

IDEALISM

By Yigeal Sachs

December 28, 2016

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Translation of the first scenes of the play. For the full translation, please email the playwright at

yigaelsachs@gmail.com

Characters:

Ze'ev Ben-Yair: A charismatic man around 50, media personality, sophisticated political provocateur, master manipulator, magician.

Natalie Doron: Young actress, beautiful, idealistic. Married to Mickey.

Mickey Doron: 40, TV director. Married to Natalie.

Mor Levi: A sophisticated businesswoman with overt sex appeal, age 40.

Stas: Technician, 35, strong, somewhat clumsy, romantic.

Setting:

An amphitheater with levels of steps surrounding an elliptical arena, with a round stage at its center. Around the stage are screens for video projection. The five characters are mostly on stage, witnessing the events. Their positions on stage indicate both geographic location and emotional territory/comfort zones. Stage right is Natalie and Mickey's home, stage left is Mor's club.

Time: The near future - in terms of technology and fashion there are no major revolutions, as the near future is very similar to the present, but a slight distance allows the near future to appear and feel slightly more theatrical, more "futuristic."

Reading note: When two lines are spoken simultaneously, the / indicates where the following line begins to be spoken in parallel.

(The stage is empty) Music. A deep warm and intimate male voice comes from the speakers:

ZEEV BEN-YAIR: What do you want? (pause) Why are you here? (pause) What do you want to see? (pause) What do you choose to believe in? (pause) If I had the power to grant you one wish. Just one wish. What would you ask for? Take your time, don't rush, think about it carefully, and only when you're absolutely, absolutely sure that this is what you want, close your eyes, and...!

1.The Truth About Supply, Demand and the Free Market

Phone rings. Electronic music. Club lighting. Silhouettes. Mor enters. She's 40, looks her age, and maybe because of that she dresses and moves with a raw sex appeal that's impossible to ignore. Phone in one hand, wine glass in the other. Stas follows her in, watching from the side. Almost 40, solid build, a bit awkward, jeans and a plain button-down shirt.

MOR: (on the phone, loud over the music, glances at Stas now and then) Not believable? What's not believable? An actress playing a whore is more believable than a real one?... So that's what you want, for me it's just extra trouble... Where am I supposed to find you an actress who'd agree to...? Fine, whatever you want – just know if you insist on an actress, you're doubling the cost... Can you stop yelling at me? If you want to save money, settle for a real whore! If you want credibility – that credibility costs! (hangs up, mutters) Son of a...

STAS: (moves closer; and when she hangs up and turns away from him; he finally gathers courage) Excuse me...

MOR: (composed, still edgy from the call, over the music) Do I look like a whore?

STAS: Sorry?

MOR: (gestures to the control booth; the music stops) No need to apologize. Just tell me – did you think I was a whore?

STAS: I don't understand – did I insult you? How... why?

MOR: What don't you understand?

STAS: I... I don't... what?

MOR: I just want to know how your brain works. Do you want to fuck me?

STAS: Listen—

MOR: The waitress brought me this wine, said it's from you. Was she wrong?

STAS: No.

MOR: Would you want to have sex with me?

STAS: Yeah, sure. I mean—not tonight, but...

MOR: Tomorrow?

STAS: Maybe. Whenever... only if you want to.

MOR: And you figured if you paid for me... — how much was the wine?

STAS: 40 shekels.

MOR: ...I'd agree to, what?

STAS: Sorry, I didn't mean to offend you, I just wanted to/talk

MOR: (suddenly hurt)Why? Don't you find me attractive?

STAS: Of course I do, why wouldn't I?

MOR: But first we should get married...

STAS: (chuckles) No need to... I don't...

MOR: (cuts him off) So you wouldn't want to marry me?

STAS: I don't know... maybe... if we'd dated a while...

MOR: What's your name?

STAS: (pause) Stas.

MOR: And what do you do, Stas?

STAS: What? Oh. (pulls wallet from his pocket; Mor, impatient, notices another man at the door. The music restarts, lower volume.

Stas hands her a business card.) I install security systems.

MOR: What? (looks at the card) Alarms?

STAS: Video. Bugs. I put in the cameras here, in this club.

MOR: (straightens, self-conscious, looks around) There are cameras here?

STAS: (points) Nowadays there are cameras everywhere.

MOR: Really. What about in the bathrooms?

STAS: Uh...

MOR: What?

STAS: (trying to guess if this is flirting) Only by the mirrors, at the entrance. Not inside the stalls.

MOR: And how's business? (he doesn't get her at first) I mean, the security systems business.

STAS: Oh. It's good.

MOR: Lots of work?

STAS: Yeah. People are scared now. Don't trust nobody. They put cameras and mics at home to watch the nanny, at work to watch employees... (Mor glances again toward the man at the entrance - Miki, simply dressed, backpack on his shoulder. She checks her phone. Stas pauses.)

