

Made He a Woman

By Efrat Tilma & Yonatan Calderon

(After the autobiography by Efrat Tilma)

Translated from the Hebrew by Margalit Rodgers



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Synopsis

The play is based on the autobiography of Efrat Tilma, one of the first transgendered women in Israel.

Efrat has been volunteering for years as a policewoman in the Tel Aviv district police, but none of her coworkers know she was born in a male body. One night her best friend is arrested. The charged encounter with her transsexual friend forces Efrat to confront her past, which she has struggled all her life to hide.

The play follows key moments in Efrat's life, providing a rare glimpse into her brave and extraordinary life. Efrat is portrayed by several actors.

The show premiered at Habima National Theatre during the 2017 Pride events, in cooperation with the LGBTQ Center, and won best show at the Theatrical Autumn Festival 2018.

Characters

Three female actors and one male actor play Efrat at different ages. If possible, transgender actresses should be cast for trans-women's roles.

Older Efrat	73, trans-woman pioneer. Volunteer policewoman in the Central District
Young Efrat	20-30, struggling to be recognized as a woman by the establishment
Lady Anne	16, Efrat's stage persona when she worked as a dancer-stripper in transvestite nightclubs in Europe
Bar Mitzvah Boy	13, Efrat as a boy
Camellia	30 (or older), a young trans-woman friend of Efrat's, works as a prostitute
Police Chief	Chief of the Israel Police, Tel Aviv District, where Efrat volunteers
Heidi	A French trans-woman, performed in Israel, works at Madame Arthur in Paris, older but still beautiful, fears for her status, afraid that Efrat will overshadow her, shifts between empathy towards Efrat and fear of her and a desire to undermine her
Jacques Leonidas	Heir to a wealthy chocolate praline empire, dependent on his family's approval, sexually attracted to transwomen but unwilling to marry one
Dr. Burou	A French plastic surgeon in Casablanca, pioneer of male to female gender reassignment
Dr. Bloch	Forensic pathologist, head of the Institute of Forensic Medicine
Peter	Willing to marry Efrat, but only on condition that she hides her past and never mentions it again
Father	
Mother	
Rabbi / Cantor (recording)	
Manager of Sabra Club in Tel Aviv (voice only) / Manager of Madam Arthur in Paris	
French Policeman / Israeli Policeman in the 1960s / Nati	
Clerk at the Ministry of Interior	
Religious Manager at the Ministry of Interior	
Clerk at the Institute of Forensic Medicine	

Nurse at Dr. Burou's Clinic

Two Assistants to Dr. Bloch

Figures in Tuxedos and Evening Gowns

Prologue: The Creation of Woman

[Dark. Dream atmosphere]

Cantor: *[Voice only]* And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Act One: A Transgender Policewoman?

1. First Encounter

[2012, a dog park in south Tel Aviv. Camellia is sitting on a bench. Older Efrat whistles to her imaginary dog. She notices Camellia and smiles at her. They have never spoken before]

Efrat: [Smiling] I see you here every day. Which one's yours?

Camellia: None of them. I just come here to relax. To watch.

Efrat: What do you watch?

Camellia: The men and women. And everything in between.

Efrat: I'm Efrat.

Camellia: Nice to meet you, Efrat. I'm Camellia.

2. La Traviata

[2013, Camellia's apartment in south Tel Aviv. Camellia and Efrat are chatting]

Efrat: Congratulations, Camellia!

[Efrat gives Camellia a ticket to the opera]

Camellia: La Traviata?

Efrat: Remember you told me you always wanted to go to the opera? So guess what?
La Traviata is playing and I want us to go and see it together!

Camellia: You think they'll let a woman like me into the opera?

Efrat: Sweetie, I promise you the opera ceiling isn't going to come crashing down on you.

Camellia: No, no. Opera is for respectable people in ties and evening gowns.

Efrat: Do you know who's the heroine in this opera? A prostitute!

Camellia: Oh! I like this opera already!

Efrat: Yeah, a courtesan called Violetta. An aristocrat called Alfredo falls in love with her. And Violetta falls in love with him. She stops working as a prostitute and sells everything she owns to pay for a new life for them both in the country.

Camellia: She pays for him? What kind of prostitute is she?

Efrat: But that's when all the trouble begins. Alfredo's father, *[in a French accent]* Giorgio Germont... come on, play him!

Camellia: I always play the villain! I want to play Violetta !

Efrat: D'accord! Germont goes to the countryside and says, 'Violetta, for the sake of my family's good name, please break up with my son.' And Violetta replies, 'But I love him.'

Camellia: *[In a bland tone]* 'But I love him.'

Efrat: Not like that!

Camellia: All right... I need to get into character! *[With exaggerated emotion]* 'But I love him!' *[Comes out of character]* Then what happens?

- Efrat:** Violetta is persuaded and says, ‘For the sake of the family’s good name, I’ll break up with him.’
- Camellia:** *[With exaggerated emotion]* ‘I’ll break up with him. For the sake of the family’s good na...’ *[Comes out of character]* What an idiot!
- Efrat:** A man like him and a woman like her – it never ends well. And then comes the climax– a huge ball, all of Paris high society, and suddenly Alfredo meets Violetta. He asks her, ‘Do you love me?’ and she says, ‘No, I do not you. I love the baron.’
- Camellia:** ‘No, I love the bar...’ *[Comes out of character]* She loves the baron?
- Efrat:** She’s lying to him! And then Alfredo tells all the guests to gather round, and he asks them, ‘Do you know what this woman did? She sold everything she owned and bought my love for money. I cannot have such a stain on my reputation. You are my witnesses, I’m repaying my debt to her.’ And then he tosses a bundle of banknotes at her. And Violetta collapses.
- Camellia:** I’m not going to collapse!
- Efrat:** Collapse already!
- [Camellia collapses dramatically]*
- Efrat:** So, would you like to come to the opera with me?
- Camellia:** I’ll think about it. *[Smiles]*
- Efrat:** How’s your client, the one who’s in love with you?
- Camellia:** Pavel? He’s not a client! We’re a couple. He won’t let me work as a prostitute anymore. He’s promised to support me.
- Efrat:** Sweetie, beware of men’s promises. I don’t want you to get hurt.
- Camellia:** You’ll see, Efrat, Pavel and I will get married, and thanks to him I’ll stop working at night.

