

5 kilo sugar

by Gur Koren

gur koren

gurkoren4@gmail.com

Phone number: 052-4452968 Israel

Gur koren

Bar giora 10/1

Tel Aviv 64336

ISRAEL

SCENE 1:

PROLOG

Gur: This story I am going to tell you is true, a story that happened for real.

I'm not saying it makes it more exciting or meaningful. After all there are lots of real life stories that are really boring and some fictional ones that are brilliant. Generally speaking if we take the top 100 pieces of all time, I think most of them are based more on the writer's imagination than on reality. But my story- is not only real; it is both exciting and meaningful, apart from one part that is a bit boring, but I didn't cut it from the play because it was "a bit boring" - that's how it is with the truth, sometimes it's a bit boring, but my point is that you should tell the truth the way it is, and not consider if it's exciting or not, although like I've said, in this case it is exciting, apart from that one part I've mentioned. So, during the boring part you may lose a bit of focus, maybe you'll think about some other stuff, though this can also happen at moments that are not very boring, for instance, when I came to visit my sister at the hospital right after she had her first son, my first nephew, right? so my sister, lying in bed looking like a plucked chicken, an interesting moment for sure, so at this very moment I suddenly thought of other stuff, I thought about this girl, Nili, nothing really happened with her in the end, but I've proved my point, right? You may think about other stuff at boring moments and at non-boring moments, in real stories and in fictional ones. Anyway, if during the boring part anyone here yawns I'll let it go. But if you can do it quietly so you don't distract the actors

I brought some evidence here with me to prove to you that all this really happened:

For example, my character's name in the play is Gur Koren. Now, I really am Gur Koren, it is actually my name, so I brought my ID card, to show you that it's really me. The picture was taken when I was 16 but you can still see it's me, right?

Now this is a napkin from the coffee shop where I sat with Yoad Riva, now I know this is a bit of a spoiler, but at this point I'd rather you trust me on the "truth" thing.

This is Yoad Riva's book of course. Ah, and this is the receipt from the cab I took to his place.

Obviously you may argue "any one can bring a receipt from a cab or a napkin from a coffee shop, that doesn't prove that his story is real" you're absolutely right. But if that's your attitude maybe we should call this whole thing off right now. Anyone who wants to see any other items, then I'll show them after the show, now I need them for the show.

If you're wondering why I'm so obsessed with the truth, I am an actor after all, I was trained to lie, then you wonder correctly. I'm not generally obsessed with the truth. On the contrary, I'm quite fond of lying. But in this particular case, I am obsessed with truth, not just because it's a story to do with the respect I have for the living and the dead in my family, but also because when people don't believe you, well, it really hurts...doesn't it?

SCENE 2:

At the head teacher's Office

Gur: I choose to begin the story in April 2007, it was just after Passover that year. I sent my CV to various schools, and one of them called me back for a job interview. Which one? Atidim high school in Holon. In Hahistadrut street. I'm intentionally pedantic about the facts for the reasons I've mentioned in the prologue, if I feel you guys trust me on it I'll stop nagging you. Ok, I'm not the only actor on the stage anymore so lets begin?...

Head teacher: So Gur...Gur Koren...What a unique name... Gur. Do you like being called Guri? I personally prefer names that end with a vowel rather than ones ending with a consonant. So what do you prefer? Gur or Guri?

Gur: Gur

Headteacher: Assertive. I like it. Gur Gur Gur. It's still a nice name in spite of the consonant.

What's that, "The Seagull"?! "The Seagull" by Chekhov?! You've directed that?

Gur: I was an assistant director.

Headteacher: I remember seeing Gila Almagor playing Nina... She's a real actress, isn't she? That was a long time ago, but I'll never forget how she whispered: "Boris... Boris..." an unforgettable moment, isn't it?

That was his name Boris, right?

Gur: Right, Boris Trigorin

Headteacher: Who played Boris in your production?

Gur: Boris Yeltsin

Principle: who?

Gur: I just tried a joke.

Principle: Humour. I like it, but with the right timing, don't you agree? Anyway, your resume is very impressive. I don't know most of the plays here but I assume you didn't make them up... In any case I trust what I see. You are dressed up properly, you are shaved, well groomed, I like it. Anyway, next year will be the first year for the theatre department in our school, remind me to tell you later about the new budgeting system of the education ministry, and I would really like... (to the secretary) Tiki! Reschedule the meeting with Frenkel to Wednesday 11 o'clock. And call Tzilla from the council, to ask her if she'd like to be present as well...if she wants

to be present she can be present as long as she doesn't utter a word...Anyway, you...

Gur: Gur

Headteacher: Gur... I'll give you this job, you look like a serious guy. You will be both a director and a Drama teacher. Wait a minute, have you been a teacher before?

Gur: No, but I think I can be really good at it.

Principle: Self-confidence. I like it. You should know this is a very difficult age group. A problematic age... Tiki, get me Osnat from **WIZO ("Women's International Zionist Organisation")** on the phone and if she's not there leave a message on her mobile .

They're actually not to blame those kids, way more hormones than brain cells, so it's very important to be cautious with them, you probably heard the story about that Drama teacher...? In the high school in Tel-Aviv, You know the famous case?

Gur: The teacher who told his students to masturbate?

Principle: Oh dear oh dear! I'm getting nauseous just hearing those words, remind me to tell you about the use of proper language. Now, you tell me, as a director or someone from this field, why on earth would someone ask his students to do such a thing??

Gur: well, when I think of this objectively

Principle: how can you be objective?? This man is a sex offender, he is dangerously ill, he's a pervert in the worst sense, and that's the last thing I need here in our school, not that i'm implying God forbid anything about you, but after all, you are a young man.

Gur: I'm not that young.

Principle: Believe me Gur, for the girls in this school you're at the most dangerous age.

(Enter a student which we will soon find out is called Lee-My Shimoni)

Lee-My: Hi headteacher, Nicole sent me to your office.

PRINCIPLE: Miss Lee-My Shimoni! Could you say Hello first, could you check if you're not interrupting? Is it always about your needs first?! Have you ever considered the possibility that I have needs as well Miss Shimoni?!

Lee-My: I'm sorry to interrupt you Miss Principle but I'm like, supposed to give you this note...

Headteacher: So are you 'like' giving it to me or are you actually giving it to me?

Lee-My: actually giving it to you.

Principle: This is Gur. Gur Koren. He's likely to be your Drama teacher next year, perhaps even to direct something at the end of the year. Remind me to suggest something to you afterwards regarding their final show... And this young lady is Lee-My Shimoni who thinks the entire world revolves around her. Right, Lee-My?

Lee-My: not the Entire world Miss, only Europe and Asia.

Principle: Oh Lee-My Lee-My, I just hope that when you finish at this institute you'll be a bit more... (looking at the note from the lab teacher) you did what?! The cigarettes to me- now!

(Gur and Lee-My hand over a pack of cigarettes)

Principle: Gur, you can keep yours, but remind me to tell you something later about personal example, now listen to me well Miss Shimoni, The burners in the lab are used only for heating test tubes and not for these death sticks! I really hope I am making myself clear! But I'm not going to speak to you in this forum, Tiki, set me an appointment for tomorrow morning with Mr. and Mrs. Shimoni. Remind me to tell you something later about parent's involvement.

Lee-My: Miss, am I supposed to like stay here?

HT: Not to 'like' stay here? Stay here for real (goes out) Oy Tiki, Tiki, it's not hard, you call Tzila from the town hall and tell her that I am going to meet Frenkel...

Gur: So, Lee-My, what year are you in?

Lee-My: So, are you already married ?

Gur: Excuse me?

Lee-My: Did you get married?

Gur: No

Lee-My: Oh dear, Listen Gur, We need to speak about something serious.

Gur: Ok

Lee-My: Meet me at 2 o'clock in the square

Gur: About the talk with your parents?

Lee-My: (In Yiddish) Oy, Kayn Naches es vert shoyn nicht sein.

Headteacher: Lee-My, you can go home and come again tomorrow morning at exactly eight o'clock, with your parents.

Lee-My: Miss, could you like give me back my cigarettes?

HT: I won't 'like' give them back to you and won't really give them back. Good day Lee-My and think really well about what you've done.

(Lee-My exits)

Do you understand what I'm talking about? That's another reason I want them to study Drama to save them from the poor language they use, do you know how many 'like' I hear here every day?

