

# **Madam Prime Minister**

A play by: Gadi Sedaka

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## **About the play:**

Prepare yourself for an electrifying political drama that will leave you on the edge of your seat! Madam Prime Minister tells the powerful story of Paula Silverstein, a sharp and ambitious politician vying for a place in the upper echelons of the government. As Number 2 in the Unity Party, she's destined for a major ministerial role in the next government under the leadership of Ronnie Coleman, the charismatic but morally compromised party leader and Prime Minister candidate.

What unfolds is more than just the race for political power—it's a story of personal conflict, betrayal, and moral choices. When Paula discovers that Ronnie has used his influence to manipulate and harm women within the party, including one of his closest assistants, she's forced to make difficult decisions that put her career, values, and relationships on the line.

Amidst the glamour of political success and the facade of a clean campaign, Madam Prime Minister takes the audience behind closed doors, exposing the corruption, personal rivalries, and gender politics that underpin the world of power. It's a play that challenges the dynamics of leadership and the cost of remaining silent in the face of abuse and unethical behavior.

As the tension mounts and Paula wrestles with whether to expose Ronnie or protect her own career, the play builds to a thrilling conclusion that asks: what are the sacrifices required for real change, and how much power can one woman hold in a world dominated by men?

**Join us for a thought-provoking and emotional exploration of what it takes to stand up for what is right, even when the stakes are higher than ever before. *Madam Prime Minister* is a must-see for anyone interested in the intersection of politics, gender, and morality.**

## Characters:

- **Paula Silverstein** – Number 2 in the Unity Party, determined and principled, fighting for her place in government while navigating complex personal and political waters.
- **Ronnie Coleman** – The dynamic and morally compromised Chairman of the Unity Party, set to become Prime Minister but hiding dangerous secrets.
- **George Silverstein** – Paula's husband, a former army officer, pragmatic and loyal, but with his own limits.
- **Rachel** – Ronnie's parliamentary assistant, a victim of his misconduct who faces her own crossroads between loyalty and self-respect.
- **Ryan** – The spokesperson for the Unity Party, caught between his personal feelings and political ambitions.

## Scene 1

(Inside the Unity Party Headquarters – On the wall, there's a giant plasma screen showing an image of the party's leader, Ronnie Coleman. A muted news broadcast is on, showing a poll predicting Ronnie's likely victory in the race for Prime Minister.)

(Enter, exhausted: **Ryan** and **Paula**)

**Ryan:** (sends a voice message) "Where are you?"

**Paula:** (we hear the voice message as she enters) "Where am I? Where you sent me. It's absolute madness, Ryan. I haven't seen home in three days."

**Ryan:** Same here.

**Paula:** And the hotel you booked for me was awful.

**Ryan:** Sorry, Paula, that's all we had.

**Paula:** And don't ever send me again to gather votes at a Bedouin 'Women's Conference'. 'Women's Conference!' 300 men in robes, and two women serving them coffee and hookahs.

**Ryan:** We're done with them. (stands with his coffee ready)

**Paula:** You made one for yourself too? (takes the coffee from him)

**Ryan:** Sorry.

**Paula:** I just hope this whole “oriental effort” was worth something.

**Ryan:** Did you see tonight’s poll?

**Paula:** I saw it.

**Ryan:** They’re saying it loud and clear – Ronnie Coleman is going to be the next Prime Minister.

**Paula:** If everything is so great, why did you drag me here at midnight?

**Ryan:** Rachel asked us to come urgently.

**Paula:** What can’t be solved over WhatsApp?

**Ryan:** We’ll hear in a minute.

**Paula:** Are you two together?

**Ryan:** Me and Rachel?

**Paula:** Yeah?

**Ryan:** I wish.

**Paula:** Did you ask her out?

**Ryan:** She won’t even talk to me until we win and Ronnie is Prime Minister.

**Paula:** Sweet. She idolizes him.

**Ryan:** Like all of us.

**Paula:** Well, check where she is because I'm dying to go to sleep.

**Ryan:** (searches for Rachel on WhatsApp) In six hours, you've got a morning show. (sends a voice message) "Rachel... we're here. Where are you?"