3. The Chief of Police

[2016, the police station. The Chief of Tel Aviv District is sitting at his desk. Efrat is standing at the door to his office]

Chief: Efrat, come on in. Sit down, please.

[Efrat sits]

Chief: Efrat, do you know why I've summoned you to my office?

Efrat: Have I done something wrong?

Chief: You haven't done anything. I'm very pleased with you. *[Beat]* That's why I'd like to know a bit more about you. Why don't you tell me about yourself?

Efrat: What's there to tell? I joined the police force five years ago. I'm in charge of the emergency call center...

Chief: Yes, yes. I know all that. Tell me... about your past.

Efrat: My past?

Chief: Before you joined the police force.

Efrat: ...I lived in Berlin, I was an air hostess for British Airways, I was married.

Chief: *[Impatiently]* What about your childhood?

Efrat: *[Pause]* What's my childhood got to do with anything? I celebrated my seventieth birthday this year...

Chief: What I'm trying to say... I want you to tell me who you are.

Efrat: You're the Chief of the Tel Aviv District Police. You don't know who I am?

Chief: Efrat, we've had a few violent incidents with transgender women recently.

Efrat: And what's that got to do with me?

Chief: There's no room for that in the Israel Police.

Efrat: I see. *[Beat]* I'll make things easy for you. I'll resign from the police force.

[Efrat turns towards the door]

Chief: Why would you do that?

Efrat: I've been lying to myself. I thought I could be a policewoman. I told myself – times have changed. But people like me just can't be on the right side of the law.

Chief: What are you talking about?

Efrat: It's been more than fifty years, but I remember. Sometimes when I go to the restroom and see this uniform in the mirror, I'm startled. How is it possible? Any minute now they'll find out. Any minute now they'll pull me out of the women's restroom and throw me in jail. Like they did back then in the old police station in Jaffa. Have you got it written down there that they threw me in jail? There was a police officer there who'd abuse me. He'd beat me. He was the law. I was an outlaw. And I guess that's the way it'll always be.

Chief: Efrat, please, calm down!

Efrat: I returned to Israel after living abroad for over forty years. But nothing has changed. But before you remove me from service...

Chief: I'm not removing you from service! You're one of our best policewomen. I've got no intention of letting you go.

Efrat: *[Sitting down]* Then why did you call me here?

Chief: I know your experiences with the Israel Police in the past were... unpleasant.

[Efrat grimaces at the understatement]

But times *have* changed. The police force has changed. We want to show the world that the Israel Police is a progressive police force that has transwomen serving in it as well. We're in the process of producing a promotional video.

Efrat: A promotional video?

Chief: And I'd really like for you to take part in it.

[Lights down on the Chief, lights up on Camellia as she enters. Efrat stands up and walks towards Camellia. The scene shifts to Camellia's home]

Efrat: I thought I was going to be thrown out of the police force, and they want to turn me a Diva...

Camellia: Now you can be our ambassador in the police force!

Efrat: But I don't want to be an ambassador! I just want to be an ordinary policewoman!

Camellia: Like in British Airways – you could have been the first trans-woman air hostess! But you chose to be merely an air hostess. You made history and nobody knows it!

Efrat: For me, being ‘merely an air hostess’ was a dream come true!

[Lights down on Camellia, lights up on the Chief. Efrat returns to the desk]

Efrat: *[To the Chief]* What exactly is it that you want me to do?

Chief: I want you to talk about your past on the video.

Efrat: I'm sorry, Chief, but I have no past.

Chief: Everyone has a past...

Efrat: I live in the present. I erased my past. I burned all my photos. I went through hell to be who I am today. No one knows who I was and no one needs to know. Everyone here respects me. You're asking me to sacrifice everything I've achieved. You want to boost the image of the police force at my expense. You know very well that people will whisper and call me names behind my back.

Chief: I promise you that anyone who disrespects you because you were born a man won't be part of the Israel Police.

[Efrat stands up agitated]

Efrat: I was not born a man! I was never a man. I never got to be a man. Even as a boy I felt something wasn't right with my body. *[Recalls the preparations for her Bar Mitzvah]* I remember it clearly... *[Mutters to herself]* ‘And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman’

Chief: Excuse me?

4. Bar Mitzvah

[Enter the Bar Mitzvah Boy and the Rabbi tutor. It is 1958. Efrat and the Chief gaze at them. Lights down on Efrat and the Chief, and they exit]

Boy: [Repeats the Haftara portion] ‘And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man...’

Rabbi: No good, no good. Let’s do it one last time before you go to the synagogue.

Boy: ‘And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man...’

Rabbi: You’ve forgotten everything I’ve taught you! It’s just nerves. It’s natural. ‘And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man.’

Boy: [Repeats quietly]

Rabbi: Good, but louder. It’s a big synagogue. You want people to hear you. ‘Made He a woman.’ Loud. Like a man!

[The Rabbi taps the Boy on the chest. The Boy flinches and emits a feminine sound of alarm]

Boy: [Louder] ‘Made He a woman.’

