

# A letter to Noa

## By Goren Agmon-Nirve

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### CHARACTERS :

- NOA : mother of Uri and Yotam [widow ]
- YOTAM : younger son , storyteller [ narrator ]
- URI: elder son , in the army [ air-force ]
- AMNON : Noas` boyfriend

### Act 1 - Scene 1

Noon . In the Office (book publications) (70's music in the background)  
(Yotam is typing on the computer ,he stops, walks to front of the stage  
turns to the audience)

**Yotam:** ( the music stops - To audience) That's music from the 70's .  
My parent's songs. While these songs were playing they fell in love,  
made Uri and then me. I'll get back to this subject but not yet ...

Mum went missing a month ago. She said she was going for 3 weeks but  
it's already been four . I'm not worried . I even said "take your time" , I  
just miss her and want to explain a few things....I decided to write to her,  
maybe like that I'll also understand what exactly happened here...

Everything began when Uri was recruited to the army. When Uri was  
recruited she was very nervous...

So instead of being a bit depressed and a bit panicky like all mothers, she  
began to learn karate and walked around with those white clothes....  
I understand that a woman alone needs to protect herself, but why walk  
around like that in the street?

Anyway, our publishing firm published a series on computers for  
children. When the sale reached a peak – A hundred thousand copies , we  
thought- Uri, Dana, Mum's secretary and I , that it was a good enough  
opportunity to celebrate with Mum, buy her something, surprise her.. we  
wanted to make her happy....(walks over to boxing sack and begins to  
work out).

**Dana:** Yotami , stop hitting that sack and come and blow up some balloons .(Yotam keeps boxing) Hello !! I'm talking to you !!

**Yotam:** (to audience) Uri bought me this sack because I wasn't manly enough for him, so when he was around I'd box my heart out just to prove I was worth the investment.

(Yotam,Uri & Dana finish hanging balloons round the office)

**Dana:** O.K. there's cake, wine, balloons and a present (looks at them) What, no present ?

**Uri:** (To Yotam) You didn't expect me to bring rubber ducks from the army base did you?

**Yotam:** Sorry, It completely slipped my mind

**Uri:** Things always slip your mind!! Is there anything that stays there?

**Yotam:** OK so I forgot, sorry, you don't have to pounce !!!!

**Uri:** You know what , wait here and I'll go with Dana to buy something.

**Yotam:** No, No! You wait here and I'll go with Dana to buy something .

**Dana :** No no no ! You guys are going alone, I haven't finished clearing up the office.

**Yotam:** But we never agree on anything ! It'll take ages and we'll be back with no present.

**Dana:** So today you'll agree (looks at the clock) when will she be back from her Karate ? You've got 20 minutes to get to the mall, find a shop, argue, make-up and buy! You're gonna make it ! OUT !

**Yotam:** (to audience) we were gone, Dana stormed the office, and suddenly, Amnon showed up in the door. (Dana is off the stage comes with a cake, bottles and glasses)

**Amnon:** Hello .(Dana is surprised , he's taken aback, drops the paper) Sorry I frightened you...

**Dana:** It's OK , I'm fine.. Look , we actually work until six and it's best if you call beforehand.

**Amnon :** The door was open.... Is this "Shamir publishers"?  
(Dana helps him pack up the papers. They laugh. She sees photographs)

**Dana:** What's this..?

**Amnon:** Just photographs.

**Dana:** Wow !! Is this you here with all theses Gorillas? Where were you in some sort of Jungle?

**Amnon:** Some other time. I can see you're having a party...

**Dana :** ( shows him the poster, proudly) "Thinking Computers"  
100 Thousand copies – Didn't you read about it in the papers?

**Amnon:** ( Laughing) Didn't get to it..... I came straight from work,  
From the Galilee and ... look, arrange an appointment for me and I'll be off !

**Dana:** Wow , first tell me about the pictures. It's not everyday that I meet a man who has been photographed with a hundred Gorillas!!

**Amonon:** Babies , baby Gorillas.

**Dana:** Even more kinky , Where did you meet them?

**Amnon:** That's the story. tell me do you Publish manuscripts by people who aren't professional writers?

**Dana:** Is it a professional book?

**Amnon:** more or less ... I lived in Africa for 10 years...

**Dana:** 10 years in Africa. !! G-d It's almost like a dream !

**Amnon:** Africa ?

**Dana:** New York, but it's the same thing. Really cool. Have you always been that kind of .... ?

**Amnon** : Not really .. it began later

**Dana**: What did you do in Africa ?

**Amnon**: It's a long story. I joined people who dedicated their lives to animals orphans... (she's hypnotized) .I wondered if a book like this would interest you.

**Dana**: You took care of orphan Gorillas?

**Amnon**: And chimpanzees and elephants, but mainly baby Gorillas , look...(shows her the photos)

**Yotam**: (To audience) Dana was my first love. Nobody knew, not even her, but then , what chance did I have with an amazing 24 year old girl who fell in love with a new man every day?

**Dana**: So why did you come back? If I was fighting for animal rights I'd have stayed in Africa. What are you doing back here?

**Amnon**: Ah, here, I work for the Society of Nature Reserve. I'm a jeep Trek guide, and I have a crazy love for birds.

**Dana**: You're a jeep trek guide?

**Amnon**: (laughs) Here and there we also protect animals. If we didn't fight for them they wouldn't survive. On tours I try to make people fall in love with places... to get to know the animals...

**Dana**: And do they? Fall in love?

**Amnon**: (Holds out his hand) Sometimes...

**Dana**: (shakes his hand) Sorry, I forgot, Dana.

**Amnon**: Nice to meet you , Amnon...

**Dana**: (gets up, holds his hand as if they knew each other) Listen, I don't want to get your hopes up too high , I can't promise that we'll publish your book, because I'm not the boss, but for a completely different reason... it's as if – you've fallen from heaven.

**Amnon:** (Laughs) Actually, I've fallen from 4 other publishers.

**Dana:** Amnon, you can see we're celebrating, and my boss- a lovely lady... listen ,we're looking for a special present to celebrate the occasion ... Do you see what I mean? When's the next trip and where?

**Amnon:** (takes out a paper) To the Judean Desert , next week.

**Dana:** Write her down, What do you do there?

**Amnon:** Don't you have to see if she wants to go ?

**Dana:** She doesn't want to go !!! She hasn't taken a holiday for 15 years!!! But I want her to go – and go she will!. What do you think of my idea?

**Amnon:** If she hasn't been away for 15 years it isn't a good idea!

**Dana:** But you said you make them fall in love. You must have meant something.. You probably see magical views....Rare animals .. I want to know if it's a cool , fun, short trip.

**Amnon:** More than fun, it's am amazing experience.

**Dana:** And you're the guide, right?... write her down!!

**Amnon:** And the book?

**Dana:** Eh... leave it , leave your card too .We'll read it....(he is about to leave she grabs his arm) Amnon , do me a favor and make sure that this trip is a lifetime experience, a trip that after it she'll float on a cloud to the next .... (he gets up) You're not leaving your book?

**Amnon:** (Puts down the book) Yeh , sure.

**Dana:** And sorry for throwing you out .... 100 Thousand copies! And the family are on the way. (he smiles and leaves)..

**Yotam:** (To audience) He didn't know what he was in for, neither did we, fate must be blind- at least in one eye. To cut it short , we arrived back (They walk in with flowers)

**Uri:** Nothing

**Dana:** You didn't buy anything?

**Yotam:** I told you- anything I like he, hates and visa versa...

**Dana:** (interrupts) A Jeep trek!

**Uri:** Jeep!?

**Dana:** There was a guy here, he brought a manuscript about his work... He's a Jeep treck guide, and guess what? Next week there's a trip to the Judean Desert . It's the answer. It's a group trip and it sounds amazing (she gives them the pamphlet)

**Uri:** She won't go !

**Yotam:** With strangers? You must be kidding!

**Dana:** So convince her. Do something for a change!

**Uri:** Mum and nature ?

**Dana:** Mother nature! ...When she meets this guide, she'll fall in love-with nature! He's sensitive , sympathetic fights for causes ...He saved monkey's in Africa ! A kind of pioneer.....

**Uri:** And you fell in love with him ?

**Dana:** What ?

**Uri:** I'm asking if you fell in love with him?

**Yotam:** (Does not like what is going on) Shshshsh... she's coming

**Dana:** Don't you dare chicken out , even if it's hard!

(Noa walks in, wearing her Karate outfit. The boys and Dana greet her with a special ceremony that will repeat itself on her birthday)

**Noa:** (turns to Uri) Are you crazy ? (gives a mock karate hit) What are you doing here.

**Uri:** (gives her one back, gently) I told the officer that I missed my mum.

**Noa:** You mean you just ran off ! You went A.W.O.L?

**Uri:** 100 Thousand copies aren't worth a little celebration ?

**Noa:** They are worth it , if you don't run away from the Army for it .

**Dana:** She's nagging already... we make you a surprise party , and you...

**Noa:** Lovely balloons!

**Yotam:** (lifting a glass) So, to the occasion of 100 thousand and to the fact that you are the mother of the year, we would like to offer a small gift in the shape of a Jeep Trek to the Judean Desert with "The Wanderers".

**Noa:** Me on a trip ? Forget it !

**Yotam:** I knew it !!

**Uri:** Mum do me a favor , think a minute - for years you haven't been on a trip.

**Noa:** No, because I hate trips!

**Yotam:** The idea is getting out, meeting people.. having new experiences.

**Noa:** I have plenty of experiences, without going on any trips.

**Uri:** (Shows her a picture from his pocket) Look what potential you had! What a smile! I think this is from Italy.

**Yotam:** (Sticks his head in to see) Jerusalem if you don't mind.

**Uri:** See ! You and Dad travelled throughout the country on bicycles...

**Dana:** The Judean Desert....by the time you get there it'll be time to get back.

**Noa:** I am working now on the contract with those New York publishers

**Uri:** New York can wait.

**Noa:** Who for? I'm running a business! Do you know what that means?

**Yotam:** You don't know how to receive anything , you just don't know !!

**Noa:** Dana, help! Get me out of this!

**Dana:** I can't, I got you into it!

**Noa:** Look, I really appreciate the thought, it's just not for me...

**Dana :** You know what , if you don't want to go don't go, we'll get you a membership for the Cinemateque club for the 10<sup>th</sup> time – anyway I'm the only one who uses it.

**Yotam:** Since my idiot brother volunteered to The fighting platoon, you're really down.

**Noa:** I'm not down ! we were 3 musketeers suddenly one's missing - so there's a hole... it's only natural.

**Uri:** It's got nothing to do with that – Stupid !

**Yotam:** Of course it has – you forced her to sign.

**Noa :** You're not beginning to fight are you? Where did you say? The desert? Lovely, I could never stand deserts , what is there to see? Sand thorns, 45 degrees in the shade. Brilliant!!! And this is with strangers...

**Uri:** Mum leave it ! There's no use giving you something you don't want. We thought you'd catch on to it, but we'll find something else- I promise.

**Dana:** Take 2 minutes to think about it ! Who wants cake ? (Dana gives out to all)

**Yotam:** (to audience) My dad got killed 15 years ago in action in Lebanon. Mum was very young then , and she had no job... Right after the 'Shiva' - week of mourning, she took the book publishing firm from his family and turned it into a profitable business. She especially loved children's books . It also helped her to recover.



Before the disaster , she wrote a children's book.. after dad died she couldn't write any more.. she was left alone with Uri and me.

**Noa** : I'm willing to go if we all go together.

**Uri**: You really don't get it, do you ? The idea is for you to take 3 days off, to get rid of us for a while.

**Noa**: I don't want to get rid of anyone, It isn't a date...

**Everyone**: G-d Forbid !

**Noa**: OK ,I'll go. (makes a hand movement) Just don't say I don't know how to receive.

**Uri**: Mum forget it, you don't have to go for us...

**Noa**: No, it's a very original gift and I... want to try. Maybe I'll catch on...(to Yotam)Hell! What am I gonna do in the desert for 3 days...?