Gur: Excuse me, do you teach them Yiddish here in the school?

HT: Yiddish? No. English and Arabic is not enough?

Gur: This girl just told me 'Oy Kayn Naches es vert ...' it's in Yiddish isn't it?

HT: You're probably imagining it, they speak so unclear that it sounds like Yiddish, Russian and *Amharic* all mixed up. (Headteacher leaves)

GUR: If you're wondering what happened in the end with this High school in Holon so, in the end I didn't really work there. I mean I did work there twice but then the headteacher fired me since I shouted at some of the kids and the parents complained.

Is there anyone here who has ever worked with young people? They will get the devil out of you these little shits. Never mind, this is really not part of the story. I have a friend that is also a Drama teacher who told me when I got fired: "Gur, you might have lost 700 shekels a week but Cancer drugs also cost money", and whoever has worked with young people knows what I'm talking about.

So let's get back to the plot, I left the school quite confused: To go and meet this girl or not to go? What 'serious business' does she need to speak to me about? As the headteacher said 'They are at a very sensitive age' perhaps I can help with anything? (I also think it might be the pervert side in me that hoped perhaps something would happen with this Lee-My...of course I can't be proud of it but to deny it will be wrong to the truth).

Let's get back a few lines, this Lee-My said: Meet me at 2 o'clock in the square but she didn't say which square. Her school is in Holon so it makes sense she means a square in Holon but which square is there in Holon? *Kougel square? The warriors square? The red square?* (an absurd option, but I wanted to mention another square so you see how confusing it was).

In the end and with no few doubts I decided to go to Dizengoff square.

SCENE 3

IN DIZENGOFF SQUARE

(Enters a beggar)

I chose Dizengoff square in Tel-Aviv for two main reasons: a) Since it is a meeting place for rebellious youngsters like the type of this girl Lee-My and b) It is simply close to my house.

BEGGAR: Excuse me, could you spare some change? I need money for food

Gur: No. So if she doesn't come or I get scared I can immediately go home...

BEGGAR: Excuse me, could you spare some change? I need some money for the bus

Gur: Sorry. Just in case she does want to come to mine for some reason, not that I'm going to lead anything towards it God forbid, but then it will be nearby...

BEGGAR: Excuse me, could you spare some change? I need money for medication for my kids.

Gur: Leave me alone, ok? When I ask myself today why did I want to meet this Lee-My I don't have a clear answer, perhaps I anticipated something, perhaps out of compassion or perhaps from an attraction to schoolgirls. Today all these reasons seems logical in the same way...

BEGGAR: Excuse me, could you...

Gur: Can't you see I'm talking? I don't like giving money to people ok? I pay my taxes, my national insurance so why do I have to help all these needy people?

Ok, the time was almost three o'clock and she said she'd come at two so I decided to leave, I knew it was a bad idea to come here.

Beggar: So you're here? at the last minute I thought you will think of this square, I was in a hurry when I said let's meet in the square and I thought you'd think of the square in Holon but luckily we've managed to find each other.

Gur: Excuse me?

Beggar: Listen, I need to talk to you about something, not a simple matter. I also don't have an endless amount of time, but I need you to help me with some *mass up*.

Gur: I told you already I don't have money

Beggar: and did I tell you or not to go and get a serious job and to stop playing with your *luft gesheften* (*In Iddiesh: Air balloon business*). Look Gurke I can only be here for a few minutes so it's important that you listen to me...

Gur: What did you just call me?

BEGGAR: What did I call you? Gurke, do you want me to call you Gur, I will call you Gur, oy the nerve of the *kids*, as they say **Der Tsiflonek merchuchem pin der hin** (in Yidish: the Hen is cleverer than the chicken) How can I translate it for you?...

Gur: How do you know my name?

BEGGAR: How do I know? I remember all your names: Gur, Sela, Ayelet, Yotam, what's the little bugger's name... I forgot, what's Ayelet's one called?

Gur: Lotus

BEGGAR: Yes, Lotus. If I remember right, he is supposed to be five years old already, isn't he? I wouldn't mind several more great grandsons but you as they say, not in a hurry anywhere, ah?

Gur: Grandpa?

Beggar: yes, grandpa, you don't have to open a bottle but I thought you'd at least bring a little smile for your old man.

Gur: Grandpa? What are you doing here? How did you...?

Beggar: Ah, this? You mean, this big mass I did to you, well I can explain, but you won't understand *anyway and* it will take a long time. (sits Gur down) Look Gurke, I used a little 'oppurtunity' to come here to talk to you about something, actually I need your help with a little matter, it's about a story that has started...

Gur: Hold on a minute, no I can't believe it. No, I can't believe it.

BEGGAR: Oy Gurke, don't be such a *Shmuck*...you know what they say in Yiddish? *Wass ich will gleib ich indem-* I BELIEVE WHAT I WANT to believe, CAPISH?

Gur: Grandpa...but you are dead how can it be?

BEGGAR: and how could it be that 6 million Jews went like flies? Do you think we could believe this? We knew there were some *massacres* but 6 million? Who could believe such a thing?

Gur: Oh grandpa it's not the same... there was a logical explanation: The Nazis killed them but... why am I arguing with you, you are dead!

Begger: Ok, I am dead, do you have to constantly remind me? Do you think I constantly reminded your dad that he didn't manage to break the glass at his wedding? No. Although Yona and Yechiel didn't forget it so fast, Yehiel kept telling me: 'What a wimp your son is, he can't even break a glass. Well, never mind...Ok Gur can you help me with something or do you only want to hear stories on how I got here...soon I need to be back and if we don't manage to sort things out ...

Gur: To go back where? To paradise?

Begger: Paradise... (laughs) what ***bobe maises (Yiddish: old wives tales)***...
Gurke, do you remember Yosef Riva?

Gur: No

BEGGAR: Didn't I tell you about Yosef Riva? When you did this essay for school?
What was it called?

Gur: Roots

BEGGAR: oh yes...roots. So didn't I tell you then about Yosef Riva?

Gur: Perhaps you told Sela?

BEGGAR: I knew I should have gone to your brother.

Yosef was from my town, from Nobi Dvor and he was also part of the group that escaped to the USSR before the Nazis, curse their souls, entered Poland. We were Zelig Gutman, Yosef Grinner, Yankl Avanson, Michael Reichman there were a few more including Yosef Riva. So after we crossed the border illegally, we arrived at Bialistok which is in west Ukraine where all the *refugees*, went to the synagogue. So we also went and when I saw what was happening there I couldn't believe my eyes, perhaps five hundred Jews as dirty as rats all crowded together, and the worst was that they were picking lice from each other...hold on a moment I have to go, I will be back soon.

Gur: Where are you going?

BEGGAR: I am not going anywhere! This square belongs to everyone and neither you nor your mother can tell me where to go. Can you spare some change?

Enters SHIMRIT

BEGGAR: Excuse me, can you spare some change?

SHIMRIT: Yes. Yes I can. So what? I work, I make money. Do I need to get harassed for that? No, no I don't!

BEGGAR: I haven't eaten for days.

SHIMRIT: and I had my car towed 'cause I had half a wheel in no-parking. Do I ask you to go halves on the ticket? No! No I don't!

BEGGAR *leaves*

SHIMRIT: Do you know if the sixty-six comes through here?

GUR: No.

Shimrit: I am talking about the mini buses because I understand they have different routes to the buses

Gur: I really don't know...

SHIMRIT: So where were we, Gurke? I've told you about the synagogue in Bialystok yes? So from the synagogue we went to...

GUR: Grandpa? Is that you?

SHIMRIT: Nu of course it's me.

GUR: How do you do that?

SHIMRIT: You never forget these things. Yes it's been 68 years, but how can I forget?

GUR: No, how do you get inside these people?

Shimrit: Ah, there are people that have a space that you can get into.

Gur: yes, but how? I mean from where are you?...

SHIMRIT: Gurke, you wouldn't understand anyway, and I have to go back soon, and if they knew I was gone they could really...

GUR: Who's 'they'? The angels?

SHIMRIT: Angels? (laughs) such **bobbe-meises**.

So when I saw all the refugees with the head lice I thought "Shleyme, It's time to get out!" So I travelled to Brest-Litovsk. By the way Gurke do you know who was born in Brest Litovsk?