(We hear the notification sound from Rachel's phone, coming from a corner of the room.)

**Ryan:** Is that yours?

**Paula:** No. Is there someone else here?

**Ryan:** Not that I know of.

(Ryan turns on the flashlight on his phone and finds **Rachel**, asleep.)

**Ryan:** Rachel! She's here, she's asleep.

**Paula:** (laughs) I don't believe it. (Paula turns on the light.)

**Ryan:** Rachel?

**Paula:** Rachel?!

**Rachel:** What?..

**Paula:** Are you okay?

**Ryan:** Did something happen?

**Rachel:** What?

(pause)

**Ryan:** You sent me a message saying Paula and I should come. We're here.

**Paula:** So, talk, Rachel.

**Rachel:** (silent)

**Ryan:** Why did you ask us to come?

(Rachel recovers, still silent.)

**Paula:** Rachel, I'm tired... I want to go home.

**Rachel:** It's... it's nothing.

**Paula:** Speak, Rachel.

**Rachel:** (pause) I'm sorry.

**Paula:** What happened?

**Rachel:** Go home. (starts crying)

**Paula:** Why are you crying?

**Ryan:** Did someone hurt you?

**Rachel:** ...He's harassing me.

**Ryan and Paula (together):** Who?

**Rachel:** (whispering) Ronnie.

**Paula:** Who?

**Rachel:** Ronnie!

**Paula:** Ronnie Coleman?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Ryan:** Ronnie Coleman?!

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Paula:** He's harassing you?!

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Paula:** Rachel... lift your head, sweetie. Look at me.

**Rachel:** I'm scared.

**Paula:** You have no reason to be afraid.

**Rachel:** I don't know what to do.

**Paula:** We'll help you.

**Rachel:** Really?

**Ryan:** Of course, we'll help.

**Paula:** I've told that idiot a thousand times that his sexist, chauvinistic jokes will get us into trouble one day.

**Ryan:** It's leftover filth from his army days.



**Paula:** It's time to put an end to it.

**Ryan:** What did he say to you?

(pause)

**Rachel:** He kissed me.

(pause)

**Ryan:** (feels like he's been stabbed) When?

**Rachel:** Tonight.

**Paula:** (not surprised) Where?

**Rachel:** We were together during his interview at 12, and when he saw the poll that he's leading, he was really happy, and I was happy too. Then, when we went down to the parking lot, he suddenly kissed me.

(pause)

**Ryan:** (devastated) It's because you two spend all day together...

**Paula:** That's not an excuse...

**Ryan:** And this campaign is exhausting all of us...

**Paula:** That's also not an excuse.

**Ryan:** So you kissed? It happens...

**Rachel:** We didn't kiss. He kissed me. I didn't kiss him. I tried to push him away, but he pressed me against the car, grabbed my neck, pushed his lips against mine, and shoved his tongue into my mouth.

(pause, tension)

**Ryan:** Rachel... Ronnie... is married... happily.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Paula:** He has kids.

**Rachel:** I really admire Ronnie...

**Paula:** He's our candidate for Prime Minister.

**Ryan:** And in ten days, we're going to win.

**Rachel:** Tell me what to do.

**Paula:** We can't ignore this.

**Ryan:** I'm in shock.

**Paula:** Rachel! Sweetheart, give me your phone for a moment. (deletes Ronnie's number) From now on, you're not working with Ronnie anymore.

**Rachel:** But I'm organizing the final rally for the day after tomorrow.

**Paula:** You're not organizing anything anymore. Ryan will organize the rally.

**Rachel:** Why?

**Paula:** Because from now on, you're sticking with me, and I forbid you from meeting with Ronnie.

**Rachel:** But...

**Ryan:** Paula's right.

**Rachel:** After the victory, the three of us will meet with Ronnie, and he will apologize to you. Until then, you won't see him or speak to him. Ryan! Take her home. And make sure there's a taxi for her in the morning to bring her to my interview at 1 p.m. From now on, I want her with me, by my side. Understood?