MOR: Go on, I'm listening.

STAS: ...In stores, gas stations. Yesterday some dad asked me to put a camera in his daughter's bedroom.

MOR: In his daughter's nursery?

STAS: She's seventeen.

look great, and...

MOR: Thanks.

STAS: And I thought... Never mind.

MOR: I'm Mor. Mor Levi. Nice to meet you. (shakes his hand; he relaxes a bit) I own this place. (he's embarrassed) See? You did it, Stas. (puts his card in her purse) For 40 shekels, you got a personal introduction. Thanks for the wine. (drinks it all, hands him the glass; he holds it, she doesn't let go) Can I trust you? (he nods) Good. Then take my bag, put it on the chair by the bar. (hands it to him; he doesn't move) Or just stand here and hold it.

Miki, who has been standing at the entrance the whole time, enters with a backpack slung over his shoulder. He approaches Mor, who turns toward him and almost bumps into him.

MOR: Son of a bitch.

STAS: Yeah. (beat; Mor glances again at Miki) Who? (notices her look)

MOR: (puts away the phone, flirty) So, are you rich?

STAS: Uh, no. It's not my company. I'm just the tech guy. Installer.

MOR: (disappointed) Oh. Are you any good?

STAS: At what?

MOR: Sex.

STAS: What? (He's embarrassed. Silent. Starts to leave.)

MOR: Why, Stas? Why did you buy me wine?

STAS: Why? Because you

MIKI: Excuse me...

MOR: What?

MIKI: Hey. (introduces himself) Miki. Sorry for the... Can I buy you a drink? I want to...

MOR: (points at Stas) I just finished one. Stas here thought if he bought me a 40 shekel glass of wine, I'd agree to fuck him. (Stas, hurt, distances himself holding Mor's bag) You want some too?

MIKI: Not right now. You're Mor Levi, right?

MOR: Do we know each other?

MIKI: Ze'ev Ben Yair.

MOR: What about him?

MIKI: Do you know him?

MOR: enough to know he's not you.

MIKI: (smiles) Where do you know him from?

MOR: Don't you know him?

MIKI: Ze'ev Ben Yair? Like everyone else, you know, from his channel shows, newspaper articles, radio.

MOR: (silent)

MIKI: I heard he comes here sometimes.

MOR: Yeah?

MIKI: Is it true?

MOR: What did you hear?

MIKI: That he... you know... into dates with working girls.

MOR: No.

MIKI: No...?

MOR: No.

MIKI: And you don't...?

MOR: No. Why do you want to know? Are you into prostitution?

MIKI: (embarrassed) I meant with him...

MOR: You're cute, what do you want?

MIKI: You know him personally, right? They told me you and he...

MOR: We've been friends for years, yeah. Look, sweetie, this is a meeting place. A members' club. All kinds of people meet all kinds of other people here. All kinds of Connections, All kinds of reasons. Are you looking for something specific?

MIKI: So you're kind of a matchmaker?

MOR: Kind of. And you?

MIKI: What?

MOR: What are you?

MIKI: Oh, didn't I say? I'm a TV director, I...

MOR: Really? (smiles) Well, if you're a director, you can say I'm a "casting director".

MIKI: You're the one who's "casting" his ...

MOR: Yeah. I like to help people.

MIKI: And in return?

MOR: What have you directed?

MIKI: Can you help me?

MOR: You'll have to tell me what you want first.

MIKI: Yeah. (pause) I'm doing some research for a film I'm about to make...

MOR: (smiles) Looking for a casting director?

MIKI: I do mostly investigative documentaries... (he pulls a tablet from his backpack intending to show her something)

MOR: (appears uninterested) Right. (pauses and looks at Stas who hasn't lost hope yet) Stas! Can you bring me my bag? (Stas approaches, bag still with him) Thanks. (takes the bag, pulls out her phone, searches) ... What was the name?

MIKI: Mine? Miki

MOR: Micky what?

STAS: I know you.

MIKI: (to Stas) What? (to Mor) Miki Doron. I once did a drama series called "The Magician", maybe you saw it, it was about...

STAS: (to Mor, interrupting Miki) With all the models...

MOR: (looks at Stas, cuts off Miki) I think I saw it. (goes back to the phone) So you're working on something new?

MIKI: Yeah, I...

STAS: (interrupts) The script was interesting but the lead actor was terrible.

MIKI: Excuse me, who are you?

STAS: Too bad he ruined it.

MIKI: Are you a TV critic?

MOR: (rebukes Stas) No, he works security.

MIKI: (smiles) He's actually right... it doesn't matter, I don't do drama anymore... I'm here for an investigative documentary about Ze'ev Ben Yair, that's why...

MOR: (looks at her phone screen) Nice wife you got.

MIKI: What?