[At the same time, the Boy’s Mother enters, exchanges glances with the Rabbi, who gestures that things are not going well. The Mother exits]

Rabbi: Very good. ‘And brought her unto the man.’

Boy: ‘And brought her unto the man.’

[Enter the Boy’s Father, looks at them]

Father: Don’t mind me.

Rabbi: ‘And the man said: This is now.’

Boy: [Repeats, out of tune]

Rabbi: Why don’t we try it standing up? [They stand up] ‘Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.’

Boy: [Repeats, even more out of tune. The Father is alarmed and exits]

Rabbi: It’s no good standing up. Sit down, sit down.

[Enter the Mother with a tray of tea and cookies]

Mother: Time for a break. Come and have something to eat. [*Touches the Rabbi's shoulder*]

Rabbi: Hey, *shomer*!

Mother: Oh, you're "Shomer Negiah", no touching... [*Rolls her eyes at the Boy behind the Rabbi's back*]

[*To the boy*] Ingele, what's the matter? You're white as a sheet. You're going to a synagogue, not a funeral.

Rabbi: Mrs. Mother, please, we're almost finished. [*Exit the Mother*] 'She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'

Boy: [*Repeats*]

Rabbi: [*Despairingly*] Excellent... [*Closes the Bible and kisses it*]

Boy: Rabbi, are girls also called up to read from the Torah?

Rabbi: [*Laughs out loud*] No, of course not! Only us men!

[*Enter the Father. He stands the Boy up and pats him on the back*]

Father: So, this is the big day! Today you get called up to read from the Torah. From now on you're a man!

Boy: I'm not...

Father: You're not...?

Boy: I'm not.

[*Pause. The Father is puzzled.*]

Father: Well. Don't forget your prayer shawl! [*Drapes it around him*]

[*The Father starts pushing him out. They exit through the front door*]

5. Reading from the Torah

[Later the same day. The synagogue. The Men gather. The women are in the women's section]

Men: [To one another] Shabbat Shalom! Gut Shabbas!

[Enter the Boy; the Men welcome him warmly]

Men: Here he is! The Bar Mitzvah boy! How he's grown! He's become a man!

[At the sound of the word "man" the Boy shudders]

Men: Here's our man! From today you're a man! You'll be a rabbi!

[The boy feels dizzy. Eventually he faints]

6. The Star of Madame Arthur in Tel Aviv

[1960. The actors' entrance at Sabra Nightclub in Tel Aviv. 1 a.m. The Boy is waiting in the dark in his Bar Mitzvah clothes minus his kippah and prayer shawl]

Announcer: [Voice] All the way from Madame Arthur in Paris, here in Sabra Club in little Tel Aviv! The one and only – Heidi!

[Heidi has finished her performance and is leaving the club to go to her taxi. She is wearing a sequined dress and a feather boa around her neck. The Boy, dressed in his man's suit, is waiting for her at the back door of the club, so he can speak to her]

Heidi: [Back into the club] Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! [Walks past the Boy]

Boy: Heidi!

Heidi: Bonsoir, Monsieur.

Boy: You sing really beautifully!

Heidi: [Laughing] Is that what you wanted to tell me?

Boy: Yes...

Heidi: [Laughing] I'll pass it on to Shirley Bassey.

Boy: Who?

Heidi: [Angrily] I don't actually sing myself! I just move my lips and dance. It's playback! [Musing] But... [Happily] Actually, that's the best compliment you could have given me!

[Heidi caresses the Boy's cheek sensuously, and goes on her way]

Boy: I want to become a woman too.

[Heidi stops]

Heidi: So that's what this is about. [Turns to face the Boy. Examines him from head to toe] You'll make a beautiful woman.

Boy: Excuse me for asking – are those your breasts?

Heidi: You bet they're mine! I paid ten thousand francs for them!

Boy: I want to have breasts like those too!

Heidi: Ha! Are there any travestis in Israel?

Boy: Just me and my friend Yarkona.

Heidi: *[Laughing]* If you ever make it to Paris, come and see me at Madame Arthur.
I'll fix you up with a job in our cabaret.

Boy: Thank you!

[Heidi takes her feather boa and puts around his neck]

Heidi: Good luck, Mademoiselle!

7. Police Harassment

[1960, a street in Jaffa. The Boy is wearing a cheap wig and dressed as a woman. Yarkona, dressed as a washed out prostitute, is soliciting clients in the audience]

Yarkona: *[To a man in the audience]* Wanna have some fun? Ten lira! Come on! *[To another man in the audience]* And what about you? But I'm clean!

[When the Boy finishes dressing up as a woman]

Boy: *[Pause]* Yarkona, where are we going?

Yarkona: I've got some nice men I want you to meet.

Boy: Will they help me become a woman?

Yarkona: That's exactly what they'll do!

Boy: Yesterday I went out with this guy. He took me to a café. He looked into my eyes and asked, 'How do you like your sausage?'

Yarkona: And what did you say?

Boy: I panicked. I said I wasn't hungry.

Yarkona: *[Laughs]* Stand here. You're pretty. They'll love you.

Boy: Who'll love me?

Yarkona: Someone's coming. Fix yourself up.

[Enter a Client. Yarkona coarsely arranges her underwear]

Client: Hey, what's up, Yarden?

Yarkona: Yarkona!

Client: A'right... *[He scrutinizes the Boy]* How about you?

Boy: I'm okay.

Client: Just okay?

Boy: Yes.

Yarkona: *[To the Client]* Behave yourself! It's her first time!

Client: A'right...

Yarkona: *[To the Boy]* Go with him. Give him a hand job. He'll pay you.