**Ryan:** Understood.

**Paula:** Good night.

**(Paula exits)**

**Ryan:** Should I walk you home?

**Rachel:** No. Just order me a taxi.

## Scene 2

(George is at home, watching trashy television – a dating show where a woman lists the typical masculine traits she’s looking for in a man.

"Masculine, charming, sexy, strong, with a sense of humor, I want him to take me, build me, do things for me..." Paula returns home and finds George in the bedroom, having fallen asleep in front of election ads.)

**(George wakes up, interested in her.)**

**George:** Oh! I thought you decided to stay with the Bedouin sheikh as his fifth wife.

**Paula:** The fourth. As of now, he only has three.

**George:** (laughs) So, you considered it...

**Paula:** I’m still considering it.

**George:** (keeps getting closer) What a king. When one of his wives comes home late, he just brings in someone else in her place.

**Paula:** I had a delay. (turns off the TV) Why are you watching this trash?

**George:** It helps me deal with the loneliness.

**Paula:** Poor thing.

**George:** But now that you’re here, I can entertain myself in other ways.

**Paula:** (evading him) I have to get up soon.

**George:** Look, I may not be Bedouin, but I do have voting rights... and if you don't pay attention to me, you won't have a way to form a coalition.

**Paula:** (laughing) Sorry, George, tonight you're staying in the opposition.

**George:** I've been in the opposition for three months.

**Paula:** That's how elections are.

**George:** You're going to win.

**Paula:** I brought you something.

**George:** I can't believe you thought of me.

**Paula:** The tribal leader asked me: "What's this? You came without your husband?" So, he sent you a consolation gift. Want to guess what it is?

**George:** A bumper from a stolen car?

**Paula:** No...

**George:** A camel.

**Paula:** (laughs) Close... (takes out a long, fragile package from her suitcase)

**George:** I don't believe it!

**Paula:** Isn't it awful?

**George:** (takes out a hookah) This is amazing.

**Paula:** You like it?

**George:** I love it. There's even tobacco! And coals!

**Paula:** Oh no...

**George:** And what a wonderful smell, take a whiff.

**Paula:** Ew...

**George:** Come on, make some coffee.

**Paula** (bursting out laughing): George! Say that to your servant girl in the tent.

**George:** You're not joining me for a hookah?

**Paula:** No, and you're not lighting that hookah now.

**George:** Then I'll go out on the balcony.

**Paula:** You're not! (stopping him) That's all I need—some paparazzi taking a picture of you sitting and smoking a hookah. That picture alone will cost us three seats in the polls. And besides, didn't you say you wanted to quit smoking?

**George:** I wanted to quit until I saw this hookah. It's like deciding to become a celibate monk and then meeting the most beautiful woman in the world.

(He tries to smoke the hookah without lighting it.)

**Paula:** George, I forbid you...

**George:** You forbid me?!

**Paula:** Fine, do whatever you want.

**George:** I certainly will.

**Paula:** I want you to promise me...

**George:** Fine, I promise...

**Paula:** I haven't finished the request yet.

**George:** I promise not to get in the way of you enjoying life as much as you're getting in the way of mine.

**Paula:** Fine, you're free to ruin your health.

**George:** (talking to the hookah) Come on, beautiful, let's find a place for you to spend the night. Tomorrow, you and I will celebrate life.

**Paula:** (pauses, organizing, removes makeup from her face) What's this note?... Mark, Foreign Minister. Brian, Finance Minister. Donald, Agriculture.

**George:** Ronnie called to consult with me about the cabinet positions.

**Paula:** I'm not even on the list.

**George:** You can relax...

**Paula:** I'm his number 2...

**George:** You'll be a minister.

**Paula:** Minister of what?

**George:** Either Social Equality...

**Paula:** Or Community Relations...

**George:** See, you know what's going on. In any case, you'll be the leading woman in the government.

**Paula:** The leading woman, after a line of losers.

**George:** That's not bad for someone who started her political career only eight years ago.

**Paula:** Eight years of grooming and investing in that idiot, only for him to shove some hollow position like "Community Relations" at me?