Natalie's silhouette appears backstage left, in the final dressing stages, wearing a mini dress, nylon stockings, and high heels. Miki's attention momentarily drifts from Mor.

MOR: Is she a model?

MIKI: Not exactly, she used to... She's an actress now. Trying to be...

MOR: Wasn't she in that series too?

MIKI: (realizes Mor "searched" him on the phone) You googled me out...?

STAS: (peeks at Mor's phone) She played one of the models...

MOR: Did some research. Yeah.

STAS: (recalls the name) Natalie Fadida.

MIKI: Doron. Natalie Doron.

STAS: Her character was Anna.

MOR: Here it is. (reads) "Drama series, 10 episodes, behind the scenes of the advertising industry..." Bulshit bulshit... "Daring sex scenes..." nice, some more bulshit, and "Nudity as a metaphor for..."

Natalie's silhouette disappears.

MIKI: What's written there is nonsense.

MOR: Yeah.

MIKI: Yeah.

STAS: Yeah.

Mor and Miki look at Stas who realizes they don't want to listen to him.

MOR: So... (to Miki, putting the phone back into the bag Stas is holding) How can I help you?

Miki waits until Stas understands he's not welcome, Stas backs away, still holding Mor's bag.

MIKI: (quietly) Yeah. I'm about to shoot a documentary on Ze'ev Ben Yair, you know, how he made all his money, political ambitions, skeletons in the closet, all that. So I thought...

MOR: Yeah...

MIKI: If you're willing, next time you... "help him"... I'd love to be there.

MOR: (smiles at Miki) You want to film him having sex?

MIKI: (startled) No! (awkward smile) No, that's really not my thing...

MOR: I don't believe you.

MIKI: You don't have to.

MOR: I'd be interested.

MIKI: (curious) Why?

MOR: Because I think everyone should see his ass.

MIKI: (pause) I... I'm not sure that's... why?

MOR: Don't you think his naked ass would interest people?

MIKI: (laughs) Like a metaphor?

MOR: No.

MIKI: Yeah. (suddenly realizes she's serious and frowns) No one would ever agree to air it.

MOR: Of course they would. Stas! (signals Stas to come closer, puts a hand on his shoulder) 5,000 shekels. Want it?

STAS: (nervous) What, if I give you...

MIKI: (backs off) I'm not...

MOR: (to Miki) Stay, I'm trying to help you. (rifles through the bag Stas holds, to Stas) Stas, short for Stanislav? (he doesn't reply) Stas it is. What's your last name?

STAS: Chernov.

MOR: You shy, Stas?

STAS: No.

MOR: Comfortable with nudity?

STAS: Mine?

MOR: As a concept.

MIKI: Leave him alone.

MOR: (to Miki) Don't interfere.

STAS: I go to the gym and stuff... (Mor listens amused, reacts with slight overinterest) I'm was into movies once, I wanted to act... but they said I'm not... so I started doing stunt work...you know, fights, falls, weapons work, stuff like

that, but there's not much of that... so I switched to security

MOR: (losing patience) Do you want to make a movie? (looks at the two men) You, Miki, and me.

STAS: What kind of movie?

MOR: A sex movie.

Stas is panicked, Miki turns away and steps back a little but listens attentively.

STAS: (pause) You want me to...

MOR: I want to offer you a job, just wanted to make sure you have no problem with filming sex.

STAS: Uh... no.

MOR: Chernov, right? (takes out a checkbook) Can you turn around for a moment? (Stas nervous, turns his back, she writes a check on it) Stas Chernov. 5,000 shekels. Only. An advance. If I'm happy, you can make a lot of money. (to Miki) Stas is an expert, bugs, spy cams, security cameras...

MIKI: I don't know if I...

MOR: What do you need to know? I put in the money, Stas takes care of filming, I take care of the... "casting". And you, only if you want, can use the video however you want. I'll call you when we're ready to shoot. After. You know nothing. Got it? Money stuff you and me settle after you decide you're in. Is everyone happy? (Stas nods, Miki doesn't respond, Mor smiles at him, starts to leave with Stas) We'll talk next week, come with me, Stas, I'll show you what I need you to do...

MIKI: (interrupts) And Ze'ev Ben Yair? (She stops) What's your story, why?

MOR: why?

MIKI: Because I think people should know.

MOR: You want to decide what people should know? Why? Do you think you're better?

MIKI: Better than who?

MOR: Than me.

MIKI: I didn't say that I...

MOR: So what's the problem? Here's Stas, he gets paid, you get your... metaphor, and I... (stops herself, decides to say something else) I just want to show his metaphoric ass to the whole world. (exits)

Miki alone, music, holding a tablet, sits center stage, his face lit by the screen's light. He puts headphones onto his ear, background noises, outside world, smoke, the face of Ze'ev Ben Yair, a handsome and charismatic man in his 50s, appears like a genie from the screen and is projected center stage like the Wizard of Oz. Miki sits to the side, watching the projection while holding the tablet

2. "THE TRUTH with ZEEV BEN YAIR"

Ben Yair: You don't really have to watch this, right?

