

Jungle in the Villa

A Play by Noam Gil

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Characters:

Jonathan, a man in his early thirties.

Mili, Jonathan's wife, in her late twenties.

Maya, Mili and Jonathan's neighbor, in her late thirties.

Daniel, Maya's husband, in his early forties.

The Stage:

The play is supposed to take place in two separate spaces – Maya and Daniel's household – the owners of the entire property – and Mili and Jonathan's home – renting from the owners.

However, all the characters should interact in the same places, divided into two spaces only through each character's imagination.

In short, the stage should uncover the discrepancy between the character's state of mind, acting as if they were in two different homes, then an objective and realistic representation of spaces.

A slash (/) indicates the point of interruption between the present line and the next speaker's line.

Scene 1

A loud, almost deafening, scream.

Lights go up on Jonathan and Mili in their new living room.

The place is a mess, filled with unpacked carton boxes (the couple just moved in a few days ago).

Mili is standing on the sofa, horrified. Jonathan was assembling an Ikea bench, but now he's on the verge of a heart attack.

JONATHAN (alarmed): What's wrong?

MILI (pointing, terrified, at one of the boxes next to her): Mouse.

Jonathan goes to the box and looks down. Mili gets off the sofa.

He raises his leg and violently stomps on the mouse, which was standing behind the box. A loud but short shriek is heard. The mouse is dead.

Jonathan calmly goes down and picks up the fresh and bloodied body of the inanimate mouse by the tail.

Mili is heartbroken and disgusted at the same time, looking at her husband throwing the body of the mouse into the trash can.

JONATHAN: What's wrong?

MILI: What?

JONATHAN: Didn't you want it dead?

Mili shakes her head.

JONATHAN: What was I supposed to...

Suddenly, more shrieks are heard from the other side of the living room, alarming Mili.

Jonathan goes over the source of the noise and looks behind an unpacked suitcase. After seeing the next victim, he smiles at his wife.

JONATHAN: Your turn.

Jonathan goes to Mili and pushes her towards the new mouse, amused.

JONATHAN: Go on, don't be shy.

MILI: I'm not killing him.

JONATHAN: Who said kill? Just say hello.

MILI: No!!

JONATHAN: No? Ok, I'm off to bed.

Jonathan goes off stage.

MILI: Don't leave him here!!

Jonathan comes back.

JONATHAN: So what are we doing?

MILI: No killing.

JONATHAN: Got it. (Bends towards the mouse) Hey, Tom. How are you doing? Listen, brother, (points at Mili) this is Milli, my wife. Milli has a big heart and doesn't want to hurt you. Would you be so kind, please, to go outside and let us get on with our lives?

"Tom" is shrieking.

JONATHAN: Ok, thanks. (to Mili) Wouldn't budge. Want me to kill it?

MILI: No.

JONATHAN: Either we kill it or not.

Jonathan raises his leg towards the mouse, waiting for her to give the ok for the execution.

The loud barks of a dog outside are heard.

JONATHAN: Well?

MILI: What are you asking me for?

JONATHAN: Don't want to take the blame by myself, hon.

MILI: Give it to Dasha.

JONATHAN: Giving it to the dog would be more humane?

MILI: More natural.

JONATHAN: Mili, I'm tired.

MILI: Ok, take care of it.

JONATHAN: "Kill it." I want to hear you say, "Darling, please kill the rat."

MILI: My love, please take the mouse outside.

JONATHAN: "Kill it." I want to hear you say it.

Jonathan raises his leg one more time, ready for the kill.

Mili, reluctantly, nods her head.

JONATHAN: If I kill it, will you still love me?

Mili doesn't respond.

Jonathan stomps violently on the floor. The suffering shrieks are louder than they were before. Jonathan stomps the floor one more time and then one last time.

There is no doubt, the mouse is dead.

He picks the body up and throws it into the same trash can he threw at the previous victim.

He goes towards the bedroom (offstage).

JONATHAN: Coming?

Jonathan is already off-stage. Mili goes after him, trying not to look at the trash can. She closes the lights.

Darkness.

After a few seconds, one more mouse is suddenly heard, and one more. The shrieks become louder and louder. Something is in there, beneath the floor. The shrieks become now deafening to almost unbearable proportions.

Scene 2

While the shrieks gradually fade out, the loud barking of a dog is heard.

Unless specified otherwise, the dog's barks will provide the soundtrack for the entire scene.

Maya is standing in her living room, staring ahead, distraught, even shaking.

The door of the house opens. Daniel gets in.

DANIEL: Come in.

Jonathan follows Daniel inside.

MAYA: Hello.

JONATHAN: Hi.

MAYA (to Daniel): Did you tell him? (to Jonathan) Did he tell you?

DANIEL: Didn't tell him anything. Calm down. (to Jonathan) Sit.

Jonathan sits on the sofa.

MAYA: What's up with your dog?

JONATHAN: We need to give her more time to get used to the new place.

MAYA: How much time?

JONATHAN: In a week, she'll be quiet, you'll see.

DANIEL: Be nice.

MAYA: I'm always nice. (aggressively) Aren't I nice, Jonathan?

JONATHAN: You... well... pretty much... well... yes... kind of...

DANIEL: So, how are you with moving in here?

JONATHAN: The air conditioner is broken, dripping all over.

DANIEL: And Mili? How's Mili?

JONATHAN: Always dripping. The air conditioner... Mili loves the place. We're trying to get pregnant, Mili is, and the air cond... it doesn't help, but besides that, and the mice, everything's good.

DANIEL: These goddam rats, they are ruining the place.

JONATHAN: That's what I've been telling you. They're all over.

DANIEL: We have a major problem, the entire village has. They get into... the rats... they are getting into the pipes and eat everything from the insides, but/

JONATHAN: The pipes are no good.

The outside barks are still heard.

DANIEL: The pipes need to be replaced. That's the thing/

MAYA (shouts at the dog outside): Shut up!!

JONATHAN: But before that, the air conditioner/

MAYA: Shut Up!! Shut up!!! SHUT UP!!!!!!

The barks stop.

DANIEL: It's these goddam rats, anyway/

JONATHAN: It's hot as hell now, and we've got to have the air conditioner cooling the place off, especially now.

DANIEL: Couldn't agree more, but the problem is not... It's the rats.

JONATHAN: Yes.

DANIEL: They are all over the place.

JONATHAN: That's what I'm saying.

DANIEL: That's what I'm saying, these goddam rats/

MAYA (cynical): Could be, and I'm just reading between the lines here, so don't catch me saying the wrong thing here, but, and I may be wrong, so correct me if I am, that **it's the rats**.

Dasha's barking is heard again.

JONATHAN: If you want, I can give you the name of someone who can fix it...

MAYA: And she's back...

JONATHAN: ...someone who'll do it for a reasonable price/

MAYA (shouting at the off-stage dog): Shut up! Shut Up!! Shut up!!!

DANIEL: Look, I couldn't sympathize more with your predicament...

MAYA: Like someone's banging on my head/

DANIEL: ...honestly, but... we... it's not the... You came here for a different reason, Jonathan.

The barking stops.

Jonathan looks at Maya and Daniel, suspiciously.

JONATHAN: What's wrong?

DANIEL (to Maya): You want to begin?

Maya shakes her head.

DANIEL: Telling you in advance, my friend, it will sound weird.

JONATHAN: What is?

DANIEL (takes a deep breath and begins): You barely know me and Maya, and we barely know you, right? But we need you to... no, we **must, you must** help us.

MAYA: Get to the point already.

DANIEL: You wanna do this? (Maya doesn't respond) Ok, so sit down and let me do the talking.

MAYA: Calm down.

DANIEL: Don't get me upset, I'll calm down.

Daniel tries to remain calm. He looks at Jonathan, anxiously.

DANIEL: Ok, here it goes. Maya and I are separating.

JONATHAN (pretends to be surprised or even care): What?

DANIEL: No need to make a fuss. We are separating. Couples separate. We are separating. I won't go into the specifics.

MAYA: Why not? Specify away!!

DANIEL: I can't stand her. God's truth. She's unbearable.

MAYA: Just to be clear. I can't stand **him**, either.

DANIEL: Everything upsets her.