## Scene 2

Night. Noa's home.

**Yotam**: (to Audience) So she went , with the wanderers. She should have been home at 9.00pm, I knew it! This whole trip...at midnight I called Uri from the army . I also phoned Dana – got her out of bed- she should suffer – It was her idea ! How could she send her to the desert with a stranger?

(Dana, Yotam and Uri sitting face –front, not speaking, Dana is laying the table)

**Dana**: You've got 3 options : To fantasize all the possible disasters, to fantasize all the possible good things, or to eat your breakfast.

**Uri**: With a babysitter like you I could wait another 3 nights...

**Yotam**: It's already 8 o'clock ! Aren't you even worried ?

(Noa walks in with a bird in a cage . She's dressed like "A Wanderer" and she's really "high")

**Noa:** Have you any idea where I've been. I haven't slept for 24 hours and I've seen the most amazing things in the world ! Have you ever seen a deer giving birth? It's hypnotizing !

**Yotam:** What's this thing in the cage?

**Noa:** Oh that's Rose . In fact she's a "Raven" (Noa sees the expression on their face) she's hurt. Amnon was looking for someone to take care of her. I volunteered Just until she gets better.... They're only permitted to couple with the leader of the flock. Any bird that trespasses the law gets thrown out of the flock. She must've been a bit tarty...

**Yotam:** You were supposed to be back by 9 pm.

**Noa:** So-

**Yotam:** Now it's 8 am.

**Noa:** Well, we missed the sunrise twice – so Amnon said.....

**Uri:** Who the heck is Amnon ?

**Noa :** The Guide. Anyway, he said that missing the sunrise in the desert is absolutely heartbreaking, so we stayed another couple of hours...  
(excited) You must see it . It's as if the wilderness goes up in flames, all the sands were bright red... I couldn't breath, Everything stood still for a moment, and all of a sudden flocks of birds filled the skies, all at once – as if someone had signaled them – and we saw the stalks ...

**Yotam:** We thought you got run over.

**Noa:** Why?

**Yotam:** Because people do sometimes get run over, and those who get run over don't call home...

(Looks at her watch comprehends time and damage)

**Noa:** I tried - my battery was finished.

**Uri:** What about the others? Did all their batteries finish?

**Noa:** I'm sorry – It just didn't occur to me...

**Uri:** May be because AMNON offered to show you the sunrise.

**Noa:** It was such a magical atmosphere... Nobody wanted to go home...  
Were you worried?

**Uri:** (cynically) Oh! Never mind us ! As long as you had a good time...  
(annoyed) Of course we were worried !!! what did you expect?

**Yotam:** If I disappeared for over an hour you'd report me to the police as  
a missing person !

**Noa:** Sunrise in the desert isn't something you see everyday...  
I'm telling you, I lost track of time... The whole group did.

**Yotam:** How does one lose track of time when you have two kids  
waiting for you at home? (slight pause both look at her)

**Noa:** This is what you wanted for me, to get out ... You wanted it... So I  
got out and lost for a couple of hours and I'm really sorry that you sat and  
worried...

**Dana:** (Dana comes in with the breakfast) are you done making her feel  
guilty? Breakfast is ready.

**Uri:** I'd better get back to the base.

**Yotam:** I'm going to sleep.

**Noa:** What about school?

**Yotam:** I haven't slept all night . What will I do at school? Good night.

**Noa:** Wait a minute (hugs him) I'm really sorry.

**Yotam:** (feels uncomfortable) OK OK (breaks off the hug )

**Uri:** (to Dana) Need a lift ?

**Dana:** (embarrassed) Not now thanks - I'm not yet...(Uri leaves - Yotam goes to the computer [stays on the stage]. Dana & Noa by the salad)

**Noa :** I really blew it, didn't I ?

**Dana:** NO! Well , Just a bit ... but it's OK . How's Amnon?

**Noa:** I saw a female deer giving birth. What did he say they were called .. Ibex.

**Dana:** (Ironically)How lovely dear !!

**Noa:** I've signed up for the next trip to the Galilee Now it's the migration Season . Amnon said we would see hundreds of cranes (slight pause) Have you ever just met someone and felt that that you already know him?

**Dana:** You mean like "Deja vu"?

**Noa:** I mean just that - It's the first time I felt –well – safe.

**Dana:** Go, go to the Galilee to see the cranes!

**Noa:** (looks at the clock) Better get the office open...did they phone ? from New York?

**Dana:** They're coming..

**Noa:** Oh! No!

**Dana:** In a few weeks - don't worry. I'll go to the office – you go to sleep! (looks at her) You're in love! Don't start looking for explanations, and don't run away ! How many times has this happened to you?

**Noa :** Much less than you !

**Dana:** I'm no example ... I fall for the the wrong guys time after time afer time....never mind me. You go for it, this is the real life..

**Noa:** Are you sure?

**Dana:** NO.( winks ) But if you don't try you'll never know, will ya ?

**Noa:** The bird!!! Dana what do I do with the bird ?

(Yotam's Monologue moves us on to the next scene)

### Scene 3

Evening Noa house Dinning room.

**Yotam** : (To audience) My mum was in love and it was so pathetic... She looked so ridiculous to me. Sometimes even... stupid! Laughing at every gag, crying for no reason . It scared me, 'cause mum was the most stable thing in my life... until now ...

Within time, she told me she was having an affair with Amnon – the tour guide - as if we didn't know!

After about 3 weeks , Uri thought it was time to meet the fellow- since in a way we're responsible for her. The big evening has arrived- and we're about to meet Indiana Jones. In fact he's late, we've been waiting for half an hour and "Indiana no come" !

(The table has been laid festively. Noa is looking at it. She's tense, taking off this adding that- she's wearing high heeled shoes, sighs every so often, or bends her leg)

**Uri**: To tell you the truth if any girl is half an hour late for me- she'll never see me again (pause) it's such rudeness to be half an hour late to dinner- it's just.....

**Yotam**: (always her savior) May be something happened?

**Uri**: Like what ?

**Noa**: Maybe he saw a wounded bird and stopped to take it . He heals all the wounded ones.

**Uri**: Even when he's invited out to dinner ?

**Noa**: What's it got to do with dinner ? If a nesting chick falls out of it's nest ...he's an idealist...

**Uri**: We never waited for the Messiah, and he was also a flipping idealist!

**Yotam:** Puncture, bomb alert, wrong house number, wrong street, Stomach ache, dizziness, cold sweat.

**Uri:** Have you noticed that you somehow always end up in the E.R.

**Noa:** Will you try to keep calm ... I'm nervous enough already ..

**Uri:** Its obvious that whatever happened to him is more important than you are. From now on, you'll always take second place.

**Yotam:** Since when have you become an expert?!  
(Noa silent but beginning to lose her temper)

**Uri:** Let's start eating. He can join us. it'll make him feel a bit uneasy.. but so what?

**Noa :** And if it's not his fault?

**Uri:** If three people are waiting for him – it's already his fault!

(they sit)

**Noa:** Five minutes- we'll give him another 5 minutes.

(silence. She begins to tear the decorations off the table angrily and takes off the plates)

**Yotam:** Mum calm down , for G-d's sake - you've known him for a few weeks - if this isn't like him - then something happened!

**Noa :** Sure happened. On my forehead is written "easy to get –no need to sweat" in bold letters. That's precisely what happened.

(Intercome rings, all jump up quickly and straighten the table)

**Noa:** How do I look ?

**Uri:** A nervous Cracker -!

**Noa :** Is the Nervous part very obvious ?

**Uri:** Smile a minute .. not too obvious

**Noa:** And the table?

**Yotam :** too...

**Noa :** Too what ?

**Yotam :** Those candles floating with the lettuce ...  
( She takes them off )

**Noa :** Be nice. Make him feel comfortable. Don't ask embarrassing questions and don't open any subjects ...

**Yotam :** Have no fear – we're going to have a wonderful dinner !  
(doorbell rings )

**Uri :** Mum. don't show him you're so tense ...

**Noa :** But this is important... he means so much to me ...

**Uri :** I realize that - but don't show it !

(she goes to door, comes back with Amnon )

**Amnon :** I'm sorry for being so late .

**Yotam:** Accident !?

**Amnon :** No.

**Uri:** Puncture?

**Yotam:** Bomb- scare? Save us the details.

**Amnon:** Wrong Address, I mean, I was in the wrong street,  
The wrong number ... You said...

**Noa:** Never Mind Amnon .... Come in...

**Amnon:** Hey! she looks much better. (to the bird) In a week we'll bring you back your flock! (a moment of embarrassment).

**Noa:** This is Amnon. Amnon – Uri and Yotam.

**Amnon:** (to Uri) So, you're the family Pilot?

**Yotam:** I'm the family encyclopedia.

**Amnon:** (Gives Noa a gift) This is for you.

**Noa:** (opens it , a book) Amnon you're a Marvel! Nobody has ever given me a book ....

**Yotam:** (To Uri quietly) Giving a book to a publisher is like taking a Bus driver on a tour bus. (both laugh)

**Noa:** What's funny?

**Yotam:** What book is it?

**Noa:** Poetry...Guillaum Apoliner (slight pause) I've never read his work....

**Uri:** (sarcasticly) Because we're into Kabala.

**Noa:** What was that ??

**Uri:** I said we're into Kabla since Dad got killed (Yotam kicks Uri under the table)

**Amnon:** (embarrassed) Sorry, I didn't know

**Yotam:** You never told him about dad?

**Noa:** (cynically) I never told him you were into Kabala (pause) Who wants soup? (gives out soup)...

**Yotam:** (to audience) What a Drama ! Big deal! I hate it when grown ups act like teenagers....actually, I don't think that love suits adults at all!

**Noa:** Bon- Appetite

**Yotam:** I don't know that poet , I'd like to read the book too .

**Noa:** There's no book Yotam hasn't read!

**Amnon:** What have your read recently?



**Yotam:** (enjoying it) Stephen Zveig. Man and woman meet in a hotel he flirts and flatters her she melts ! but her young son disturbs Mum and they decide to punish him.....

**Noa:** So who wants soup?

**Yotam:** Mum we're having soup ...  
(to audience) Uri couldn't stop staring at Dad's photograph. He was five years old when dad got killed. When he thought he was alone at home, he would tell Dad's photo what he thought , what he felt , what happened at school and now he's probably squirming at the thought of Dad looking at him befriendng Mum's new boyfriend.

(Uri looks at photo. Amnon watches Uri. Yotam Looks at them both, and Uri sees Amnon)

**Uri:** This is my dad , that's his tank.. In one hand he's holding me – in the other Yotam.. He was killed in 1985. Nothing Heroic, our own Air force didn't recognize our ground forces – sent them some friendly fire....