Gur: No

SHIMRIT: Menachem Begin, anyway, then I left the gang from Nobi Dvor, including Yosef Riva, and I went to Brest-Litovsk where I had the chance to hop on a train going east. When I get off at some station to drink some **Kipiatok (boiled water)** , Gurke do you know what is Kipiatok?

GUR: No

SHIMRIT: Kipiatok is boiled water they used to have at every station in Russia. So who do I meet there? Yosef Riva, just off a train from Bialystok, he also decided to try his luck in eastern USSR. So eventually we got on a differant train to Witsbek, in northeast Belorussia... what's this itching down there?

SHIMRIT lifts her skirt a bit and looks at her knickers

SHIMRIT: Look at this, Gurke, they start making underwear and then stop half way.

GUR: It's a thong grandpa, it's in fashion...

SHIMRIT: It's too small for her...

GUR: It's good for her...

SHIMRIT: You pay full price for this thing?

GUR: What? Yes, full p....

SHIMRIT: Oy Gurke, forget this for a moment and focus! I'm getting to the point, in Witsbek it was, as they say, heaven on earth, considering the lives of the refugees... But when spring came, longings for the family came, and there were rumours that fellas were moving toward Kiev, and from there to west Ukraine somehow, and from there we planned to go home – to Poland. We didn't know back then that the bloody Nazis, "cleaned" the Jews out of most of Poland. So Yosef and I got on a train to Kiev, when I say got on a train I mean we stowed away in the luggage compartment. In Kiev we stayed at Aharon Rosenthal and after 7 or 8 days we said goodbye and we headed to Bialistok.

Gur: Isn't Bialistock the town that you got to when you crossed the border?

SHIMRIT: Yes, we got back there since we wanted to go back towards Poland. We returned to Bialistok through Sarnei which is by the way where your grandma was born, and there in Sarney, they told us there was a sugar shortage in Bialistok.... Ah!!!!!!

SHIMRIT dials her mobile

SHIMRIT: Dad, I want you to come pick me up!... Dizengoff square... no, no sixty-six, no mini-buses and no buses. Hold on a sec. Does the Seventy-two come through here?

GUR: Yes...no... that's by Rabin square.

SHIMRIT: There's no seventy-two!... no, I'm not going to buy a parking permit just to pop up to Itay for a sec to drop off a book... Why do you say that? Were you there? No, no you weren't! So are you coming or not? ... Fine, don't do me any favours, bye. (Hangs up). Excuse me Gurke, I had to go back for a moment, where were we, in Sarney, yes?

GUR: What? Why did you go back?

SHIMRIT: You think its so easy coming here? They count us every hour over there like in prison.

In Sarnei Yosef and I bought five kilos of sugar each and when we left the train station in Bialistok these two gentlemen approached us and asked in Yiddish about

our “luggage”. So I tell them I have “ a bit of sugar with me” and then I ask them “if they’re interested in buying some”. And then the two gentlemen introduce themselves as policemen and ask us to accompany them to the police station. Then Yosef, who was light on his feet, skedaddles out of there and vanishes, as if the ground swallowed him up. And... your grandpa got the taste of a soviet prison for two whole months.

SHIMRIT’s mobile rings

Hello?

GUR: Grandpa, maybe...

SHIMRIT: Shush, shush! No Mrs. there is no Shimrit here...

GUR: Grandpa it’s best to...

SHIMRIT: Shush Gurke, Grandpa’s on the phone! This is not Shimrit, it’s a wrong number, you should call 118 if you need to find a number...

(Hangs up)

Kurve, not very nice. Anyway, since that day in Bialistok me and Yosef haven’t met each other. In 1951 your grandmother and I met Aharon and Yaffa, your father’s uncles, to drink soda in Alenbi street and I suddenly see a shop which says ‘**Riva’s** Apparels’ and there I see him, Yosef. It turned out he opened a shop in Tel-Aviv. I didn’t go in of course, I was with your grandma and she didn’t like to meet people from the war. I thought this was the end of the story, right? but a little while ago who do I see? The great honourable Yosef Riva, they’ve put us in the same ward, and he speaks to me as if nothing happened, we talk about this and we talk about that and then we talk about his memories of the war...

GUR: hold on, in what ward did you see him? In the hospital you were in?

SHIMRIT: Over there I see him, over there! Where we are now!

GUR: Ah up in the sky!

SHIMRIT: It’s not in the sky Gurke, in the sky there are only clouds! That’s the kind of **bobbe-meises** they tell you here about death!

GUR: So tell me yourself....

SHIMRIT: Leave it Gurke! So what transpires? That Yosef remembers going to Bialystok on his own! Smuggling sugar on his own! You understand? He tells everyone what a big hero he was and doesn’t say how he deserted his friend to the police. And this is where I come to you for help.

GUR: Yes?

SHIMRIT: Yosef told me that his grandson is writing a book about his grandpa, about Yosef, yes?... and the book tells his story of the war, and how he came to Israel and so on, Kapish? I want you to do something about Riva's book, I want the truth to come out. I want the book to say that Shlomo Koren also went to Bialystok with the sugar and that I got caught and that he ran away, like a Shmendrik he ran away!

GUR: Grandpa, what am I supposed to do? Go to Yosef Riva's grandson and tell him... what? That my grandpa came from the world beyond and told me that the story his grandpa told was not entirely true?

SHIMRIT: Tell me this, how come you're not married? Before I left, you had a beautiful girl with curly hair, why did you not marry her? What is your grandpa asking you? To make him compote out of nails? Did I ask you to clean my *tuches* when I got back from hospital? You brought a *shiksa* (In Iddish: foreigner) for that, right? You knew very well to cry over my grave when everyone was watching, but when your grandpa asks you to make amends for a little injustice, that is too much for you ah? Smarkatch!

SHIMRIT's mobile rings

SHIMRIT: Hello? ... What? No, you didn't call.... Mum, you didn't call! Doesn't matter now. Who's picking me up? You or dad?... so where are you? Ok, I'm coming towards you...No, no, I'm not walking all that way! I'm not going to walk!

SHIMRIT leaves

GUR: What would you do if this happened to you? I could have gone to my Doctor. I could have told my family, see if it had happened to anyone else, I could have told myself that all of this never really happened and go on as usual...

Now, whenever I face any major conflict in life or a serious dilemma I go to sleep and wait till I wake up with some new insight or with a dream that gives me some direction.

So that's what I did. And actually I fell asleep really quickly. When I woke up I realised I remembered every little detail of my conversation with grandpa, or whoever it was, and I decided to just accept it.

As you accept all the strange things that happen in life, and I had a lot of strange things happening to me. For example several years ago I was with somebody and after she comes ...we were naked in bed and I was stroking her bum...

An actor gets closer to Gur and whispers to him

Gur: Leave it, in any case this show won't get any Arts Council funding – the actors here think it could get Arts Council funding

ACTOR: Why wouldn't it get any Arts Council funding? It has very educational elements: Holocaust, bravery, intergenerational relationship.

GUR: Can you imagine a high school in Beer Sheva coming to watch this show?

ACTOR: Why not? It's a great show for secondary schools. And on Holocaust memorial day we can go from one school to another, do you know how much money there is in **Theatre in education** (T.I.E)? With all the respect to Gesher theatre, T.I.E pays the best money, believe me only schools...and the kids don't have to listen to who you've slept with and how, in any case it is not relevant to the story, so don't say it if you don't have to.

Gur: Ok, ok I won't tell this story. Anyway: I'll go back to the end of the last monologue: I decided to accept it since in life sometimes strange things happen. *Is this acceptable?*

ACTOR leaves, Gur continues in a quiet voice

So with this girl, I came once and it was quite a lot and then me and the girl are smoking and talking and then I have another hard on, not after half an hour, after three minutes and I came again, strange isn't it? Bring me a Professor of science to explain this! It's never happened to me beforehand or ever since, usually I need at least an hour or two, and most times only once a night and if I do it's only if I meet someone that...

ACTOR Enters again

And the influence of immigration on the Israeli culture was massive, because of the Holocaust and the...

ACTOR leaves

So where were we? I get up and put on google: Riva's Apparels, Alenbi street Tel-aviv and I see that there was a shop with this name (hold on a second, do you know what Apparel is? It means, fashion ,clothing...a word that is hardly used...what? You were too shy to ask? So sweet) so I cross-checked a few things and... I get to the grandchildren of Yosef Riva of Novi Dvor. He has eight grandchildren: five granddaughters, but they don't interest us, and three grandsons: Avnerr Bar Lavi from his daughter Drora, who is a vet, and two other grandsons from his son Shmuel: Rami who lives in Boston and ...get this... Yoad Riva: junior lecturer on East EuropeanJewry. Pa pa pa pa pa pam.