The only reason so many people listen to me and my nonsense is that you're tired of hearing all those boring "intellectuals" who represent no one but themselves, demanding that you accept democracy as a necessary evil, and claiming that people like me are dangerous to democracy. Strange – because I actually think democracy is a necessary good. The majority rules! (Sound of trumpet fanfare)

Great, isn't it? (The fanfare fades away with a comic effect)

Not in their eyes. Why? Because democracy allows the majority, who they believe are idiots, to rule.

Miki: He doesn't mean a word he says.

Ben Yair: (As if in dialogue with them) They try to shut me up because they believe they have a monopoly on the truth.

They try to silence me so you won't hear any other truth.

They control the media, academia, and the courts.

And they're afraid to lose their power, their web of lies, their thought police, and they only have one purpose: To prevent the truth from winning, so they can stop the majority from ruling.

Miki: And hundreds of thousands believe every word that comes out of his mouth.

Ben Yair: (His face appears, smiling like the Cheshire Cat)
...And that is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
the truth.

***Ben Yair Disappears like a genie back into the tablet. Miki
stares at the glowing screen illuminating his face.***

3.The Truth About Trust and Love

Natalie appears wearing an open coat, a mini dress and high
heels. The light comes up. She looks amazingly sexy, waiting
for feedback.

Miki doesn't react. She turns around. Her heels clack on the
floor. She waits.

NATALIE: Well?

MIKI: What?

NATALIE: What do you think?

MIKI: (focused on his screen, earbud in) About what?

NATALIE: Can you look at me?

MIKI: I'm listening.

NATALIE: Can you put your iPad down for a second and look at
me?!!

MIKI: Sure. (looks at her, she looks amazing) What?

NATALIE: Never mind. It's not important.

MIKI: Okay. (goes back to the tablet) I'm starving and the
fridge is empty. If you're going out, can you pick up
something to eat while you're-

NATALIE: (cuts him off) I'm pregnant.

MIKI: (stops and looks at her again - after a quiet beat) And
that's not important?

NATALIE: No. Because I'm going to have an abortion.

MIKI: Oh. Okay.

NATALIE: (cuts him off) I can't afford to be pregnant.

MIKI: (pause) What, because of your career?

NATALIE: That too. I hadn't really thought about it. No.

MIKI: So why...?

NATALIE: Because it's not yours.

MIKI: (looks at her) Oh.

Pause

NATALIE: Do you want a divorce?

MIKI: I don't think so.

NATALIE: Then I'll have an abortion.

MIKI: Okay. (pause) Why are you...? Are you going somewhere now?

NATALIE: Yes, I'm going out to get laid. I'll be back at dawn. See you tomorrow.

She exits. He goes back to the tablet, then remembers and yells after her

MIKI: Wait, should I order takeout, or will you stop by the store?

NATALIE: (yells from outside) I hate you!

MIKI: What's wrong? (She comes back.) ..Why are you dressed like...?

NATALIE: I have an audition.

MIKI: Oh. (looks back at his tablet, remembers, then looks at her again) Oh, the part of the-

NATALIE: (explodes) You're such an iceberg!!!

MIKI: Sorry, I'm just in the middle of something.

NATALIE: Really? (comes closer) And it doesn't bother you to know I'm about to make out with someone?

MIKI: When?

NATALIE: Now.

MIKI: At the audition?

NATALIE: Probably, yes. I told you. She's a prostitute.

MIKI: You told me. Right. That's why you... (gestures at her clothes) Got it. Do you want my approval?

NATALIE: (after a long moment) I don't want to lie.

MIKI: Did anyone ask you to lie?

NATALIE: I'm a bad liar.

MIKI: (confirms) You're the worst liar in the universe.

NATALIE: Thanks.

MIKI: But that's why I love you.

NATALIE: But you think I'm a lousy actress.

MIKI: I don't. You're not. / Why...?

NATALIE: You'd want me to quit, right?

MIKI: Don't think so. No. You just need... (pause)

NATALIE: You?

MIKI: No way. That's not what I was saying.

NATALIE: I know I can be great, I'm sure of it. I just think if anyone's really going to believe me, I first have to believe it myself.

MIKI: (smiles, her innocence touches him) Okay.

NATALIE: Yeah.

MIKI: Alright.

NATALIE: But to believe in myself, I need...

MIKI: ...a partner.

NATALIE: A partner who wants to believe me.

MIKI: Fine.

NATALIE: See? We complete each other.

MIKI: Because I buy the food and you clear out the fridge?

NATALIE: Because you don't believe in anyone or anything, and I still love you.

MIKI: I do.

NATALIE: You don't. (gets up to leave) Maybe you're right. I don't know.