**Amnon:** How do you know?

**Uri:** I don't know. I'm just assuming.

**Noa:** Who want's soup?

**Yotam:** Third round of this soup... what are you trying to do ? choke us?  
(Short break)

**Amnon:** We're going to Ein-Ovdat next week, we found two tigers in the area; Have you ever seen tigers in Nature?

**Noa:** I didn't know there were tigers in Israel.

**Amnon:** (really trying to brighten them up) What about you guys ? Are you coming?

**Noa:** (EXCITED) Coming?! Of course we're coming ! (to boys) right?

**Yotam:** (ignoring the invitation) So you collect wounded birds? What else do you do?

**Noa:** We've been offered a nature trip ...why are you ignoring it ?

**Yotam:** Dana said he was a Pioneer , I'm just trying to understand what she meant.

**Amnon:** (embarrassed again) I fight the causes that endanger the lives of the birds...

**Yotam:** And what a fighter ! Do you have any idea how much trouble you cause us?

**Yotam:** There are clashes with the Air-force sometimes !

**Uri:** Sometimes? Three pilots got killed.

**Amnon:** Thousands of birds are wounded and smashed into the engines of the planes.

**Uri:** Are you comparing the lives of birds to human lives?

**Noa:** We don't have to speak about the Airforce.

**Yotam:** Why not? When cultures mingle each man brings his own world.

**Uri:** During the last few years more planes have been hit by birds than by our enemies.

**Amnon:** I used to fly along with a flock of storks – to learn their channels of flight.

**Uri:** You were a pilot?

**Amnon:** F-16.

**Uri:** ( Excited) No kidding ! Why didn't you say so? I would try harder to be nice! What Missions were you on?

**Amnon:** Don't count on me. I left the Air force.

**Uri:** (disappointed) When?

**Amnon:** A long time ago – more than 10 years ago.

**Uri:** Why?

**Amnon:** All sorts of reasons –personal reasons .

**Uri:** Guilt?

**Amnon:** What?

**Uri:** Because of the birds?

**Amnon:** (laughs) No. It just didn't suit me any more....

**Uri:** What exactly did you do?

**Amnon:** I was a flight Commander, an Officer

**Uri:** And...

**Noa:** Why are you prying?

**Uri:** It's getting interesting at last.

**Amnon:** I never really wanted to be a pilot. It was just so “in” in my time... so... Well I was pushed into it because of the social pressure, besides - in those days that was the thing to do!

**Yotam:** You really are some kind of vampire!!

**Uri:** (to Yotam) Shut up!!

(Short Pause)

**Amnon:** I grew up on a Kibbutz, that was the style- if you weren't in a fighting Unit or if you hadn't sworn to die for your homeland - you were an outcast.

(cell. phone rings Uri answers).

**Uri:** Yeh!! Honda 96.. first hand. What? I can't hear you... the brakes are new , I changed them a month ago..

(second cell phone rings Yotam replies)

**Yotam:** Just a minute (to Uri) someone's asking about the Honda.

**Uri:** Give him the details.

**Yotam:** Blue, 500cc '97.

**Uri:** 96'. In great condition. Nearly new, I changed the brakes a month ago.

(3<sup>rd</sup> cell phone rings Noa answers. all 3 are speaking together)

**Noa:** Hello! Sorry we're just in the middle of...

**Uri:** Mum - give the details.

**Noa :** Blue, 96, new brakes , 500cc... what do you mean "which"?

**Uri:** Honda Mum Honda!

**Noa:** Honda, and we're in the middle of supper, you're sorry ? Well so am I (closes ).

(angry and embarrassed ) Please take your Honda to your room .  
(both boys leave the room with phones to their ears)

**Amnon:** So that's Uri.

**Noa:** I didn't know you were a pilot....

**Amnon:** I didn't think it was important.

**Noa:** You never even mentioned it!

**Amnon:** So?

**Noa :** Nothing - You surprised me...(short pause) but you passed the test very well.

**Amnon:** (worried) Despite your warnings he wasn't so bad...

**Noa:** No... he was charming ...

**Amnon:** (Laughs) what about the younger one?

**Noa:** Very sharp. Don't argue with him about books – Anything you will ever read he has already read... He'll also tell you why you're reading it . First time, Amnon, is very hard.

**Amnon :** So let's get to the second time before you offer soup for the fourth time!

**Noa:** Right ! Where are the kids anyway? Yotam!

**Yotam:** Don't wait for us we're closing the deal.

**Noa:** Well it looks like it's just the two of us for the rest of the meal.

**Amnon:** Noa, I can't eat anything, let's leave it. And don't be annoyed with them – they may be paying me for being late! (They leave the table and go and sit on cushions under the window)

**Noa:** (Amnon is looking at her) It's not that you couldn't find the street.

**Amnon:** I haven't sat with a family for years...

**Noa:** Cold feet.

**Amnon:** Maybe.

**Noa:** Are you still in touch with your wife?

**Amnon:** No, we split up 10 years ago, after my accident, I told you about that.

**Noa:** Yes, I remember

**Amnon:** After the accident, she wanted a break , left and never came back.. I wanted to tell you about it...

**Noa :** Never mind..

**Amnon:** Why never mind?

**Noa:** No no I mean, I mind a lot. We're not kids... both of us have stacks of memories that...

**Amnon:** We hate talking about.

**Noa:** Right (they both laugh).

**Amnon:** We don't need to scan autobiographies from the age of three...

**Noa:** I'm not a scanner – and let's not scan anything ! We begin now.  
From this very moment.

(Amnon is relieved , Hugs her, she gives him an automatic Karate hit – he slides off - she laughs slightly embarrassed)

**Noa:** Look Amnon I haven't met a hundred men. I once brought a man home for a few dinners - it was a big mistake. I don't want to get hurt or to harm my kids in any way.

**Amnon:** I wouldn't...I couldn't ... I know what I want...  
(short pause he looks at her)

**Noa:** It's been a long time since ...I mean ... I haven't been with any man.. I tried: met guys, dated , but I wasn't really with anyone.....

**Amnon:** (takes a step back) OK I'll stay exactly where I am.. I won't do anything.

**Noa:** (she goes right up to him so that their bodies touch) No! no ! do!  
DO things. Bring new ideas.. I just want you to know that I'm a bit scared of...

**Amnon:** Me?

**Noa:** of .. (says it quickly) of Sex.

**Amnon:** (doesn't mind a bit) ah...

**Noa:** What do you mean ah! You sound as if every day you meet a woman of my age who's scared of... I look at other people in the street, in cafes, everything comes so naturally to them she's on her side he's on his... How do they know what side they are supposed to be on? Arm in place leg in place... as if they were born with it... I'm wasn't ... and I don't know how ...

**Amnon:** Not far from here there's a park, where they have all the plans and flowers of Israel...

**Noa:** (talking about the hug) but my arms and legs what should I do with them? (they leave)...

(Uri and Yotam enter clear the table fold it and make it smaller)

**Yotam:** : They ran Off!

**Uri:** Him being a pilot only gives him more points!

**Yotam:** And what gives him less?

**Uri :** I never said that...

**Yotam:** You will, it's a matter of seconds!

**Uri:** I wonder what flight crew, what year, what missions he took part in? It makes a hell of a difference! Pilots aren't modest by nature.

**Yotam:** What's bugging you?

**Uri:** Nothing! I'm just curious!

**Yotam:** And you're going to check him out?

**Uri:** I never said that?

**Yotam:** No but your going to do it! You've done it before.

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

**Yotam:** I know your ways !!

**Uri:** Mum, she's a special person. Not every guy that comes along suites her.

**Yotam:** If you would hear her restless walking at night !

**Uri:** She misses Dad.

**Yotam:** She doesn't miss him , she just can't fall asleep!

**Uri :** What's gotten into you?

**Yotam:** I can feel your vibrations ... You really scare me (cynically) You want her to have a boyfriend, but when it happens you almost tear him to pieces. They are always strange, weird hypocrites or just not good enough for you ! He's doesn't have to give you any information about his personal life. Besides it was tense enough anyway!!!!

**Uri:** Can imagine them in bed?

**Yotam:** Why should I imagine them in bed?

**Uri:** I can't either, It just doesn't seem possible does it?

**Yotam:** Question over-ruled ... No mother of mine does things like that!

Scene 4

Afternoon , Noa's home .

**Yotam :** [ to audience ] Mum had been going out with Amnon for quite a while. She went on more and more walking tours and spoke more and more nonsense, and *I* was running the house. One weekend we volunteered to go up north with Amnon to a demonstration. He demonstrates against anything and everything, and mum said that even Don Kichote needs a little support some time... so we're going up north to demonstrate against the farmers in the Golan... I don't know them and personally have nothing against them. I don't know what the heck he wants from them. it seems stupid to me, but Dana's going , which is good enough reason for me to go too ! [he's typing on the computer , Noa enters ]

**Noa :** Is Uri here yet ? I need a word with you .. [ hands him a book ] you wrote on this book that it's feministic junk ..

**Yotam :** So that's probably what it is .

**Noa :** Well ... its not a very intelectual way of putting it...

**Yotam :** It's not literature ..

**Noa :** Danas' going to New-York . If you really want to help me , you've got to be more serious .



**Yotam** : *[ panic-stricken ]* Dana ?! why`s she going to New-York now?  
Why in the middle of the year ? Why ..?

**Noa** : Don`t you know she wants to study in New-York ? Don`t worry ,  
we`ll manage. Where`s Uri ?

**Yotam** : *[ to audience ]* I knew she wanted to study music , but I didn`t  
know it was serious !! I had to stop her ! I felt that if she left , I would die  
.. she musn`t go .. it won`t work.. I can`t stand it .. *[ he goes to the boxing  
sack , Uri comes in and starts coaching him ]*  
*[ testing his muscles ]*

**Uri** : With these muscles, you wont make it anywhere ! Harder ! Again !

**Noa** : I need to speak to both of you.

**Uri** : Wait , I`m coaching the sisi

**Yotam** : Sisi !?! O.K I`m through with it .

**Noa** : Why don`t you sit down *[ trying to sound calm ]*. You know  
Amnon and I have been together now for quite a long time.

**Yotam** : 4 months and 3 days .

**Uri** : so ..?

**Noa** : ..and...

**Yotam** : You`re not marrying him !!

**Noa** : *[ laughing ]* No.. But I want to offer him to come and live with us ..  
*[ long pause ]*

**Uri** : What for ?

**Noa** : What ?

**Uri** : Why does he have to come and live here ?

**Noa** : I don`t understand your question.

**Uri** : You`re seeing each other , you haven`t got small kids , you`ve got time , two houses , you`ve got all you both need , why should he come and live here ?

**Noa** :It`s not the same . Why don`t you understand ?

**Uri** : We have rules in this house ! We`re used to a certain way of living! Bringing in a stranger could cause a revolution ...

**Yotam** : Revolutions create new worlds .

**Uri** : Yeh .. and where is he going to put his damn birds?

**Noa** : ..The birds are temporary ... I understand it`s a bit offputing .

**Uri** : Very offputing , so why not skip it ?! It`s not as if you live miles away from each other ... why don`t you say something ?

**Yotam** : I`m thinking about it...

**Uri** : Well maybe if you said what you`re thinking , we will get somewhere ...

**Yotam** : I have mixed feelings...

**Uri** : I`ve never heard one straight answer from you!

**Yotam** : I wish I had one , but I always feel both sides of the problem...

**Noa** : Can we get back to the point ? Amnon`s going to be here any minute...

**Uri** : I just want to understand ; Are you asking us or telling us ?

**Noa** : I`m debating out loud ,together with you two .

**Uri** : Well, I`m not sure you know him well enough to bring him into the house .

**Noa** : What do you mean by that ?

**Uri** : Four months.. What do you know about him ?

**Noa** : That he`s honest , kind , patient , clever , generous .. anything else ?

**Yotam** : It`s more than you know about most of the girls you bring home...

**Uri** : Did you know he was chucked out of his kibbutz ?

**Noa** : Oh I see, you`ve opened an investigation office .

**Uri** : No , but I was curious . I mean , he was squadron commander , and all of a sudden -(poof!) the air-force didn`t suit him anymore ! Well his story doesn`t suit me!

**Noa** : So you decided to investigate . How wonderfull ! Amnon had a small crises and left the army . Is that a crime ?

**Uri** : Depends what kind of crises ...

**Noa** : He was involved in some plane accident in the airforce.

**Uri** : What happened in that accident ?

**Noa** : [ *doesn't know* ] Your tone of voice is very annoying ! I don`t even want to start talking with you about it .

**Uri** : I understood this was an open discussion.

**Noa** : That doesn`t mean you can stick your clumsy foot into anyones soul. We are not rummaging through his past , we are speaking about the possibility of...

**Uri** : I want to remind you that last boyfriend you brought here- a horrible, disgusting man -you also showered with compliments.

**Noa** : He wasn`t disgusting . he was ..pitiful...

**Uri** : The reason isn`t important.

**Noa** : I hoped it would work out.

**Uri** : But it didn`t ! The idiot got temper tantrums when I held my knife in my left hand or when Yotam ate with his fingers .

