**Offer:** And even though I'm your grandson, I will always be his son!

**Malka:** Like father like son!! You listen to me, Offer, your mother had been through enough when she was alive, I won't let you demean her after her death.

**Offer:** It's not her I'm going to demean, it's you!

**Malka:** *(Attempting another tactic)* How much do you need?

**Offer:** *(Stunned)* How much do I need? Your whole life is nothing but business. Sorry, I don't do business with pigs.

**Malka:** If you dare go to trial I'll be there, too. There's no one truth.

*Pause.*

*Offer continues to unpack his suitcase.*

**Malka:** *(Challenging him)* If you move in here, I move in here! I have my own suitcase! *(She leaves)*

**Erik:** Noga, either you people figure this mess out, or I'm out of this house…

**Noga:** Hey man, get a grip. Go to the police and file a complaint.

**Erik:** What for?

**Noga:** For an invasion of private property.

**Erik:** You go. It's your private property, not mine.

**Offer:** Until you have a probate order, this house belongs to me, too. I always wanted the kids to grow up in nature, we're going to have a great time here.

**Noga:** I'll get that probate and this house is mine, with or without the trial.

*Erik goes outside, Noga looks at him.*

**Offer:** *(Walking around the room, searching for something)* Where are my childhood photo albums? *(Searching through the bookcase)* Where are my childhood photo albums? They were here. Where are they?

*He aggressively opens all the closets. The closets are filled with paperwork that scatters all over the place. He can't find them. He pushes Noga aside, opens another closet where he finds the photo albums.*

**Offer:** *(Browsing through the album)* There's my mom and dad. I'm in the middle. *(Frantic)* I look pretty happy. Look. You can tell how people feel in a photo. Come, take a look…

*Noga doesn't respond.*

*Offer continues to flip through the album. He doesn't describe what he sees, but instead lets out unintelligible yelps, that somewhat startle Noga.*

**Offer:** Here I am on a donkey! Here's mom playing the piano… *(Noga doesn't respond)* Here I am… This was the picture with my mom and dad… *(Stunned)* Who cut out his face?

**Noga:** I did.

**Offer:** Why?

**Noga:** Because.

**Offer:** *(Flips through the album some more, alarmed and offended)* These were my only photos, I don't have any more!!

**Noga:** I cut out my father's photos, too. If you're gone, you're gone!

**Offer:** *(Slaps her, she falls)* Who let you do that?!

**Noga:** Get off me!

**Offer:** I apologize… I'm sorry…

**Noga:** No more sorries, you want a war? You'll get a war. *(She takes another album out of the closet and rips it to shreds in a frenzy)*

**Offer:** What are you doing?! Noga, don't! Don't do this!

**Noga:** You wanted your childhood albums, well there they are, eyes, hands, legs…. *(She throws pieces of the photos at him)*

**Offer:** *(Staring at the shreds, at Noga, can't believe his eyes)* Let's tear me out of this house! I got you these pictures from London! *(He rips them off the wall)* I got mom these plates from Greece. *(Shatters them)*

**Noga:** *(Goes crazy and starts smashing things along with him, pulling open cardboard boxes and taking stuff out of there)* And here are all your childhood games!!

*For a moment, they both smash whatever they come across. Offer rips apart their mother's dress.*

**Noga:** *(trying to stop him)* Offer! Not that one! That's mom's! Stop it! You're freaking me out!

**Offer:** *(Coldly)* "Take whatever you want", you little bitch! What did you think, that if you erased the past it would make it easier to start over? You're a lame version of your mother, just as quiet, just as suppressing! You could never start over, not in America, not anywhere!

*Offer goes into the bathroom to put his towel and toothbrush there. Noga runs over and locks him inside.*

**Offer:** *(Banging violently on the bathroom door)* Open the door, Noga…

**Noga:** *(Leaning against the door, crying)* There's no point banging on the door, no one can hear you.

**Offer:** You know I can't handle closed spaces.

**Noga:** Get used to it. It won't kill you.

**Offer:** I'm sorry, Noga. I lost it. Let me out, I'll go home.

**Noga:** I don't believe you. You don't care about me, you don't care about anyone. Everything you ever did for me was out of a guilty conscience. You can't have whatever you want, I take it back. The entire inheritance is mine, like mom wanted. That's how this is going to play out! Now go to court, you have good reason to!