I call him and introduce myself, say my name is Gur and I'm a director, which isn't strictly a lie, and that I'm directing a children's theatre production of the play Ghetto, which is strictly a lie, and I say I need help with making the production more authentic. He is nice, doesn't suspect a thing and is happy to meet me. So we agree to meet in a café.

SCENE 4

In the café

Waitress: Good evening, would you like to order?

Gur: I'm waiting for someone

ENTERS Yoad Riva

Yoad: Gur ?

Gur: Yoad?

Yoad: R-ight. How amazing, that's exactly how I imagined you. I have a talent of hearing people on the phone and then imagining what they look like. Do you mind standing for a minute? What's your height?

Gur: 1.83

YOAD: How crazy, I imagined you 1.73 so you surprised me by 10cm. So Gur, are you a director?

Gur: yes

Yoad: How cool. I really like theatre. Where are you directing?

GUR: Mostly in drama schools and with young people

YOAD: How funny, I have a friend who works with young offenders

(... missing bit)

Waitress: Would you like to order?

Yoad: R-ight

Waitress: Would you like to hear 'our specials'?

Yoad: I just want a drink. What have you got?

Waitress: We have Latte, Latte Machiato, Moca-Latte, Capuccino, Mocca-chino, Hot Chocolate with Flake, Hot Chocolate without Flake, Americano, Turkish coffee and we have our special herbal teas- highly recommended

Yoad: For me-mocca latte, no actually moccachino with a lot of froth

Waitress: and for you?

Gur: Do you have cappuccino?

Waitress: Latte?

Gur: Cappuccino

Waitress: Latte

Gur: yes, fine.

Waitress: so one mochachino with lots of froth and one Latte, do you want to hear about our quiches?

Yoad: I am not really into quiches, I am more into something sweet. Do you feel like indulging with me on something sweet? What are your sweets?

Waitress: We have special Vanilla Ice Cream on Halva with Sweetened Tahini... We have Belgian Waffles with ice cream, we have the 'Marquis de Sade' which is a Belgian chocolate cake, cheese cake with crumble, hot chocolate fondant, blueberry fondant -

Yoad: I feel like something more like pastry, don't you?

Waitress: We have our pastries: Butter Croissant, chocolate croissant, almond croissant, Chocolate Brioche, Brioche with Ricotta and raisin, malt loaf, carrot and cinnamon cake, poppy seed cookies...

Yoad: How is the carrot cake?

Waitress: With cinnamon! Highly recommended

Yoad; I'll have that

Gur: I told you there is one boring section in the play.

Waitress: So one carrot and cinnamon cake. And for you?

Gur: Croissant.

Waitress: butter, chocolate or almond?

Gur: Eh...

Waitress: do you want to hear about our puddings, we have -

Gur: No! A chocolate croissant

Waitress: So,one moccachino, one latte, one carrot cake with cinnamon and one chocolate Croissant. Do you want to hear about our Foccachias?

Yoad: Maybe later...

(waitress leaves)

Yoad: So what were we talking about? Ah, you're directing 'Getto' right? How amazing, do you know we had a seminar with Sobol 6 months ago? He's a fascinating man. Have you worked with him?

Gur: With Sobol? Me? No way. He's so big, I'm small.

Yoad: I always say, size doesn't matter...

GUR: Yoad, do you mind if I smoke

YOad: Do you really have to?

GUR: No. So, Yoad, I wanted to consult you, how can I give the actors the feeling of a small town in Poland

YOAD: Vilna.

GUR: pardon?

YOAD: the play 'Getto' is about Getto Vilna it's not exactly a small town.

GUR: Yes, right...can you recommend a book that they should read?

YOAD: One book? There are millions. There is 'Those seven years' by Zuckerman, it's not easy for kids but it's very good. Have you read it?

Gur: No

Yoad: It's excellent. There is one that is not directly about this time but ...Have you read 'Poland a green land' by Apelfeld?

GUR: No

YOAD: no way? It's Apelfeld, You have to read it!

GUR: Yes...It's a shame my grandfather is not alive anymore I would have brought him to tell the actors about that time, he is not from Vilna, he lived in a small town near Warsaw but still...

YOAD: Near Warsaw? What town?

GUR: *Nobi Dvor*

YOAD: Nobi Dvor? How unbelievable! *My* grandfather is from Nobi Dvor

(ENTERS the waitress)

Waitress: Here one Moccachino and one latte, I'll bring the pastries in a moment

(TURNS to Gur) Excuse me sir, can I have a word with you?

GUR: yes

WAITRESS: Can I have a word with you , *alone*?

GUR: Excuse me?

WAITRESS: There is a certain matter I need to...

GUR: Shlomit? Is it you Shlomit?

WAITRESS: Yes I am Shlomit

GUR: Wow, I haven't recognised you (to YOAD) She was my student a few years ago. Shlomit, Meet this friend of mine Yoad Riva.. You probably want to talk about the personal matter...

Waitress: Yes, I would like to talk to you about the personal matter.

GUR: Excuse me Yoad, something between a teacher and an ex student.

YOAD: I will stay here with my moccachino

(GUR and the WAITRESS go to the side)

WAITRESS: Do you think he suspects us?

GUR: Yes he probably says to himself "this waitress is probably his grandfather"

WAITRESS: So this is Yosef's grandson

GUR: Yes it is

WAITRESS: Is he going to change the story about the sugar in the book?

GUR: What sugar? We haven't got round to it yet. With him you need to go very slowly.

WAITRESS: If you feel it isn't going well, buy him a good drink, cook a good fish, invite him and his wife and speak to their heart as they say.

GUR: Wife? I think he is gay granddad.

Waitress: What is gay? Like gay shlufen?

GUR: Feigele (In Iddish: gay) ,granddad

WAITRESS: Feigele? The grandson of Yosef Riva? why are you looking at me like that?

GUR: This time you just entered into someone very good looking grandpa

WAITRESS (looking at herself) As they say, nothing is missing. Deal with the mess up Gur, do your grandpa a favour.

Gur: I am dealing with it. Grandpa, do you mind if I touch your, I mean the waitress breasts? You don't get an opportunity like this every day?

(He Touches the waitress breasts)

WAITRESS: Oy, Gurke, what are you so excited about breasts? (*touches his own breasts*) yes, it is very nice what she got here, come you can play a bit more.

(*Gur strokes the waitress breasts*)

WAITRESS: Wow, What do you think you are doing?

(She slaps him)

WAITRESS: Sorry, I had to go back on the hour, what happened to you?

GUR: never mind just tell me next time you have to go

WAITRESS: Oh, I need to go again.

GUR: but come afterwards grandpa

WAITRESS: I'll try, In the end they will catch me. Don't let him get away...

(*GUR returns to the table*)

GUR: Sometimes it exhausts me how the responsibility for my students doesn't end when they stop being my students.

YOAD: yes, that's what I always say. (*to the waitress*) Shlomit, Shlomit, our pastries?

WAITRESS: Are you talking to me?

YOAD: Yes, I wanted to know what about our pastries?

WAITRESS: I'll bring them, and my name is Nofar

GUR: She is so complicated... so where were we?

YOAD: We just discovered that both our grandparents are from *Nobi Dvor*

GUR: What a small world. What's the name of your grandfather, God rest his soul.

YOAD: How do you know he died?

GUR: I didn't...I just guessed...from the sorrow in your eyes when you talked about him.

YOAD: You are so sensitive. Yes, he died four years ago. His name was Yosef, Yosef Riva.

GUR: What? Your grandfather was Yosef Riva? Yosef Riva from *Nobi Dvor*? I can't believe it. You wouldn't guess how much my granddad used to talk about your grandfather. It is unbelievable...

Yoad: Really?

Gur: Sure, so your grandpa is Yosef form 'Riva's Apparels'?

Yoad: How do you know about that?

Gur: It is the shop that was in Alenbi, right?

Yoad: How amazing, that you heard about it, the shop was closed before you were born. You know when I think about it my grandfather was the first fashion designer of Tel-Aviv.

Gur: Really?