**Noa** : Can't you see Amnon is completely different ?

**Uri**: *[obsessed]* And those long silences ... I will never ever forget those long, scary silences .. depressive maniac ! He silenced those long meals ,whilst we sat there ,tense to the bone , taking sideglances at his pursed lips ... no one ate , no one breathed- our minds were set to solving the worst riddle ... why the heck is he silent ? Was it something we said ? Something we did ? Why doesn't he say something ?! ..and you never saw or heard ...

**Yotam** : *[trying to defend Noa ]* Uri , leave her alone !

**Uri** : I'm in the army now Yotam , youre the one that's going to be dealing with this, alone !

**Yotam** : Don't worry about me . I'll manage .

**Noa** : You have 2 amazing traits ; one- to always remember the worst , and two- to bear grudge .. for your own sake , try to get rid of both of them together . and there's also been a slight misunderstanding ; I'm debating with you out of respect for you . I'm in no way asking for your permission . Is that clear ?

**Uri** : What do you know about his accident ?

**Noa** : I know all I need to know .

**Uri** : What do you think ?

**Yotam** : I'll manage .

*[ pause ]*

**Noa** : And the other guy .. my boyfriend , he wasn't a bad person .. I .. I couldn't love anyone ...

**Uri** : You were waiting for dad to come home ... *[ embarrassed . Noa leaves hastily ]*

**Yotam** : *[ to audience ]* I hated him when he spoke to mum like that . I swore that one day I'd hit him blue , even though he's stronger .. he'd speak to her as if she was guilty of something .. as if she killed dad .. but what if he's right and I'm wrong ? what if this Amnon fellow moves in ,

and sets all his demons free ? I really am alone here .. all perverts seem nice and intelligent at first ...

*[ Amnon , bright and gay , walks in wearing a nature shirt and binoculars round his neck . ]*

**Amnon** : *[ brightly ]* Hiya everybody ! So , we`re going are we ? !

**Yotam** : Amnon, is that what you always wear to demonstrations ?

**Amnon** : I thought we`d have some time to tour around a little ...

**Yotam** : tour.. well, we`re not really in much of a touring mood , if you ask me ...

**Amnon** : *[ trying to cheer them up ]* Yeh , you lot look really down in the dumps , which is why we should get going ! Clear your heads a bit .. this is the best season .. the Carmel is in fool bloom *[ waiting for a reaction ]* Have you ever been to the ancient caves? .. *[he looks at them , they look back ]* Well, nobodys forcing you !! .. but .. What about the demonstration .. you *are* coming ? I`d be really happy , it`s very important...

*[Uri enters ]*

**Uri** : Against who exactly are we demonstrating ? A few farmers from the Golan ? What have they done to me ?

**Amnon** : *[ patient ]* It was in all the papers .. even though tens of organisations are helping them to get over the wolves attacking their heards , they left a poison cow out in the field ...

**Noa** : ...and what d`you think happened ? they managed to kill a few wolves , but on the way to victory , 30 eagles died .. 30 eagles !! How many eagles do we have here ?

**Uri** : And who cares how many we have ...?!

**Amnon** : You`d be surprised , there are some angles left .

**Uri** : And you`re one of them, I suppose ?

**Amnon** : *[cool]* Yeh...

**Uri** : [teasing] And what if the farmers are right ? After all , their cattle are being wolfed down, aren't they ?

**Amnon**: If one can justify murder, then they're right !!

**Uri** : Fighter you were , and fighter you are .

**Amnon** : True.

**Uri** : So why did you leave the air force ?

**Noa** : What business is it of yours ?

**Uri** : I met a few people who were with you in your squadron ...

**Amnon** : Oh, really ?! Who did you meet ?

**Uri** : You flew to Africa in 1985 .

**Amnon** : [ *doesn't understand what he wants of him* ] 87 , if you're writing the story of my life ..

[ *1 sec. Silence* ]

**Uri** : Could it just so happen that you didn't leave the air-force -they forced you to leave ...?

**Noa** : [ *assertive* ] Uri , please stop it !!

**Uri** : That's what I heard at the base .

**Amnon** : [ *to Uri* ] You never met anyone from my squadron ...!!

**Yotam** : [ *trying to stop it* ] Pilots , as we all know , love telling tales ... don't believe more than one third .

**Uri** : But there are 3 thirds !! Which to believe ?

**Amnon** : [ *smiling* ] In this particular case , none ! I left the air-force of my own accord .

**Uri** : So I'm lying ?

**Amnon** : You have a vivid imagination .

**Noa** : We`d like to get to the Golan (Heights) today . Please save this interview for some other time .

**Yotam** : Wait ! Dana`s not here yet !

Noa : [*decisive on changing the atmosphere, friendly and easygoing* ] So there`s ice-cream, Amnon , could you give me a hand ..?*[they leave ]*

**Yotam** : [*losing his temper* ] ..So you met someone from his squadron!! So what ? You`re talking bullshit , ruining the atmosphere , all because you met some ancient pilot from his squadron !!

**Uri** : What`s the matter with you ?

**Yotam** : [*really annoyed* ] You flew in 1985 ? in 1987 ? Every time something disturbs you , you become a history researcher ! The problem is ... the only history you really have in your mind , is your fathers history !

**Uri** :I have no problem with Dad . I have him in my mind - his voice , his eyes , his walk . You`re the one with the problem .

**Yotam** : I have no memory of him at all .

**Uri** : That`s your problem , you`re jealous of of my memories!

**Yotam** : How can I be jealous something I don`t even know , idiot !! He`s nice , Amnon .. but you can`t see that , `cos you`re still sure Dad`s coming back .. you always used to tell me he never really died.

**Uri** : I was 8 years old .

**Yotam** : [*lashing out*] Right ! And now you`re 19 and you still haven`t got over it! You`re still waiting for him ...

**Uri** : I am not waiting for anyone !

**Yotam** : So what`s setting you off then, huh ? That he`s sleeping in dad`s bed ? Where did you expect him to sleep? On the floor ??

**Uri** : [ *grabbing Yotam by the collar* ] SHUT UP ! DO YOU HEAR ME?  
Shut up ! And if you ever say that sentence again , I will break your bones !

**Yotam** : Let go for gods' sake . Dead people do not come back .

[Noa & Amnon enter , with ice-cream cones . Noa , who caught the end , shouts out loud ]

**Noa** : There is chocolate-vanilla or punch-banana , which do you prefer ?

**Uri**: I don` t think we should go . Demonstrating is a political view .

**Noa** : If it disturbs you , don` t come .

**Uri**: I think you should` t go either.

**Noa** : Excuse me , but we are not siamese twins . This is important to me, and I` ll listen to my own conscience .

**Uri** : What do you know about farmers ? ! You don` t have to go out of your way to please him !!

**Amnon** : How dare you speak to her like that ?!

**Uri** : Why ? Because it doesn` t suit you ?

**Noa** : Which ice-cream do you want ?

[ At the end of the last sentence , Dana walks in with a huge banner , with slogans against factories destroying the ecology . the banner can be funny]

**Dana** : [ *finding the quiet suspicious* ] Vanilla . aren` t we going ?

**Yotam** : We` re going! Of course we` re going ! The million dollar question is; where to ?!

**Uri** : [ *holding danas` banner* ] What the hell is this ? Have you also gone bananas ? Do you really think you` re going to wave this in a public place?

**Dana** : Of course I` m going to wave it , it took me 3 hours to make !



**Uri** : Whos` side are you on ?

**Dana** : The side of the trip to the Golan .

**Uri** : Do you know these farmers ? Have you really looked into their problem ? We`re not groupies of the Nature Reserve Society !! *[ tries to tesr the banner , Amnon stops him immediately ]*

**Amnon** : Leave it alone !!

**Uri** : Listen to me , Mr. Bird-watcher- x pilot ! you are not going boss us around here, even if you do still have a few traits from the air-force ..

**Amnon** : Uri , shut up !!

**Uri** : Who do you think you are telling me to shut up? Nobody in this house tells me to shut up !! Not even my father when I was 5 years old !

**Amnon** : Well that`s a real shame .

**Uri** : *[taken aback for a second ]* Macho ! Well disguised -but still a Macho !

**Amnon** : What do you want to know ? What are you looking for?.. Just ask !! I have no secrets ...

**Uri** : I don`t know who the hell you are !  
*[short pause , Amnon takes banner and walks out ]*

**Dana** : *[ doesn`t understand whats going on ]* Was it something I said ? ..I thought this was supposed to be fun !

**Yotam** : Don`t blame yourself , Dana , we ran out of humour an hour ago.

**Dana** : Shame really , I`ve never been to a demonstration of ..

**Uri** : ..anthropological phenomenon !!

**Dana** : Just the word I was looking for ! And it would do you no harm to pick on people who are not pilots for a change .. *[ to Noa ]* Do you need

support ? In two minutes I'll fix things here ! Come ,on , Yotam , I've got more banners downstairs ..

*[ Dana and Yotam leave ]*

**Uri** : I didn't mean to ruin the day .

**Noa** : But you did .

**Uri** : I don't believe a word he says . I just don't believe him !

**Noa** : I live with him , and I believe every word .

**Uri** : Why did he go to Africa ? Why did he leave his wife ? What happened in the Air-force ?

**Noa** : *[ annoyed ]* It's none of your business !!

**Uri** : *[ takes no notice ]* You don't know who he is , yet you feel safe , because you're like that , you don't see anything bad or evil .. but there is .. that's life .. and if something happens when I'm not here .. ? I don't want you to get hurt ...

**Noa** : Nobody is going to hurt me , and stop talking rubbish .

**Uri** : I hope you're right .

**Noa** : ..and until you're convinced I'm right ? Listen , I don't want you making investigations.. it's the first time since your father .. the first time I .. the first time somebody really cares about me .. that I feel .. I could just pack a bag and fly to tour in South America .

**Uri** : You're not 20 years old !!

**Noa** : I never was ... it's just a feeling . I'm not really going anywhere .. I've always felt the whole world on top of me , and that one day I'd just stop carrying it ...

**Uri** : Me too...

**Noa** : What do you mean ?

**Uri** : In the course .. I'm really can't concentrate , I failed 2 exams .

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

**Uri** : If I don't pull myself together , I'll be chucked out ...

**Noa** : But why are you so distracted ? What happened ? You loved it ..  
*[Noa , assertively takes the `phone ]* I want to speak to officer of the pilots course . I need to explain that you're ...

**Uri** : Are you crazy ?

**Noa** : Look , in your state .. someone's got to talk about it , so that it doesn't ...

**Uri** : D`you think it's a kindergarten ? Can you imagine a combat pilot making some critical mistake and then saying ; sorry about my mistake , I'm just worried about my mum.. Look, I'm o.k.- go on , they're waiting for you downstairs ..

**Noa** : There'll be another thousand demonstrations ...

**Uri** : Mum...

**Yotam** : [ to audience ] It was really pathetic in the Golan , but I wanted to give Amnon some credit ..so that he wouldn't feel so lonely.. Why do I always find myself in these impossible situations just because I'm afraid of violence .. I liked the way Amnon stood up for mum . At long last there's a man in the house , and it's not Uri .. Mum continued spending lots of time with him , and a few weeks later they went together to Binyamina .. Amnon had a house there . I informed Dana that I was ill , and all alone .. she immediately came round, of course .. .

## **Scene 5**

**Dana**: How is it that there isn't even a Paracetamol ?.....  
 For heavens' sake ! Once in her life she goes to the Judean Desert- and completely loses her head ! You should have reminded her.

**Yotam**: How could I know?

**Dana**: Listen, I've got a guest at home (touches his forehead) I'm leaving my whole medicine cabinet here ,and making you a cup of tea,

and I'm going back home. You remember that I told you about that Lady who reads into Coffee cups? Well she told me that I was going to meet someone ..this weekend (she makes him tea ready –he stands next to her)

**Yotam:** Dana, are you really going to New York?

**Dana:** Yes, but not today?

**Yotam:** When?

**Dana:** Soon, why?

**Yotam:** How will you get on there , alone?

Dana: Hey Kiddo, are you worrying about me?