MAYA: That hypocrite/

DANIEL: Always having disproportionate outbursts/

MAYA: Lazy/

DANIEL: Control Freak/

MAYA: Loser/

DANIEL: Deranged/

Maya: Pathetic/

Daniel: Psychotic/

MAYA: I'm doing all the work here, and he/

DANIEL: Ok, he got it.

MAYA: This incompetent ass can't even commit to one job.

DANIEL: He got it!!!

MAYA: Fantasizing about financial success that will never come/

DANIEL (to Jonathan): You see? She'll go on with it, just to screw with my head/

MAYA: Do you know he lost his job?

DANIEL: Do you know she's fucking someone else?

MAYA: Intel bought QPI, and the executives decided to get rid of the dead meat/

DANIEL: Someone she met at Pilates/

MAYA: So what did they do, the QPI executives?

DANIEL: Pilates? Do you understand who you're dealing with here?

MAYA: They offered a severance package for whoever volunteers to fuck off/

DANIEL: An architect who lives in the city/

MAYA: Guess who volunteered?

DANIEL: Divorced plus two/

MAYA: Our Daniel, that's who/

DANIEL: And guess how she told me about it?

MAYA: Without asking me...

DANIEL (pointing at Maya): This precious diamond.

MAYA: ...or even telling me.

DANIEL: In the middle of the night. Two in the morning, she wakes me up/

MAYA: Just left his job/

DANIEL: "I'm having an affair."/

MAYA: And how did he finally tell me?

DANIEL: "I've been sharing my bed with another man these last months."/

MAYA: Guess how./

DANIEL: That's what she said, at two am./

MAYA: Two hours before...

DANIEL: "Thought you should know. Good night."

MAYA: ...when we're in bed, casually...

DANIEL: Her revenge for leaving the job that ruined my life.

MAYA: Just to annoy me. Do you see what we're dealing with here?

DANIEL: Just to let you know who we're dealing with here/

DANIEL and MAYA (in sync): With her/him, I'm dealing with, that's who, with her/him, that's what I'm dealing with...

DANIEL: I will not illustrate our mutual history. We had our moments, and we have three beautiful kids, but something happened along the way...

Maya laughs defiantly.

DANIEL: Ok, Ok. Be quiet. Anyway, everything is settled now, and we agreed to separate peacefully. I could have fought, gotten more, but I'm... she will be with the kids and stay here, and I will... well, it doesn't matter. The main point is that we agreed to meet here for the last time, and, foolishly, thought that we could agree about what stays here and what I'm taking, you know, not just the big stuff but also the small stuff, the plates, records, books/

MAYA (points at Jonathan): He's falling asleep just from listening to you.

DANIEL (furious): Shut the fuck up!!!!

MAYA: Make me, motherfucker!! MAKE ME!!!!

JONATHAN: Enough!!!!

Maya and Daniel stop fighting, trying to regain their composure.

JONATHAN: My God, relax. Both of you.

DANIEL: Where was I?

JONATHAN: You were in why I'm here.

DANIEL: Yes, so anyway, I will not illustrate our mutual/

MAYA: You already said that.

DANIEL: What?

MAYA (imitates him): "I will not illustrate..." You are "not illustrating" for an hour now.

Dasha begins to bark again.

DANIEL (desperate): Look, I'm trying here...

MAYA (looks outside): And off she goes again.

DANIEL: ...I really am.

MAYA: At least get her inside/

DANIEL: But you're killing me, Maya.

JONATHAN: She prefers the yard.

DANIEL: Anyway, I came here tonight to get my stuff, the last things, after Maya took the kids to her mom. And then we began to talk, and the talk turned into an argument, and the argument into a fight, and seconds before it became physical, Maya threatened to call the police. Here is where you get into the picture.

MAYA: Tell him why I threatened you.

DANIEL: He is not our judge. (to Jonathan) You came here for different reasons.

JONATHAN: What does that mean?

DANIEL: It means that before we turn this place into Gaza, we need someone to bridge... (to Maya) "Bridge" is the right word?

DANIEL: To bridge, to settle, reconcile... to be.

MAYA: Yes, to be. To be Here. Some presence that will make sure that nothing nasty happens here and make sure that no lines will be crossed.

MAYA: The lines are already crossed. We are in a new territory now, and this asshole is steering us right to hell.

DANIEL: Cunt!

MAYA: Fag!!

DANIEL: Whore!!!

MAYA: Bitch!!!!

DANIEL (suddenly becomes calm): So naturally we thought about you, and Maya agreed.

MAYA: That's why we invited you here. To find the right path to help us get by, to be here while he takes his stuff and goes away.

DANIEL: So...

JONATHAN: So you want me to stay here and sit and ensure you are not killing one another?

DANIEL: Take care that we don't lose our minds. (to Maya) Correct?

MAYA: Yes.

JONATHAN: How much time will it take?

DANIEL: Not much, half an hour, and I'm out of here.

JONATHAN: Ok.

DANIEL: Thank you, man. (to Maya) Let's get back to work.

Daniel goes to the remaining furniture and begins packing.

JONATHAN: So, just be here?

DANIEL: Yes, stay here and just... be.

JONATHAN: I can do that.

Maya joins Daniel in packing. Jonathan sits on the sofa. He seems exhausted, staring ahead. Maya looks at the candles on the living room table.

MAYA: What about your mother's candles?

DANIEL: You want them?

MAYA: Yes.

DANIEL: Take them.

MAYA: And the entire set.

DANIEL: What about the books?

MAYA: What about them?

DANIEL: I want the books.

MAYA: You don't read.

DANIEL: Neither are you.

Jonathan lies down and looks at the ceiling, like a child who waits for the night to take over. The lights fade out to complete darkness, and so does the dialogue.

MAYA: I'm reading more than you do.

DANIEL: No, you don't.

MAYA: When did you pick a book?

DANIEL: When did **you**?

MAYA: I read poetry.

DANIEL: The fuck you are.

The dialogue fades out. The stage is dark. We're jumping thirty minutes ahead.

Scene 3

Half an hour later (approximately).

The entire stage is still dark.

MAYA (shouts angrily): Come here, you piece of shit!! You tough Guy!! Show me whatchya got!!!

Jonathan opens his eyes, alarmed. The lights are on.

Maya is holding a knife, and Daniel a frying pan.

Both point their weapons toward each other.

DANIEL: They can take me to jail. I don't care anymore!!

JONATHAN: Hey!!! What's going on here?

Jonathan stands between them, making sure they are as far apart from one another as humanly possible.

DANIEL: Come here, shit face, hit me!! Just try!!!

JONATHAN: Nobody's hitting any/

MAYA: Wow, I'm so scared. You are **SO** scary.

DANIEL: Come here, I said. Don't hide behind him.

JONATHAN: Stop it!!!

MAYA: What will you do? You couldn't hurt a fly, you loser, you weasel, you nobody, you nothing.

DANIEL: Yes, so why are you hiding?

MAYA: I got the knife, baby. Make a move.

JONATHAN: Enough already!! Both of you. (to Daniel) Give me that.

Jonathan takes the frying pan from Daniel's hands.

JONATHAN (to Maya): You too.

He takes from Maya her knife and lays both weapons on the floor.

JONATHAN: What happened to you too? Are you out of your mind?

DANIEL: I hate her. I do... hate her... so much. I've never despised someone the same as her... (emotional, almost crying), and it scares me. She takes out the monster in me, the mucus, the slime. This creature, the mother of my kids, the woman with whom I shared the best years of my life. Thousands of times, I told her, let's take a step back, stop this madness, but she'd always deliberately push the wrong buttons, doing it to kill me. To destroy me. (to Maya) You Satan.

JONATHAN: Can't we end it peacefully?

MAYA: I don't hate him.

JONATHAN: Very good. (to Daniel) See?

MAYA: He doesn't deserve my hatred.

JONATHAN (in despair): Why? Why?

MAYA: I hate things that have value, things that exist, but this thing, this snail, this failure, this nobody... how can you hate nobodies? Like hating air... (to Daniel) Because that's what you are, air, nobody, zero. How can someone hate a nothing?

Maya and Daniel look at each other. Jonathan is helpless and wordless.

DANIEL: You wanna see something?

MAYA: Yes, give it to me. Show me you exist.

DANIEL: Ohh, you'll get a reaction all right. COME HERE, YOU CUNT!!!

Daniel and Maya run simultaneously towards the place on the floor where Jonathan laid down the frying pan and the knife.

