

"THE USER GUIDE FOR RAISING A CHILD"



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English translation by Yan Kogan

Characters

Father

Emile

Mother

Grandmother

Doctor

Pedagoge

Musician

The play is an open experiment in front of an audience led by the pedagogue. The father and Emile are inside the arena surrounded by the characters and the theatre audience.

The play is based on an award-winning novel "A user guide for raising a child" by Eldar Galor.

Pedagogue: *(To the audience)* I want to thank you all for coming today. Because your presence is very important to us, I kindly request to turn off all devices, and I wish everyone a pleasant and meaningful experience.

I would like to begin.

(All the characters enter the stage)

Pedagogue: The myth of Icarus and Daedalus - After completing his labyrinth, King Minos had imprisoned Icarus and Daedalus in a high tower overlooking the sea. The two have built wings from feathers. Before they fly for freedom, the father warns his son of flying too high, the son ignores his father's warning, the wax holding his wings together melts by the heat of the sun, he falls.

(The characters lead Emile and Father into the arena while singing the myth of Icarus and Daedalus)

Take the middle way

Don't fly too low, don't let the water weigh down your feathers

Don't fly too high, don't let the sun scorch your wings

Thus spoke the old man, kissed and hugged his son

Never will he kiss him again, the boy had spread his wings

The sudden thrill of the daring flight swept the boy as he flew towards the sun

To the deep blue of the sea he plunges, to the humming waves

His name they will call in remembrance

Icarus? Where are you? Icarus my son?

Where have you gone my loved one?

Suddenly he sees his feathers on the water.

Pedagoge:

Chapter 1

Scene 1 - Emile and Father

(All the characters take their place on stage)

Emile: Dad?

Father: What?

Emile: be an old man screaming: "Don't kill me".

Father: I'm an old man. Don't kill me.

Emile: Not like that...Really scream.

Father: Don't kill me!

Emile: No, not like that...Really scream.

Father: I'm an old man! Don't kill me!

Emile: Boom! Laser! I've killed you!

(Father plays dead and doesn't get up)

Emile: Dad? dad? Stop it, I don't like this game anymore *(approaches Father to check if he's breathing)*

Father: *(Scares Emile)* Emile!

Emile: *(Silently staring)* I'm bored... *(Not getting any response)* I'm bored!

Father: What do you want to do?

Emile: I want to Go out.

(The surrounding characters audibly disapprove)

Father: It's late.

Emile: So what?

Father: We'll go out some other time.

Emile: But I'm bored.

Father: I know, but it's bedtime.

(Emile starts singing "The bird's song")

Emile: *(Singing)* A bird wants to fly...A bird wants to fly high...Come on Dad, join in!

Father: Emile, not now.

(Emile keeps singing and taunting Father, Father stops him)

Father: Good night!

Emile: Wait Dad, not yet, I don't want to be alone.

Father: You're not alone, I'm here.

(Surrounding characters repeat "I'm here" as an echo)

Emile: But when I fall asleep, I'm alone with my dreams.

Father: Alright. Let's play a game.

Emile: Yes! What kind of game?

Father: The game of "Letting Go".

Emile: What do we do?

Father: We lay on our backs.

(Emile and Father lay down next to each other)

Emile: Now what?

Father: Take a deep breath, and listen.

Emile: To what?

Father: To everything around us.

Emile: Why?

Father: So we can forget about all the little thoughts running around in our heads.

Emile: What are little thoughts?

Father: What have I done today, what do I have to do tomorrow, what have I forgotten to do today, and so on...

Emile: How do we do that?

Father: We focus on this moment. Just listen to the sounds around you, what do you hear?

(Emile describes the actual sounds in the theater)

Emile: I hear... And also...

Father: Good, now focus on your breathing. Inhale and exhale, inhale and exhale. Notice how the little thoughts slowly fade away and disappear.

(Both are quite for a while)

Father: Now we can let go of the day and go to sleep.

Emile: Wait I still have little thoughts in my head... who made the first seed?

Father: What?!

Emile: Who made the first man? Who made the first steel? Who made the first breeze? And the first sun rays, and the olives and chickens and wheat?

Father: Well, some things we can't know for sure. The answers depend on what we choose to believe. Some choose to believe God made the first seed, others choose to believe it was just there.

Emile: I prefer to believe in God, but before I choose I need to know who made God?

Father: If you choose to believe in God, you also choose to believe he is so almighty he managed to make himself.

Emile: How did he do that?

Father: That's a secret. That's the best kept secret in the world. God wouldn't want anyone to find out, otherwise there would be more than one God. So can we let go of thoughts now?