[Yarkona pushes the Boy towards the Client, and they exit. To the Client]

Yarkona: You behave yourself, okay?

Client: A'right, a'right...

Yarkona: *[To the Boy in a whisper]* Take the money and give him a hand job. Piece of cake.

[The Boy and the Client exit. Yarkona makes eyes, as it were, at men passing by]

Yarkona: *[To a man in the audience]* Want me? Ten lira! *[Notices an approaching Policeman]*

Yarkona: Dammit!

[Yarkona starts leaving. The Policeman enters]

Policeman: Where are you rushing off to, Yarkona?

[A moment later, the Boy returns and looks for Yarkona]

Policeman: Hey, you! Come here. What's your name?

Boy: ...

Policeman: Have you got a name?

Boy: *[Bowing her head]* No...

Policeman: *[Laughs]* What's with the costume? Going to a fancy dress party?

Boy: ...

Policeman: What are you doing here?

Efrat: Nothing.

Policeman: Nothing, eh? And how did you get here?

Boy: Just passing through.

Policeman: Just passing through? Are you lost?

Boy: Yes...

[The Policeman approaches the Boy]

Policeman: Get into the squad car. I'll take you home.

Boy: No, thanks... no need.

Policeman: Are you afraid your parents will find out what you're doing here at night?

Boy: No, please!

Policeman: You fucking faggot! *[He strikes the Boy hard]* This is the last time I catch you here! D'you hear me?

Boy: Leave me alone! Please, leave me alone! I haven't done anything!

[The Boy tries to get away but the Policeman grabs him, drops him to the ground, grabs his hand and shoves it between his legs]

Policeman: Is this what you're looking for?

Boy: *[Crying]* No! Leave me alone!

[The Boy manages to break away from the Policeman. The Policeman chases him but the Boy escapes]

Policeman: Next time I catch you in women's clothes I'll throw you in jail, you *pervert!*
[Spits]

[The Policeman leaves. The Boy, still dressed as a woman, arranges his hair and straightens his dress. Yarkona returns]

Boy: *[Crying]* Where have you been, Yarkona?

Yarkona: I see you've made a new friend!

Boy: Why did he do that to me? I didn't murder anyone, I didn't steal anything.

Yarkona: *[Wiping away the Boy's tears]* It's the law, sweetie.

Boy: What kind of law is that?!

Yarkona: Israel is no place for women like us. Antwerp, Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris – over there it's heaven for women like us. Over there you can live your life and no one hassles you.

Boy: And when will they stop saying this is a costume?

Yarkona: You've still got a long way to go.

Act Three: Showgirl

8. Betrayal

[1962, Madame Arthur in Paris. Young Efrat, who now goes by her stage name Lady Anne, is on the stage lip-syncing a song. The song ends to several rounds of applause. Enter the Cabaret Manager]

Manager: A big round of applause for Lady Anne! *[Slaps Lady Anne's backside. She gives him a sharp look and pushes his hand away]* What a pussycat! Ladies and gentlemen, it's cold outside, but here inside it's hot, sizzling hot! Every night we have to force the girls to keep their clothes on. So stay with us, you never know, maybe tonight *[Beat]* we'll lose the fight. *[Drum roll]* A short break and we'll be back.

[Lady Anne enters backstage. Heidi is putting on her makeup and getting ready for her performance]

Lady Anne: What an idiot!

Heidi: You were amazing!

Lady Anne: Really?

Heidi: Absolutely fantastic!

Lady Anne: Thank you, Heidi!

[Lady Anne touches up her makeup in front of the mirror]

Heidi: *[Handing her an envelope]* For you.

Lady Anne: *[Opens the envelope and discovers a passport inside]* Ahhh! I don't believe it!

[Lady Anne grabs Heidi excitedly and hoists her up into the air]

Heidi: Anne! Anne! Anne! You're mad! Calm down!

[Lady Anne regains her composure and puts Heidi down]

Heidi: I fixed everything. See? It says you're twenty-one. Now you can work here without worrying.

Lady Anne: What would I do without you, Heidi?!

[Lady Anne grabs Heidi again and swings her up into the air]

Heidi: You're mad! Look what you've done to my hair! *[Beat]* Now go, your chocolatta is waiting for you out there! Go on!

[Lady Anne goes over to Jacques's table. He stands up as she approaches]

Jacques: Lady Anne!

Lady Anne: Monsieur Leonidas!

[They kiss. Jacques seats her chivalrously]

Jacques: You look beautiful!

[Jacques hands Lady Anne a small box that looks like a ring box]

Lady Anne: *[Thinking that Jacques is proposing to her]* Jacques! *[Opens the box. Disappointed but making a show of false enthusiasm]* Oh! Pralines!

Jacques: Leonidas pralines – champagne truffle! And – *[Taking out a diamond necklace]*

Lady Anne: Jacques! You shouldn't have!

[Jacques clasps the necklace around Lady Anne's neck]

Manager: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm proud to present the one and only! The jewel, the diamond *[Making a diamond shape with his two hands, and pointing towards his genitals]* in our crown – Heidi!

[Heidi begins her performance, during which Jacques is feeding Lady Anne pralines from the box]

Lady Anne: Jacques, you'll make me fat!

Jacques: I'm getting married.

[Beat. Lady Anne is stunned, hurt]

Jacques: She can't hold a candle to you, Anne! I love you. But my parents insist that I marry and start a family. If I don't have children, my brother will inherit the business.

Jacques: Say something, Anne!

Lady Anne: Congratulations, Jacques.

[Lady Anne pushes the pralines towards Jacques when she realizes that they are more important to him than she is. She stands up to leave, but the Cabaret Manager arrives with a bottle of champagne, he grabs Lady Anne's hand and violently sits her back down]

Manager: So, Monsieur Leonidas, what do you think of our new acquisition?