**Yotam:** Sure, but more for Mum – How can you leave her alone here? How will she manage?

**Dana:** She'll be fine, and if not, she'll find someone else. I'm not irreplaceable .

**Yotam:** I'm not sure about that.

**Dana:** Is Uri in the army this weekend ?

**Yotam:** Dana, I feel sick .Why should I care what Uri's doing this weekend ?

**Dana:** He hasn't smiled for months ! What about his red-headed girlfriend?

**Yotam:** I don't get you – *I* feel awful , I call you in, and all you can talk about is that idiot !

**Dana:** Hello- Hello! You don't look so bad to me ...

**Yotam:** Well I feel bad.

**Dana:** What exactly do you feel?

**Yotam:** A pain in the chest... Go at the end of the year .College doesn't begin yet anyway?

**Dana:** Wait a minute, is that your illness? Is this what you got me out of bed for, G-d you're so cute !! Do you fancy chips?

**Yotam:** Why didn't you marry your boyfriend from the Moshav?

**Dana:** I left him. I'll get married when I feel like it- I have a few more fascinating dreams than being wife and mother of the year , and making sure there is food in the kitchen.

**Yotam:** (Ironically) Very fascinating ... a new guy every week...

**Dana:** Hey, that's none of your business !

**Youtam:** You don't really have anyone, you're lonely- I can't understand why you live like that!

**Dana:** ( threatening) Yotam, whether you're ill or just pretending to be- stick to your symptoms and stop blabbering - because one more word and these chips are the last thing you'll ever get from me ! I swear I'll never talk to you again...

(Uri enters –quickly angrily amd slightly drunk)

Uri: Where's Mum ?

**Yotam:** They went to Benyamina..

**Uri:** Just when I need her.

**Youtam:** Why didn't you say ?

**Uri:** I'm off duty at weekends. Is there anyone who doesn't know that ?!

**Dana:** Uri , can I help you...?

**Uri:** (takes a beer from the fridge) I need my Mum! (about to leave)  
( Dana goes after him)

**Dana:** Hang on a minute ... I waited for you... I'm making soup.

**Uri:** Forget it Dana..I know you mean well, but don't mix in..

**Dana:** I'm making chips too !

**Uri:** Not now...(Leaves)

**Yotam:** So who the heck are the chips for then?? I suddenly thought maybe Uri and Dana... No! Can't be! He's not her cup of tea , if you ask me, and he's younger than her! But something about the way he... and she's right , I havn't seen him laugh for ages! Maybe I should talk to Mum, maybe she hasn't noticed...

(Evening . Noa & Amnon in Noa's house – a box full of books – she and he are rummaging through)

**Noa:** Is this all you possess ?

**Amnon:** For now... one day we'll live in Binyamina.

**Noa:** Don't fantasize – I'm not leaving my home.

**Amnon:** 'One day'...! A day that's not yet written in any calendar...

**Noa:** You wanted to try living here – why are you running away already?

(they both rummage through the box)

**Amnon:** There's been so much antagonism..

**Noa :** There always will be . We need to make our own decisions, not to get anyone's permission.

**Amnon:** I feel so unwanted.

**Noa:** Why? I want you- and I decide

**Amnon:** We're in no rush ! First I'll take you to Africa . to all the places I've been to.. You know that once you've been hugged by a Gorilla you can spend your life looking for him..

**Noa:** I want you here- not in Africa.

**Amnon:** I also want you .. there ( Hugs her and tries to lead her to the bedroom)

**Noa :** Amnon, I'm not sure.. What if someone comes in ?

**Amnon:** No one will come in.

**Noa:** This house has no rules . Anyone could walk in ... Yotam could turn up .

**Amnon:** Are you sure you want me to live here?

**Noa :** You've never slept here before.....

**Amnon:** (Wants her) What are you scared of.....we decided to try – so lets try (puts her arms around him, music, he takes her to the bedroom... music continues and changes from romantic music to music with elements of tension)

(Uri arrives, looks around, sees their bags and realizes they are back. He listens and hears the music from the bedroom... he is completely drunk )

**Uri:** (Shouts) Mum (roars) Mother!

Uri (sees the carton of books and another bird cage) )Oh ! I can see you brought a guest from Binyamina (to the bird) “cheep cheep” how are you birdie.... Don't you talk..? Mum ! Take the bird back, it won't talk! I take it you're busy at the moment, but that's alright , I can talk to the wall... it's always here, the wall, always ready to listen. So first of all, thank you for speaking to my officer behind my back. It was really good for me because since then all the officers just love me. The chief Officer gave me a special flight - just him and me – Great guy – he said I have to get over it and pull myself together, Dad will be very proud of me.. Do you think ghosts feel proud? I cried during one of the exercises ..he told me that when he did the course he cried all the time and it's ok he knows I'm ....well, that I'm... well having a tough time... He believes that orphans are more vulnerable so I'm 'vulnerable' - that's what the course Officer said... I'm so pleased you told him that you brought an ex-pilot into our house. In his opinion it just makes things harder for me. He even invited me to his house for dinner on Friday night... who knows ? Maybe he wants to adopt me... He thinks that ...sh..shit ! You're really sleeping tight... maybe you're dead!?

(roars towards the bedroom, kicks bag, bag flies and the contents spill out.Noa comes out wearing a dressing gown/pyjamas or she has dressed quickly)

**Noa:** (embarrassed) Hi !

**Uri:** What ...What are you doing? (Amnon comes out and stands by her)

**Noa:** (tries to say something) Uri...

**Uri:** (cuts her off) Don't speak to me.. don't even come near me, don't speak to me ..how could you? In this house- in this room.. as if nothing- You're disgusting , G-d do you have any idea how disgusting??  
(to Amnon) If you're sleeping on the left side the mattress must be hard-nobody's slept there for years... but there's a window and you can see right up to heaven -.

**Amnon:** (Very assertive) Oh I can see the heaven , thanks .Now get back to your own business! You're disturbing !

**Uri:** Disturbing what?

**Amnon:** Disturbing us!

(Uri Leaves – Noa is shocked by his outburst)

**Noa:** You shouldn't have spoken to him about Heaven (Amnon keeps silent) He's only nineteen years old.

**Amnon:** Only ?! Nineteen is a lot. It's a lot

**Noa:** But come on, Heaven , why did you have to ?

**Amnon :** He wanted to hear it!

**Noa:** So you took the challenge (slight pause)  
It's hard for him... he'll get over it.

**Amnon:** Not if we keep on saluting to his Orphan- flag.. He's not the only orphan, you know..

**Noa:** Bur he's my orphan.(pause). You treated orphan animals, Amnon , can't you understand what he feels?



**Amnon:** Of course I can ! But you know, in order to survive, animals have to go back to the forest , there comes a time we need to seperate .. without seperating...

**Noa:** Forget it – it’s a stupid comparison...

**Amnon:** You won’t let him grow up !

Noa: (cuts him off) How many kids have you brought up that you’re teaching me how to bring up mine ? (Amnon offended) He wouldn’t like any man I brought home - and you’re a mysterious pilot... Africa... change of occupation... it’s all a bit hazy...

**Amnon :** We’re all a bit Hazy.

**Noa:** Really?

**Amnon:** What’s the matter ?

**Noa:** Did you have a woman in Africa?

**Amnon:** (surprised) Look, I’m no p...

**Noa:** And Kids?

**Amnon:** If there were, would I hide them ?

**Noa:** How is it that in 15 years, you never raised a family –(no reply)  
Why Animals ?

**Amnon:** Because they can’t protect themselves . Is the Investigation over?

**Noa:** What exactly happened in that accident, that since then you...

**Amnon:** Since then I what ?

**Noa:** Who’s Itamar ?

**Amnon:** Who?

**Noa:** When I opened your computer I saw that you write to him a lot.

**Amnon:** How dare you !

**Noa:** I wasn't prying... I just to write something on the computer.

**Amnon:** I will not give you and your kids all the answers . I will never take their fathers' place , or fill in the black hole you carry around with you - and my future, like yours is unclear...

**Noa:** After Motti I never wanted anyone. He was the best thing that ever happened to me. I wanted him back. I got into Uri's fantasies, and we both waited for him. This the first time a stranger has come into this house.. and nobody knows how !

**Amnon:** I don't know how either .. but I won't put your sons through any more maturity tests... that's your job.. I've done enough harm in my life .. next time he speaks to you like that- I might just hit him !

**Noa:** When they were little, I promised I'd be here forever and that nobody would come between us... (pause) You've got to be patient ... (Amnon collects his things) What are you doing ?

**Amnon:** I just.... I need to get out a bit !

**Noa:** Don't go !

**Amnon:** You're the one that promised them- maybe you need to keep your promise. (Takes his bag and leaves)

## ACT 2

### Scene 1 (Saturday Morning)

**Yotam:** (to audience) A week went by, Amnon didn't come back. Mum went back to walking around in her Karate outfit. And the worst part of it was, she worked non-stop; day, night, weekends ... Uri phoned every day and I reported that she wasn't eating, that she looked terrible that he had utterly destroyed her. He sounded worried, which really pleased me. On Saturday, Dana came in to the office to drag her out... (Dana and Noa in office, music, Noa is sorting out papers)

**Dana:** Did he call? (No reply , Noa carries on sorting the papers) Did you call ? (Noa picks up a pile of books meaning to give them to Dana) Don't call. Don't look for him.. Me? I would have looked , found and lost him again by now – but I'm a loser ...Left eh.. ? Just like that? What a cheek! Let's see him fight for you! He fights for gorillas let him fight for you too! Such a weakling ! Just like my father – one small thing doesn't suit him and he's out ! Just like that .

(to herself . sort of memory ) Why? Where are you off to? What happened ? You're having a hard time? So what? You think it's easy for mum? For me ? Leaves an elderly woman who looks like a sack of potatoes and starts all over again... And why does she look like a sack ? Because all her life you've been coming and going , coming and going. Grandma – didn't interfere. Go, go, go on ! Let's see who'll take you ! (to Noa) I hate men !

(Noa looks at Dana astounded)

**Noa:** (giving Dana a book) We gave this to the wrong interpreter . Need to give it to someone else (showing her something) And this needs to be repaired (puts it aside).

**Dana:** What repaired? Why repaired ? Noa it's Saturday ,go home. The kids are there alone- it's not fair...

**Noa:** What will I do at home? I've ruined his course ( suddenly)  
Mmm... Very good... I shouldn't have signed in the first place - He didn't give me a choice ... so let him cope with the course just like all the rest- or not be a pilot ! The one who disturbs me the most is Motti (turns his photograph over) I can't get him out of my mind .. looking at me like a supreme Judge ... reproaching me ! What are you reproaching me for ? He wanted six kids .... It's a shame we never had them... (phone rings, Noa answers) No I'm not coming! Yes I know it's Saturday, there's a lot of work here... so manage by yourselves. (Pause) I really miss Amnon - Who's going to judge me? 2 Kids ? What can they see beyond their own selfish needs ? They're worried when your ill ,so that you won't die on them too soon ... but if your hurt or drowning they don't give a damn ... I'M NOT GOING HOME , I'M GOING OUT...

**Dana:** Where are you going?

**Noa:** I don't know, and I don't care - but I'm not going home.

**Dana:** You're going out of your mind!

**Noa:** In a way ...Yes...

**Dana:** Noa, don't be stupid!

**Noa:** I'm serious.

**Dana:** Well I don't like it...

**Noa:** Neither do I , I don't want to cook for them , to wash their clothes, to tidy after them , to speak to them to hear them, I don't want to be there... I once read that G-d made " mothers " because he couldn't be in so many places at once. So – what G-d can't do, I can't do either!