Jonathan runs toward them, trying to prevent the future disaster.

A second before the three meet, before Daniel takes the frying pan and Maya the knife, Jonathan reaches them and stands between the couple.

In the moment of the clash, the lights go off.

Jonathan, hurt, is yelling in anguish, and so are Daniel and Maya.

These screams eventually end and converge with...

Scene 4

Soothing sounds of a flowing river, fish jumping on the torrents of the riverbank, and birds chirping, followed by an atmospheric piano that quietly plays a harmonic tune.

We are back at Mili and Jonathan's house.

Mili is lying on a mattress, wearing athletic sports clothes, highlighting her slim figure, listening to soothing sounds.

Her eyes are closed. She's doing her exercises, first on the back, then on the side, and then standing up. Her exercises seem like a slow, hypnotizing choreographed dance.

JONATHAN (shouts, off stage): Mili?

Jonathan enters the stage, alarmed and hurt yet fully alive and invigorated. His shirt has a small stain of blood on it.

Mili's eyes are still closed, focusing more on her breathing than her surroundings.

JONATHAN: You wouldn't believe what/

MILI: Where were you?

Jonathan stands next to Mili.

JONATHAN: At the/

MILI: I waited and waited and waited, but you didn't come/

JONATHAN: Yes, but/

MILI: And it's already two hours since you went.

JONATHAN: Wait till you hear what happened/

MILI: You promised me we'll be together tonight, and then you broke your promise.

JONATHAN: Sorry...

MILI: And here I am, all alone...

JONATHAN: If you knew what I've been through/

MILI: I'm not mad. It's all right. Everything is fine. All is good. I started without you, but now you're here, finally, and I need you by my side.

JONATHAN: I'm trying to explain why I/

MILI: Jonathan!

JONATHAN (surrenders): Ok. You're right. I'm here.

Jonathan takes off his shoes and joins her, imitating her moves.

MILI: Ready?

JONATHAN: Yes.

MILI: You're with me?

JONATHAN: Always.

MILI: Ok, three, two, one... (takes a deep breath and begins) We are standing with our legs paralleled, lifting our hands, breathing deeply, and/

JONATHAN: Lowering our hands.

MILI (Lowers her hands, Jonathan follows): ...lowering our hand, as if we were birds, flying in the open air... (leans forwards, pushes with her hands an imaginary object) We open the doors of perception towards a new world, breathing, lifting our hands (doing circling motion with her hands) and now we are cruising amidst troubling waters, but we remain firm, unmoved by the currents/

JONATHAN (imitates her): Remaining firm, unmoved by the/

MILI: Stop it. It's not funny.

JONATHAN: Sorry.

MILI: We open the doors...

JONATHAN: Of perception.

MILI (pretends to be angry, but she's amused): Stop it.

JONATHAN (imitates a respectable man): Thousands of apologies.

Mili goes on. Jonathan follows her movements.

MILI: We open the doors of perception, breath, inhaling nature... (moving an imaginary object away) We are sailing in the deep ocean... (same movement only up and down instead of sideways) The tide is coming and lifts us. We go with the flow, up and down, into the abyss in concentric movements.

Jonathan is over with the exercise and returns to life.

JONATHAN: You wouldn't believe what I/

MILI: We are hugging the space in front of us...

Jonathan has no other option than to cooperate and "hug the space in front of him."

MILI (continues): We take a deep breath, absorbing the air... (lifts her leg and gently steps on the ground) and throw our anchor into the ocean... (moves her hand with the imaginary wave that is sweeping them) waiting for the tide to come and sweep us off. We don't resist, moving along the flowing currents. When the current calms down, we push the waterway, cleansing our body dry, transporting ourselves into the heavens above (circling in her hands a big imaginary ball), embracing the moon, caressing the moon, and finally pushing the moon away.

JONATHAN (waves his hands): Goodbye, moon.

Mili opens her eyes and sees Jonathan for the first time since he came in.

MILI: Ok, what did you want to... (looks at his bloody stomach, alarmed) What's wrong? What happened?

JONATHAN: I was planning to tell you/

MILI: You're bleeding? Take off your shirt.

Jonathan takes his shirt off and reveals a bloody scar near his waist.

JONATHAN: You wouldn't believe/

MILI: My god.

JONATHAN: Yes, no, listen/

MILI: What are you waiting for? Take all of it off. I want to see.

Mili tries to unbutton his pants.

JONATHAN (tries to keep his pants on): Listen for a second.

MILI: You got blood all over.

JONATHAN: Where?

MILI: In your back.

JONATHAN: It's nothing. I'm good.

MILI: And I'm on and on with the moon while you... I'm taking you to a hospital.

JONATHAN: Look at me, honey. I'm good/

MILI: I am looking at you/

JONATHAN: Nothing to worry about./

MILI: You are bleeding/

JONATHAN: A scratch...

MILI: It doesn't look like a scratch.

JONATHAN (shouting): Stop it!!!

Mili stops, looking at Jonathan, stunned.

JONATHAN: I'm sorry, my love. I didn't mean to raise my voice. I just wanted to tell you what... we're good, right?

MILI: You're coming in here with blood all over...

JONATHAN: Can I talk, please?

MILI: Sweating like a pig.

JONATHAN: It's hot.

MILI: What was I supposed to do?

JONATHAN: You are right, and I was wrong. Let's relax, all right? All is good. Are you ok?

Mili nods her head.

JONATHAN: Good.

MILI: You were out for such a long time...

JONATHAN: Because I was at/

MILI: And I was concerned./

JONATHAN: But I'm back/

MILI: And I was asking myself, what can happen?

JONATHAN: What could have happened? Nothing could have/

MILI: And then I said to myself, everything can happen/

JONATHAN: Why would anything/

MILI: Then I said, "Mili, relax, don't be so uptight."

JONATHAN: Exactly/

MILI: "Jonathan is a big boy. Jonathan can take care of himself."

JONATHAN: Like a big boy/

MILI: "Take a breath..."

JONATHAN: A deep breath...

MILI: "Begin the exercises without him. He'll join like he always does. Everything's fine."

JONATHAN: Everything **is** fine/

MILI: But look at you.

JONATHAN: Honey, I just saved the life of/

MILI: You have blood all over.

JONATHAN (furious): You know what? Fuck it. I'm taking a shower.

Jonathan is about to go off-stage.

MILI: What? No, don't go.

JONATHAN: You won't let me finish a sentence.

MILI: I will. I'm sorry.

JONATHAN: Since I came in, not a single word.

MILI: I'm keeping my mouth shut. Now it's your turn.

JONATHAN: I have a shift in four hours.

MILI: Right. I got it. I apologize. Tell me what happened. Please.

JONATHAN: Don't want to.

MILI: Don't be a baby.

JONATHAN: It doesn't matter, and you are not interested anyway, so I'm taking a shower.

MILI: Please tell me.

JONATHAN: I don't want to...

MILI: You don't have a choice. You will tell me. Please tell me.

JONATHAN: Leave it.

MILI: Never.

JONATHAN: Don't feel like it.

MILI: I'm begging you, the love of my life, the diamond in my... please tell me. I want to hear it. (Gets down on her knees) I'm on my knees here. Please, tell me. PLEASE!! PLEASE!!!

JONATHAN: It's not funny.

MILI: But I want to hear it. What happened over there?

JONATHAN: You wouldn't believe wh/

DANIEL: Hello. Hello.

Jonathan and Mili look at Daniel, who stands at the doorway, staring at Mili crouching in front of Jonathan. It looks awkward.

DANIEL: The door was open.

Daniel gets in.

DANIEL: What a night, huh? How are you, Mili? Heard you are trying to get pregnant.

MILI: What?

DANIEL: Jonathan told you how he saved our lives?

MILI (angry, to Jonathan): You told them about the pregnancy?

JONATHAN: Didn't you hear what he just said? Your husband saved their lives.

DANIEL: Because of him, we managed to have a civilized conversation for the first time in centuries.

MILI (to Jonathan): You did?

JONATHAN: That's what I've been trying to tell you.

DANIEL: And most importantly, after you left, Maya and I had a long conversation about our post-break-up lives...

MILI: You are breaking up?

Daniel (points at Jonathan): Didn't he tell you?

MILI: Ohh.