**George:** It is what it is.

**Paula:** I could've led a club here at our local community center. At least I wouldn't have to clean up after his mess.

**George:** What mess?

**Paula:** (pauses, deciding not to tell him) Without me, he would've stayed in the army.



**George:** He has constraints.

**Paula:** Then he should try harder. I have dreams and things I want to achieve too.

**George:** (touching her) You have the opportunity to do something good right now.

**Paula:** (suddenly) I said it's not the right time tonight. What else do I need to do for you to understand that?

**George:** Sorry...

**Paula:** Why isn't it clear to you from the very start?

**George:** I'm courting you.

**Paula:** Then don't turn it into harassment.

**George:** You're exaggerating!

**Paula:** I said no!

**George:** I was just trying to get close.

**Paula:** You can't keep trying when I've clearly said I'm not interested!

**George:** I have no intention of forcing myself on you.

**Paula:** I didn't mean you were forcing yourself, it's just...

**George:** I get it! It won't happen again! Enough! Calm down!

**Paula:** Fine, enough.

**George:** Enough, you!

**Paula:** (pauses) I need to rest... I have to get up soon.

(pauses)

**George:** I turned on the water heater for you two hours ago.

**Paula:** George... I'm sorry if I hurt you. It's been a tough day. So, if you could give me a small, gentle hug, I'd really appreciate it.

**George:** Are you sure?

**Paula:** I need it.

(They hug, and she gets a WhatsApp message.)

**George:** It's not important.

**Paula:** A message at three in the morning is always important.

**George:** I'll read it for you while you get ready for bed.

**Paula:** Thank you.

**George:** Ronnie's asking if you know where Rachel is. She's not answering his calls.

**Paula:** (pauses, thinking)

**George:** Should I text him something?

**Paula:** (thinking) No.

(The phone rings.)

**George:** It's Ronnie. Should I answer?

**Paula:** No. (after two or three rings) Decline the call.

**George:** Maybe it's urgent?

**Paula:** (takes the phone, rejects the call, and throws the phone aside)  
Enough.

**George:** Do you want me to talk to him?

**Paula:** About what?

**George:** About the appointments.

**Paula:** Absolutely not. It's my business, and I'll handle it.

**George:** I can help.

**Paula:** I said no.

**George:** Okay.

**Paula:** ...I'm going to take a shower.

**George:** Enjoy.

(The room goes dark. Night. George is in bed, Paula enters in a nightgown. She finds the cup of tea George made for her. She can't

sleep, walking around the house with the tea in her hand, flashing back to Rachel lying in the corner in the dark. Far away, the sound of a DJ from a wedding in the 1980s can be heard. Darkness.)

### Scene 3

(At Rachel's home, she staggers with a bottle and pills and turns on the TV. The morning show studio is on screen, with the host speaking to viewers. Below him, a headline reads: "Coming up in the studio, Paula Silverstein – Number 2 in the Unity Party." Paula calls Rachel, but Rachel chooses to decline the call, throws the phone away, swallows another pill, and drinks whiskey.)

(Paula, getting ready for the broadcast, sends a voice message to Ryan while being prepared by the makeup artist.)

**Paula:** Ryan! Wake up! Rachel didn't show up at the studio. She's not answering her phone. I'm going live—let me know that everything's okay.

**Technician:** Five minutes to air.

(The makeup artist is applying makeup in front of the mirror.)

(**Ronnie Coleman** enters from behind, surprising Paula.)