*The banging stops, and everything's quiet, suddenly we hear crying from inside the bathroom, Noga listens. She slowly opens the door, he won't come out.*

**Noga:** *(Sitting by the door)* Offer… Come out, Offer. *(He won't come out)* Offer. I'm sorry… Please, come out… Come out, Offer… *(She breaks down)*

**Scene 8**

*The same day, an hour later.*

**Erik:** *(Coming in)* There's no point relying on the police.

**Noga:** Thanks, Erik.

**Erik:** *(Suddenly noticing the mess and the silence)* What a mess! Where's Offer?

*Noga points at the bathroom.*

**Erik:** *(Listening to Offer's weeping, confused)* We gotta get him outta there.

**Noga:** What for? Finally, some peace and quiet.

**Erik:** He can't be sitting in the toilet while we go on organizing the wedding like nothing happened.

**Noga:** Would you rather we sat in the bathroom while he organized the wedding?

**Erik:** Give him half of everything!! You have no idea what he's going through!!

 **Noga:** He doesn't want half of anything!! He wants mommy to come out from the ground and give him a hug.

**Erik:** So what? Is that such a crime?? We can't leave as if everything is hunky dory… You have to figure this shitstorm out, if you care at all about this guy.

**Noga:** That's enough, Erik, I got this inheritance so I could go as far as possible in life.

**Erik:** How far, Noga? Where do you want to go?

**Noga:** As far as I possibly can.

**Erik:** So we're basically talking about money.

**Noga:** We're talking about five years of slave labor.

**Erik:** You're not doing this internship to go save the natives in Africa.

**Noga:** So what if I'm not?

**Erik:** You're not going to operate on the helpless!

**Noga:** What's with the righteous indignation? Why are you judging me? For my ambition? My talent? My potential?

**Erik:** Your greed!

**Noga:** I beg your pardon…?

**Erik:** You'd better have some superior moral reason to rob a man blind like that. Do you have one? You don't. You're going away to make a career and some money.

**Noga:** And if I did have a superior moral reason?

**Erik:** Then maybe I'd understand you.

**Noga:** And who gets to decide what's superior or not, you? God, I just love it when losers get all righteous on my expense.

**Erik:** *(Stunned by her)* Losers?

**Noga:** Hanging out with your army desk jockeys…

**Erik:** Desk jockeys?

**Noga:** *(Ignoring him)* Knowing that you have a secure paycheck and calling it standing army, that's more superior? More moral?

**Erik:** At least I'm not stealing from anyone. I work hard for what I make, even if you despise what I do.

**Noga:** Who's stealing?? I got what I deserved!

**Erik:** And what does he deserve? I'm asking you, what does he deserve? This is his house, too.

**Noga:** Not anymore.

**Erik:** Morally speaking, this is his house, too, it belonged to his mom and dad. And don't talk to me about the will, I know it by heart.

**Noga:** This house is all I've got, we're not selling it.

**Erik:** Then what did you mean when you said 'take whatever you want'?!

*Noga is silent.*

**Erik:** What did you think he'd want? Half a cuckoo clock? Half a dinner set from two hundred years ago? What the hell were you talking about? *(A short pause)* You never meant what you said. You were never going to give him anything.

**Noga:** I meant every word when I said it, but now I don't want to give him anything.

**Erik:** So we're going to trial?

**Noga:** Whatever.

**Erik:** And America?

**Noga:** America can wait.

**Erik:** America can wait? And me? I can wait, too…? What am I doing in the middle of all this…? After eight years of service, this is what you have to offer me…? I look at you and I have nothing to hold on to.

**Noga:** I love you, Erik, that's something to hold on to…

**Erik:** It's not enough anymore. I don't want to wait for trials, and I don't want to live like this. I'll never live anywhere at the expense of Offer's pain… You see him, you see me… and you continue to cling to that Goddamn will… Love isn't enough, Noga… It's not enough… *(He gets ready to leave, perhaps even collecting his belongings)*

**Noga:** Are you leaving me, Erik?

**Erik:** I gotta go… I gotta get outta here… *(He leaves)*

**Scene 9**

*The house. Night time.*

*Offer is projecting photos of his mother in various situations on the wall.*

**Offer:** *(At the photo)* I'm waiting for your answer… Don't try to fool me with your smiles… The dead see and hear everything, I've looked into it... I'm not mad at you, I just need to understand… I have to figure all this out…