DANIEL: No, we're fine, everything fine, "from enslavement to freedom," as they say. (Points at Mili and Jonathan) Soon in theaters near you. I'm joking of course. Anyway, since Jonathan left us, we have had a long talk about the future, and the fact that we managed to talk is a miracle that your husband made possible. So...

JONATHAN: What?

DANIEL: You saved our lives. Because of you, our children have healthy and living parents. I will be forever grateful for what you've done.

Daniel suddenly stops. Jonathan and Mili look at him, confused.

JONATHAN: And...

DANIEL: Yeah, so... unfortunately, I'm not a man of words because, you know, we are not in the hood here, and eventually, we signed a contract for the... so... you know... I had no other choice.

JONATHAN: What are you talking about?

DANIEL (takes a deep breath before the execution): I need you guys to leave this place.

Scene 5

MAYA: Mili?

Maya is in her house, and Mili just walked in. Maya goes and gives her a warm and rather excessive hug.

MAYA: Let me look at you.

MILI (embarrassed by the familiarity): Hi, Maya.

MAYA: Hi, gorgeous.

MILI (emphatically): How are you?

MAYA: What do you mean, the divorce? Give me a break. The best thing I could have wished for. But why focus on the clouds and the rain when the sun is shining? Let's talk about your future baby.

MILI: I'm not pregnant, can't believe Jonathan told you.

MAYA: Stop it! It's a good thing he told us. I can help.

MILI: There's no baby yet.

MAYA: You must be fucking like rabbits, right?

Mili is stunned.

MAYA: Girl, you are talking with your sister here.

MILI: Well... you know... we make... occasionally, or... you know... as much as we... need.

MAYA: Nothing to be ashamed of. You two are gorgeous, and you're going to have gorgeous kids.

MILI: God willing.

MAYA: Beautiful people like you deserve beautiful kids... who's your doctor?

MILI: Goldenfeld. I just transferred to him.

MAYA: Goldenfeld? Too bad you didn't talk with me first. I would refer you to Deutch.

MILI: Seems professional.

MAYA: He took care of me when I had Noya.

MILI: Goldenfeld?

MAYA: Deutch.

MILI: Wasn't he accused of/

MAYA: Deutch? God no. Just rumors. He may be flirtatious, but he would never/

MILI: We'll stay with Goldenfeld. I'm supposed to meet him this afternoon.

MAYA: Goldenfeld? Ok.

MILI: I'm so so sorry that Dasha keeps barking.

MAYA: Barking? Don't be silly, music to my ears.

MILI: So, what's up with you?

MAYA: Besides my desire to see my husband dead, everything's hunky dory.

MILI: Heard you found a friendly architect to spend your nights with.

MAYA: Who told you, Jonathan?

Mili nods. Maya bursts out laughing.

MILI: What?

MAYA: My stupid husband told me in the middle of the night that he quit his job, so I told him I'm having an affair. Don't know where it came from.

MILI: You aren't having an affair?

MAYA: What did he expect, that dumbass?

MILI: You made up the architect?

MAYA: Every night, dumbass is on the couch, and I'm next to him, talking on my cell, phone sex with the architect like you wouldn't believe it, only for dumbass to listen.

MILI: Listen to/

MAYA: His name is Joshua...

MILI: The architect?

MAYA: Divorced plus two.

MILI: Wait, I don't understand/

MAYA: He is working on a big downtown project for the financial district...

MILI: Does he exist?

MAYA: Joshua studied architecture in Italy where he also began his career, in Milan. He married some Italian woman, Francesca something, and moved back here. But then she left, just like that, leaving him to take care of his two daughters. He has a boutique firm that deals only with socially constructive projects. He's very progressive and socially aware. And he has a client list, my God, you wouldn't believe the who's and who's that are lining up for him. If he'd heard me name-drop his clients. It's between us, right Mili? (doesn't give time for Mili to answer) I met him at the Pilates, Josh, and he was eyeing me. Wow, you should have seen him, seen **us** together, like two high school sweethearts. And he's lovely, and charming, and funny, and good looking, and he smells like... an angel, my Joshi... and he also listens. He says that my voice soothes him. Soothes. That's what he said. Why are you looking at me like that?

MILI: Because you sound...

MAYA (blushing): In love?

MILI: Look at you. You're all red.

MAYA (all red): Stop it.

MILI: If you're happy, then/

MAYA: Wait a few years when you'll have three kids and a husband who makes you want to vomit every morning, like spoiled fruit, filled with maggots and shit and... vomit.

MILI: But...

MAYA: You are only starting. Give it some time.

MILI: No, what I have with Jonathan is true love.

Maya laughs hysterically. Mili doesn't.

MILI: What's so funny?

MAYA (gets serious): Thought you were joking.

MILI: No.

MAYA: Ohh.

MILI: What's so strange with/

MAYA: Nothing, forget I said anything. Let it go.

MILI: Anyway, good luck with this new chapter.

MAYA: You too, especially at the next stop in your life.

MILI: Yeah, I wanted to talk to you about that.

MAYA: Daniel told me you took it pretty hard.

MILI: Jonathan didn't like the/

MAYA: When we found out what we had to do, I cried like a baby, honestly I did. To think that a few weeks after you move in, we must let you go, tore me inside. Ask Daniel how I wept.

MILI: No, I believe you, it's just/

MAYA: Come here, gorgeous.

Maya hugs Mili like a mother hugging her small child.

MAYA: The last thing I want is a conflict between us.

MILI: Me too.

MAYA: I know it's sudden and that you just moved in. I know it's complicated. We know it all, and if we could, we would love to let you stay. Unfortunately, we didn't have any other option.

MILI: Let's talk about it.

MAYA: Nothing to talk about, Mili. You signed a leasing contract with us, which spells out what we can or can't do with the property. We are not in the hood here. It's a respectable place. Daniel will move to his mom for the next month, but then we will need you to clear out. He'll be here, so we can still be together, the family, with the kids, like a big family with parents who live **next** to each other but not **with** one another.

MILI: And you couldn't know it before we moved in?

MAYA: We signed a contract, all of us, and we must abide by the contract. It is our right to ask our tenants to move away with thirty days' notice. Read the leasing contract.

MILI: The contract spells out other stuff that you ignored, the air conditioner, the mice/

MAYA: We'll take care of it.

MILI: After we're gone.

MAYA: As I said, we'll take care of it.

MILI: After we're gone.

MAYA: Ok, I can see where it's going. I'm talking to you respectfully, and you become bitchy.

MILI: I'm what?

MAYA: We fully realize the situation you are in.

MILI: The situation you put us into.

MAYA: I fully understand/

MILI: We're glad you fully understand. It's important to realize you fully understand, but you can't just, after such a short time, throw us out.

MAYA: Spare me the dramatics. We are not "throwing you" out. And besides, I can also bring up stories about your annoying dog and other stuff.

MILI: What's wrong with Dasha?

MAYA: A breach of contract, that's what it is.

MILI: You agreed we bring her over.

MAYA: We didn't agree to her non-stop barks, all night, all day. We didn't agree to that.

MILI: It takes time. Two more weeks, and she'll be quiet.

MAYA: You spoil her. Saw it the minute you came here. She barks, you caress her, she urinates in our yard, you kiss and hug her, she jumps over our fence, almost tearing it down, and you caress her some more, and in the meantime, this bitch turns into a small and spoiled monster. She needs to be educated, to realize that you can't do what you want. She needs a reality check.

MILI: Funny to hear that from a woman who sleeps with a ghost.

MAYA: Excuse me?

MILI: Do you know what she's been through?

MAYA: Why should I care about history if she keeps barking at me?

MILI: Ever heard about compassion?

MAYA: Fuck compassion.

MILI: Don't be mean.

MAYA: And fuck you too. Now FUCK OFF!!!

Scene 6

JONATHAN: Fuck off? Fuck off??

Mili is back at her house.

MILI: I shouldn't have told you.

JONATHAN: She said fuck off? and fuck you?

MILI: She didn't mean to/

JONATHAN: Who does she think she is?

MILI: Forget about her. Listen/

JONATHAN: "We're not in the hood." Did you notice them saying that? That we're not in the hood, in the streets...

MILI (seems excited): Baby, I'm/

JONATHAN: Do you understand what they're saying to us? To me?

MILI: What?

JONATHAN: That we're not in the hood.

MILI: We're not.