YOAD: How hysterical! You won't believe it, I wrote a book about my grandfather's story.

GUR: Really? Yoad, I want to be the first to read this book!

YOAD: Well, you'll have to wait about six months, the manuscript is at the publisher's and if there aren't any problems it will be published around the holidays.

GUR: Around the holidays? I don't think I can wait till then.

YOAD: If you want you can come to mine and I will let you read the manuscript.

GUR: At your home? Wouldn't it disturb you?

YOAD: Disturb me? Of course not, our grandfathers were... hey by the way what's the name of your grandfather?

GUR: Shlomo Koren

YOAD: Shlomo Koren? It doesn't sound familiar, strange isn't it?

GUR: Yoad, life is full of strange things.

Yoad: How amazing! That's what I always say

Gur: I choose to finish the scene here, for Prosaic reasons: at this point a woman with a baby entered the café and the baby started to scream really loud.

Yoad: oy, that was annoying why do they let babies in café's?

Waitress: and also in plays working with babies is always unreliable.

Gur: true, if we bring a real baby he might scream in the wings or sleep exactly when he needs to cry...

Waitress: Babies are really unprofessional

Yoad: And the noise they make is so annoying

Gur: So I choose to stop the scene here we will say goodbye to Yoad now, we will see more than enough of him later...

SCENE 5:

Near the doctors

Gur: Three days later I am on my way to my Doctor. Nothing that is connected to my grandfather, I had some pain in my ribs. Near the doctors, there's a hedge, not sure what plant it is, and just beside it I met Gadi Electric

ENTERS Gadi 'Electric' speaking on his mobile phone

GADI: Guri? Guri? Nivi you won't believe who I see here? Guri. Wow man wow, wow man, What are you giving me your hand? A hug Guri, a hug, wait a second

Nivi, Do you remember Guri? He was at our wedding...

GUR: Me and Gadi studied together in...

GADI: Not in high school Nivi, this is Guri that studied with me in 'Beit-Zvi'

GUR: The real name of Gadi *Electric* is Gadi Havkin but everyone called him Gadi Electric as he was smoking joints and saying 'Hey brother, this joint is electric '

GADI: Of course I haven't forgotten Nivi, sure I will get it for you...

GUR: When Gadi was high he started to quote from all the monologues he has done or saw or just written. Actors...

GADI: Wow Guri ...Of course I'm with you Nivi, I just don't want to bore Guri

GUR: As you see, he already married some Niva and they had a baby called ...perhaps Maayan? Electric what's your daughter's name?

GADI: Reut, Guri, Reut

GUR: Her name is Reut and he doesn't really work as an actor anymore, he works in... electronics

Hey Gadi, do you still work in a video library?

GADI: In the library? No, I'm selling car speakerphones.

GUR: Selling car speakerphones, and although he hasn't acted for a while, every time he sees me he says that 'We have to do something together'

GADI: I won't forget my lovely, how can I forget?

GUR: 'Let's do a fringe show like only we can do Guri', that's what he says to me and then he'll tell me to speak to him tomorrow. Whoever sees us will think that tomorrow we are actually starting rehearsals on something but...well, actors have a hard life...

GADI: Bye Nivi, won't forget, love you most in the universe.

Wow man, wow wow ,what are you doing with a cigarette? Look what I've got here (*takes out a joint*) Look what I've got here, Brother, it's electric what I've got, electric!

GUR: Hey bro, there are people here.

GADI: So there are people, so what? Don't be a coward

GUR: Didn't you say you were going to stop when Maayan was born

GADI: Reut, Guri, Reuti. Yes in the beginning we thought I'd stop when she was born but you know how it is...so now Niva has decided that if I don't stop when Reut starts nursery then we are getting divorced...Oy Guri, never get married (smokes) ...Oh that's electric...so now I need to stop it, I mean in a little while...Oh what electricity...until she starts nursery...

GUR: The best is if you stop when she goes to the army

GADI: Guri what's up with you? Are you still with the curly one?

GUR: Her? No, we separated a long time ago.

GADI: Oh Guri I'm so jealous of you...do you remember Richard the second?

'Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal:
'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,
The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,
Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain"

So what did you settle on with Yosef Riva's son?

GUR: How do you know about?... Grandpa? Where did you disappear to last time?

GADI: Do you think it is easy for me to come here? Don't ask Gurke, they are watching me carefully,Here, even now, hold on a moment Gurke...Guri, do you remember Richard the 3rd?

'Now is the **winter** of our **discontent**. Made glorious summer by this sun of '...

Oy Gurke as they say they are seriously looking for me...what is this? Tsingale? (in Yiddish: a joint)

GUR: Grandpa, give it to me . Do you think you can smoke this?

GADI: what's going to happen? I won't die from it.

GUR: Grandpa, I'm going to Yoad, Yosef's grandson's house

GADI: The gay?

GUR: Yes, and I had an idea, perhaps you can tell me something that Yosef used to say. Perhaps something in Yiddish, something that...

GADI: Yiddish..Oy Guri I forgot how great it is to get high with you...You remember the days, Guri? Wouldn't you go back to drama school now? So, you remember the monologue I did...

So what were we talking about? Did you ask me something?

GUR: Grandpa , give it to me..

GADI: How do you say in Yiddish? Prier alles dap mentriken ah schnapps

GUR: Grandpa I'm asking you

GADI: That's how you say "Before anything else we need a Schnapps"

GUR: Grandpa , leave it

GADI: Oh this joint is cool...Guri how fun would it be to have the falafel by the guy in Givatayim , you remember what I used to tell him, 'add more aubergine, c'mon'.

Oh Gurke, don't you want the herring that Yona your dad's aunt used to bring, there's nothing like Yona's herring

Guri do you remember when we were in school we went to smoke with this **chick** from second year who always played young girls' characters, remember what used to happen there...

Oh, we always had three girls in my town: Henia, Leah'le and Hudel. And Hudel was such a beautiful girl. They used to sing in Yiddish to her:

Hudel Hudel Sheine meidale (Hudel a beautiful girl)

Kim Tsi meer (come to me)

En Gib mir a beigale (and give me a Bagel)

Oy Guri this stuff is hot, have you tried it? What can I tell you? Never get married, never. Sometimes I want to tell Nivi 'Leave me alone, go to your mother and leave

me' and then I see Reuti laughing at me and I forget everything. Do you want to be a dad Guri?

So when the Nazis came they shot all of Leah'le's family, I didn't hear anything about Hudel but Henia , she got through the war and she lives in an old people's home in Haifa. Do you remember the street name in the song about the pretty girl from Haifa?

: 'There is a chick in Haifa, she lives in -' what street does she live in Gurke? I can't go all over Haifa and ask where this girl lives, right? It's not bad this Tsingale, ah?

Oy Guri, this stuff is hot. What's the time? Do you have a watch? Ok Guri I have to go. I promised Niva that I'd buy her face cream and a digital thermometer for Reuti, since she threw ours away. She is so sweet; don't you want a little girl? Do you have any idea where I could get one? Ok I have to run, never get married....what, a handshake? Give us a hug!

Guri, when are we going to do something together? Let's do a fringe show like only we can do, speak to me tomorrow ah?...

Leaves

SCENE 6

A call to the Niagara Falls

Gur: The next morning I called Yoad so we could arrange to meet. You know this whole story about meeting him at his place didn't really ...hold on a second, Hello , Yoad?

YOAD: Hello?

GUR: Yoad, hi it's Gur you said we should meet about the book

YOAD: Hello, can you speak louder, who is it?

GUR: It's Gur, Gur Koren, we met in a café'.

YOAD: Gur, how amazing, you know where I am now?

GUR: Where?

YOAD: At Niagra falls

GUR: What?

YOAD: Yes, I know it's crazy! My brother had a son so we went to Boston to his circumcision, his wife gave birth three weeks early, so we went to Boston and now we are travelling in Canada, you have to see it, how awesome, it's so huge!

GUR: Ok, I won't disturb you, let's talk when you're back...

YOAD: No, you're not disturbing me, I am glad to hear from you, I didn't forget you, I'll call you so we can sit and look through the manuscript, it will be amazing, ok I can't hear a thing it's so noisy here from the falls it's unbelievable, speak soon, bye.