Miki: (she turns to go, he mutters) Good luck with the audition. Knock 'em dead.

NATALIE: (hears and stops) Who?

MIKI: The... in the audition.

NATALIE: You forgot.

MIKI: What?

NATALIE: (comes closer to him) That I'm a human lie detector.

MIKI: Go away, don't touch me. Not now. You'll be late for the audi...

NATALIE: (suddenly puts her hand between his legs, Miki freezes.) Now... the truth. The whole truth and nothing but the truth.

MIKI: Okay.

NATALIE: I think you're afraid to want me too much because you're afraid of losing me. I love you. (kisses Miki) Do you believe me? (Miki looks down) But as an actor, if I ever have to act like I love someone, I won't just pretend, I'll really love him. or her. (Miki looks at her) until the scene ends and that's it, I have to. Otherwise I'll just feel like a whore.

MIKI: What do you want me to say?

NATALIE: Say whatever you feel!

(Pause.)

MIKI: I'm starving. (She hits him, he laughs) Did you want me to lie?

He holds her hands, she tries to wriggle free.

NATALIE: I have to go now.

He lets her go, she hits him again, he laughs, they wrestle, the tablet falls, Natalie picks it up, Miki snatches it from her.

NATALIE: What were you watching!!? (pause) Is it what I think it is? (She reaches for the tablet, and Miki pulls it away.)

MIKI: You don't want to see this. (They fight over the tablet.) Just go, you'll be late. Don't touch it! You can't stand him. Noooo!!!!

Ben Yair's voice echoes: The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! His hologram appears in a cloud of smoke

NATALIE: Yuck, I can't stand him.

MIKI: Told you.

NATALIE: Why...?

MIKI: Because I'm the only one who understands how dangerous this man is.

NATALIE: He's an idiot.

MIKI: He's a genius.

NATALIE: Yesterday you said he was the devil.

MIKI: He's an evil genius

NATALIE: If you hate him that much, why watch every stupid video he makes?

MIKI: Because that's my profession. Weren't you on your way to make out with someone you never met...? (realizes he went too far) sorry. Good luck.

NATALIE: (after a moment) That's my profession.

Ben Yair's projection appears , he's wearing a suit and descending the steps to center stage. He faces the audience,

his voice amplified. He draws closer to Natalie, watching her with admiration, and continues to flirt with the crowd.

BEN YAIR: Ahhhh, women. I love women. I love my mother, my wife, and my daughters, women, in general. You're more beautiful, more intelligent, more sensitive, more brave. You're so much more. There's no argument about it, and even if there was, we'd probably lose it because you're better than us. (Natalie leaves Miki and approaches Mor, who enters with Stas. They shake hands and talk—no sound is heard.) If you want to jump the highest, don't ask us to lower the bar for you. If you want to run and win, don't beg us to give you a head start. You know why? Because we will. Because we're afraid of getting in trouble with you. Say "no" to something you want? Are we crazy? Do you want us to be sensitive and supportive? Great. Watch cooking shows together? Sure thing. Go shopping with you and cry at the movies? we're on. If you want, we can even shave our chest and balls for you, but no matter how hard we try, we can never give birth, and you can never win wars! Don't our generals know that? Of course they do. But they don't want trouble at home, so they lower the bar, give you a head start, and if we lose the war, never mind, at least we get to march behind a hot female commander. (Phone rings) I'm done for. (Takes phone from his pocket.) Sometimes I forget my wife watches this too. (on the phone) Hey, honey. You're right. Of course — it was a joke... Shallow, chauvinist, and in poor taste... Of course a woman can be anything — even Prime Minister. You're right. I went too far. Sorry. (Puts the phone back in his pocket.)

Natalie warms up in her silent conversation with Mor. It's unclear if Ben Yair is annoying her or if it's Mor. Stas stands close by, alert. Ben Yair turns directly to Miki.

BEN YAIR: Hormones, it's an unconventional chemical weapon. I've never understood why it's mostly the left that supports putting women in fighter jets loaded with bombs. Can you imagine what might happen if a woman pilot flew an F-35 over a hostile civilian population during her PMS? (Ben Yair starts to leave, stops, turns to the audience.) ... Now, when I think about it like this... maybe it's actually not such a bad idea (smiles) making a woman our Prime Minister.

4.The Truth About Feminism and Gender Equality.

NATALIE: (in shock and anger) Are you out of your mind? What do you think I am?

MOR: Why are you angry?

NATALIE: (on her way out) What do I look like?!

MOR: Will you calm down for a moment and let me finish?

Natalie stops, very tense, but willing to listen.

NATALIE: I'm not a whore.

MOR: (calm) and I am?

NATALIE: I didn't say-

MOR: And Stas, do you think he's a whore?

Silence, Stas makes sure there's no doubt.

STAS: I'm not a whore.