*Gali walks in, he blinds her*

**Gali:** What is this? What is this? Offer, is that you…?

**Offer:** Look at her laughing…

**Gali:** Come home, Offer.

**Offer:** Hold on, can you see that? She's looking at me…

**Gali:** What should I tell the kids? That you moved out?

**Offer:** She wants to talk to me… I can feel it…

**Gali:** Either you're snapping out of it and coming home, or I'm…

**Offer:** Why is she quiet?

**Gali:** Stop it, Offer, you're scaring me…

**Offer:** There's nothing to be scared about…

**Gali:** If you're not coming home now, you'll have no home to come back to.

**Offer:** Is there someone else?

**Gali:** What are you talking about?

**Offer:** I'm asking if there's someone else…

**Gali:** You went off the deep end. You have a wife and three kids. I want you to see a doctor…

**Offer:** Why? Are you sick?

**Gali:** Maybe he could help you…

**Offer:** *(Monotonous)* Don't turn me into a whack job, I know what I'm doing. I know exactly what I'm doing.

**Gali:** *(Comes closer to him, tries to touch him)* Let's get out of here. Are you coming?

**Offer:** No.

*Noga comes in wearing her bridal gown, stands in front of the projector. Gali turns on the light.*

**Gali:** What are you doing, Noga?

**Noga:** *(Staring blankly)* What…??

**Gali:** *(Tries to grab her by the hand)* Come, sit down, I'll get you some water…

*Noga won't sit down.*

**Noga:** *(In a haze)* He's guilty!! He's guilty and he deserves it!

**Gali:** *(Gives her a sip of water)* No one's guilty or innocent… you have to put this behind you…

**Noga:** Mom didn't want to leave you anything. She didn't forget about you, she gave up on you.

**Gali:** *(Practically forcing her to drink, touches her forehead)* You have to drink something, Noga, you're burning up… *(She sits her down, but Noga gets up again)*

**Noga:** You betrayed her, ran off to your father and never came back! That was the hardest blow for her, she waited for years for you to come back!

**Offer:** Why didn't she call me back? Why? I waited, I waited for years for her to call me. She never felt sorry for me.

**Noga:** You forgot all about us, never came for a visit. Not on holidays, not on weekends, you never came.

**Offer:** I did. Sure I did…

**Noga:** No, you didn't.

**Offer:** I was sixteen, Noga! I was a kid and I wanted to be with my dad, is that such a crime?

**Noga:** You were the only man in the house. You were my dad…

**Offer:** I wasn't your dad, I was your brother. I needed parents just as much as you did, and there was no home here…

**Noga:** But I was here! Five-years-old. And you promised me, and you vowed to me that you would take care of me forever, every night at bedtime you swore to me… And then you were gone…

*A short pause.*

**Noga:** *(Breaks down)* It's me… The last week mom asked to see a lawyer and I didn't call him.

**Offer:** What? Mom asked for a lawyer and you… Why didn't you call him?

**Noga:** It was late at night, and the next day she was all confused, and there was no one to talk to.

**Offer:** *(Can't believe his ears)* But she asked for a lawyer and you… You could have called a lawyer, you could have called me… you could have…

**Noga:** It fell through.

**Offer:** Fell through? Why? She was trying to say something and you wouldn't let her! The last week… She asked for a lawyer… Maybe she was thinking of me, I can't be sure, but it's possible… Maybe.

**Noga:** We'll never know what she really wanted. I couldn't go running for lawyers in the middle of the night.

**Offer:** You didn't want to! You knew this will existed and you didn't want to talk to a lawyer… *(He wants to lunge at Noga but Gali stops him)* What kind of person are you…?

**Gali:** *(Screams at him)* She's dehydrated, Offer. What she's saying is meaningless. Help me take her to our place…

**Offer:** Go home, Gali!!

**Noga:** *(Laughs hysterically)* Mom got you back eventually, she managed to get you back to her. That hideous will made you come home. **Mom loved you very much. She loved you more…**

**Offer:** Loved? A woman who takes vengeance at her own son… To avenge a child… Take your house and rot in it. I don't want it. I don't want you. I want to forget you. *(Turns to leave)* Come on, Gali, let's get out of here!!

*Offer gets up and leaves, Gali doesn't move, stares at Noga.*

**Noga:** *(Mumbling)* Don't go, Offer, don't go…

**Malka:** *(Storms inside)* Let him go!! I hope we never seehim again. Come here, Noga'le… You're starting over…

**Gali:** Malka… Let me help.

**Malka:** You've helped enough… *(To Noga)* Let's go replace that ticket to America…

**Noga:** And Offer?

**Malka:** Forget Offer, you're going…

**Gali:** give them time, Malka…

**Malka:** We're out of time and you… I'm asking you to leave. *(Gali leaves)*

**Noga:** And Erik…

**Malka:** You don't need anyone, you have a great career ahead of you…

**Noga:** *(Plunges to the floor, takes a doll, hugs it and mumbles)* Don't go, don't go…

**Malka:** Get up, girl, everything will be alright… I know what I'm saying, everything will be alright.

*Noga continues to rock back and forth on the floor, holding the doll. Malka looks at her in despair.*