SCENE 7

At Evelyn Barda

GUR: Two weeks have gone by, Yoad hasn't called but worse than that-my grandpa hasn't appeared through anyone I've met. I tried to go out more, to meet more people, different types of people from different places, but as he used to say- Gurnisht - nothing.. I started to miss him and even to worry a bit, perhaps where he is at it's a bit like the army and perhaps he was denied leave or maybe even worse than that. I really started to worry, so my friend gave me the phone number of Evelyn Barda.

EVELYN: Take off your shoes before you come in.

GUR: Evelyn Barda is a hiller or a medium or whatever you call it. My friend goes to her regularly. Once this friend was unsure whether to get married or leave her boyfriend so this Evelyn connected her with a Marquise from the 17th century who told her 'leave him immediately and surrender to physical delights' by the way since then this friend of mine has sex all the time.

Hi Evelyn I'm Gur Koren we spoke on the phone I am a friend of...

EVELYN: Right you are Gur and you were born in May

GUR: In November

EVELYN: In this incarnation you were born in November in the last one, which was a very significant one, you were born in May.

GUR: Really, what was I in the last incarnation?

EVELYN: That's not a question that you ask randomly like 'What's the time' and it's also 75 Shekels for each incarnation I reveal for you. From the seventh one it's 50 shekels. How will you pay, Visa card, Cheque or cash?

GUR: Can I pay with visa?

EVELYN: Fine, fine, I said 'Fine', enough, I can't deal with her...

GUR: What's this? Who is it?

EVELYN: My mother's ghost! Since she died I don't have a second to myself, she has something to say on everything, even after I shower, she comes to check if I wiped the floor. So who would you like to contact?

GUR: My grandfather, rest his soul

EVELYN: Of course rest his soul otherwise you could have called from a landline. So what would you like? To speak to him, to write or send a message?

GUR: What's the difference?

EVELYN: To speak to him is 700 shekels, to write is 450 and a text up to 5 words is 250 shekels, from 5 words upwards it's 25 shekels for each word, for words that include the letters K, L or B it's 50 shekels for each letter and the ones that have the letters G or T I don't send because it **breaks the connection**, you are paying with visa right?

GUR: Yes

EVELYN: SO we need to add VAT, just a second...my mum said not to add VAT because you are sweet...If he was paying cash I wouldn't, so what do you want me, to pay his VAT? I can't deal with her, so what have you decided?

GUR: I will send him a message

EVELYN: Do you want to send it to grandma as well? It is only 150 shekels extra

GUR: My grandmother is still alive

EVELYN:...Yes. At least till September

GUR: What? My grandmother is going to die in September?

EVELYN: I didn't say anything, just a little tip: Get her away from Maroon coloured cars

GUR: Ok, so write to my grandfather 'when are you coming? Need to talk'

EVELYN: That is seven words; It's not a problem you just have to add...

GUR: Ok then write 'Grandpa, need to speak urgently'

(Connecting with the Grandfather)

EVELYN: New message received: 'Need to speak to you urgently, only through Evelyn Barda'

GUR: Is that what he said?

EVELYN: Do you think I'm lying?

GUR: Ok, then' I'll speak to him through you

EVLYN: I am giving you a 75 shekels discount because you already sent a message, ok mum, a 90 shekels discount...

(Trying to contact)

Fuck this Orange network, they put antennae in the neighbourhood and since then my communication keeps being interrupted...shh, here it's back again, I am going to sue them one day I'm telling you. Shhhh

Here I can see him, he looks a bit like you, you have the same nose.

Ok, speak

GUR: Grandpa?

EVELYN: What?

GUR: When are you coming?

EVELYN? I am not coming, I am dead

GUR: I know but I need to speak to you about our business

EVELYN: If you want to speak to me it's only through Evelyn Barda

GUR: Grandpa, Wus Hertsach (In Yiddish: How are you?)

EVELYN: What?

GUR: Wus Hertsach?

EVELYN: What's that?

GUR: It's in Yiddish

EVELYN: I don't speak Yiddish

GUR: But my grandfather does

EVELYN: But now your grandfather communicates through me right?

GUR: yes, thank you I'm going

EVELYN: Hold on, don't go yet I see the ghost of the late prime minister and he wants to tell you something.

GUR: What does he want to tell me?

EVELYN: He said he has to talk to you but only through Evelyn Barda

GUR: How much is it for the message? I am not paying for the call.

EVELYN: Ok, ok give me 400 shekels for everything, I'll only charge you **on 'air time'**

(takes out the visa, Evelyn only looks at it)

GUR: **You don't need to swipe it?**

EVELYN: No, I am connecting directly with the credit card company... and a little tip on the house: Don't go to Raanana in the next month...hold on, also not to Rishon Letzion, mum says the main thing is not to go to Rosh Hanikra...

Gur: To be honest, this scene is a bit over the top. In reality Evelyn's character was less exaggerated and she didn't have this accent, she was Moroccan: I mean Barda is a Moroccan name, isn't it? But Ronit, the actress that plays Evelyn, who is also a good friend of mine, used to call me and say: 'Gur, first of all the scene is not working and besides I can do a great South American accent and it's going to be very funny.

ACTRESS: Gur, what are you telling them?

GUR: About my special and sensitive contact with my grandfather.

ACTRESS: **To be honest**, Evelyn Barda's scene was boring and sad till I rewrote it. 'A new message received' that's mine for example. Mine or not mine?

GUR: Yours

ACTRESS: So say thanks and shut up. I rehearsed in your living room for six months with no air conditioning, long before you knew the show would be accepted to Gesher... (leaves)

GUR: Actors...they are unbearable.

A week went by and Yoad called me to say he was back in Israel and we arranged to meet in his flat in Efner Street in Givatayim.

A second before I knock on Yoad's door, a significant moment in the plot, I want to sum up what we have so far, for anyone who lost concentration. It's absolutely fine, I sometimes go to see a show and continue thinking about lots of other things: work, relationship, things I need to do tomorrow, does the actress have a boyfriend or doesn't she? Things like that. They say: 'Go to the theatre and forget life for an hour and a half' but it's not so easy to do that. So, for those who didn't forget life I will give a short summary, but from now on please, focus, ok?

Gur Koren, in brackets me, starts to meet his grandfather, in brackets who died two years ago, who speaks to him through people that Gur meets. Gur's Grandfather asks him to correct an injustice that is going to happen: A story of smuggling five kilo

sugar from the town Sarnei to Bialistok in brackets in USSR at the time. The story is going to be published in Yoad Riva's book, in brackets Homosexual, without mentioning Gur's grandfather. Now Gur, in brackets me, is about to knock on Yoad's door...enjoy.

SCENE 7

At Yoad's flat

YOAD: How amazing, I didn't think you'd be punctual. Sorry about the mess, I only just landed.

GUR: How was it, abroad?

YOAD: Oh America, it is just amazing. And I have a nephew that is so sweet you just want to take a tiny fork and eat him. Make yourself at home.

What will you have to drink?

GUR: Could I have water?

YOAD: Don't be so dry, come and drink some wine with me, some dry wine ... the truth is that I have already had one glass, but I can't let you drink on your own.

YOAD leaves

GUR: As you can see we didn't invest much in the set so I have to tell you that Yoad's flat was not what you would expect of a gay guy's flat. I am not saying all gays are expected to have the same flat, but this was...like an old person's flat, with lots of old books and photographs...

YOAD: Who are you talking to?

GUR: No one I am just doing a monologue...

YOAD: What?

GUR: Tried a joke?

YOAD: You know you are a funny guy?

GUR: So I'm told...Yoad, is that a picture of your grandfather?

YOAD: No it's his brother and the baby that he is holding is my father. There you go, what should we drink for?

GUR: The strong friendship between our grandparents?

YOAD: and their grandchildren. Lechaim (cheers)

GUR: Yoad, do you know what I found at my grandmother's house?

YOAD: Tell me right this second

GUR: It's a page from my grandad's diary from the war, should I read it to you?

YOAD: Of course

GUR: Listen

(To the audience) It's clear to you that I wrote this page right?

READS Aloud

"In the town *Sarnei* me and my good friend Yosef Riva were told that there is a sugar shortage in Bialistok. We bought 5 kilo sugar each, Yosef was missing a few Rubels so I lent him the money, what wouldn't I do for a good friend like Yosef. When we got off the train in Blalistik two Gentlemen approached us, presented themselves as policemen and asked us about our 'luggage'. Yosef fled straight away while I was arrested and held for 60 days".