Emile: Just one last question.

Father: Last one.

Emile: Can God fly?

Father: I guess so.

(Pause)

Emile: I want to fly too!

Father: Where do you want to fly to?

Emile: Far way.

(Pause)

Father: Where far away?

Emile: I don't know.

Father: How will you fly?

Emile: With my wings.

Father: But you don't have wings.

Emile: Why don't I have wings?

Father: You just don't.

Emile: Well I want wings.

Father: Well you can't have them.

Emile: Why not?

Father: Because you can't have everything you want.

Emile: Well if I'll want something hard enough, I'll get it.

Father: That's it, good night Emile.

(Father steps away from emile, Silence)

Emile: Why isn't Mom here?

Father: She got an offer so interesting, she couldn't refuse.

Emile: You think her offer is more interesting than being with her son?

Father: No.

Emile: I miss Mom.

Father: Me too.

Emile: I'm not going to sleep. I'm waiting for Mom.

Father: Emile...

(Father tries to catch Emile and put him to bed, Pedagogue remarks from her place)

Pedagogue: The name Emile, probably taken from the book “Emile”, the first educational novel written by Jean-Jaques Rousseau way back in the 18th century, which is in fact the swiss guide for raising a child. The main question raised in the novel is, how could man preserve his innate goodness, the noble savage, throughout his life in a corrupt society, and retain his divine image, his true nature, his authentic self.

Father: That’s enough! (*Emile not responding, start talking to an imaginary friend*) Emile! I’m talking to you.

Emile: I’m busy! (*Whispering to his imaginary friend*)

Father: Stop it!

Pedagogue: Emile has his imaginary friends: Rotten Egg, Mr. Missing, Deadly Coin and Twenty One, each conceived in a specific time, and serves a unique purpose in Emiles inner world. Until he turned three, Emile insisted on wearing only tights and dresses, the distinctions are not quite clear to him.

Emile: We want wings!

Father: You can’t have them.

Emile: We want wings right now and it’s not negotiable.

Father: You’re not getting wings.

Emile: Rotten Egg says you have little belly, and that you’re not charismatic and we’re not listening to you.

Father: Emile don’t start with that nonsense.

Emile: You get us wings right now or we’ll

Father: Or you’ll what?

Emile: We’ll never go to sleep ever again.

Father: Emile don’t you threaten anybody.

Emile: Why?

Father: Because!

Emile: Rotten Egg says “Because” is not an answer.

Pedagogue: Emile isn’t currently receiving any kind of formal education, the swiss guide for raising a child states that a culture in which kids would typically learn reading and writing, is characterized with high self restraint, delayed gratification, logic, hierarchy, all of which would definitely come in handy in this case.

Father: That’s enough!

(*Father garbs Emile, they start struggling*)

Emile: Why?

Father: Because there are rules in this house!

Emile: I want to go out!

Father: You can't go out.

Emile: Why?

Father: Because it's late

Emile: But I want to.

Father: I don't recall asking you what you wanted.

Emile: Yes you did.

Father: Well I'm not asking you now.

Emile: I have a heartache and I feel like dying.

Father: Emile!

Emile: I have a heartache and I feel like dying,I have a heartache and I feel like dying...

Pedagogue:

Scene 2 - Grandmother and knife

(Grandmother steps down to the arena, Pedagogue hands out a knife, Father grabs the knife)

Emile: I have a heartache and I feel like dying

Father: Fine. If you want to die here's a knife.

(Grandmother jumps in)

Grandmother: Hey! Hey! Hey! What's going on here? Are you crazy? What is this?

Emile: Grandma, Dad is threatening me with a knife.

Grandmother: That's dangerous! *(Takes the knife away from Father)*

Emile: That's true!

Pedagogue: Let me just point out that there is an alternative parenting blog that recommends letting young children play with knives, light a fire on their own, throw spears and operate power tools, resulting in them becoming confident adults.

Grandmother: Have you lost your mind?

Father: Everytime he doesn't get his way he says he feels like dying.

Grandmother: Emile, Why?

Emile: Because I have a heartache and I feel like dying.

Grandmother: You can't say that, not even as a joke.

Emile: Why?

Grandmother: Because... Just because.

Emile: "Because" is not an answer.

Grandmother: "Because" is an answer.

Emile: Dad won't get me wings.

Grandmother: What wings?

Emile: Wings, so I can fly like god.

Grandmother: Who told you this nonsense?

Emile: Dad.

Grandmother: I see.

Emile: Grandma, did you know Mom said I will fly really far?