**Paula:** Ronnie!

**Ronnie:** You're not answering my calls.

**Paula:** You called me at three in the morning.

**Ronnie:** We're nine days before the election. That's reasonable.

**Paula:** I was worried.

**Ronnie:** We're in the lead.

**Paula:** Not everything is about politics. (to the makeup artist) I'll handle it myself, thanks. (the makeup artist exits)

(pause)

**Ronnie:** You met with Rachel last night.

**Paula:** Yes.

**Ronnie:** She's not answering me.

**Paula:** And she won't.

**Ronnie:** Is she okay?

**Paula:** I'm keeping you two apart.

**Ronnie:** Isn't that an exaggeration?

**Paula:** I'm protecting both of you.

(pause, Ronnie considers his situation and makes a decision)

**Ronnie:** It was a moment of foolishness.

**Paula:** You want to be Prime Minister.

**Ronnie:** I got carried away.

**Paula:** You're not supposed to get carried away.

**Ronnie:** It won't happen again.

(pause, Paula stares at him)

**Paula:** I'm handling it. It's behind us.

**Ronnie:** Thank you. See you later?

**Paula:** (stares at him, pauses) You're not staying to watch the interview?

**Ronnie:** Nina is waiting for me in the car. Channel 12 is interviewing the candidates' wives...

**Technician:** Paula – one minute to air.

**Paula:** Tell her I wish her good luck.

**(Ronnie exits)**

(The program intro plays on Rachel's TV as she lies on the floor with a bottle of whiskey. George also turns on his TV at home to watch Paula's interview.)

(During the interview, and in parallel, Rachel is lying on the floor with a bottle of whiskey next to her. The TV is on behind her, but she can't get up. There's a knock on the door, and Ryan enters, finding Rachel drunk on the floor with a bottle.)

**Ryan:** Rachel... Rachel, are you okay?

**Rachel:** (drunk) Ryan... do you still want to go out with me?

**Ryan:** You said we'd meet after the victory.

**Rachel:** So, you've lost interest in me?

**Ryan:** Rachel...

**Rachel:** Last week, you were more eager.

**Ryan:** You didn't even change your clothes...

**Rachel:** Do you think I'm filthy?

**Ryan:** No.

**Rachel:** Doesn't it bother you that Ronnie kissed me?

**Ryan:** It bothered you.

**Rachel:** Does it disgust you?

**Ryan:** You need a shower.

**Rachel:** You're right. I'm disgusting.

**Ryan:** Please, stop.

**Rachel:** I disgust you.

**Ryan:** Do you want help getting up?

**Rachel:** Don't come near me.

**Ryan:** Rachel...

**Rachel:** Pathetic.



**Ryan:** (hurt, breathing deeply, controlling himself) What did you expect to happen?

**Rachel:** I hoped you could help me.

**Ryan:** You understand the situation.

**Rachel:** I understand that you're a loser. (whispering and trembling) Go away.

**Ryan:** Rachel...

**Rachel:** Leave me alone, please...

**Ryan:** Rachel, you're drunk. (he tries to lift her but fails)

**Rachel:** (lost in her thoughts) Don't touch me! Don't touch me!

(Meanwhile, on TV, the host speaks.)

**TV host:** And with us this morning is Ms. Paula Silverstein, ranked number two in the Unity Party. Good morning. (the camera switches to Paula, who's caught reading a WhatsApp message from Ryan, then pulls herself together)

**Paula:** Good morning, Avri, and good morning to the viewers.

**TV host:** It seems like Ronnie Coleman, who's likely to become the next Prime Minister, is planning to appoint you as the Minister for Community

Relations, or the Minister for Social Equality. Was it worth building an entire party for a role like that?

**Paula:** (smiling) I suggest we win the election first, and then we'll see what everyone does.

**TV host:** Between us, Paula... Social Equality doesn't really exist here and never has. And the Minister for Community Relations? That's some unclear package the previous prime minister left behind, and no one knows exactly what "relations" or which "community" it refers to. The question is, what are you planning to do with each of these bizarre possibilities?