YOAD: That's so weird: my grandfather did tell me that he smuggled sugar from *Sarnei* to Bialistok but...he didn't tell me he was there with any Shlomo Koren

GUR: Well you know he was going through so much, it's natural he didn't remember everything

YOAD: My grandfather remembers details like the colour of the handkerchief in the jacket of the British officer that checked him in to Haifa port in 1947.

GUR: Yoad, if I ask you, in the name of the friendship of our grandparents, and our friendship, to add in your book one short line saying that my grandad also smuggled sugar with your grandfather and he was caught and arrested, would that be too much to ask?

YOAD: Well, first of all I don't know if it's true. We don't have any proof except this page that you showed me that could easily have been written by you. Secondly...it suggests my grandfather left a friend to the police and ran away himself.

GUR: Well you don't have to write it like that. You can write that the police arrived and wanted to arrest them and your grandfather managed to escape while mine didn't.

YOAD: I am not sure Gur, the manuscript is already in an advanced stage of editing

GUR: Yoad I beg you. This is something that I would really want to do for my grandfather.

YOAD: Gur, your dedication to your grandfather is really sweet but what you are asking me to do is a bit problematic.

GUR: I understand it will be a nuisance with the publication and everything, I can try to organise some money, I mean my family will be happy to pay...

YOAD: Don't be silly...let me think about it for a minute...so you say they went together to Bialistok. Can you imagine them? A train coach, night, darkness, freezing cold, they are snuggled next to each other under a sack, strange ah? It could have been us...

GUR: Lucky that we don't need to snuggle under a sack, isn't it?

YOAD: Yes, we can snuggle under the duvet ha,ha,ha...Gur you know what I think, maybe I can add in my book one line that will mention your grandfather in the story about the sugar...

GUR: Really?

YOAD: Gur, do you want to be nice to me?

GUR: Of course I'll be nice to you

YOAD: You know what I mean...

(Pause)

GUR: Yoad you put me in an **awkward** position

YOAD: Don't worry it won't be awkward

GUR: I think I will have to say no.

YOAD: Hey I am not forcing you

(Pause)

YOAD: How embarrassing, It's so embarrassing, you won't be offended if I ask you to leave now? I'm not throwing you out, but I don't feel like I want to speak about things that happened in the Second World War now. I apologise if it sounded like I was begging you...you know what I'm talking about. Sorry and bye (*leaves*)

SCENE 8:

IN Efner street

TAXI DRIVER: Did you order a taxi to Dizengoff Centre?

GUR: Yes, I ordered a cab earlier, Why didn't I tell you earlier? you see what state I was in...

SCENE 9:

IN THE TAXI

(To the driver that toots his horn)

You son of a bitch, ok? Do you see this asshole? Do I need to drive through an orange light? Believe me this is the problem with people in this country: No patience, no patience **at all**. Do you think this guy behind us could read Agnon with his patience? He could never read Agnon! Perhaps he can read Paul Auster, can read the cheap philosophy of Paulo Coelho, I am not talking about Ram Oren or Harlan Coben that anyone can read. But Agnon? Never! And this Agnon can blow your mother away with his writing! He'll blow away your mother!

Leave Agnon, 'Kreutzer Sonata' of Tolstoy. Who can get the genius of Tolstoy without some patience? I know, to start with you say about '*The Kreutzer Sonata*' *what is this bullshit all these piano lessons that this woman takes, but listen to me carefully: If you give me one book better than 'Kreutzer Sonata', on the spot I will take a knife and cut off my dick.*

Look at this pillock on the bike, put a helmet on, you asshole! These idiots don't understand how dangerous it is to cycle with no helmet. Later some boy racer will cut him up and this guy will spill his brains on the sidewalk, and then you will turn on the news and what'll you see. The sister of the cyclist crying like a whore and saying how 'he loved life ' and that he used to sing to her songs on the guitar' and they will show photos from his trip to South America...believe me this is the problem in this country: weeping. They weep about everything, exactly like in 'Little Women' by Louisa May Elcott. Have you read 'Little Women'?

GUR: A long time ago

DRIVER: Look how she is crying and wailing, and not that I have a problem with people who wail, especially if it's a good wail like the ones of Garcia Marques...I love his tear-jerkers have you read 'A Hundred years of Solitude'? What a son of a bitch of a book? But 'Little Women'? You know what? There are sections in 'Little Women' that just reek of weeping.

What is it here, JNF Boulevard?

GUR: The Shalom Bridge, keep going through Kaplan.

DRIVER: Is this Haifa way? This used to be the Tnuva building..look what they did here Gurke, what a great building this is.

GUR: Grandpa! Where have you been for so long?

DRIVER: I apologise again that I am dead.

GUR: Grandpa, can you pull over?

DRIVER: Gurke, I just came to say that my visiting hours are finished

GUR: What? Why?

DRIVER: I was caught, that's why. The bastards there, they are worse than the Nazis. I actually escaped now, just to find out if you sorted the business with the book.

GUR: I am coming now from meeting Yosef Riva's grandson (hooting) Grandpa , at least stay on the right, on the right...(louder hooting)

DRIVER: So how was it with the gay guy, is it sorted?

GUR: No, he wanted me to...Grandpa go slower, he wants me to...grandpa drive on the right, I'm scared!

DRIVER: Don't teach me how to drive ..., Do you know who took your mum to hospital when she was pregnant with you ?I took her with my Briska car? Because your dad was in the 'yom kippur' war. So now you are teaching me to drive?

So what's happening with this guy?

GUR: He's agreed to add in his book what you told me

GRANDFATHER: Nu, thanks God

GUR: If I do it with him

GRANDFATHER: Do what with him?

GUR: What do you think he wants me to do with him?

GR: (laughs), I didn't think you'd need to give your **tuches** for your grandfather

GUR: Granddad I'm not going to do it

GR: Ah, what are you making such a fuss for? Do you know what I did once to one Ukranian man for two cigarettes? This guy took my hand and put it on...

Gur: Grandpa I don't want to hear it! Traffic light grandpa!!! I'm sorry but I can't do it

GP: I, as they say sympathise with you...look Gurke, there, where we are, what you call the next world, I am in the same 'Platoon' with Yosef Riva and we are going to be there, probably forever, although there time is a bit different, (hoot, shouts from the window) Hoot your Kurve mother. ... and if I'm going to see Yosef Riva forever and know that here in this world there is a book where its written that he was such a big hero, then my time there is going to be much worse than the prison in Bialistok and not for two months but forever, do you get this Gurke?

Gur: Yes

GP: and now I need to go back and I won't come again. Now you'll do what you think is right

Gur: Ok I will do it. But come and meet me afterwards. Only one more time, ok? We haven't had time to talk, there are so many things I want to tell you...let's meet in two hours in Gan Meir... Do you know where is Gan Meir?

DRIVER: Gan Meir? Of course I know where Gan Meir is? What am I an idiot? I thought you wanted to go to Dizegoff centre. Trust me, that's the problem with this country the 'indisiveness' in the beginning they say, let's make peace with the Arabs, then they say 'Let's get tough with the Arabs' they can't decide anything in this country.

GUR: You know what, take me back to where you picked me up.

DRIVER: To Givatayim?

GUR: Yes

DRIVER: let's go to Givatayim **(A sound of tyres screeching)**

Have you read 'Father Goriot' by Balzac?

GUR: No, can I smoke?

DRIVER: Smoke freely mate. the first ten pages are so heavy, but afterwards it is a great book. This Balzac tells you about this shitty inn in Paris, how does that sound? Boring as hell. So get this, it is fascinating! Like a **superglue** this book stuck to my hands! What do I like about Balzac, this shithole knows how to write about real people, working people not these jerks that sit in café's and wank on about the meaning of life.

It is 50 shekels mate.

(GUR pays and gets out of the taxi, the driver continues...)

and speaking about wanking...has anyone read 'The Sorrows of Young Werther'? Look it is classic, I'm not denying it but it is a book that wanks on some stupid love, do you know how many people killed themselves because of this book? I'm not saying Goethe is a loser, it was a different time and yet...some books were written ages ago and still you can say 'I'll cut my dick if this wasn't written yesterday' You probably haven't read 'Ulysses' by James Joyce? It is not a book it is a suitcase! It is heavier than my mother this book, but if you get to the end there is this nymphomaniac that tells this story about all her fucking, and you just die...