JONATHAN: Where did I come from?

MILI: The city?

JONATHAN: What's the difference between the city and the hood?

MILI: Heaven and earth?

JONATHAN: Give me a break. The city is the hood upgraded. And in the meantime, they are the ones who breach our contract, not us. Who evicts his tenants a few weeks after moving in? Only stinking suburban yuppie assholes who think that the world is their private tennis court.

MILI: No, you are not giving up on the noise.

JONATHAN: And I saved their lives. How could I've been so stupid?

MILI: You are not stupid. You're a good man.

JONATHAN: Should've let them slaughter each other.

MILI: No, no, no...

JONATHAN: We'll die before I give up to him or his bitch of a wife.

MILI: Baby, it's not you, this language. Don't give up on the problem, and don't be afraid of the solution...

JONATHAN (imitates Daniel): "We're not in the hood anymore."

MILI: ...that's what you're doing.

JONATHAN (ignores her and shouts to his neighbors): "You know where we are?" That's what I'll tell 'em. "In fucking Gaza, that's where we are. And I'm gonna blow your shit, all of it. That's what I'll do. That's what we're doing in the 'hood' assholes. Because you started a war that's gonna bury you. That's what you did, and that's what I'll do. I'll never give up. You hear me??"

Sounds of mice shriek, followed by the barking of a dog.

JONATHAN: Like a fucking jungle in here.

MILI: I went to Goldenfeld today/

JONATHAN (still furious): And a little support from you wouldn't hurt.

MILI: From me?

JONATHAN: Instead of the brakes you're putting on me.

MILI: What brakes?

JONATHAN: The brakes, the brakes... You stand in my way wherever I go. Nothing matters to you besides your damn Pilates and your dog.

MILI: Nothing matters except you and me. We cannot control them, their actions, or the misery they spread, but we can control ourselves, you and I, like one unit. They don't exist. It's only us, you and I, you and I.

JONATHAN: Fucking yuppies.

MILI: Baby, look at me. (he looks at her) I'm pregnant. We're going to have a baby.

It takes a few seconds for Jonathan to calm down. He looks at her, surprised. She kisses him.

MILI: Just got back from Goldenfeld. I went for a routine check-up, and then he did an ultrasound and saw heartbeats. Eight weeks pregnant.

JONATHAN: You're pregnant?

MILI: Made it. You and I made it.

She kisses him again.

JONATHAN: So... you're... pregnant?

She nods, almost crying tears of happiness.

JONATHAN: Wow, come here, my love.

Jonathan hugs her, happy.

MILI: Do me a favor, Sweetie. Never give up. Close yourself off from the noise. It's only you and me in this story, nothing else matters. You, me, and the little one who will join us soon. Right?

JONATHAN: Yes.

MILI: We're all good?

Jonathan nods in approval, smiling.

MILI: You're all good, right?

JONATHAN: I'm good.

MILI: Ok, so now/

DANIEL: Hello there.

Mili and Jonathan look at Daniel, who stands at the doorway.

Jonathan's smile immediately freezes and turns into the agitated gaze that filled his face before.

DANIEL (gets inside): Hope I'm not intruding.

JONATHAN: What do you want?

DANIEL: I came here to talk.

Daniel is already inside, standing in the living room, keeping a safe distance from Jonathan.

DANIEL: Funny how things turn out. Twenty-four hours ago, we were best friends, but now we've become enemies.

JONATHAN: Daniel/

DANIEL: But we aren't enemies, are we? We talked about it, Maya and I, about what Mili said earlier, and we realized that you are right. We decided to accept your request to stay. So, consider your eviction null and void.

MILI: Really?

DANIEL: That's why I came here, to apologize for even bringing it up. There was no reason for you guys to suffer only because my wife and I don't get along. So, in short, you can stay here until your lease expires, if not further than that.

MILI: Wonderful.

DANIEL: We will also fix whatever needs fixing, as specified in our lease agreement. That's what I wanted to say, that we're all good, you and us.

Mili (to Jonathan): See? Everything worked out for the best. That's how the world operates. Things break apart, and then they reassemble.

JONATHAN (unimpressed): He's not finished.

MILI: There's more?

Pause.

MILI: Daniel?

DANIEL: Well... the thing is...

JONATHAN (to Mili): What did I tell you? It's all part of the plan.

MILI: What plan?

DANIEL: The thing is...

JONATHAN: The plan that begins with "The thing is..."

DANIEL: The thing is that we thought about what Jonathan told us yesterday...

JONATHAN: Do you think I don't know who we're dealing with?

DANIEL: ...about the mice and the air conditioner and, well, we have a real problem here.

JONATHAN: No shit.

DANIEL: I was contemplating our private problem...

JONATHAN: He was "contemplating"...

DANIEL: ...and realized that the problem is far from being private.

JONATHAN (to Mili): Listen carefully...

DANIEL: As it turns out, it is a joint problem that falls under the responsibility of the council of this community.

JONATHAN: He memorized it.

DANIEL: Apparently, I was wrong.

JONATHAN: Apparently, he was wrong.

DANIEL: Or, more precisely, we want to look into it and see if we were wrong. Because this house and our house, the two houses, share the same underground pipes and the pipes, they are the problem, not the pipes but the rats crawling inside the pipes. They are the leading cause of the problem, the rats coming over, and pipes and rats are like flies and shit, right? (to Jonathan) Who knows about these things better than you do, right?

JONATHAN: What does it mean, who knows better than me/

DANIEL: And then I realized that the rats' problem necessitates a more thorough solution that requires deep digging/

JONATHAN: I asked what it means, who knows/

DANIEL (deliberately ignores him): The thing is, Jonathan, my grandfather built the house where you live now, the house I grew up in...

MILI: He's cutting us off from the water supply.

DANIEL: The contractor didn't know that someday we would build another unit, so he didn't divide the pipes.

JONATHAN (to Mili): Of course he is!!!

DANIEL: Your plumbing problems are our plumbing problems.

JONATHAN (again, to Mili): And you say I need to calm down.

DANIEL: My father, rest his soul, built this house for us. But he couldn't dig and remodel the entire pipe system because of the roots of the fichus next to our home.

MILI: They want to break us.

JONATHAN (furious): The fichus?

MILI: We won't let them.

JONATHAN: He's talking about fichus.

DANIEL: Our fichus has the deepest and strongest roots.

MILI: Let him talk about his fichus as much as he wants. We're all good. Turn off the noise.

DANIEL: My grandfather, one of this village's founding fathers, insisted on leaving these old and wise fichus at their original place. The trees stood there, tall and proud, before anyone came. So he planned, my grandfather planned the original house around the fichus. When my father grew up, the fichus was his best friend. And its roots, the supporting roots of the fichus as well as my dad's roots, ran deep, very deep. The point that I'm trying to illustrate here is that our pipes are intertwined, the fichus and us. So as far as the solution is concerned, yes, we will have to cut you off the water supply. It's a trial-and-error thing. Who knows? Perhaps the rats will run away to the next water supply, but even then, if they do, we will have to be cautious about it, making sure they are gone for good, the rats.

JONATHAN: Finished? (Daniel nods in approval) Ok, so what you just said now makes no fucking sense. First off, no way the fichus were here before you came. Trees of this kind were not here seventy years ago, so don't make an ass out of yourself.

DANIEL: Is that right?

JONATHAN: Yeah.

MILI: How would you know?

JONATHAN: I know things!! Secondly, whoever said that you couldn't cut down supporting roots to repair sewage pipes?

DANIEL: What do you know about supporting roots?

JONATHAN: Why wouldn't I know supporting roots?

MILI: What is "supporting roots"?

JONATHAN: You can cut down as many supporting roots as you like, no matter how deep or strong they are, ask every plumber you can find, and they will tell you. And lastly, do you think I'm stupid? Cutting off the water and the rats will evaporate just like that?

DANIEL: I'm the property owner. It's my call.

MILI: For how long are you cutting us off?

DANIEL: Until the problem is solved. Could be for hours.

MILI: Could be for days? Weeks?

DANIEL: "Prophecy has been given to the fool."

JONATHAN: Motherfucker!!!!

MILI: No, no, no...

JONATHAN: Are you fucking serious???? For weeks?????

DANIEL: You can't hold the stick from both ends, Jonathan, blaming us for not taking care of the property and then blaming us for taking care of it.