Jacques: Lady Anne is the most beautiful of all.

Manager: Champagne?

[The Cabaret Manager pours champagne for Jacques and then for Lady Anne. They freeze. Lights down on them. The song resumes. The Cabaret Manager exits. During the rest of the song a Policeman enters and stands on the side. Heidi finishes singing, notices the Policeman, and goes over to Jacques and Lady Anne's table, indicating to the Policeman who Lady Anne is. She raises Lady Anne's wineglass]

Heidi: To Lady Anne! The new star of Madame Arthur!

Jacques: Heidi, you're still the most glamorous!

[Heidi moves away but stays within earshot. The Policeman advances towards Jacques and Lady Anne's table]

Policeman: Lady Anne?

Lady Anne: *[Unsuspecting]* That's me!

Policeman: Police! Documents, please.

Lady Anne: I haven't got them on me right now...

Policeman: Come down to the station with me.

Lady Anne: No, just a minute, I think I have them here in my bag.

[Lady Anne opens her bag, takes out the passport, and slips it into her bra without the Policeman noticing. Approaches him seductively]

Lady Anne: They're on me.

[Jacques hides his face, afraid that he'll be recognized at an establishment such as this. Lady Anne shows the Policeman her passport. Unimpressed the Policeman angrily takes the passport and examines it]

Policeman: Did you falsify your date of birth?

Lady Anne: No... I didn't...

[Jacques slips out]

Policeman: You're coming down to the station with me. Forging a passport is a serious crime!

Lady Anne: Jacques! *[Noticing he's gone]* Jacques?

[The Policeman drags Lady Anne out. They bump into Heidi]

Lady Anne: Heidi! Help me!

Heidi: You're going to jail, Anne! They'll shave your pretty little head and put you in a men's prison. But don't worry, I'll send you some pralines!

[The Policeman takes Lady Anne with him and they exit]

9. Rebirth

[Later the same day. The Policeman throws Young Efrat onto the floor. Her hair has been cut and is now short. Frantic, Young Efrat raises herself into a sitting position. She touches her short hair and cries]

Young Efrat: I am creating myself.

I am giving birth to the woman I was meant to be.

I want to become a whole woman.

I want the body of an ordinary woman.

I don't want a man to love me like this.

[Young Efrat repeats the above sentences louder and louder. Enter the Police Chief and the Older Efrat and sit at the desk in his office. It is 2016. Older Efrat resumes her seat at the desk beside the Police Chief]

Older Efrat: *[To the Chief]* It was a painful blow. But I told myself – I'm not going to let it break me! I'm not going to let anyone stop me fulfilling myself. I'll go through the transformation. I'll connect my body and my soul. In those days, gender reassignment surgery was illegal in Europe.

Act Four: Woman

10. The Big Day in Casablanca

[1965, Casablanca, Morocco. Young Efrat is at the door of Dr. Burou's clinic. She is dressed as a man in a loose shirt that hides her breasts and a man's short wig. A Nurse dressed in white opens the door with a smile. She speaks with a French accent]

Nurse: Bonjour, Monsieur.

Efrat: Is this Dr. Burou's clinic?

Nurse: Oui, Monsieur, how can I 'elp you?

Efrat: I'm here to have gender reassignment surgery.

Nurse: Monsieur wishes to become a woman?

Efrat: *[Removes the man's wig]* My passport says I'm male. I was afraid I'd be refused entry into Morocco if I was dressed as a woman.

Nurse: D'accord, Mademoiselle. Welcome to Casablanca! My name is Fatima. I am the docteur's head nurse. Now, Mademoiselle, do you have enough money for the opération?

[Efrat hands the Nurse a bag filled with banknotes. The Nurse counts the money. She is not happy with the amount]

Nurse: It's not enough.

Efrat: It's all I've got...

[The Nurse is angry. She takes all of Efrat's money, leaving her one twenty-franc note. She goes out to fetch the doctor. Enter the Doctor. He too speaks with a French accent]

Doctor: Bonjour, Mademoiselle!

[The Nurse starts preparing Efrat for surgery]

Doctor: You've probably heard about the opérations they do in India. They simply castrate the poor girls. Those surgeries are just catastrophe. Gloves!

[The Nurse hands the Doctor a clean pair of gloves. He begins examining Efrat]

Doctor: I have developed a technique I call 'inversion method'. I have made vagin for all the girls from Carrousel de Paris and Madam Arthur. They can tell you my

vagin is parfaitement fonctionnel. You, Mademoiselle, will be able to ‘ave sexual relations with a man and achieve orgasm. Did you know, Mademoiselle, that once upon a time men had an elongated bone in their male organ, like many other mammals? In the course of évolution man lost this bone and the ability to maintain prolonged érection. In my opinion, Mademoiselle, God created woman not from a rib in his chest, but from that penis bone.

[The Nurse takes Efrat to the operating room, lays her down on the bed, and administers anesthetic injection]

Efrat: *[To God]* You up there, please let me come out of here a perfect woman. And if not, please take me away.

[Dark]

Rabbi: *[Voice only]* And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

[A few days after the operation. Efrat is recovering in bed. She caresses her chest and stretches her hand down. When she finds a vagina instead of a male organ a smile spreads across her face]

11. The Institute of Forensic Medicine

[1965, Ministry of Interior, Shalom Tower. Raised voices, shouts, commotion. Young Efrat is at the Woman Clerk's counter. The Clerk returns with her documents]

Clerk: We can't change anything with this.

Efrat: Why not?

Clerk: Sir, You have to bring proof that...

Efrat: Madam. I already told you, I'm a woman.