**Dana:** (found something) It's your birthday next week !

**Noa:** It was last year and will be next year too.

**Dana:** They're making you a surprise party !

**Noa:** (Sarcasticly) I've had my share of surprises for the next 10 years... this time I'll surprise them!

(tel. Rings Noa answers)

**Noa:** 1 cup of rice, two cups of water, a little oil and a pinch of salt... 10 minutes on a small light ... *After it boils* (angry) Uri how many times do I have to tell you ? I'm working! I'll come home when I come home ! So eat without me!! ( puts phone down . Really angry, finding it hard to put into words) Sometimes I... Sometimes I just ...

**Dana :** (Guessing) hate them ...?

**Noa :** I feel like . you're not going to believe this, but I feel like ...

**Dana:** Killing them!

**Noa:** No! one day , one day, you'll see- I'll just ...

**Dana:** What? What? Come on ! ...Spit it out ! Say it already ! What will you just? OK, we're closing and going home . It's Saturday and I've got someone waiting for me.

**Noa:** Shut up , or you'll be my first victim!

**Dana:** We're closing !

**Noa:** (jealous) Are you in love?

**Dana:** Of course I am ! It 's Saturday, you know I always fall in love at the weekend . (teasing) By the way, he has a friend if you want to....(Noa laughs) Go home! What do you want them to eat ? Each other?

**Noa:** I'm going to a matinee, then I'll go to the first show, then I'll go to the second show... and after that I'll let you know(Noa leaves).

**Yotam:** (to Aud) Dana decided to call Amnon . I can't believe that she's starting with him when Mum's still in love?! Sometimes I just don't understand her....don't understand me either! Why couldn't I fall in love with a more mature woman?

(telephone )

**Dana:** Hi Amnon - I'm glad you're not at home... hello answering machine... Amnon, Noa is in a real state, I am sure you are too . It's her birthday next week- Be there! I know you have no courage and you never take chances (Holds the phone away from her and shouts at it rather than in it) Well bloody well get over your defects and be here... It's not less important than saving a couple of zebras ! Who said love's got to be tragic? OK Amnon, now it's your turn, and when you've finished hearing this message- erase it! Unless you want me to get the sack!

**Noa 's house.**

**Yotam:** (to Aud) Mum got home really late. I didn't see her. I haven't seen her all day today , either . It's Sunday , midnight, and she's not back yet....I've gone through thousands of books and I haven't found one manual for kids that explains what I am suppose to do or say to my Mother when she's in trouble.... And I can't trust my own mouth to say the right thing .

Suddenly HE turned up...Amnon

(Door opens Amnon enters)

**Amnon:** Hello

**Yotam:** You're back...

**Amnon:** Is you Mum in?

**Yotam:** I'm glad you're back.

**Amnon :** Thanks.

**Yotam :** I just want you to know that its not fair ... I don't know how to explain it , but ... its just not fair ! Mum's done a lot of things lately that she's never done before ... because of you ... so its not fair ...

**Amnon :** I ...

**Yotam :** Is there someone else?

**Amnon:** Of course not!

**Yotam:** Then why..?

**Amnon:** I .. I can't eh...

**Yotam:** (Cuts in) talk about it . OK . Don't talk about it. But if you're not *really* back – then go before she comes ( Noa walks in. Amnon looks at her. Yotam to Aud) I'm going to bed.

**Amnon:** Hi...(Noa ignores him) how are you? (no reply) You're right ot be angry (pause) I was in Benyamina ... I wanted to think things out (no reply. Amnon doesn't know whether to continue or not) On the farm in Africa...there was this American guy that worked with me , Steve ...He was married to a divorcee with a child .... Just when everything seemed to be working out , he left her... I never understood why...(Noa doesn't reply. Amnon sees his book on the table) My book ... Is it back from proof?

**Noa :** So why did Steve leave his wife?

**Amnon:** I never wanted a child, you're right, they scare the life out of me. I can't take responsibility for the suffering of any human being, especially children...

**Noa:** We're a package deal , me and them, three for the price of one .

**Amnon:** I want the deal!

**Noa:** Are you sure? Uri will never love you...

**Amnon:** I still want it...

**Noa:** He's not a bad person ...He's scared too

**Amnon :** I know.

**Noa:** You might never love him either- so don't pretend to . With Yotam you still have a chance.

**Amnon:** And with you? (slight pause) I don't hate your kids... on the contrary, I want to love them. I'm not even sure they'll ever accept me as part of the family.

**Noa :** Nor am I .

**Amnon:** OK ... I accept that too.

**Noa:** So if you're actually becoming part of this household – next time you want to think - try going round the block instead of taking off to Benyamina... (She gives him a karate flick, he laughs, she hugs him) I was so worried about you.

**(Yotam.Home .Evening . Noa's house.)**

**Yotam:** Amnon moved in , and the birds multiplied by the day, by the hour... I've noticed that in my family, the craziest one , wins! When Amnon gets offended, we all start petting his birds. When Dana's down Mum raises her salary, and as for Uri... for the past God knows how long – he's decided that at home we should hear only music from the 70s . I'm just too normal for this house, and it's beginning to get on my nerves. I'll have to think of something crazy ... but not today ... today it's mum's birthday.

( Noa and Dana are tidying the lounge for the birthday . Moving bird-cages , Noa takes them to another room and throws out one sofa . They lay the table ... Yotam looks at them over his computer and continues typing )

**Dana** : Is it for kids ? The book that you're ... writing ?

**Noa** : For grown-up kids .

**Dana** : About Amnon ?( pause )

**Noa** : Not quite ...

**Dana** : How is he in bed ? ( Noa nearly chokes ) What's the matter ?

**Noa** : What kind of question is that ?

**Dana** : Do you like going to bed with him ?

**Noa** : Dana , I do not want to talk about it !

**Dana** : Look, if you're writing about him , you must talk about sex. I mean , how are we gonna sell it? What'll we write on the cover ? My romance with Dr. Doolittle ? His favourite positions ...

**Noa** : DANA !!

**Dana** : Sex is a must ! Look at all the best-sellers ... you cant just-

**Noa** : You're disgusting !! I'm here telling you that for the first time since Motti I'm trying to write – and you're already selling !

**Dana** : Selling I learnt from you darlin' ! Anyway , if you're too shy to expose your sexuality , you can use my experiences ...

**Noa** : If I use your experiences there'll be no room for a story !! And I'm not too shy ...

**Dana** : ( full of admiration ) Now were're really coming out of our shell, aren't we?

**Noa**: When I was ten years old, I asked my mother what sex was. She said it was very bad, and those who start with it can't stop... for years I had these nightmares that I am standing in the street, people are walking by and I'm jumping on them and I can't stop .... (embarrassed) Listen to me, going on about ...



**Dana:** The real thing at last !!

**Noa:** If you must know, he's amazing...

**Dana:** Can't stop eh!? (teases her – Noa runs after her . Uri comes in wearing army uniform)

**Uri:** Hi .. Need any help?

**Dana:** Change clothes and get some cups out.

**Uri:** OOH! I see we've opened an aviary !

**Noa:** (laughs) Right, but let's give it a try. If they really disturb you then ...In fact I don't even know whether I can live with them in the same house...

**Dana:** (very sharp) You've got a surprise birthday lady, so go and get ready

**(Noa leaves, Dana puts music on. Uri goes to the birds, gargles and makes forest sounds)**

**Dana:** Leave the poor little birds alone. This house will probably be the death of them anyway. (they both laugh)

**Uri:** You always protect Mum. What about me?

**Dana:** You need protecting ?

**Uri:** Does that surprise you?

**Dana:** No , I mean yes. Very much.

**Uri:** What do you think I'm made of ?

**Dana:** (touches his shoulder) Cast Iron !

**Uri:** Maybe that's why I can't move my back...(Dana points to chair he shakes his head)

**Dana:** Come on, I'll give you a massage... Well...?(Uri sits she massages his back lightly) Wow ! You're really stiff ! What the heck have you been carrying? ... You *are* going to be nice today at the party (hurts him) right?

**Uri:** Promise, Scouts honour . Dana, have you got a boyfriend?

**Dana:** Ye..No..well yes and no.

**Uri:** And the guy from the Moshav.... Why did you leave him ?

**Dana:** He left me.. my dreams of New york – he didn't like them ...

**Uri:** Well it's dangerous . A beautiful woman, alone in New-York...Are you sure you know what you are doing? (Dana hurts him on the shoulder) Ouch! Don't go Dana..

(Yotam and Amnon enter. Amnon with a huge bunch of lettuce)

**Dana:** (embarrassed. Hits Uri's shoulder without noticing) Where have you been? Amnon , cut the veg. and put the wine glasses on the table. Yotam show him where the tableclothes are and get out the good plates! Ooh, Amnon ...lettuce!

**Amnon:** Organic

**Dana:** (taking it from him) For the salad, or for the vase? OK Amnon get the table laid and cut the –(she puts lettuce in a jar)

**Yotam:** You don't have to do everything she says... she 's temporary .

**Amnon:** On occasions like this I do as I'm told .

**Yotam:** You ?

**Amnon:** Left overs from the Kibbutz , do everything and anything to fit in..

**Uri:** I got Mum an amazing present.

**Amnon:** Really! So did I.

**Yotam:** What?

**Uri:** A book ?

**Amnon :** Surprise..

**Uri:** Come on ...

**Amnon:** Surprise!

**Uri:** Surprise her, and tell us..

**Amnon:** OK - but promise not to spoil it – Tickets to Africa ...

**Uri:** (shocked) To Africa...?

**Amnon:** For two weeks

**Yotam:** Instead of a honeymoon?

**Dana:** Wow! It's great .... Wow! Is there room for me too...?

**Uri:** She can't leave for two weeks now ! We're a month to the annual book fair.

**Amnon:** I didn't know that...

**Yotam:** It's a hell of a lot of work, may be you can postpone it...?

**Dana:** No need for that ! I'll manage the business – Yotam will give me a hand...

**Uri:** You three planned this?

**Amnon:** Nobody planned anything, it's my idea.

**Uri:** (to Amnon) You should have asked me! (silence. Dana leaves the room)

**Uri:** What do you know about her? Maybe Africa doesn't agree with her.

**Yotam::** We're five minutes to her birthday !

**Amonon:** I don't get the problem...

**Uri:** A lot of problems . She runs a publishing firm , it's business, she can't just take a fortnight off ! It's enough that she has been wondering around with you all over the country – mainly on weekends , when I come home.... And Yotam lately has been speaking to your birds because there is no one else at home to speak to. ( to Yotam) Why don't you give him your opinion about his bright idea!?

**Yotam:** (snaps back) Because I don't have an opinion !! You're the one who thinks, talks and decides everything in this house – all your life you've been deciding for us - so I developed no opinions of my own ... you turned me into a cabbage !! So what difference does it make? Now he's making the decisions, with me everything's the same.

**Amnon:** That's not fair Yotam, it's not true!

**Uri:** You're the good kid, always doing the right thing – so that everybody loves you... that's all that matters to you anyway. Why don't you tell Amnon what you think of his birds?

**Yotam:** Who says I think at all ?

**Uri:** You really are a cabbage, but even cabbages think when they have to !

**Yotam :** Right ! And this cabbage has been thinking for the past year that you shouldn't have pushed mum into signing for your pilots-course ! No normal widow would do it ! but the cabbage is silent.... 'cause he's a good kid.(Dana enters)

**Dana:** Are you lot still in Africa ? Well please fasten your seat belts for a crash landing- because it's party time ! (birthday music)

**(Noa enters with a garland of flowers on her head- birthday music continues )**

Noa: Surprise !! (they have their own private birthday ceremony and Dana brings in a cake with the music of Happy birthday to you. )

**Yotam:** Come on Mum..! (They all blow out the candles together – Yotam aims at Dana who laughs) Everyone here ? So let's begin...