**Paula:** I certainly aim for a much more significant position.

**TV host:** Are we hearing a rebellion against Ronnie Coleman?

**Paula:** (smiling) I have no intention of serving in the government as a token woman in a meaningless role.

**TV host:** And what, in your opinion, is considered a meaningful position?

**Paula:** I think, at this time, the Ministry of Internal Security needs responsible hands.

**TV host:** (laughs) Well, you know that's not going to happen.

**Paula:** Why not?

**TV host:** Because I don't know any male Prime Minister who would give a woman that position.

**Paula:** I haven't seen the men who've managed the ministry so far deliver any results.

**TV host:** Are you capable of eradicating extortion and gang violence in the south?

**Paula:** I'd be happy to address the criminal neglect that exists on this issue.

**TV host:** And to combat violence against women in minority sectors?

**Paula:** Unfortunately, violence against women exists in all sectors. I intend to devote myself to everything this position demands.

**TV host:** If Ronnie Coleman agrees to grant it to you.

**Paula:** (calmly) So, I'm telling you, my party leader Ronnie, and most importantly, I'm telling the viewers who are watching us right now and everyone planning to vote for us, that I have no intention of giving up on this matter.

**TV host:** While we're interviewing you, Ronnie Coleman is responding to us on Twitter: "The Unity Party sees Paula Silverstein as an asset, and she will be a central minister in any government I form." In short, he's brushing you off.

**Paula:** I don't think anyone can brush me off...

**TV host:** Ronnie Coleman just did... and I suggest you stay with us for the next segment because, right after the commercials, we'll be discussing the incredible and tragic story of Hellen, who was severely beaten by her husband in front of their children, lost consciousness, was hospitalized and treated for a month, and now refuses to file a complaint against him, demanding that he be released from custody. And we'll ask her just one question – why? Stay with us.

## **Scene 4**

### **Rachel and Ryan**

(Ryan receives a message from Paula. Rachel is lying on the floor, and suddenly she rises.)

**Rachel:** I told you to leave.

**Ryan:** Paula asked me to stay.

**Rachel:** (neurotic, searching for Ronnie's number on her phone) Can you give me Ronnie's number? I don't understand where it's gone.

**Ryan:** Paula deleted it from your phone yesterday.

**Rachel:** With what right?

**Ryan:** She's looking out for you.

**Rachel:** I don't need you to look out for me.

**Ryan:** After what happened yesterday...

**Rachel:** What happened to me is none of your business.

**Ryan:** So why did you tell us?

**Rachel:** And what did you do about it?

**Ryan:** Nothing.

**Rachel:** Useless.

**Ryan:** (hangs his head)

**Rachel:** Fine, I'm going to see Ronnie.

**Ryan:** Paula's coming soon.

**Rachel:** Paula can go jump off a cliff.

**Ryan:** Rachel...

**Rachel:** Get out of my way.

**Ryan:** Don't make this hard for me.

**Rachel:** I'll call the police.

**Ryan:** I'm here so you don't call the police...

**Rachel:** Then I want to talk to Ronnie.

**Ryan:** That's not possible.

**Rachel:** You'll get a kiss from me... with the tongue... just the way  
Ronnie likes it...

**Ryan:** You're hurting me.

**Rachel:** Don't you want a kiss?

**Ryan:** No!

**Rachel:** That's how you can become Prime Minister one day.

**Ryan:** Stop it.

**Rachel:** Until yesterday, you were eating me up with your eyes, and now you're not interested anymore?

**Ryan:** You're drunk!

(The doorbell rings, and **Paula** enters.)

**Paula:** Hey... what's going on here?

**Rachel:** You're impotent, Ryan. You're a total loser.

**Paula:** Rachel! What's happening between you two?

**Rachel:** I want to know what gives you the right to delete Ronnie's number from my phone.

**Paula:** Rachel...

**Rachel:** Answer me!

**Paula:** I forbid you from speaking to him.

**Rachel:** I have the right to talk to whoever I want.

**Paula:** Not to Ronnie.

**Rachel:** It's not my fault he kissed me.

**Paula:** Of course it's not. You're not to blame for anything.

**Rachel:** Then why are you locking me up here? Why are you deleting numbers from my phone? Why are you forbidding me from seeing Ronnie?!