MOR: He's not a whore.

NATALIE: (pause) It's not my place to judge him.

MOR: (quietly, calmly) Your agent told me you don't have a problem with nudity...

NATALIE: I told her I don't have a problem with nudity as long as...

MOR: ... as long as it serves the story... right?

(pause)

NATALIE: What story? She told me it's like reality TV.

STAS: More like a Docudrama.

MOR: Sort of.

NATALIE: She said It's like a prank show.

MOR: Not exactly.

NATALIE: She didn't say it's reality porn!

MOR: Because it's not reality porn.

(pause)

STAS: It's a great exposure for you. This film will be seen worldwide.

MOR: Stas. (shuts him up with a look)

NATALIE: Listen, I don't know who you are or what you're about, I've never heard of you, but I didn't study acting to—

MOR: (doesn't wait for the end of the sentence, quietly)
50,000 per one shooting day.

NATALIE: ...to be a— (looks at Stas, sees he's sensitive about the subject, and corrects herself) in porn.

Stas: What's wrong with being in porn?

MOR: It's not porn.

STAS: Did you know it's one of the only professions where women earn more than men? This and modeling.

NATALIE: I'm not a model.

MOR: It's not porn.

STAS: You could be.

MOR: Stas!

(Silence)

Stas: She is very beautiful. You are very beautiful.

NATALIE: (to Stas, flattered) Thank you.

MOR: Stas, what's the name of that Brando movie you told me about?

STAS: Last Tango in Paris.

MOR: There you go — Would you call The Last Tango pornography?

NATALIE: Oh, come on...

MOR: And why not? (pause) I'll tell you why: Because when an actor like Brando has sex on camera, it's not porn, it's art.

NATALIE: I don't think they actually—

MOR: (looks at her phone) What else...

STAS: In the Realm of the Senses.

MOR: "In the Realm Of the Senses." Right? Would you call that muster piece pornography? I'm asking you...

NATALIE: I haven't seen it.

MOR: (looking at her phone) In the Realm of the Senses. Nagisa Oshima. You haven't seen it?

Natalie is embarrassed.

MOR: (scrolling on phone) Nymphomaniac?

STAS: Lars von Trier.

MOR: Surely you've seen... with what's her name...

STAS: Charlotte Gainsbourg. A very powerful film.

(pause)

MOR: Have you?

(pause)

NATALIE: Didn't get around to it.

MOR: (quiet, to Stas) people graduate from acting school these days without basic ... (Natalie heads for the exit) Fuck that. Honestly, It's all bullshit. You're fantastic. You're the best actress I could've imagined for this job, I don't even need to audition you, I saw you on TV, in that scene... Your husband directed it, right? You were incredible. For me that's enough. (Natalie softens a bit, Mor stays skeptical) But you're right. You're right. It's not about being physically naked. It's about putting yourself out there emotionally. If you're not totally okay with it, I don't want you to do it. It would be a crime.

Natalie hesitates, starts exiting.

MOR: (Quietly to stas)Here—look at this.

Natalie stops, confused, Mor looks at her phone.

STAS: ...In the Realm / of the Senses.

MOR: (cuts Stas off) In the Realm of the Senses. That's a must-see. Nymphomaniac I liked less. (Approaches Stas.) Stas, can you check if the girl who was here before...?

NATALIE: I'm two hundred percent okay with myself! I know what I want, I know what I'm worth, and I know you have to compromise sometimes, and I know there's a price to pay, but...

MOR: It's okay, I understand.

NATALIE: Do you know how few actresses manage to get an almost lead role in a TV series? People recognize me the street. Ask me for selfies. And I know what they say, but I didn't get that part because I... It was before we were a couple. We started dating only after the... And the fact I appeared naked in one TV series/ doesn't mean I'm a...

MOR: I get it.

NATALIE: You don't!

Natalie is on the verge of tears. Mor gently touches her, Natalie flings her hand off.

NATALIE: So I haven't seen "In the Realm of the Senses". You can shove your Realm of the Senses up your (Mor starts to leave and Natalie shouts after her.) I'm an actor! People know and love me and they appreciate my work. This is what I've dreamed of doing my whole life, and I worked very hard to make this dream come true!!!

Announcement: The theme music for Ben Yair's show "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth."

BEN YAIR: (enters energized and furious, facing the audience and the people onstage) Fuck that bullshit!!! I'm not going to apologize and I won't take moral lessons from anyone, and no one, absolutely no one is going to call me a fascist just to shut me up! Don't bullshit us with all this human rights talk, what about the right to live?! After something terrible happens— a murder, a terror attack, or some illegal immigrant rapes some girl on the street— only then we suddenly remember: Today you can locate any cell phone

in seconds, photograph every home, every street corner, break into computers and know everything about anyone at any moment, so why not do what it takes to stop all this shit before it happens?! Privacy? That's our problem? When the people I love are in danger, I don't care what the rest of the world thinks of me, or what they say about me, and I don't care how it looks. I'll always tell you the truth. The whole truth and nothing but the truth! If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to hide. You don't need to hide because we have nothing to be ashamed of. They can't make us stop telling the truth. You know why? Because we're not afraid to pay a price for the freedom to be true to ourselves!