**Uri:** Wait a minute , we haven't lifted her up yet (he notices that there is a sofa missing )

**Noa :** Let's skip it this time.

**Yotam:** OK, I would like to announce that we are celebrating two happy events . First – Mum 's birthday – and second, we have new tenants and I want to introduce them. This is Amnon , and those are Rose , Trombose and Narcose . The raven from the Judean desert is deliberately not getting better, she loves it here , and she doesn't need to mate 'cause she's frigid.

**Noa:** Yotam! (surprised by his knowledge)

**Uri:** Where's the sofa,?

**Yotam:** If you don't mind, I'm trying to give a lecture on birds! So...

**Amnon:** The sofa was falling apart. When we moved it the leg broke – we couldn't fix it .

**Uri:** I don't care! I want it in my room.

**Noa:** I gave it to the Rag and bone man

**Uri:** Without asking me !?

**Amnon:** The wood was rotting, there was nothing to do with it, we can buy a new one like that if -

**Uri:** Who asked you to fix it? Why did you touch it anyway?

**Yotam:** Who cares about that stupid old sofa now !?

**Uri:** That stupid old sofa – I bought with dad in the flea market.!!

**Yotam:** So what? ! Is that why you're ruining the party?

**Amnon:** Sorry, I'll find the sofa

**Uri:** Who are you kidding ?!

**Amnon:** I will. I'll find the rag and bone man, and I'll buy it back.

**Yotam:** (very angry) We are trying to have a party.!!

**Dana:** Let's give a toast ! (gives out the wine)

**Uri:** (lifts his glass and turns to the father's picture) To life ! le chaim!  
Do you hear me dad? Amnon will find the rag and bone man and buy back our sofa....What do you think of the party ? You weren't invited ? why not? Nobody thought of it ? Days go by , years pass ...and you're stuck in a frame under glass .... You're disturbing now .. your presence is unwanted .. you disturb the flow of life !!(takes the picture off the wall) I'll take you to my room.

**Noa:** (assertive and in control) Hang that picture back ! ( Uri does not move) Hang the picture back in it's place - now ! (Uri Hangs the picture back)

**Uri:** (to Amnon) I understand that people were killed in your accident...

**Amnon:** People are killed all the time.

**Uri:** You never told us.

**Amnon:** I don't owe you anything.

**Uri:** At war or in practice ?

**Amnon:** I'll gladly speak to you in my free time and at my own pace .  
Now, I advise you to cool down.

**Uri:** What happened in that accident Amnon? Did you also blow someone up by mistake?

**Noa:** Stop it !!

**Uri:** I heard at the base ...

**Noa:** I don't want to know what you heard at the base ! I love Amnon and I'm about to live with him . I wasn't born to serve your whims and needs, and I'll live my life to the full, exactly as I wish, whether you like it or not, and don't you dare touch that picture... thank you for the party- it was very touching (she leaves. Dana leaves after her)

**Yotam:** (to Uri) When will they discover at your course that you are a piece of scum. (Yotam leaves. Pause, Uri is shocked by the reaction. Amnon sits and looks at him)

**Uri:** It just slips out of my mouth – I can't control it...I can't control anything – truth is , I don't give a damn about the birthday... I want to, but I just can't pretend...(clears the table angrily) I can't land the bloody plane properly ... I'm never going to pass the solo .

**Amnon:** Not everyone is born to be a pilot

**Uri:** What?

**Amnon:** Stop whining and feeling so sorry for yourself.

**Uri:** If I don't pass the solo – I'll be based in town at Headquarters

**Amnon:** So you'll be based in town (short pause) So what ?

**Uri:** I can't bring the wheel to the beginning of the Runway.

**Amnon:** Concentrate on the technical side, and leave your father in peace!

**Uri:** I hate you Amnon, I hate you so much ..I can't concentrate on anything else. (short pause )

**Amnon:** (changing his attitude) Cry baby. You know what I miss most? Going up in the air after the sunset, and then finding out that if I go up a little higher , I can see the sun again, and have a new day. I could make the sun rise and set 5 times in a minute.. Like the little prince.

(Yotam transfers to next scene)

**Yotam:** (to aud) Uri didn't go back to the base , he asked to be transferred to the city based Headquarters, the Kiriya, for a couple of months – to get over his crisis . He was a good pilot and his officers gave him what he wanted . Mum didn't know anything about it , and they flew off to Africa . I fed the birds and Uri blew his top.."How can you go to Africa when your son is going to flunk his Pilot's course". I tried to explain to him that if she would have known, she wouldn't have gone, but he was in no state to listen to logic.  
Everything happened in those 2 weeks ...

The microwave went wrong.  
The sink got blocked up!  
The dryer made funny sounds!  
Only Dana kept in shape – G-d when is she going to notice me ?

Act 2 Scene 2

**Dana:** Yotami, come with me to take those guys from New-York out for Lunch.

**Yotam:** What are they like ?

**Dana:** Very disappointed Mum's in Africa. I doubt whether it'll be much of a match.

**Yotam:** So why invite them out for lunch? I mean, if we won't get back the investment. (Uri storms in )

**Dana:** HI!

**Uri:** Is Mum back yet ?

**Yotam:** She's coming tonight.

(Uri sits quietly "freeze")

**Dana:** What? Wanna come out for lunch with us?

**Yotam:** Something's happened !

**Uri:** Dana... Amnon took part in the action that blew up the tank !

**Yotam:** What tank?

**Uri:** Dads' tank!

**Dana:** What d'you mean ...?

**Uri:** What don't you understand ? Amnon took part in the attack that killed my father.

**Dana:** Amnon ? Are you sure we're talking about the same guy.. It can't be!



**Uri:** I knew he was hiding something, I could feel it. I asked him about planes and his answers were about gorillas...(pause, Dana is in shock.. Yotam is speechless)

**Dana:** Where did you dig up this information. We've known him a year and there was no hint that..

**Uri:** There were thousands of hints .

**Yotam:** It doesn't make sense . Amnon and I talk a lot...He wouldn't lie!

**Uri:** Well he did, It's written in the report of the investigation committee

**Dana:** How did you get the report?

**Uri:** I am at Airforce Headquarters.... It's no big problem

**Dana:** What exactly is written there?

**Uri:** (getting annoyed) Sorry- I didn't learn it by heart. (pause) There were four planes – he was No.1 the leading plane.

**Yotam:** That's the plane that hit Dad?

**Uri:** Yes , the leading plane blew up Dad..

(Yotam backs off ..thinking)

**Dana:** (beginning to crack) I know Amnon, I just can't believe it..

**Uri:** For a year I've been telling you , you don't know who this guy is! A whole year!(pause) Son of a bitch, with his ugly bird collection – hypocrite, (feels he's going to cry ...drinks something) Takes her off to Africa, selling her love stories and what does she know ? Nothing...piece of shit!

**Dana:** It's impossible!

**Yotam:** What's impossible ? It's exactly like in the bible- “ you have killed and also coveted” King Ahab killed Nabat, took his vine and his wife.

**Dana:** (assertive) What vine? Yotam, don't start ! No wife and no vine!  
Can't you flipping well see ? He loves the woman

**Uri:** Who said he loves her ? Maybe it's all part of the lie, and she's deluding herself...

**Dana:** Why would he live with her if he doesn't love her? With you two here, he'd have to be a real masochist ...

**Uri:** To ease his conscience ! To tell himself everything is alright. Pityful! A soldier got killed, a human being got blown to pieces and everything is just fine....Do you call that love? You know what? In the end –he'll leave her .. then she'll pay twice the price

**Dana:** He won't hurt her- he loves her ...

**Uri:** Well then he shouldn't have fallen in love with her.!

**Dana:** What choice did he have?

**Uri:** What do you know about love? You have some weird philosophy that suits animals ...Love isn't something uncontrollable! He shouldn't have let himself fall in love with her.... He failed her once, isn't that enough? (pause) How can he even speak to her , go to bed with her , travel with her , go out with her- and lie all the time? I could kill him...just kill him, Dana...(tries not to cry) My whole life could have been different if only... I could have (sudden outburst) and you're all trying to protect the bastard !

**Dana:** Not him Uri, her.

**Yotam:** Dana, it's our father.. true I have no memories, but to live with the guy that killed your father, to see him every day, to think that....

**Dana:** What's written in the report,? What exactly is written there?  
Was it done purposely?

**Uri:** Don't preach me Dana... you think you can see into this... if you try to protect him then you can't feel or understand anything – so don't preach to me and don't mix in !

(Uri leaves , Dana right behind)

**Dana:** Wait a minute ! I want to talk to you...

**Yotam:** (to aud) That's it ! It's just not working out !! I did my best..I tried.. (Shouts) It's not working ! (takes out the bird cages, opens them and throws the empty cages back in ) to aud.

I suddenly couldn't stand being alone – something petrified me- I wanted someone to talk to... but nobody even looked my way...I couldn't be alone ..I just couldn't...

Act 2 scene 3

**( Amnon and Noa enter , singing )**

**Noa :**Oh , I really missed home ..

**Amnon :** Yotam !

**Noa :** Shh.. it's the middle of the night

(Amnon bumps into the empty cages )

**Amnon :** Noa .. come here a minute ..

**Noa :** Whats the matter ?

**Amnon :** The cages , they're all empty ! Where are the birds ?! They were wounded ...

**Noa :** I don't understand it ...

**Amnon :** I knew it ! I shouldn't have gone !

**Noa :** Hold your horses , lets ask , find out .. Dana and Yotam were here .. maybe something happened ?

( Yotam enters , Noa comes close , to hug him ) Yotami ! I missed you ..

**Amnon :** Hi Yotam ! Where are the birds ?

**( Yotam frees himself from the hug )**

**Noa** : Yotam .. Amnon just asked you a question . (Yotam remains silent. Noa gets annoyed ) Do you know , or don't you know where the birds are ?

**Yotam** : ( annoyed at her outburst ) I really don't care ..

**Noa** : You promised to take care of them ! You promised .. where are the birds ?

**Yotam** : I don't know

**Amnon** : You don't need to back him up

**Yotam** : I'm backing you up !

**Amnon** : Backing me up ?!

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

**Amnon** : What did he do ?

**Yotam** : He ? who's he ? Me! Amnon- I threw out the birds myself .  
( pause . Noa is shocked by the confession )

Noa : I don't believe you .

**Yotam** : Why not ? Because I don't pour out my feelings like you lot ?

**Amnon** : I want to know exactly what you did !

**Yotam** : I also want to know what you did ! ( can't stop himself ) I'll tell you what I did.. I sent the birds as airmail messengers straight to my father ( to Noa ) I just hope they didn't tell him that besides betraying him, you're a whore ! ( Noa slaps him in the face . It takes him a few seconds to get over it ) You're so .. predictable.

**Amnon** : Where did you find the strength to kill ?

**Yotam** : Same place you found it !

**Amnon** : What did you say ?

**Yotam** : Are you preaching me ? How nice .. he keeps his secrets locked inside because he hasn't got the guts to confess , and I get hit ! You were always smarter with those weaker than you ..

**Noa** : What the heck's got into you ?

**Yotam** : You prefer the monkey game .. don't see , don't hear , don't talk. That way its safest .

**Noa** : What have monkeys got to do with you setting the birds free ?

**Yotam** : Oh, there's plenty in common .. monkeys, birds , Amnon , dad ..

**Noa** : O.K , That's enough ! I don't want to hear you ! As if its not bad enough that Uri's been driving us crazy- now you're starting as well ?!

**( Yotam gets a suitcase from elsewhere )**

**Noa** : What are you doing ?

**Yotam** : I don't like being yelled at . And Uri is the only one allowed to hit me .

**Noa** : ( trying to control herself ) Do you realize that you're doing something terrible ?

**Yotam** : Believe me , I heard today some more terrible things- and I survived ..

**Noa** : Where are you going ?

**Yotam** : I don't know , but this is definitely not my cup of tea ; shouting, smelly birds , hysteria , history- I'm the sensitive one , remember ? So it just doesn't suit me ...