Grandmother: *(While looking at Father)* Really? Tell your Mom it's better to learn how to be grounded first.

Emile: Where's Mom?

Father: Emile go to sleep.

Emile: I'm not tired, I'm waiting up for Mom.

Father: You are tired.

Emile: *(Repeatedly)* No I'm not!

Father: *(Repeatedly)* Yes you are!

Grandmother: Yes you are! Come on Sweetie, Grandma's here now, let's get you to bed.

(Grandmother puts Emile to sleep)

Grandmother: It's bedtime. *(To Father)* It's time you send the child to school. No excuses this time.

Pedagogue: There are many educational options available nowadays: there is formal education, democratic education, anthroposophic education, montessori education, bilingual education, dialogical education, unified education, continuing education, bonding education, exciting education, loving education.... You just have to pick the one method best suited to fulfill your child's full potential. It's that simple.

Grandmother: You hear that?

Father: Didn't you say it's bedtime?

Emile: Who made the first seed? Why have the dinosaurs gone extinct?

Grandmother: Quite, not now.

Emile: But I want to know!

Father: *(Approaches, sits next to Emile and Grandmother)* There are several versions.

Grandmother: But it's bedtime!

Emile: I know, there are several versions and I need to choose. Tell me Dad!

Grandmother: Dad will tell you tomorrow.

Father: It all happened millions of years ago.

Grandmother: Oh come on!

Father: *(Pointing to Grandmother)* Dinosaurs peacefully lived on the planet, until one day it was hit huge meteorite. Most of the dinosaurs perished on impact, the few that remained disappeared in a dust cloud that blocked the sunlight for centuries.

Grandmother: Okay, have we finished?

Emile: Could it happen again?

Father: Theoretically speaking, anything that happened could happen again.

Emile: Theoretically speaking, could people disappear?

Father: *(Looking at Grandmother, Grandmother signals Father to say "No")* Yes.

Emile: What will happen after people disappear?

Father: Everything will be the same, but without people.

(Pause)

Emile: Can I sleep with the light on?

Pedagogue: The swiss guide states that children who weren't accustomed to darkness will grow up to become dimwitted individuals.

Father: No. Good night Emile.

Grandmother: Sleep tight Emile.

(Grandmother returns to her place on stage)

Pedagogue: A lullaby, performed by the Mother.

(Musician and Mother sing a duet)

Mother and Musician:

Give a lullaby to a child

Sing him to sleep

Give a lullaby to a child

Father has gone to work, Father has gone to war

But keep on sleeping.

The wolf is howling, the enemy's at the gates, but keep on sleeping.

The house is collapsing, a world on fire.

But keep on sleeping, but keep on sleeping.

Don't tell him about angels

Don't tell him about butterflies

And not about golden birds

Sing the horrid things with a sweet voice

The plague and the sword and famine

Are a soothing rhythm.

Take a lullaby from a child,

He will still fall asleep, he will still grow up.

Take a child from a lullaby

And the lullaby will carry on alone in the world

In the end it will catch up and put him to sleep for good.

Pedagogue:

Chapter 2

Scene 1 - Wetting the bed

Emile: Dad?

Father: Yes Emile?

Grandmother: Yes Emile?

Emile: (*Embarrassed*) I've peed.

Pedagogue: The Swiss guide states that the most effective way to eliminate bedwetting is not to change the child, and force him to sleep in the smell of urine.

Father: Come Emile, let's change.

Emile: Not here.

Grandmother: (*Looking at the audience around*) Emile, no one is watching.

Emile: I don't want to.

Grandmother: Well you can't stay like that.

(*Father approaches Emile*)

Father: Emile.

Emile: Don't touch me...Don't touch me

Grandmother: Stop it sweetie.

Emile: I'm not well, I'm not well.

Pedagogue: According to different reports, 44% of children whose fathers had suffered from bedwetting, 42% of children whose mothers had suffered from bedwetting and 77% of children whose both parents had suffered from bedwetting are most likely to experience bedwetting themselves. Heredity is not easily discarded.

Grandmother: (*To Father*) He didn't get it from our side.

Father: Stop it. (*To Emile*) What do you want to do?

Emile: I want to be alone.

(*Silence*)

Grandmother: (*Says in a manner the child wouldn't understand*) There's something wrong with the child.

Father: (*Replies in the same manner*) There's nothing wrong with the child.

Pedagogue: Bedwetting could be the result of stress and pressure due to changes to the immediate environment, at home, ADHD which must be diagnosed and treated properly, Evidently emile is crying for help.