Ben Yair stays to listen to Miki and Natalie.

5. The Truth About Art and Exposure.

MIKI: (stunned) Fifty thousand for one day of filming? Wow

NATALIE: Can you believe it?

MIKI: No.

NATALIE: Could you do it?

MIKI: What?

NATALIE: You know...

MIKI: You were right to walk out.

NATALIE: How do you know?

MIKI: Stas? That's what he said his name was?

NATALIE: (laughs) He's wasn't there for the... he just helps her with the video... (laughs) I don't know, he looked like an old retired porn star/ so i...

MIKI: (agitated) What was the woman's name?

NATALIE: Mor Levi.

MIKI: Bitch.

NATALIE: You know her?

(pause)

MIKI: No. Where was this audition... (starts to leave)

NATALIE: Where do you think you're going?! what...(laughs) You want to avenge my honor? I'm a big girl. I just thought you'll find it funny. (flirts) Doesn't it turn you on to think I was that close to becoming a porn star?

MIKI: (dryly) Why? Do you think it turns me on when hundreds of men are jerking off while they replay your sex scenes with that idiot?

Silence. Miki realizes what he said. Natalie moves away.

NATALIE: I know you regret it. Today you wouldn't let me do those scenes...

MIKI: You're my wife

NATALIE: (cold) What do you mean?

Mor joins the conversation. The scene with her weaves together the previous Mor-Natalie scene with this dialogue. Natalie wavers, torn between the two scenes.

MOR: He means you're his woman, that's all, right?

NATALIE: What are you trying to say?

MOR: That he gets to decide.

MIKI: We're not short on money, you don't need to debase yourself in all these lousy auditions...

NATALIE: (to Miki, embarrassed in front of Mor's look) I work, I make money.

MOR: Who earns more?

NATALIE: (to Mor) Why does it matter?

MIKI: Only one thing matters. That you do only what you want to do.

MOR: So basically you're living off him. He pays all... ok, most of the expenses, and in exchange he gets exclusivity.

NATALIE: I love him.

MIKI: You're not really considering doing this...

MOR: If you do it with someone else, will you stop loving him?

NATALIE: Are you really talking about full-on sex...everything included?

MOR: Probably. Yes.

NATALIE: (to Miki) Would you be okay with me doing that?

MIKI: No! (leaves Natalie alone, goes over to Mor angrily, Stas ready to defend her but Mor calms him) Are you crazy?

MOR: Do you want me to cancel?

MIKI: She's my wife!

MOR: Oh really?

MIKI: I'm not letting her do it.

MOR: I don't think it's your decision to make.

Natalie goes back to Mor, Mor moves away from Miki and approaches Natalie.

NATALIE: Fifty thousand?

MOR: Yes.

MIKI: (to Natalie) You can't be serious, can you?

STAS: Do you agree?

MOR: Stas thinks you'd be brilliant.

NATALIE: I don't know. No. Maybe. (pause) No.

Long pause, Miki relaxes and moves away, Natalie doesn't move

MOR: So why are we still talking?

NATALIE: Because I'm trying to understand how you, as a woman/
can even...

MOR: (interrupts) That's how men oppress women.

NATALIE: Sex?

MOR: (smiles) Marriage.

MIKI: Bitch!

Miki thinks about rushing there, but Stas's stare stops him.

MOR: A long time ago, in Jericho, lived a woman named Rahab.

MIKI: Oh, come on...

MOR: She had no husband. Her body was her own property. Not her father's, not her brothers', not her husband's. She was her own woman. She had her own money, her own opinions, her own view of the world. And they, those bastards, took that amazing thing she was and reduced it to one word.

(silence)

NATALIE: I'm not...

MIKI: (curses) Fucking whore.

STAS: That's why Africans hates being called the N-word.

NATALIE: What?

STAS: A woman is the n***** of the world.

NATALIE: What is he talking about?

STAS: Pornography's a matter of geography.

MOR: All these big words... It's just for manipulation.

NATALIE: (stunned) Don't you believe in love?

MIKI: (mumbles to himself, in shock) I don't believe it.

NATALIE: (to Miki, as if answering Mor's question) Really?

MOR: Men are assholes.

NATALIE: (to Mor) If I didn't believe in love, I'd kill myself.

MIKI: (to Natalie) I can't believe you're actually considering this.

NATALIE: (to Mor) I'm dead serious...

MOR: Love? I don't know...

NATALIE: Because if you don't believe in something...

MOR: You can believe in astrology, reincarnation, aliens...