Clerk: ...that you've had an operation and now you're female.

Efrat: I'll bring a signed document from my family doctor.

Clerk: No, no. It has to be a legal document.

Efrat: Legal?

Clerk: Yes. You have to go to the Institute of Forensic Medicine and bring a document signed by a forensic physician confirming that you've had a medical procedure and now you're... *[Cynically]* a woman?

[Efrat crosses the stage to the Israeli Institute of Forensic Medicine, and stands in front of the Receptionist]

Receptionist: Are you here for a forensic medical examination? This is the first time a body has walked in here on its own two feet...

Efrat: I was sent here from the Ministry of Interior.

Receptionist: The institute director is Dr. Bloch.

[The Forensic Pathologist enters wearing rubber gloves]

Receptionist: He'll deal with you.

Efrat: *[Happy]* Great, thank you.

Pathologist: In an hour.

Efrat: *[Surprised and discouraged]* In an hour?

Receptionist: In an hour.

Efrat: [To the audience] I waited for over an hour outside the doctor's door. Until the receptionist told me I could go in.

Pathologist: Have you got a referral for me?

Efrat: No...

Pathologist: Then go and get one.

[At the Ministry of Interior]

Clerk: Oh, didn't I give you a referral?

Efrat: No.

[The Clerk gives Efrat a referral. Efrat returns to the Institute of Forensic Medicine and hands the referral to the Receptionist]

Efrat: Here.

Receptionist: But it's missing the bureau director's signature. Without a signature it's simply not valid.

Efrat: Could you please...?

Receptionist: I'm very sorry.

Efrat: Please...?

Receptionist: I'm very sorry.

Efrat: Please, just this once...?

Receptionist: I'm very sorry!

Efrat: [To the Pathologist] Dr. Bloch! Dr. Bloch! Can you see me, please? Please, Dr. Bloch!

[The Pathologist gestures for her to leave. Efrat goes back and forth between the Ministry of Interior and the Institute of Forensic Medicine, mumbling fragments of sentences: 'Please', 'Will you, please', 'I insist', 'How is it possible that...', 'I'm begging', 'Please! I need help!', 'Please help me'. The Clerk and Receptionist shoo her from one to the other]

Efrat: [Screaming] Enough! This is outrageous!!!

[Efrat enters the Pathologist's office and gives him the referral. The Pathologist studies the referral thoroughly]

Pathologist: Get undressed.

[Efrat undresses. The Pathologist takes out a measuring tape]

Pathologist: Lie down.

[Efrat lies down naked and self-conscious. Enter two Assistants. The Pathologist measures her body, stating his observations in a cold, emotionless voice as if Efrat were a corpse. The Assistants document everything in writing. Each part of Efrat's body is measured and documented]

Pathologist: Forehead. *[Measures her skull]* Seven.

Assistant 1: *[Repeats and writes down]* Forehead. Seven.

Pathologist: *[Opens Efrat's mouth, examines her teeth]* Teeth.

[The Pathologist hurts Efrat and she protests. The Pathologist stops the examination impatiently]

Pathologist: *[More firmly]* Teeth!

[Efrat understands that she has to cooperate]

Assistant 2: Twenty-six and thirty-three. Fillings.

Pathologist: Arm. *[Stretches her arm, measures it]* Seventy-one.

Assistant 2: Arm. Seventy-one.

Pathologist: Breast. *[Grasps her breasts]* Two silicone implants.

Assistant 1: Two implants.

[The Pathologist hands the measuring tape to Assistant 1]

Pathologist: *[Commands]* Spread your legs.

[Efrat spreads her legs. The Pathologist and his two Assistants on either side of him bend down and peer between her legs in amazement]

Pathologist: Vagina present.

Assistants: Vagina present!

Pathologist: *[Commands]* Leg. *[Stretches her leg, measures it]* What size shoes do you wear?

Efrat: Forty-two.

Pathologist: Large foot. *[To Efrat's face]* Like a man!

Assistant 1: Shoe size. Forty-two.

[The Pathologist concludes the examination, removes his gloves]

Pathologist: Get dressed and go home. Come back in two weeks. Your report will be ready.

[Efrat gets dressed and goes to the Ministry of Interior]

Clerk: Wait here, Sir. The bureau director has to approve it.

Efrat: It's Madam. And I'm not going to wait. Ask him to see me right now!

Clerk: Mr. Rosenson...

[The Bureau Director enters, a bowl of food in his hands, a kippah on his head]

Clerk: That... *[Cynically]* woman is here. When can you see her?

Director: Not today. I'm busy.

Clerk: He can't see you today. Come back tomorrow.

Efrat: Listen to me carefully, you've been giving me the runaround for a whole month for something that takes no more than a second. I'm not leaving here today without a new ID card!

Clerk: He can't...

Efrat: Do you understand?!

Clerk: But it's not possible...

Efrat: Give me a pen and a piece of paper, please.

Clerk: What for?

Efrat: Do you know where we are?

Clerk: At the Ministry of Interior?

Efrat: At Shalom Tower. I'm writing a farewell note and going up to the roof. And I'm going to jump off. And it'll be on your head!

Clerk: *[In alarm]* Mr. Rosenson!

[Pause]

Director: [Sighs] Bring him in.

Clerk: The bureau director will see you now.

[Efrat enters his office. Seated at the desk is a religious man wearing a kippah]

Director: What do you want?

Efrat: For a month now you've been refusing to issue me a new ID card. I've got all the documents and I insist...

[The Director interrupts her and tosses her new ID card onto the floor]

Director: There's your ID card!

[Efrat picks up the card]

Director: Now get out of here!