Jonathan approaches Daniel, ready for confrontation. Mili stands in his way.

MILI: Don't!

JONATHAN (to Mili): I want to see him cutting us off. (to Daniel) I dare you to cut us off. I have a pregnant woman here.

DANIEL: I already cut you off. From tomorrow you don't have... What??? You're pregnant?

Mili nods. Daniel goes enthusiastically towards her and gives her a generous hug.

DANIEL: Amazing. I'm so happy for you.

MILI: We're expecting a rough time here.

DANIEL: No doubt. Been there, done that. Such fantastic news, the hope and promise for a better tomorrow. So so exciting... (to Jonathan). Make sure you get as much mineral water as you can. Goodbye.

The dog outside begins barking. Daniel is on his way out.

JONATHAN: Daniel!! (Daniel stops) If you go on with it, we'll see how strong and deep the roots of your fichus are.

DANIEL (furious): Don't you dare touch my fichus!!! Do you hear me???? (calms himself) I'm trying to be civil, but you are acting like a thug. This property is mine and mine alone. Not yours. Only mine. And if we want to fix the pipes, we'll fix the FUCKING PIPES!!! (again, calmly) There's no room for emotion here. We're not in the jungle, not in the hood or the streets. We signed a lease, and we must honor our agreement.

JONATHAN: I piss on your lease, and I piss on our agreement, and I piss on you and your cunt wife. You are going to regret the day you messed with us. Trust me. It won't be pleasant for you if you cut us off. Ok? Good. Now get the fuck outta here.

Daniel doesn't move.

JONATHAN: Fuck off!!!!

Daniel goes away, frightened.

JONATHAN (to Mili): Come here. (Mili gets closer to Jonathan, scared) We're going to get through this, baby. Just don't stand in my way. Ok? Don't worry. We'll be good, you and me and our little kid. We'll be good. Just don't stand in my way.

Mili looks at her husband, horrified.

Scene 7

Maya is on her headphones.

MAYA (looks at herself, describes what she's wearing): A green t-shirt under a white sweater, black pants, grey scarf, slippers... (looks at her legs) over white cotton socks. White panties and a bra. Yeah, that's the one.

Daniel goes in. Maya immediately turns her back to him.

MAYA (to the headphone): Now? But he's here.

Daniel stands in front of her. She turns her back to him once more.

MAYA: Ok, wait a sec... hold on, hold on, you beast!! Wait a second.

Maya sits down, removes her slippers and then her socks and scarf, throwing them on the floor.

MAYA: Your turn.

She waits a bit.

MAYA (laughs embarrassingly): No!!! What's wrong with you? Don't jump to the... no, you are insane, insane I said... (to Daniel) He lost his mind.

Daniel stands next to her, but she, again, turns her back to him.

MAYA (delighted): Ok.

Maya takes her shirt off.

MAYA: I'm doing it now.

She throws her shirt at Daniel.

MAYA (To Daniel): Catch. (to the headphone) Ok, your turn.

DANIEL: Maya.

MAYA (to Daniel): I'm on the pho... (immediately to the headphones) Yeah, I'm here... No, it's not fair... but it's **your** turn... So it's my fault there's nothing left for you to take off?... Wow, you're insane... Come on. I don't believe you... really? Ok. I'm taking it off...

Maya takes her black pants off. She now wears only her bra and panties.

Daniel goes to stand in front of her.

MAYA: Ok, done. Now, it's your... really? How big? Touch it. Yeah, touch it. Touch it... I wanna hear you touch it... Yes, yes... Harder, harder... (sees Daniel in front of her) What do you want?

Daniel doesn't answer and continues to look at her, furious.

MAYA (back to the phone): No, it just... doesn't matter, I'm here... ok... so here it goes...

Maya takes her bra off, turning her back to Daniel.

Daniel is a ticking bomb waiting to explode.

MAYA: Yeah... very much... no, wait for me... I want to... Oh my God... OH MY GOD...

DANIEL (can't take it anymore): Give me that!!

Daniel takes the phone and throws it on the floor in a maniacal rage.

MAYA: Hey!!!!

He keeps jumping on the phone.

MAYA: Stop it!!

Suddenly, one of the boxes behind the couple starts to move.

Maya and Daniel don't notice it.

DANIEL: Look at yourself, you whore!!

The noise from other boxes is also heard and now becomes louder and louder.

Daniel stops. He looks at the source of the sound. The thrusting of the phone, it seems, has woken up the house from its slumber.

DANIEL: Maya! Maya?!?!

The sound becomes unbearable while the boxes move by themselves.

Now, the other side of the house is also moving, followed by loud screeching noises from the mice underneath.

MAYA: What the fuck???

Daniel and Maya are alarmed and frightened. Daniel goes on the sofa. After wearing her shirt back, Maya dares to go to one of the boxes.

She picks it up and looks down at the horror underneath.

She yells out.

An electric fuse explodes, followed by sheer darkness that surrounds the stage. The lights go on and off, on and off.

The sounds of the mice get louder and louder.

Maya runs towards Daniel.

MAYA: Uhuhuhuhu!!!!!!!

DANIEL: Maya!!!!

MAYA: They're all over me. Take them off!!! TAKE THEM OFF!!!!!!

DANIEL: They're on me too... OOOOFFFFFFFF! OOOFFFFFF!!!!

The whole place, it seems, is now flooded with rats. Darkness now creeps over. The shrieking sounds get louder more and more, and so are the horrified shouts of Maya and Daniel.

Scene 8

Jonathan and Mili's place.

Daniel is already there, bruised and even a bit bloodied. His hair is wet. He looks like someone trying to recover from a painful trauma.

The barking of the Dasha is heard off-stage, even though Daniel and Mili ignore her.

DANIEL: I'm living now in a world of shit, literally. There is a pool of shit in the middle of our living room. And the rats, the rats, it'll take days for the cleaners to find them all, and ... you know what? Let's stop the game. Let's talk, you and I, like rational human beings.

MILI: Ok.

DANIEL: We're the voice of reason in this madness, right?

Mili doesn't answer.

DANIEL: Your husband, he terrifies me, and my wife, she terrifies me even more. But we... we can talk like civilized people, right?

Mili remains silent.

DANIEL: Let's think of a way out of this.

MILI: I'm listening.

DANIEL: I think I came up with something.

MILI: Ok.

DANIEL: First, and it's crucial for you to understand, my grandfather came here from Germany in the 1930s to build this piece of heaven/

MILI: Better not to concern ourselves with the history.

DANIEL: History doesn't concern those who don't have one.

MILI: And we have no history?

DANIEL: I was **born** here, my dad was born here, my grandkids will be born here as well. This is **my** place. For you it's a passing station in life. We both know it. And yet, and if Maya knew I'm telling you, this she'd kill me. What I'm trying to say is... I'm willing to pay you to go away. Two months lease I'm transferring into your bank account right now, in addition to the next month that you'll spend here, free of charge. Three months lease I'm offering you here.

MILI: To buy us off.

DANIEL: I want to solve this conflict. This thing that's going on here, it's killing me. I can't sleep at night. I'm shaking all over. There is no other option, so I beg you, go someplace else and continue with your lives, but not here. Not here. Ok?

MILI: Daniel, do you know your wife has invented a lover just to humiliate you?

Daniel looks at Mili, confused.

MILI: What kind of people are you? Who does that?

Daniel doesn't answer her.

MILI: What did we do to you that you're treating us like that?

Daniel doesn't respond.

MILI: Are you comfortable with yourself? Look at me!

He looks at her.

MILI: It's not who you are, this pettiness. I can see that you're a good man with a big heart. You don't throw people away from their homes on a whim just because you feel like it. Where is your conscience?

DANIEL: Take the money...

MILI: Something has happened to you, right?

MILI: Please, take the money.

MILI: Something happened to Maya, and something happens to everyone here, to Jonathan too...

Suddenly, Daniel bursts out crying.

DANIEL: I beg you, take the money.

MILI: Like there's a radioactive cloud above us, an evil cloud, a cloud of hatred and filth, and we are right underneath it...

Daniel's crying only increases.

MILI: Something is happening here, something's happening to this place... and that cloud, it doesn't stop showering rain on us, an acid rain from above that stains us with its filthy drops, a cloud that transforms human beings into human waste. A human waste. Can you feel it?