**Paula:** Why do you want to meet him?

**Rachel:** That's none of your business.

**Paula:** You've lost control.

**Rachel:** I need to organize the party's event for tomorrow.

**Paula:** Ryan is handling the event.

**Rachel:** That loser can't give Ronnie what I can give him.

**Paula:** What are you planning to give him?

**Rachel:** I'll give him everything he needs to win.

**Paula:** I'm not allowing that.

**Rachel:** (breaking down) Ugh, I'm so stupid.

**Paula:** You're not stupid, Rachel.

**Rachel:** He just wanted a hug and a kiss.

**Ryan:** But you didn't want that.

**Rachel:** Because I'm an idiot.

**Ryan:** That's not how you felt yesterday.



**Rachel:** He just wanted a little love.

**Paula:** That's not your responsibility.

**Rachel:** He's under pressure, and I'm not helping him.

**Ryan:** He has a wife, Nina. She's the one responsible for giving him love in that way. It's not your job! And you're drunk!

**Rachel:** (mocking Paula) And you're an idiot.

**Paula:** You're getting up now, taking a shower, brushing your teeth, drinking coffee, and sobering up from all this drunkenness and nonsense. (tries to lift her but can't) Ryan! Snap out of it and help me!

**Rachel:** (crying in her drunken state) I want to meet Ronnie.

**Paula:** (lifting her forcefully) You'll meet him only after the election, and only after he apologizes to you for everything he did. Come on, sweet Rachel. Lift her up!

(They exit, and as they leave, TV morning show interview with **Nina**, Ronnie's wife, starts playing on TV.)

**Morning show host (female):** I must admit, among all the politicians I've met, your relationship with Ronnie seems to be the most glamorous, calm, and peaceful I've seen. He's both a respected officer and a gentleman, not to mention successful. Aren't you afraid someone might

try to snatch him away from you? After all, if the polls keep going like this, we'll have a pretty handsome Prime Minister.

**Nina:** His good looks only add to our uniqueness.

**Morning show host:** You two are so lovely. How did you meet?

**Nina:** I was a morale officer in the Paratroopers, and he was the battalion commander.

**Morning show host:** I'm sure there were other women in the battalion who had their eyes on him.

**Nina:** Yes, he was the dream of all five women who served with me in a battalion of 250 men. And the truth is, I didn't think I stood a chance with him. But then I noticed that the battalion commander was very, very interested in my educational presentations and national heritage lectures. Eventually, he started requesting personal lessons in his tent.

**Morning show host:** (chuckles) These days, that would be called an abuse of power...

**Nina:** True, but things aren't what they used to be. And the main difference is that in our relationship, I'm the one who tells him what to do. (laughter) In any case, Ronnie is the man of my life.

**Morning show host:** According to the polls, you're soon going to be the First Lady.

**Nina:** The first and the last one for him. (laughter)

**Morning show host:** He'd better make sure you're the last... What's he worth without you?

**Nina:** Oh... nothing.

(They laugh and continue chatting, but their conversation fades into mute. Arabic music plays in the background.)

## Scene 5

(At home, **George** is setting up the coffee table, clearly expecting a guest. He is handling the hookah with great ceremony, treating it like a beautiful woman. The doorbell rings, and he quickly hides the hookah.)

**George:** Come in...

(**Ronnie** enters, saluting George.)