[The Director exits. Efrat walks to the front of the stage and reads her new ID card]

Efrat: Efrat Anne. Female. [Pause] They won't break me! They won't break me!

[Older Efrat enters the rear of the stage and joins in]

Efrat: They won't break me!

12. Wedding

[1980, Tel Aviv. A hill overlooking a new neighborhood. Enter Young Efrat and Peter]

Efrat: Very nice!

Peter: It's a new neighborhood. *[Pause]* I've missed you! Time stood still until you came back. Not a day passed, not even an hour, that I didn't think about you. I love you.

Efrat: Peter, I...

Peter: Do you love me?

Efrat: No... I mean... Yes, I... that's not what I meant to say.

Peter: Do you love me? We've been together for almost a year and a half and I feel that you're not completely mine.

Efrat: Yes, I love you, Peter, but it's not... it's not right, you don't understand...

[Peter kisses her and she falls silent]

Peter: See that last house over there? It's ours!

[Efrat feigns happiness but can't be truly happy because she is convinced that in just a moment, when he finds out about her past as a male, Peter will leave her]

Peter: After Martha died I didn't believe I'd ever find love again. I'm so happy when I'm with you! *[Becoming serious, takes both her hands in his and kneels]*
Effi, will you be my wife?

[Efrat kneels too]

Efrat: Wait a minute. There's something important about me that you need to know. The reason I asked for a break is because I needed to make a decision. I flew to Mallorca, to Palma. Every day I walked around the Jewish Quarter. Have you heard of the Marranos?

Peter: No.

Efrat: Outwardly they looked Catholic in every respect. Because they were afraid of the Inquisition. But deep down they kept their Jewish faith. On the Sabbath, in the cellars, the women would light candles and the men would bless over the wine.

Peter: I know you're Jewish, Effi. Is that the problem? That I'm Catholic?

Efrat: No, of course not! What I'm trying to tell you is that I'm like the Marranos too. You see?

Peter: What do you mean?

Efrat: I wasn't always as I am now.

Peter: What are you trying to tell me, Effi?

Efrat: Peter, I was born male.

Peter: What?

[Peter falls silent. He is stunned. He lets go of Efrat's hands, stands up, and draws away from her. Efrat collapses to the ground and weeps silently. She is convinced that no one will ever love her. When Peter notices that she is crying, he leans towards her and lifts her up]

Efrat: I'm sorry, Peter. I didn't want to lie to you. I meant to tell you sooner but I couldn't...

Peter: Effi, Effi, stop it! *[Pause. He caresses her face]* I didn't know you then. I know you now. And what I see now is a beautiful woman, a woman I'm in love with. To me you are the most perfect thing in the world.

[Efrat remains openmouthed]

Peter: The past is past. Let's look forward to the future! Effi, will you be my wife?

Efrat: Yes, I will!

[They kiss]

Peter: Just promise me one thing.

Efrat: Of course, anything!

Peter: From this day on I don't want to hear about your past ever again.

Act Five: A Transgender Policewoman!

13. In Jail

[2016. A few days after Efrat's conversation with the Police Chief. The holding cell in the basement of the Central District police station. In the room are Camellia who has been detained for questioning, and Nati, the Policeman watching her, absorbed in solving a crossword puzzle, ignoring her calls]

Camellia: Officer! Officer!

[Enter Older Efrat dressed in police uniform]

Efrat: Hi, Nati.

Policeman: Ah, Efrat! *[Glances back at his crossword]* Animal. Starts with an L and ends with an R?

Efrat: Lerner!

Policeman: *[Laughs]* He really is a beast!

Efrat: What have we got today?

Camellia: You there! Officer!

Policeman: Just some detainee. He's being a real pest. Can you go talk to him, please?

Efrat: *[To the Policeman]* Sure, gladly.

[Efrat goes into the cell and sees Camellia]

Efrat: Camellia! What are you doing here?

Camellia: Efrat!

[Efrat glances back to make sure Nati can't overhear them]

Efrat: What happened?

Camellia: It's Pavel. We had a fight. We'd made plans to go out to a restaurant. I put on my best dress, but he said he prefers to order in, again! I told him I'm woman enough to have sex with but he'd rather die than be seen with me in public! I told him if he doesn't take me out to the biggest restaurant in town where the whole world can see us – it's over between us. He was drunk. Things got loud.

He tore my dress off... One of the neighbors called the cops. As soon as he heard the siren he just vanished into thin air...

Efrat: You poor thing!

Policeman: Everything alright in there?

Efrat: *[To Nati]* Yes, everything's fine. *[To Camellia]* But I don't understand, why have you been arrested?

Camellia: A tall policeman came, redhead, with a mustache...

Efrat: Lerner!

Camellia: All I did was toss a cigarette at him...

Efrat: Camellia, that's called assaulting a police officer!

Camellia: He shouted my old name so loud that the whole building could hear!

Efrat: The name on your ID card?

Camellia: *[Angry]* Are you on my side or theirs?

[Mediterranean music erupts from Nati's cellphone. He answers]

Nati: Hello? Now? No problem.

Camellia: You've forgotten where you came from!

Efrat: Please, Camellia, I'm begging you. They don't know about me here!

[Nati enters and handcuffs Camellia in order to take her for questioning]

Policeman: *[To Camellia]* Shimon!

Camellia: It's Camellia! *[To Efrat]* See? See?

Policeman: Camellia, come on, beautiful. The investigator is just dying to meet you...

[The Policeman takes Camellia and they walk away from Efrat]

Camellia: Efrat, do something!

Policeman: *[To Efrat]* You know this drag queen?

[Pause. Camellia looks beseechingly at Efrat]

Efrat: I met her once... in a dog park.