(Father tries to approach Emile to change his pants, Emile is looking for a place to hide, Father stops)

Pedagogue: The Mother!

Mother: (talking to the father) Imagine that soon you could be with me and you'll see how uplifted and joyful you feel... Even more, it'll be an abundant cheerfulness that'll flood you like an irresistible surge, you'll be reborn, start over, I mean you'll start over as soon as I arrive. In Fact you'll be happy because I'm sure that that's what you'll be in a moment. Everything would be yours in a moment, the hope, the certain anticipation, that is your happiness. Although, although, there's a cloud in your sky, light as a feather, It'll disappear. In the basis of presence there's an empty space. The emptiness will be filled of course, of course. Nothing will stop me from coming. We have a meeting. No one made me promise. I wanted to. This meeting is the most important meeting of all. I've told you, when we meet again I'll be free just for you, just for you.

Pedagogue:

Scene 2 - Doctor Abu Devinci

(Doctor enters to birds chirping, sings in arabic)

Doctor: Hello.

Father: Emile look who's here.

(Doctor keeps singing to attract Emiles attention)

Doctor: A little bird told me you're Emile.

Emile: What bird?

Doctor: The little chick right here *(Doctor approaches, so does Father)*.

(Doctor holds up an imaginary chick between his closed palms, Emiles tries to listen)

Doctor: It's whispering something.

Emile: I don't hear anything.

Doctor: It's a shy chick, It doesn't like to speak up. Wait, It's whispering something, Mhmm...It said that you are asking for wings? It hears everything your heart is saying. Is it true?

Emile: Who are you?

Doctor: Doctor Abu Devinci. I study man's ability to fly, I build all sorts of models to enable a human to fly like a bird.

Emile: Why?

Doctor: Freedom.

Emile: Freedom?

Doctor: Yes, to allow humans to be free anywhere, we can be free anywhere.

Emile: Do you know how to build wings for me?

Doctor: Only God knows.

Emile: Do you also believe God is so powerful that he had created himself?

Doctor: I believe in not believing.

Emile: So you don't believe?

Doctor: I do, do you?

Emile: I believe.

Pedagogue: *(Calls out the names of Palestinian villages)* Mlabes, Umm al rashrash, Askalan, Umm az-Zinat, Bir'im, Al-Majdal...

Emile: Who said that?

Doctor: It's the white cockatoo. *(Doctor shows the cockatoo puppet in the cage)*

Emile: What's that?

Doctor: Nothing.

Emile: What's it saying?

Doctor: Oh just... Shhhhhh

Emile: What is it saying?

Doctor: Names of Palestinian villages occupied in 1948.

Emile: Why?

Doctor: He's nostalgic sometimes.

Emile: Why?

Father: Okay thank you very much doctor, that's not for us.

Doctor: Okay, if Emile doesn't want his wings...

Emile: I do!

Doctor: Perhaps you're not ready for freedom.

Emile: What? Why?

Doctor: To be free, a man has to first believe that he can.

Emile: I can.

Doctor: And then, work very hard to earn his freedom.

Emile: I'll work hard.

Doctor: Are you sure?

Emile: I'm sure.

Doctor: And what about your father?

(Pause)

Emile: Dad I want my wings.

Father: How much do you want for them?

Doctor: You don't get wings so easily.

Emile: So what do we have to do?

Doctor: Start training.

Emile: What do we do?

Doctor: Your father knows, he remembers.

Emile: Dad, do you know?

Father: *(Hesitates)* I do. Thank you doctor.

Doctor: I'll start my work and you start yours, you do too. Tfadalu.

Father: Come on Emile, let's start training.

(Father and Emile start warming up)

Pedagogue:

Scene 3 - Homeland

(Musician starts playing arabic oud music, Doctor recites the poem "My father" by Mahmoud Darwish)

Doctor:

*He looked away from the moon
Leaned embraced the earth
Prayed for a rainless sky
And had forbade me from traveling
A lightning set valleys on fire
Where for many years my father had groomed stones
Cut down trees
His skin had made dew
His hand emptied trees
And the horizon had wept poetry
Odysseus was a knight
And at home there were loaves of bread
Wine and sheets
Horses and shoes
And when he had prayed on a stone my father said
Look away from the moon
And beware of the sea and of traveling
A star passed in the horizon
Fell slowly
And my shirt is neither fire nor wind
My eyes wonder on signs in the dirt
And then my father had said
He who has no homeland
Has no grave in the earth
And had forbade me from traveling*

Emile: What is a homeland?