DANIEL: Yes.

MILI: Look at me.

He looks at her.

MILI: You're a strong man, Daniel. Don't give up on the filth.

DANIEL: I'm trying.

MILI: You got to go back to the beginning. The Daniel in front of me has broken up from the real Daniel. You are divided, estranged from the Daniel you once were. You are no longer the original and kind Daniel that you were. Do you get me?

DANIEL: Yes.

MILI: Today's Daniel and yesterday's Daniel are two separate Daniels.

DANIEL: Yes... Yes...

MILI: Two opposing forces that push one another to two different places. The new Daniel is haunted by the problem and tormented by the history, and when you're possessed by the problem and the history, the solution gets away and evaporates as if it was never there. Look at me.

Daniel looks at her.

MILI: I'm standing here in front of you. I am here, not the history, a woman with human features and a human shape, textures, colors, an individual offering you a real solution to the problem, a solution, a chance to take back the life you lost, an opportunity to open yourself to the colors, the textures, the shapes, to silently appreciate the moment we live in.

Daniel is mesmerized by Mili.

MILI: Let's leave behind us the depraved world of mental abstractions.

DANIEL: Mental abstractions?

MILI: Yes.

DANIEL: But Maya/

MILI: No, no, it's not Maya, Maya is a victim, right?

DANIEL: Yes.

MILI: Jonathan too, his eyes tell me everything. He's become something else, a different Jonathan. We mustn't give up on the noise, the filth, Daniel (she touches his chest). Don't give up on the hatred.

Daniel: Mili?

MILI: What?

Daniel gets closer to Mili and kisses her. Then, after a few seconds, she shoves him off delicately.

Daniel withdraws and wipes his tears, embarrassed.

DANIEL: Sorry.

MILI: It's ok.

DANIEL: I didn't mean to.

MILI: I know/

DANIEL: No, really/

MILI: it's ok.

DANIEL: It's just... when you mentioned the cloud and the mental abstraction thing, I thought you meant/

MILI: No.

DANIEL: Yes, I get it now. No worries.

The loud voices of Dasha's barking are heard. However, there is something different in these barks, something alarming.

DANIEL: But you're right.

MILI (looks outside, concerned): Dasha??

The barks have a different tone now, as if the dog is in pain.

Daniel is unaware of the sounds, he goes on.

DANIEL: What you said, about the two Daniels and all that...

Mili looks outside, confused.

Daniel is too preoccupied to mind it.

DANIEL: And Maya... I will talk to her...

The barks now seem like shouts of anguish.

MILI: Dasha?

A last barking is heard, followed by mysterious murmurs and then, silence.

Mili looks outside, horrified, terror-stricken.

DANIEL (still unaware of what's happening outside): Because nothing is lost, nothing is, and if the cloud is showering us acid rain, we have an umbrella, as you said, an umbrella that will protect us from the/

MILI (horrified): Dasha?????

Daniel becomes aware of Mili, who walks backward.

Both of them look towards the entry door.

Suddenly, Maya goes inside, drenched in blood.

Her hands are holding the severed head of a dog. The dog's eyes are wide open. The mouth is twisted.

Fresh blood keeps dripping out of it. Maya looks at Mili in defiance.

She throws the head toward Mili.

MAYA: Whoof... Whoof...

Mili catches the head and shouts a horrified scream.

The lights go out.

Scene 9

Mili is standing center stage. Jonathan is sitting behind her.

She looks at the audience, shivering, trying hard not to cry while eulogizing Dasha at her funeral.

MILI: I haven't found Dasha. Dasha found me, like destiny. We went to a farm up north and there she was, staring at me with her eyes. Her eyes were on me since we came there. When I asked the owner whose dog she was, he told me Dasha came from Syria. That's what the man said. She was bruised all over, her front left leg was amputated, the right one badly scarred, and she had another scar on her face, (shows in her face) from here to here. The man said she escaped the war up east. She belonged to a shepherd from Tapas, a village in southern Syria. That's what he said. Fighters from Isis took her after killing the Sheppard and used her in their war against the Syrian army. That's what the man said. She managed to escape south and then landed on a minefield. That's where her leg was blown off. She continued running away from Israeli soldiers, who kept shooting at her, in the south, running away, not knowing who from and what for. And then, finally, she came to the farm, God knows how. And then I came. She looked at me in her poor and lost face, as if begging me to save her from the nightmare of her life. She didn't understand why everyone was against her, why they wanted her dead, why people are so cruel. She looked at me as if I was her guardian angel. When we came here, I thought her journey had gotten a happy ending, surrounded by good folks, secured by the warm love we tried to give her. My Dasha.

Mili wipes her tears, expecting Jonathan's sympathy. She will not get it.

JONATHAN: Mili, Dasha didn't come from Syria. She didn't fight for Isis. Israeli soldiers didn't shoot her.

MILI: That's what the man said.

JONATHAN: The man lied. I saw it in his eyes. He told you what you wanted to hear. He couldn't have known what she's been through because dogs can't talk, and neither Isis terrorists. There's no way of knowing. So he made up a nice story for us to open our wallets.

MILI: I know what you're trying to do. I'm not giving up on you.

JONATHAN: I need to go away for a few days.

MILI: Running away?

JONATHAN: You're not with me on this, and I can't carry this battle all by myself. Not when you're fighting against me all the time, not when you're negotiating with the enemy. We could have won, but we lost. You made me lose.

MILI: Jonathan/

JONATHAN: Forget it. It's not worth it, not for me, for you, or us. It just isn't.

MILI: Yes, it is.

JONATHAN: I don't want to be here anymore.

MILI: So let's move away.

JONATHAN: You don't understand what I'm trying to say. As I see it, I don't want to be with you anymore. I don't know. I need time to think. I need you to give me some time... alone.

MILI: Take as much time as you need. I'm not giving up on you.

JONATHAN: You are very annoying. You really are. I hate to say it, but it's true. You are turning me off with your hopefulness. I'm fed up with it.

MILI: Don't you love me anymore?

JONATHAN: Don't know. Perhaps I've never loved you. You seemed nice and generous and ok to look at, but nothing much more. You had something desperate in you, like you were looking for a prince to save you from being alone, and it turned me on, so I took you and convinced myself that I love you, and then you hung on me like a parasite with your positivity. I thought that it might work, that you might do me good. I don't know. Maybe I loved the idea of you, but not... you.

MILI: I see.

JONATHAN: You see? I'm so glad you see. I'm so happy that you see. You see everything, and you accept everything, and nothing corrupts you, right? You are so pure and clean, you one percent milk, you Teflon, you decaf coffee, electronic cigarette you, life energy, you vegan. I can't look at you.

MILI: Ok.

JONATHAN: You're a bleeding heart. That's what you are. I don't love you, and you are the worst fuck I ever had. Let's see you optimize that, you healthy bitch. Why are you looking at me like that?

MILI: Nothing.

JONATHAN: Are you crying?

Mili shakes her head.

JONATHAN: Do you want to cry?

Mili shakes her hand.

JONATHAN: Do you understand what I'm saying here?

MILI: What do you want from me?

JONATHAN: A reaction, a slap in the face, abuse, something. Give me something so I can see that you're alive, that you're hurt, that you have feelings, something.

MILI (goes to Jonathan and slaps him on his face): Is that what you want?

JONATHAN: From now on, you're all alone in this story.

Jonathan is furious, looking at her with complete and utter scorn. He is about to go.

MILI: Jonathan? (Jonathan stops) What about our kid?

JONATHAN: Are we really expecting?

Mili looks at Jonathan, hurt.

He goes away, leaving her all by herself.

Scene 10

Maya is sitting on the couch.

Daniel is behind her.

MAYA: Don't look at me like that. Because of me, our kids will finally have a whole night's sleep after they return.

DANIEL: Monster.

MAYA: I overreacted. I'm the first to admit that.

DANIEL: Overreacted? That's what you did?

MAYA: Who gave you permission to come in, anyway? It's not your place anymore.

He still stares at her, furious.

MAYA: After what they did, what choice did I have? We were covered in shit. What was I supposed to do?

DANIEL: The mother of my kids severed a dog's head.

MAYA: They started it. You know what? I'll go over and apologize, tell her it went too far. I'll buy her a new dog, whatever she wants. Stop looking at me like that!!