[The Policeman halts]

Policeman: Ah! Labrador!

Efrat: What?

Policeman: Animal. Starts with an L and ends with an R! *[Laughs]* And you told me I wasn't capable of solving a crossword puzzle!

14. Suicide

[2016, south Tel Aviv. Camellia is at home, drunk, a glass of wine in her hand. The music from Act Two, Scene Two of *La Traviata* is playing at full volume in the background, and she is dancing drunkenly around herself. Efrat bursts in]

- Efrat:** Camellia! It's two o'clock in the morning! Do you know how many complaints we've received at the station?
- Camellia:** Good, let them come. Let them take me away again.
- Efrat:** No one's coming. I told them I'd take care of it. [Turns down the music]
- Camellia:** Like the last time you took care of me!
- Efrat:** I've been trying to get hold of you for a week. You haven't been answering my calls.
- Camellia:** I don't need your explanations!
- Efrat:** When Nati detained you I was confused, I didn't know what to do...
- Camellia:** You betrayed me!
- Efrat:** I'm here to help you! You're standing on the edge of a cliff. One day you'll fall off!
- Camellia:** Pavel came to see me yesterday. He cried and apologized for everything that happened. I forgave him of course. We had a wonderful night. I haven't felt so loved for a long time, so... safe. [Beat] This morning, when I searched for his body beside me I found... a bundle of banknotes.
- Efrat:** That Pavel is nothing but trouble. Why don't you quit this job? Find a normal one!
- Camellia:** I'm not like you, Efrat! I'll never be an air hostess or a policewoman. My past follows me wherever I go! People like me live only at night. In the dark. When the imagination works better than the eyes. But you know what I think, Efrat? I think you're jealous of me!
- Efrat:** I'm jealous of you?
- Camellia:** I might be a trans prostitute, but I'm proud of who I am. I'm not lying to myself, thinking I'm a biological woman.

[The music from La Traviata resumes playing in Camellia's head. Figures dressed in tuxedos and gowns suddenly begin to appear. Camellia looks at them fearfully, Efrat tries to attract her attention, but to no avail]

Efrat: Camellia!

Camellia: I'm like Violetta in La Traviata. I can't go back to the straight and narrow. There's no salvation for me!

Camellia: *[To the Figures, reciting a variation on the opera, pointing at Efrat]* Do you know this woman? This woman is not what she claims to be. She's a liar. She told me she cared about me and I believed her.

Efrat: Camellia, who are you talking to?

Camellia: We were like family. We had a pact. And you broke it. I swear to you all! The debt I owe her is now settled! I owe her nothing!

[Camellia tosses the bundle of banknotes into the air]

Efrat: Camellia, please!

[Efrat grabs her forcefully, which brings Camellia back to reality for a moment]

Camellia: Get out of here!

Efrat: Camellia, let me help you, I love you, Camellia. Camellia!

[Efrat exits. The Figures start closing in on Camellia, the music becomes increasingly louder and scary, the Figures start laughing, Camellia tries to silence them, she closes her eyes and blocks her ears, tries to drive them off with her hands, but they hold onto her. Camellia chokes and dies]

15. Coming Out

[2016, a dog park in Tel Aviv. Older Efrat sits down on a bench. A Junior Policeman is holding a video camera]

Policeman: This is where you want to be filmed? In a dog park?

Efrat: Yes.

Policeman: Okay, fine. *[Aims the camera]* Ready? Action!

Efrat: Hello, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Efrat Tilma and I'm a policewoman in the Israel Police, Tel Aviv District. I want to tell you about someone very dear to me. My friend Camellia Sorkin.

Camellia was a woman who was larger than life. She wanted to find her place in society. She wanted to work and make an honest living. But no one wanted to employ her. She wanted love. But no one wanted to love her. Camellia was like La Traviata, who strayed from the straight and narrow. Society drove her to the margins, to the edge, over the cliff.

Thanks to Camellia I realized that I've been living a lie my whole life. Biologically, I was never a woman. I am a trans-woman. Being a trans-woman takes strength and courage that a lot of people don't have. I wear my trans-womanhood like a medal of courage on the battlefield.

I wear my trans-womanhood in memory of my sisters who fell in battle, like Camellia Sorkin, and for my sisters yet to be born, so they'll have an easier birth.

My story is not about a trans-woman who was harassed by the police, and today she herself enforces the law. No. My story is about a woman who did everything she could to obliterate her past only to discover that she is proud to be what she's been all along – a trans-woman.

Policeman: Very good, Efrat. *[Beat]* It's starting to get a bit dark. Shall we go?

Efrat: I'd rather stay a while longer.

Policeman: Good night, Efrat.

[Efrat nods. Thoughtful. The Policeman exits]

Epilogue: First Encounter

[Immediately after. Efrat is still sitting on the bench. Enter Camellia's ghost and sits on the bench. They have never spoken before. They smile at each other. Efrat speaks tearfully]

Efrat: I see you here every day. Which one's yours?

Camellia: None of them. I come here to relax. To watch.

Efrat: What do you watch?

Camellia: The men and women. And everything in between.

Efrat: I'm Efrat.

Camellia: Nice to meet you, Efrat. I'm Camellia. *[Pause. Hesitantly]* I'm a trans-woman at the beginning of my journey.

Efrat: I'm a trans-woman at the end of my journey.

[They laugh]

Camellia: I wouldn't have believed it. You're so beautiful! Are those your breasts?

Efrat: You bet they're mine. I paid a lot of money for them!

[Camellia laughs]

Camellia: One day I'll be beautiful like you.

Efrat: You're beautiful as you are, Camellia! I won't forget you.

[Camellia smiles at her and they hold hands]

The End