Father: A homeland is... hmmm... *(searching for the right words)*

Pedagogue: Homeland is an area to which a people have a historic affiliation, a place where a national identity is formed.

Grandmother: Israel is our homeland, the Jews. Your homeland Emile.

Emile: What is the doctor's homeland?

Father: Israel is also the doctor's homeland.

Emile: But grandma just said that Israel is the homeland of the Jews.

Father: A homeland belongs to all of those who were born in it.

Grandmother: Some would say it belongs to whoever was here first.

Doctor: That, I can agree with.

Emile: So who was here first?

Father: Emile let's keep training. *(continue training routine)*

Grandmother: Who's song was this?

Pedagogue: The song is called "My father", by Mahmoud Darwish, who's considered by many to be the Palestinian national poet.

Grandmother: I grew up in a kibbutz- "Givat ha shlosha". And I'd been raised on the values of Zionism, I grew up on S.Yizhar, Moshe Shamir, Yoram Tehar Lev. I love Bialik and Alterman and Haim Guri' but most of all I love Yehuda Amichai. Here's a good story, Alterman wrote to candle light, Haim Guri wrote by the light of the bonfire and Yehuda Amichai wrote by the light in the refrigerator.

Emile: What does it mean to write by the light in the refrigerator?

Grandmother: His songs made us feel at home, in our homeland. Speaking of songs, how I loved sing-alongs.

Pedagogue: Music!

Grandmother: Join me!

(Musician plays and Grandmother sings "Sixty years old", signals the crowd to join, Emile and Father continue training)

Grandmother:*(singing)*

The top of mount Gilboa had been painted red

From the hen house calls a rooster to announce the day

A sixty year old opens her eyes, puts on her shoes

A big day lies ahead, it's her day

A big day lies ahead, young and innovative

Straightens out her wrinkles and eases years

*Because she's real, not a symbol, not a flag and not a sign
The past lies behind she looks onward*

*She's a grandmother and a mother, grandchild and great grandchild
In short she's rejuvenating like the seasons
A woman of summer, a woman of winter, a woman of embrace, a woman of feud
But deep in her heart, there's always spring*

*There her rugged hand hard as a tree trunk
Gentle and caressing with infinite tenderness*

Pedagogue: Thank you. that's enough.

Grandmother: You see, that's what I grew up on.

Doctor: And on the "Workers party of Israel" point of view that you only kill and ruin and destroy if you must.

(Pedagogue calls out again the names of occupied Palestinian villages)

Grandmother: Excuse me, are you trying to tell me something?

Doctor: It isn't me, it's the white cockatoo.

Grandmother: Who?

Emile: *(Approaches the puppet in the cage)* The white cockatoo, he calls out the names of villages.

Grandmother: What villages?

Emile: *(To the doctor)* Why is it in a cage?

Doctor: Everyone has a cage.

Emile: Why does he stay inside?

Doctor: Because that's his home.

Emile: His home is cage?

Doctor: Yes, a cage is also a nest.

Father: Doctor, shall we continue training?

Doctor: Ofcourse.

Father: Let's go Emile, time to learn to fly.

Pedagogue:

Chapter 3

Scene 1 - Willpower

(Father guides Emile as he starts the flight sequence)

Pedagogue: In order to preserve the noble savage, a man must be granted independence, free will and freedom of choice. The swiss guide recommends to let the child fly, but also clip his wings before he soars to high.

Emile: My feet are tired.

Father: You're not stopping now.

Emile: What happens when you're so tired you can't go on?

Father: Than it's time for willpower.

Emile: What's willpower?

Father: It's a force deep inside you that only comes out when you're really tired.

Emile: Does everyone have willpower?

Father: Yes, but most people's willpower is weak and as soon as things get tough they break down.

(Emile wonders)

Emile: I keep going. I have the willpower.

Father: Aren't you tired? *(flight training continues)*

Emile: No. *(Exhausted)*

(Stops training after a while)

Emile: Had you're father tested your willpower too?

(Silence)

Father: No.

Emile: Why not?

(Silence)

Emile: Why haven't I met him?

Father: He left home when I was a child.

Pedagogue: A man who has been abandoned by his father, or had experienced first hand inadequate parenting, is likely to develop anxiety from becoming a parent himself.

Emile: Why isn't mom here?

Mother: I can't live like everyone else, there's always something missing. I can't help but live in hope for something unusual to occur. I've lived hoping you'd love me. I don't long for peace, not just plain happiness. I need joy, ecstasy. In a place like this there's no chance of

ecstasy. We've arrived less than twenty minutes ago, I look at you, you've grown old, wrinkles are starting to show. You've gray hair you haven't before. It's progressing faster than you think. You're head is bowed, the flower is too heavy for the stem.