SCENE 10

In Yoad's flat again

YOAD: Look , this is really strange...what are you doing? I mean listen I am not going to do anything with you, it's clear to me that you came here just so I write about your grandfather in my book and not because you want me in any way and this is fine with me that you are not interested in me as a man...and I don't intend to do anything with anyone who is doing it only in order to get something so...I can make you coffee, I can show you photos, we can ...

GUR: Yoad, best that you be quiet now, ok?

(they start kissing)

GUR: Ok, It's clear what happened next.

YOAD: It is not quite clear.

(Kissing)

GUR: Ok, you get where it's going from here.

YOAD: Perhaps there are a few that haven't got it yet.

(a longer kiss)

Gur: Can I just tell them what happened next?

Yoad: yes, but don't miss a thing...

(leaves)

GUR: Ok, so what happened after we kiss is that he kissed my...one second ok? After we kissed he opened my...after the kiss he...sorry I can't continue this monologue so I'll read it from this piece of paper if you don't mind (gets a piece of paper and reads) after we kissed he kissed me in the...ok I know I promised to tell only the truth but I really can't. So I will give you this piece of paper (*gives the paper to the audience*) whoever wants can read it and it is ok with me and whoever doesn't want to, it is also ok with me. Only if there is anyone under 18 then they shouldn't read it. That's not just me but the request of the theatre's solicitor. And now we can definitely say goodbye to the idea of arts council funding.

SCENE 11

In Gan Meir

Gur: Even though I was sure my grandpa wasn't with me when I tried to arrange a meeting with him, I still went to Gan Meir (Meir park)

It was about 3 am and although it was already spring, it was a pretty chilly night. There weren't many people around: An older woman with a dog, two Russians with some Vodka, another couple and from the other direction I remember a few youngsters with guitars. And then... from behind this lottery booth, out popped this prostitute carrying a plastic bag.

Why did I approach her, of all people? Maybe because she seemed out of place. Prostitutes don't usually hang out in Meir park, and maybe...some things you can just feel. Like they say in Yiddish, 'Blut is nicht kaine wasser', and it has a nice translation: "Blood is thicker than water".

Hello.

Prostitute: What d'ya want?

Gur: Nothing. I was just saying hi. Waiting for someone?

Prostitute: what are you, police?

Gur: no.

Prostitute: Even if you were, I can be wherever I want.

Gur: for sure, I just noticed you were acting strange and thought you might need help.

Prostitute: I don't need anything from you, ok?

Pause

Prostitute: I don't know what I'm doing here. I was with... someone there on Allenby and then I'm not sure...I find myself here with a plastic bag with cognac and herring.

Gur: Herring?

Prostitute: Herring! I hate herring. Don't know what's wrong me, and I haven't even taken anything...since noon.

Gur: Come sit for a bit, have a rest.

Prostitute: what d'ya want from me?

Gur: Nothing, honestly.

Prostitute: Right, I'm going, I don't know why I came here.

Gur: No, please don't go.

Prostitute: Kid, I have better things to do...

Gur: hey, I want...I want...

Prostitute: Here?

Gur: Yes. How much is it?

Prostitute: hand-job two-hundred, blow-job two fifty, I don't do sex in a public park. If you want that, get a hotel.

Gur: Can we just talk? I'll pay you, of course.

Prostitute: Talk? What are you, a pervert?! Yalla, I'm outta here!

Gur: OK, OK, hand-job. I want a hand-job.

Prostitute: Give us two-hundred.

Gur: Do you take visa?

Prostitute: Huh?

Gur: just joking.

Prostitute: You joke with your mother, right?

(GUR pays PROSTITUTE the money, she open his trousers)

Gur: Grandpa?

Prostitute: Huh?

Gur: Nothing.

Prostitute: did you say "grandpa"? Are you sick? That's your thing? No problem I'm ya grandpa, yo'grandma, whatever ya want.

(Grabs his penis and gives him a hand job)

Prostitute: I remember I was once here with your grandma after the Suez War, as they say, nothing's changed.

Gur: Grandpa, can you let go of my willy?

Prostitute: Ah?

Gur: Your hand.

Prostitute: Oish, Gurke Gurke, is this what you do instead of getting married? What are you, a beast? Look what I got us. Nu, we can sit down and have a little bite to

eat. I made a special request, to come see you, although I'm under caution, but they were very considerate this time. Did you do what you needed to do?

Gur: I did.

Prostitute: and...

Gur: the book is out before the holidays, and I think whoever reads it will know who ran away from the police in Bialystok and who was in prison for two months.

Prostitute: Listen Gurke, I don't know how to tell you this but I just met Zelig Gutman, who was also with us in the USSR and he told me that he was the one that went with me to Bialistok with the sugar.

GUR: What? You mean...you mean

PROSTITUTE: I am sorry

GUR: What? Do you know what I went through ...

PROSTITUTE: Gurke, I was only joking.

GUR: Ahhhhh!!!!

Postitute: yes, I deserve it. Gurke, I am really very proud of you that you helped me to sort out this mess, I am really grateful. What shall we drink to?

Gur: To, as they say, blood is thicker than water

Prostitute: blut iz nisht keyn vasser.

(They drink)

PROSTITUTE: Oy, There's nothing like Cognac,

GUR: Tell me grandpa? How is it over there?

PROSTITUTE: Over there? How can I explain to you the next world in this world's terms. Well, do you remember during our last Passover together that Sarale from the Kibbutz came?

GUR: Yes

PROSTITUTE: Do you remember the bloody Kugel she brought?

GUR: How can I forget?

Prostitute: So over there reminds me a bit of Sarale's kugel

GUR: The next world is like Sarale's kugel?

PROSTITUTE: Nu, you can't understand, you'll see when you get there...and tell me why didn't you marry this young girl with the curly hair, can you explain this to your old man?

GUR: Ah her, it didn't work out. Also she wasn't great in bed. We hardly had sex.

PROSTITUTE: Is that a reason? With your grandma I didn't do it since...

GUR: Grandpa, I don't want to hear about that.

PROSTITUTE: Although your grandmother was a devil in bed

GUR: Grandpa, I don't want to hear about it.

Prostitute: (tastes the herring) Oh, how I missed herring. It's nothing like the herring that Yona, your dad's aunt, used to bring during the holidays, but herring is herring.

Gur: Oh grandpa, what was that song you used to sing to us in the high holidays?

Prostitute: I never used to sing in the high holidays.

GUR: Of course you did, before Yosi was killed you used to sing to us, you used to bang on the table and sing na na na

Prostitute: Ah gur, it wasn't a song, it was the nigun [tune]!

Gur: The nigen, yes, the nigen! It was like na na.....

Prostitute: Sha sha (starts to hum) na na na

(GUR and the PROSTITUTE quietly hum the nigen)

Gur: So tell me grandpa, why did you come to me? Not grandma, or dad or my brothers...?

Prostitute: truth be told, I tried, but Gurke, how should I put this, you were the only one crazy enough to believe such a thing.

Gur: Yes, I really am crazy. So you really can't come again?

Prostitute: Huh?

Gur: come see me every once in a while?

Prostitute: What's going on? What is this? Say... did you pay me?

Gur: Yes.

Prostitute: Ah ok, what a day I've had... ok I'm off...

Gur: Wait a sec.

Take some more money because it was really very special. (gives her another note of money) and...take care of yourself, ok?

(Gently strokes her face. Prostitute looks at him and leaves)

SCENE 12

Epilogue

NARRATOR: That's it. I didn't see him after that. Around the holidays Yoad's book was published and on page 49 it was written: "I went to Bialistok with Shlomo Koren from my town while we were both smuggling five kilo sugar each. Soviet cops caught Shlomo and he was sent to prison for sixty days. I managed to run away".

In my grandpa's memorial service I look at my family to see if they feel something. But nothing. We stand there looking at the big black stone, my auntie reads something, sometimes we remember a story but not more than that.

Actually a little while ago I was sure he was trying to get into me. I lay in bed, almost asleep and suddenly felt a bit of a pressure between the nose and the eyebrows and I really felt like he was trying to get into me and tell me something. I open my eyes and I saw Naamushi sleeping next to me, beautiful as an angel, but naamushi...naamushi is a completely different story...

So if I can ask you one more thing...if by any chance my grandpa ever manages to 'steal the border' again and get into one of you...please tell him that I love him. And that I miss him. A lot.