NATALIE: ...then what's the point of getting up in the morning?

MOR: (sighs) ...God.

NATALIE: What?

MOR: I grew up religious, so...

NATALIE: So you believe...

MOR: God forbid, heaven help me.

(they both laugh)

MIKI: (cuts them off) It's not funny!

NATALIE: (to Miki) Listen! (serious, to Mor) Why did you stop believing in god?

MOR: Why do you think? You think religious people really believe there's someone up there who sees everything, watches, judges, punishes?

NATALIE: They don't?

MOR: They're just like you. Yeah, they're terrified if they eat bread on Passover, they're scared to death if they masturbate on Yom Kippur, but then they fast a little, pray a little, and work out a deal before it even gets to court. Between men and God you can always settle for some community service, but between man and his fellow man...they have rules but no real enforcement. Most religious people have a silent agreement with God: they keep their crap secret and he looks

the other way. (Real anger, long suppressed, is released and grows) Bribery, theft, hitting the wife and kids, cheating, even rape – if no one knows, they believe it's okay; God doesn't have time for that crap, neither do people, you know why? because if no one sees it... it didn't really happen.

Natalie and Stas are stunned, Mor calms down

MOR: I only believe in what I can see. I don't believe in fake modesty, I don't believe in shame, I don't believe in big words that hide the simplest truths. I believe everything must be seen, everything must be shown. And I believe that only when you have nothing to hide, you can finally stop being afraid.

NATALIE: (pause) What does it have to do with this film you want to make?

MOR: Telling the truth isn't enough. You have to show it.

MIKI: (on the verge of despair) Can't you see she's crazy?

NATALIE: I actually think you'll like her.

MOR: All those bastards... media guys, judges, generals, CEOs—I want the whole world to see their asses.

NATALIE: And I'm supposed to pull down their pants?

MOR: If they spend a few minutes alone with you, they'll do it themselves.

NATALIE: (to Miki) Don't you see we want the exact same thing?

MIKI: Bulshit

NATALIE: You're a straight white man, and there are some things you can never understand.

MIKI: (pause) Are you attracted to her?

NATALIE: I love the way she doesn't give a fuck about what people think.

MIKI: Why would you even want to? For the money?

NATALIE: I don't think so. I'm not sure. I'm scared to death.

MIKI: You don't have to do it?

NATALIE: I don't.

MIKI: Please don't. You don't need this.

NATALIE: I think that's exactly why I want to do it.

MIKI: Don't you see she's manipulating you?

NATALIE: (smiling) So are you.

MIKI: You can't.

NATALIE: Why not?

MIKI: People will see you

NATALIE: Are you afraid of what they'll think of me, or what they'll think of you for letting me do it?

MIKI: I'm afraid I won't be able to protect you.

NATALIE: (mumbling) You're afraid I won't need you to.

MIKI: What!!!?

(pause)

NATALIE: I didn't mean it. (pause) I'm terrified.

MIKI: So why?!

NATALIE: Because I want to stop being afraid.

(pause)

Sound cue: Ben Yair's show theme. He comes onstage dressed like a university lecturer, book in hand.

BEN YAIR: Welcome to the university of life! Today's lesson: xenophobia. The president himself said I encourage xenophobia. I didn't know what that was, so I looked it up. (Opens a book.) "Phobia" is fear. "Xenophobia"—fear of strangers. In short—racism. (Closes the book.) Not good. All day I kept thinking, maybe he's right. If such an important person takes time out of his busy day to teach me something I didn't know about myself—that I'm encouraging xenophobia, encouraging fear and hate... it's scary to think. I'm a thorough person, so I took the day to study the subject deeply: Turns out statistically, the most common fear isn't fear of death, pain, loss of control, or bereavement. I was surprised to learn that research proves the most common fear is the fear of what other people will say about us. No matter how much we know the truth inside, that fear makes us go quiet, pretend, doubt. If that's what they're saying about us—maybe we are not the good people we think we are. Maybe we're even bad? Let's get back to the lesson—xeno-phobia. Why does it start? No baby is born racist. (Gentle music, a slide appears: a white baby next to a black baby.) No one comes into the world with prejudice. Babies love butterflies (a butterfly lands on the white baby's hand) just as much as they love... cockroaches. They'd love to pet a

rabbit, just as much as they'd pet a rat . Babies are the purest, sweetest things in the world. No baby thinks Arabs are terrorists or that black people are rapists, and you know why? (explodes) Because babies don't know shit! Of course not every n***** is a rapist and not every Arab is a terrorist, but no lefty dad would let his daughter walk alone at night in a neighborhood where illegal migrants live, and no bleeding-heart mom would leave her little girl to play with potential rapists . If you don't want Arabs and blacks in your neighborhood, it's not because you're racist. And it's not because you're afraid. It's just because you care about your family and want to keep them safe and alive!