DANIEL: I met your architect.

Pause.

MAYA: What?

DANIEL: Joshua. I met him.

Maya looks at Daniel, trying to understand if he's for real.

DANIEL: I hired a private investigator to find the architect from Pilates, and he found him. I just came back from him, your Joshua.

MAYA: You... what?

DANIEL: I Talked to him, your Joshua. I told him who I was, and he told me who he was. I asked him if he sleeps with my wife, and he said yes. I asked him to stop, he said no. "I love her," he said, "and she loves me." You are the most beautiful flower he ever picked. That's what he called you, the architect from the Pilates.

MAYA: He said that?

DANIEL: He said he just bought you two holiday tickets to the Caribbeans.

MAYA: He did?

DANIEL: He worships you.

MAYA: He said that? His exact words? He worships me?

DANIEL: So I killed him.

Pause.

MAYA: You what?

DANIEL: I killed him.

MAYA: You killed him? My Joshua? You killed Joshua? My Joshua?

DANIEL: That's what I did. You will never hear from him.

MAYA: No.

DANIEL: Yes.

MAYA: No!

DANIEL: Yes!!

MAYA: Are you nuts? It's unjustified manslaughter.

DANIEL: You left me no choice.

MAYA: No, I refuse to accept it. You didn't kill him.

DANIEL: You killed a dog, cut his head open.

MAYA: But Joshua? You're talking about a human being/

DANIEL: That I killed.

MAYA: How?

DANIEL (thinks about the response a little bit, this is what comes out): With a knife, in his stomach, yes, that's how I killed him. I saw him die, your Joshua.

MAYA: No, he didn't die.

DANIEL: What did you think I'd do? Nothing?

MAYA: But... he had kids, a job, clients, a world that depended on him.

DANIEL: Exactly, and that's what happens to those who fuck my wife.

MAYA: You monster! Monster!! MONSTER!!!!

DANIEL: He's dead, your Joshua, and with him all of your plans for a better tomorrow, they're all dead. Everything's dead!!

Maya is sobbing. Daniel doesn't stop.

DANIEL: You have no right to happiness, baby...

MAYA: Stop, please stop. I can't take it anymore.

DANIEL: ...Not after what you did to me.

MAYA (shouts to the sky): Take me out of here!!! It's too much, too much. Stop the game, let's just stop. Please, I beg you, stop.

DANIEL: Whom are you talking to?

MAYA: I can't take it anymore.

DANIEL: Maya, look at me.

MAYA: No. Go away.

Daniel sits next to her, seems calmer, and more emphatic.

DANIEL: Look at me.

MAYA (looks at him): What?

DANIEL: I'm also suffering.

MAYA: I know.

DANIEL: So why are you doing this to me? I'm not your enemy.

Maya doesn't respond.

DANIEL: Why are we keep doing it to ourselves?

MAYA: Don't know. I don't know.

DANIEL: Look at me.

Maya looks at him.

DANIEL: Is there a way back?

MAYA: Me and you?

DANIEL: Yes.

Maya doesn't answer.

DANIEL: Maya?

MAYA: I just want you to... stop yelling at me.

DANIEL: And I want you to stop cutting the heads of helpless animals.

MAYA: I won't do that again.

DANIEL: And inventing lovers. (*Mays nods in approval.*) Promise?

Maya nods in approval.

Lights on Mili, sitting on the floor in her house, alone, staring ahead, silent.

Daniel lifts his pinky towards Maya as if offering her peace offering. Maya gives him her pinky. They are, for the first time since the play began, peaceful.

Scene 11

Mili is all alone.

Daniel and Maya see her inside. They come in.

DANIEL: Mili? How's it going?

MAYA: Where's Jonathan?

MILI: Left.

MAYA: Oh...

DANIEL: Jonathan left? Why did he go?

MAYA: Was it because of/

DANIEL: Anyway, we have some big news for yo... So he's not coming back?

MAYA: Tell her.

DANIEL: If you need anything, I'd be more than/

MAYA: What's the matter with you?

DANIEL: What?

MAYA: Tell her!!

DANIEL: Ohh, yes. So Maya and I decided to give another chance to our so-called marriage.

MAYA: Lines were crossed, no doubt about it, by you guys and by us.

DANIEL: Yes.

MAYA: But as far as we are concerned...

DANIEL: Yes.

MAYA: We've talked it through, and we want peace, between you and us, or you, but also between ourselves, if you know what I mean. There's an opportunity here to open a new page/

DANIEL: By apologizing...

MAYA: Yes, by apologizing... for what... happened/

DANIEL: With the dog.

MAYA: Can I finish my thought? Please?

DANIEL: Sorry.

MAYA: With the dog. I went too far. No arguments there. With Dasha.

DANIEL: Maya.

MAYA: So I'm sorry. It's not who I am, and it'll haunt me for the rest of my life, I can promise you that, this thing that I did, even though, if we'll be honest, her barking drove me crazy/

DANIEL: Let's move on.

MAYA: Yes, it doesn't matter.

DANIEL: No, it doesn't.

MAYA: I'll do whatever it takes to...

DANIEL: Tell her what we planned to... you want me to tell her?

MAYA: If you insist.

DANIEL: I'm not insisting, whatever you prefer.

MAYA: You tell.

DANIEL: Ok, so/

MAYA: You know what? Let me.

DANIEL: Go ahead.

MAYA: Daniel is coming back. We're getting back together, he and I, at least for a trial period.

DANIEL: Trial?

MAYA: Yes? No?

DANIEL: Why a trial?

MAYA: No trial, ok, don't argue with me.

DANIEL: But/

MAYA: Just don't. Leave it. The main thing is that we are back together, so, at the end of the day, what I, what we wanted to say was that/

DANIEL: This house is yours to live in, yours and Jonathan's... or just yours. We don't need it, and if it's up to us, and it is, you both, or just you, can live here as long as both of you... or just you... want to... you know... stay. And we won't raise the lease.

MAYA: For this coming year.

DANIEL: Yes.

MAYA: So, the thing that happened between us... with the rats and dog and, you know... It's all... like... water... under the... you know... bridge?

DANIEL: Yes.

MILI: You ruined our lives.

MAYA (aggressively): Mili, we are the only ones who/

DANIEL: Maya.

MAYA (calms down): Right, sorry.

Daniel approaches Mili.

DANIEL (emphatically): Is there something we can do for you?

Mili looks at him in contempt.

DANIEL: Like... buy a new dog?

Mili is about to kill him.

MAYA: Let's go, honey. We are in her way.

DANIEL: I just wanted to thank you, I did. I know that you're mad at me or us, but it's crucial for you to know... that you made me realize a few things about myself and my life. You helped me deal with the inner conflicts that haunted me. Since you came in, I developed and evolved as a human being, and you have some stocks in my evolution. That's what I wanted to say.

Mili doesn't respond.

DANIEL: So... yes... you know... and again... thanks, thank you.

MAYA: Let's go.

Daniel stands up. Both of them are about to leave.

DANIEL: Do you think she'll be okay?

MAYA: Yes. No. I don't know. I think that she prefers to, you know, stay... alone.

Maya takes Daniel outside. Daniel looks one last time at Mili before getting out. Mili is again left alone, looking around her at the empty house.

Suddenly, something moves in one of the cart boxes in the living room. The box shakes a bit, followed by inhuman shrieks. Mili smiles emphatically at the box. She gets up and moves towards it. She looks down and sees the helpless mouse who keeps shrieking at her.

After a few seconds, something changes in Mili.

Her emphatic smile turns into a stare of a different kind, something dark, scary, vengeful.

Unbeknownst to her, Jonathan enters the stage, standing behind her. He seems regretful and compassionate.

Mili still stares at the mouse, unaware of her husband's presence.

Her stare is deadly. She lifts her leg, and then, as violently as possible, she stomps the mouse and crushes him.

The mouse's short and painful shrieks won't stop her. She stomps him repeatedly in a maniacal rage, screaming at the helpless and dying creature. After a few stomps, she hovers over the body and spits on it.

There is something liberating in this violent and homicidal act as if these emotions were waiting to get out for a long time.

She stands up after spitting it and suddenly notices Jonathan, who looks at her horrified.

She has become a different person, both alarming and uninhibited at the same time. Both look at each other, standing like two frozen objects.

The lights are out. The play is over.

THE END