I'm cold, I'm hot, I'm hungry, I'm thirsty, I don't want anything.

I'm cutting all ties, so the memories won't bury me. I'll purge the memory from myself, I'll keep only what I need to know who I am, I'll forget everything but that: I'm nothing but myself, I mustn't be anything but myself.

Pedagogue: And what does Emile's father think of all this?

Father: *(Avoiding the subject)* Emile, "The empire strikes back"! *(Both playing star wars)* Luke Skywalker is hanging in an ice cave, a half troll half polar bear lies nearby *(points to Grandmother)*, the lightsaber is stuck in the snow. Luke Skywalker reaches out, closes his eyes, focuses. The lightsaber hesitates but finally obeys and flies towards him. He frees himself from the ice trap, cuts off the troll's arm, and flies away but then, Darth the king of evil appears, trying to capture Skywalker.

(Father chases Emile and catches him. Emile tries to telepathically pull an object closer)

Grandmother: Emile, what are you doing?

Emile: I'm a Jedi who can move things with his mind.

Grandmother: Don't try it.

Emile: Why?

Grandmother: It won't work.

Emile: how do you know?

Grandmother: I once also wanted to be a Jedi and move things with my mind. It doesn't work.

Emile: Just because you couldn't make it work, doesn't mean I can't. *(Emile holds up an imaginary sword, continues duelling with Father. Pins Father with the sword)*

Father: Don't kill me I'm your father, Darth the king of evil!

Emile: *(Stops)* It's impossible the evil Darth is Luke's father.

Father: Even fathers make mistakes sometimes.

(Emile kills father with an imaginary sword)

Emile: Like your father.

(Pause. Emile starts beating father with the imaginary sword with growing anger, Father isn't responding)

Pedagogue: The Swiss guide states that the transition to childhood is accompanied by copernican revelation that the father is not the center of the world. Russo that had written the Swiss guide for raising a child in the 18th century was not aware of the psychoanalytic

realization that would be made in the 19th century and would torment during the 20th century generations of fathers and sons.

Grandmother: That's enough!

(Emile snaps back to reality, stops hitting Father)

Emile: Grandma, do you want to learn how to fly too?

Grandmother: No thank you.

Emile: Don't you have any more willpower left?

Grandmother: What does that mean?

Emile: Most people's willpower is weak, and when things get tough they break down.

Grandmother: Believe me, I don't break so easily.

Emile: Then go on, follow my step *(Emile demonstrates)*

Grandmother: Emile!

Emile: Come on Grandma.

Grandmother: I said that's enough!

Emile: Grandma is it possible that old people can't fly?

Grandmother: Did you just call me old?

Emile: Yes.

Grandmother: I'll show you who's old!

Doctor: *(Interrupting them)* Okay, I think we're ready for the next stage, Dad, are you ready?

Father: *(Comes to)* Yes.

Doctor: Emile, are you ready?

Emile: Yes.

Doctor: Let's start building the wings!

(Doctor lays out a plan and brings in the wooden parts to assemble the wings, father and Emile work with him)

Pedagogue:

Scene 2 - Arabush

(Grandmother watches them working, circling them)

Grandmother: When will they be ready?

Father: Patience.

Grandmother: What material are you using to make them?

Doctor: Wood.

Grandmother: What kind of wood?

Doctor: Oak.

Grandmother: Why not olive tree wood? You people have a lot of olive trees.

Father: Emile hold this.

Doctor: We have all kinds of things.

Grandmother: Speaking of olive trees, my friend had just bought an ancient 500 year old olive tree for her garden. Cost her an arm and a leg.

Father: How about that?!

Doctor: I wouldn't call it ancient. Emile did you know that the oldest tree in the country is 3700 years old. It's located in the arab village - "Arraba" in Lower Galilee. It's one of the oldest not only in the country but the whole middle east.

Grandmother: Just for the record, Arraba was mentioned in the writings of Joseph Ben Matityahu as Gabara, one of the three biggest jewish settlements in Galilee in the time of the Maccabean Revolt.

Father: What difference does it make?

Grandmother: Just to keep in mind that if we do the math, the oldest tree is planted on jewish land.

Doctor: And who do you suppose lived there before Mr. Joseph Ben Matityahu?

Grandmother: I had no intention of going into politics but since you've started...

Father: Can we please not discuss politics right now?!

Grandmother: Sure, shut your eyes, it's much more convenient that way.