**Noa** : Well I can't stand coming home after two weeks , and finding empty cages

**Yotam** : Good ! So that makes two of us ! ( finishes packing , about to leave )

**Noa** : It's the middle of the night ! Youre not going anywhere !

**Amnon** : Yotam ...

**Noa** : Yotam ! Stop it ! ..Please.

**Yotam** : I don't want to stop it ! Until today I've done whatever's good for everybody else- from now on ,I'll do whatever I want ! As for Amnon don't worry , he'll bring new birds ...

**Amnon** : ( deeply offended ) I live here , together with you , and you'll respect my birds the same way that I respect sofas Uri bought in the flea-market fifteen years ago !

**Yotam** : So now you're mocking his memories too ..

**Amnon** : Not at all .

**Noa** : Amnon , excuse me , this is between him and me .

**Amnon** : No, it's between him and me .

**Yotam** : He's right ! listen to him for once ! (to Amnon ) It's between you and me , you and Uri , and you and my father .

**Amnon** : There's nothing between me and your father .

**Yotam** : Well the report seems to think otherwise...

**Amnon** : What report ?

**Yotam** : Ask Uri- he'll gladly tell you !

(Yotam leaves with his luggage)

**Noa** : What's between you and their father ?

**Amnon** : Nothing .

**Noa** : So why is he insisting on putting you together?

**Amnon** : I don't know .

**Noa** : Were you ..? Are you connected at all with ..?

**Amnon** : Never ever.

**Noa** : Then what's he talking about ?

**Amnon** : He's talking about my accident .. ( long pause ) I hit a soldier , during practice .. it was a mistake ..

**Noa** : You hit , and...

**Amnon** : I- I killed a soldier ( pause )

**Noa** : ( finding it hard to comprehend ) What do you mean you killed ? How can you just say that ? .. I killed a soldier . I don't believe it ! I .. you.. ( screams ) What do you mean *I killed a soldier* ?! ( pause . Amnon wants to talk , but Noa starts first )

**Noa** : For almost a year , you've been living with me .. almost a year ! .. why didn't you tell me ?

**Amnon** : Its none of your business .

**Noa** : None of my business ?? You know that I .. that the kids .. that...

**Amnon** : That what ? I hit my best friend in an air-raid.. its got nothing to do with you . And nothing to do with your kids .

**Noa** : But you kept it secret .

**Amnon** : I have full right to .

**Noa** : No. You're living with me .

**Amnon** : Even so , and even though you are who you are , you have no rights over my wounds and secrets . I don't owe them to you .

**Noa** : How do the kids know ?

**Amnon** : They searched .

**Noa** : How did they connect it to Motti ?

**Amnon** : That , I told you , I have no idea .. My accident was half a year later .

**Noa** : So they're lying ?  
(pause )

**Amnon** : Uris' looking for someone to blame for his fathers death .. he collected bits of information , didn't check them out , and put them together exactly as he wanted to see the full picture .

**Noa** : If you would've just spoken to me .. I've never lifted a finger on either of them . If only I would've known .. we're not a normal family , there's a boy here still mourning his fathers'death - it may sound farfetched , but it's a fact . I told you , he's my son ...

**Amnon** : In the Judean desert you never told me you were a widow, and when I knew, I didn't dare ..

**Noa** : Didn't you realize I'd find out one day ..

**Amnon** : I was scared of your reaction ..

**Noa** : So that's Itamar .

**Amnon**: (cold) I've never spoken about Itamar . I could only write to him ...you saw it on the computer (pause) We were in the same class at school and if it really worries you, I'll get the report of the incident.  
(pause. they both seem to be lost )

**Noa**: (controlled outburst) You lot in the army don't know what you're doing! What's going on there ?! Do you know what was written in Motti's report ? The officer gave an order not to bomb, but one pilot didn't hear him! He was also low on fuel, and he bombed... What is 'low on fuel'? Tell me what that means so I can understand! They go out on missions without fuel , so they drop bombs at any price?

**Amnon**: Not at any price – by mistake. It happens in war- it happened in the past, and it will happen in the future.

**Noa**: Great! So there's hope!(pause) What shall I tell the kids now?

**Amnon**: I'll speak to them.

**Noa**: No, it's my job..... (Amnon Leaves fade)



Scene 4 Noon Dana's house.

**Yotam** (to the audience ): Within 5 minutes I become Hamlet. My father's friend killed my father, and I have to take revenge . I've never taken revenge before but I know it's what everyone is expecting of me ... Until now Uri was law and I was mercy- that's all over...Now I need to take sides, but I don't know what side I'm on....

**Dana:** Didn't you go to school?

**Yotam:** Tell me- Hamlets' mother -what did she think? That her son was crazy ? NO!

**Dana:** You haven't eaten either-

**Yotam :** She didn't think she was betraying- she was sure he was the crazy one!

**Dana:** Why aren't you eating anything?

**Yotam;** And Bat-Sheva... David threw her husband out to war and she runs off with the king.....Tell me do women have no Back Bone?

**Dana:** I forbid you to read anything for the next few months . Do you hear me? You're not touching any books, and that includes the bible.

**Yotam:** I don't read the bible, I remember it by heart.

**Dana:** You're mixing fiction with reality!

**Yotam:** I've been here for four days, and she hasn't even called . That's reality?

**Dana:** You didn't look after the birds!

**Yotam:** After Uri told me... I felt so unstable ...

I won't live with him in the same house! I am not going back until he goes! He's ruined my life, this Amnon – because of him we are only half a family, because of him I'm not manly, because of him I'm a

book worm ,because of him I think of others instead of myself ..he disturbed my whole bloody life and do you know what the saddest part of this story is (pause)...? I' ve got used to him...

**Dana:** Oh ,you're so cute.. it's a shame you 're so young!

**Yotam:** What difference does it make how old I am?

**Dana:** Everything will be all right, you'll see, all the pieces will fall into place.

(They have a pillow fight, Yotam suddenly hugs Dana)

**Dana:** Hey Kiddo , What's this ?

**Yotam:** I love you Dana!

**Dana:** (Laughs embarrassed, pushes him away, he holds her hand) Stop talking rubbish!

**Yotam:** I really feel deeply for you...

**Dana:** (tries to back off) Yotam, you and I are like big sister and little brother .. listen-

**Yotam:** (won't let go) Don't say that ... I love you , I'm waiting for you- now I'm too young, but in a couple of years the age difference will be irrelevant. There are a lot of love stories like that...Don't leave me Dana! I'll die without you ... I'm totally alone in this world.

**Dana:** (Shakes him) What are you talking about? What's got into you?

**Yotam** (leaves her, to the aud) I felt her breast! Who can I tell ! Noone ! If Amnon weren't a murderer .. so until there's a man in the house I won't fall in love again ... Dana ,as usual , went to back Mum up.

### Noa's House

**Noa:** Yotam never came back and Uri's not talking to me

**Dana** :(pause) Where is Amnon?

**Noa:** I don't know

**Dana:** Don't judge him. If he's a crook the whole country are crooks . He was only a soldier and what do soldiers do? Kill each other!

**Noa:** Look at us Dana! Where am I ? Where are the Kids? Where's our home?

**Dana:** Don't give up yet. You haven't had any relationship for so long, and he pulled you up like a rope.

**Noa:** The kids will never accept him- never!

**Dana:** They don't need to forgive him .. it's his story, he's got to live with himself. I'm sure that's hard enough for him.

**Uri:** (surprises them) Why are you mixing in?

**Dana:** Where did you spring from ?

**Uri:** Why do you think it's hard on him?

**Dana:** I believe him.

**Uri:** You believe him . Who asked you what you believe?

**Dana:** Don't you speak to me like that- you spoilt , selfish brat!

**Uri:** Go back to your Moshav, marry the man that loves you. Leave me and my mother alone.

**Dana:** Don't you worry Uri. I'm leaving. You'll never see me again. But for your own sake stop giving everyone advice and come back to earth. Who do you think you are – chucking everyone out? Look at your family- with you around , your mum's got a snowballs' chance in hell for a good relationship ! (Dana leaves)

**Noa:** It's true. Amnon had his accident- but it's got nothing to do with your father.

**Uri:** There are facts and he's selling you a bunch of lies again.

**Noa:** Uri, there are no facts.

**Uri:** Have you checked?

**Noa:** I know. You got mixed up with another story.

**Uri:** I did not mix up anything!

**Noa:** You are wrong, it's not him!! And you still have a chance to back out.

**Uri:** Back out from where?

**Noa:** You've been against him from the first moment. If it were someone else you'd make up a different story. You'd find something . it's no big problem everyone has secrets....

**Uri:** It depends what secrets!! You think you know everything!

**Noa:** I don't want to know!! Fifteen years are more than enough. Those living above the ground don't deserve any less than those living under the ground ... I'm not a tombstone of my memories. True , he had an accident but he's not guilty...he's not a liar - he's a victim, just like your father .

**Uri:** (outburst) How can you compare them? He's alive and Dad's dead!  
(pause) I'm leaving home....

**Noa:** You are not leaving home before you finish the course..

**Uri:** I don't want to decide for you , don't want to take responsibility for your life (pause) and if you have any doubts , it's all written. There are facts.

**Noa:** You are right it's written- but you never read it...

**Uri:** What are you insinuating? That I made it all up? Pilots told me..

**Noa:** "Pilots told me" isn't enough ! The report itself - have you read it?  
(silence) Did you or didn't you read it ? (She gives it to him)

**Yotam:** Uri hadn't read the report, he just read the beginning. On the day Dad got killed there were 25 actions in Lebanon. Amnon took part in one of them, the whole air force took part. He had nothing to do with the

action that hit Dad. How do I get out of this one ... I must speak to Mum and Amnon...

**(late evening , same day, Amnon collects his stuff and cages)**

**Noa:** Uri went to look for a room to rent...

**Amnon:** Good for him.

**Noa:** Like your baby animals ...

**Amnon:** No, don't worry- he'll always come home.

**Noa:** But he won't sleep here. He won't turn the house upside down... His friends won't raid my fridge!

**Amnon:** You come to me ,when you can . When this cools down

**Noa:** I need time Amnon. A lot of time- alone with the kids. You'll always remind them of something very difficult...

**Amnon:** I know.

**Noa:** If you don't go to Africa- we could meet again soon ,maybe .

**Amnon:** I have to go.

**Noa:** Why now?

**Amnon:** It's the only place I can be , there is no other place- (he hugs Noa) and after what happened- I can't stay here ...When you feel you can...

**Noa:** I can't leave the kids.

**Amnon :** For a short while ?

**Noa:** I can't promise anything...

**Amnon:** You don't need to promise.

**(Uri walks in, moment of silence )**

**Uri:** (very embarrassed) Do you need help with those to the car?

**Amnon:** No. I'll manage (pause- brings in sofa). The sofa you were looking for.

**Uri:** Where did you find it?

**Amnon :** I bought it back from the Rag and bone man.(Amnon about to leave.)

**Uri:** Amnon -

**Amnon:** I left my address with your mum- you can write if you want.

**(Amnon Leaves)**

**Yotam:** Although we were all wrong . Amnon left at the end of the summer, and we never saw him again. The cages went with him – Mum was so down she didn't leave her room for a week. What I didn't understand was... In Anna Karanina, she went crazy when her lover left her, because she had nothing of her own. Mum has us , but maybe kids aren't enough ...?

In September Mum went back to the office , Uri went back to his course and I went back to school. (to Aud) Then one day - she just left . She said she was going for three weeks, but four weeks have already passed . Dana is in charge of the house, I'm not in love with her any more.

Mum's in Africa and she writes every day. I'm not worried. I told her myself "take your time" ...I just miss her so much ...I never really said all I wanted to.

If I could, I would tell her that I'm sorry about the birds, about Amnon. There are things I didn't understand, after all - I'm a kid... WHAT DO KIDS KNOW ABOUT LOVE?

**-END-**