(The three move away from Grandmother to continue building)

Grandmother: Is this the first time you're building those?

Doctor: No.

Grandmother: Who have you built them for?

Father: What's the difference?

Grandmother: Well who?

Doctor: I've built them for my son.

Father: Okay, I suggest we let the doctor focus on his work.

Grandmother: I'm not bothering anyone, I'm just talking. So, did he fly?

Doctor: Yes. He flew. He's in heaven.

Emile: Why's he in heaven?

Doctor: Because of the war. He'd been badly wounded and had gone to heaven.

Emile: Do you miss him?

Doctor: Very much. Very much.

Grandmother: Your grandfather, is also in heaven because of the war. Your grandfather was a hero. He defended us from our enemy.

Emile: Who is our enemy?

Father: Emile keep working.

Emile: Who is the enemy.

Grandmother: The arabs.

(Silence)

Emile: *(Frightened)* Rotten egg says he's not afraid of "arabushes".

Doctor: What are "arabushes"?

Emile: Arabs.

Doctor: so I'm an arabush?

Father: Emile!

Emile: *(Stressed)* I have a heart ache.

Father: It'll pass.

Emile: Grandma said that they better take you all to the bottom of the sea.

Doctor: And what does grandma suggest we do there?

Emile: I don't know, I feel like dying.

Father: Doctor we better focus on building.

Grandmother: *(Embarrassed)* Emile you're confusing the story of the sea with your grandpa. He was a brigadier general in the navy. A great commander in the army. Some day you will go to the army too.

Father: Doctor we're with you.

Grandmother: It's very nice of you to build wings for je...*(Father looks at Grandmother in anger)* for others.

Doctor: I see no differences. Every child deserves to fulfill their dream.

Grandmother: So you're selling dreams?

Doctor: Freedom is not a dream lady.

Grandmother: Who are you to sell freedom?

Doctor: Pardon?

Grandmother: You people keep complaining you want your freedom, and we deny you of it. So why do you think you have the right to sell freedom?

Doctor: I'm not selling anything.

Father: I think we better let the doctor work.

Emile: Doctor when will I get my wings?

Father: Very soon Emile.

Grandmother: Don't make promises you can't keep.

Father: I suggest we all come down.

Grandmother: Don't tell me to come down, you and your nonsense. That's enough. Enough games. There will be no wings.

Emile: There will be wings.

Father: Doctor I'm asking you to ignore...

Grandmother: Stop this. The child isn't ready for this.

Emile: I am ready for this.

Father: He's readier than you think.

Grandmother: I will not allow this.

Father: We never asked for your permission.

Grandmother: I just don't want his heart to break.

Father: Why would his heart break?

Grandmother: I don't believe this man.

Doctor: What is your problem with me?

(Doctor stops working)

Father: There's no problem.

Grandmother: Why are you here?

Doctor: I'm here to help your grandchild.

Grandmother: No one had asked for your help!

Father: Yes we have!

Doctor: That's it. Hallas! I can't go on like this.

(Doctor collects his belongings)

Emile: No!

Father: Doctor please, I'll see to it that we're not disturbed any more.

Pedagogue:

Scene 3 - Intervention

Pedagogue: *(Comes in the arena for the first time)* Stop! I want to stop here. Places. *(The characters take their positions)*

(Interviewing Father with her microphone)

Pedagogue: Where is it all heading?

Father: Everything is under control.

Pedagogue: Doesn't look like it. I think you're ignoring the core of the problem.

Father: I don't see any problem.

Pedagogue: It's time you open your eyes. Do you see your child? He's calling for help, there's a vast gap between his intellectual and emotional worlds and then he turns into a turbulent ocean.

Father: We don't need any help.

Pedagogue: The child is detached, he's out of touch with reality. How can a child like that be out of the education system?

Father: Emile's mother and I, had decided not to force him to be anywhere he doesn't want to be.

Pedagogue: I don't see Emile mother here. why isn't your wife here?

Father: *(Speechless)*

Pedagogue: Raising a child alone is extremely difficult. Emile needs to feel he has someone to lean on, you give him way to much free choice. Do you agree that a child needs boundaries?

Father: Yes.

Pedagogue: He doesn't have the ability to decide what's best for him, that is your job. You need to be his compass. Where are you leading him?

Father: What?

Pedagogue: Where do you search for answers to your own questions? How does your decision making mechanism work?

Father: I..I don't know.

Pedagogue: Do you realize you need help?

(Signals the characters to intervene and influence the father, Ques Musician to start a rhythm)

Pedagogue: The swiss guide states that children are naturally ungrateful creatures, focused only on fulfilling their immediate needs. It's the parent's responsibility to teach the child self control, restraint and gratitude.

Doctor: Did you know that the swiss guide states that children are born pure and society corrupts them.

Pedagogue: Do you realize we're discussing a user guide for raising a child, written in the 18 century, today's society operates on different values, mankind's standards have changed, all the more challenging when it comes to a child's education.

Grandmother: Back in the day everything was much simpler, a child knew what was allowed and what was forbidden, we didn't drive kids crazy with endless possibilities, today's parents are lost.

Doctor: Remember that a child is born with a pure soul. Free soul. The world makes it hard for us to be free. When a child is born he has the potential to be anything, anything!

Grandmother: How do you expect your child to get along in the world? As a mother I knew where to draw the lines, you should learn from my generation...

Doctor: Her generation is irrelevant.

Grandmother: It's never been more relevant!

Pedagogue: It's certainly true that today's new parenting has countless methods and theories to deal with.

Grandmother: New parenting, quite an invention. Parenting has been around forever nothing new under the sun. Your generation knows so much and yet you know nothing. You should learn...

Doctor: Halas, let go of the past. It's our turn...

Grandmother: I won't let go, what are we without our past? Tell me, do you geniuses even have kids?

Father: My instincts are telling me, to tell you all to go fuck yourselves!

(Silence)

(Pedagogue signals Doctor, Grandmother and Musician to start monologues addressing the audience. Musician starts singing the myth of Icarus and Daedalus, Mother steps down from her chair circling the ring. Everything is simultaneous and intense)

Grandmother: Pardon me, but I'm not just a grandmother, what I have already forgotten you have yet learned, you little pissants, I'm here because you couldn't do anything without me, you know nothing, we can't allow ourselves to let go of the past, the past gives us meaning! The new generation has to preserve our values, must guard them, we have built this country

with our bare hands, with our blood, we mustn't forget that, we mustn't be ashamed of who we are and what belongs to us, it's our only country, who are we without our past? A people without a past is a people without a future, remember where you came from and you'll know where you're going, we've built this country and we'll defend it at all costs, It has cost me a lot, I've lost my husband to the war, I've lost the love of my life, but I knew it was a price I had to pay.

Doctor: My child is gone, the war took him away, I go on without him, I thought I couldn't live a single moment without him, turns out we can go on without what is most precious to us. I believe we have to teach the next generation to behave differently, that's our only hope, make sure the kids think differently. Let go of old values, identities and definitions, I named my son Taher for a reason, he was pure, he hasn't been polluted by all the fear and evil of the world. We can change what we've been through, we mustn't forget we're only guests in the world, we're all here for a split second and then disappear, we're no bigger than a speck of dust, once we'll comprehend that everything will change. No one should take himself too seriously, a speck of dust doesn't think the world revolves around him, it just lives, just lives.

Mother: Emile? Emile, come to me, come to me beloved baby full of potential. My breasts are rich with milk only for you. Come to me my first born, mother promises to love you always, mother promises to feed you when you're hungry, mother will quench your thirst when you're thirsty, mother will comfort you when you're heartbroken, mother promises to always keep you safe, mother wants to hug you all day long, mother wants to kiss you everywhere, come to me, mother will protect you, come to me my child.

Pedagogue: *(To Father)* Where do you search for answers to your own questions? Do you see your child calling for help? Why isn't your wife here? Do you understand a child needs boundaries? How does your decision making mechanism works? Children have always been clay to form and mold and pray they'll turn out good, but due to structural changes to the employment model and the redistribution of responsibilities associated with men and women, an abundance of educational theories and mainly too much attention, raising children has turned overly complex in recent years.

(Emile is standing in the center of the stage, he tries to approach Father, the characters grab Emile and try to pin him down, Emile struggles until he tires, Father stares helplessly and does nothing)

Pedagogue: *(To Emile)* Shhh...hush... come now... shhh come down... come down.

(When Emile is exhausted, the characters let go, Emile tries to stand up and collapses.

Father decides to approach Emile, the characters step away)

Father: Get up *(extends his hand to Emile)*.

Father: We're leaving.

Emile: But we can't.

Father: We can.

Emile: Stay with me.

Father: I'm with you.

Emile: Will I make it?

Father: You'll make it.

Emile: How do you know?

Father: Intuition.

Emile: What's that?

Father: An inner voice. An inner voice that knows.

(Pause)

Emile: I'm scared.

Father: I'm with you.

(Father and Emile exit the stage hand in hand)