**Ronnie:** Commander!

**George:** At ease! (They embrace.)

**Ronnie:** How are you doing?

**George:** I didn't believe you'd come.

**Ronnie:** When the commander calls, I report. How's your ear?

**George:** Perfect now.

**Ronnie:** What happened?

**George:** I replaced the battery. (They laugh.)

**Ronnie:** One stray shell can follow you for life.

**George:** And friendly fire, no less.

**Ronnie:** I remember.

**George:** We got over that too.

**Ronnie:** No one can beat you, George.

**George:** No one... except... my wife.

**Ronnie:** Of course... but she's not here...

**George:** No, no. Black coffee?

**Ronnie:** No sugar.

**George:** Thirty years and nothing changes. (He pours coffee from a traditional Bedouin pot.)

**Ronnie:** Have you two talked?

**George:** Who?

**Ronnie:** You and Paula.

**George:** Look, after thirty years of marriage... you have to talk once in a while... (They laugh.)

**Ronnie:** Well...

**George:** You look tense, like the Syrians were.

**Ronnie:** I need to get rid of this issue.

**George:** With a little sense, we can solve everything.

**Ronnie:** I'm listening.

**George:** First, drink!

(**Ronnie** takes a sip of coffee.)

**George:** I really appreciate you coming, Ronnie. After all, there are only nine days until the election... and I preferred we meet here, not at a café, for two reasons: One, so some idiot doesn't sit there, record us, or take a picture and leak it.

**Ronnie:** Of course.

**George:** And that's the second reason. (He reveals the hookah.)

**Ronnie:** Wow... where did that come from?

**George:** The Bedouins sent it to me yesterday with Paula.

**Ronnie:** From Abu al-Heib?

**George:** Abu al-Bedouin something... one of the Abu's... Look, look at these curves. You've never seen anything like it.

**Ronnie:** That's not a hookah, it's a belly dancer.

**George:** And she doesn't stop dancing. And... the whole set: coals, tobacco, tongs, mouthpiece, hose, sealing tape...

**Ronnie:** It's a whole world.

**George:** And rosewater essence.

**Ronnie:** Rosewater?!

**George:** To make the "bloo bloo" look beautiful.

**Ronnie:** You can't beat the Bedouins.

**George:** Sit, sit. We'll smoke it together.

**Ronnie:** George, I don't have all day.

**George:** Sit, man. Take a puff. Take it. You need it.

(**Ronnie** takes a puff.)

**George:** Well? Isn't it paradise?

**Ronnie:** (enjoying) It's really a pleasure.

**George:** Did you see how the pink water dances? (He takes a puff, and we hear the long "bloo bloo" sound.) Ahhh...

**Ronnie:** Give it here, give it here.

**George:** I haven't enjoyed myself like this since I was in Dubai.

**Ronnie:** So what about...

**George:** Don't worry.

**Ronnie:** Is she being stubborn?

**George:** Like all women.

**Ronnie:** So what do we do?

**George:** We manage.

**Ronnie:** Rachel is not just anyone.

**George:** What does Rachel have to do with this now?

**Ronnie:** Isn't that why you wanted to talk to me?

**George:** Rachel? What do I have to do with Rachel? She's your assistant, isn't she?

**Ronnie:** I handed her back to Paula.

**George:** Why?

**Ronnie:** I need someone more dedicated.

**George:** Ah... Paula likes Rachel, though.

**Ronnie:** So there's no problem with Rachel?

**George:** Not that I know of.

**Ronnie:** Great. So what did you want to talk about?

**George:** Ronnie, you know none of this is new to me... I was a battalion commander and brigade commander, and I've had thousands of men under me.

**Ronnie:** Thousands of men and thousands of women.

**George:** (laughs) Those were the days. Anyway, about Paula...

**Ronnie:** She's not happy with her position.



**George:** Not at all. You've got to find her another position. This whole "community relations" thing, she's not buying it.

**Ronnie:** I can't give her Internal Security.

**George:** Of course not. That's not for her. She loves performances. Give her the Ministry of Culture.

**Ronnie:** I promised that to our coalition partners.

**George:** Then give her Cybersecurity.

**Ronnie:** Taken.

**George:** What's left?

**Ronnie:** Higher Education.

**George:** That's not bad.

**Ronnie:** But it comes with the Water Ministry.

**George:** No, they'll make a joke out of her. Give me something simple, and make sure she's home early. I'm tired of waiting up for her all night.

(**Ronnie** takes another puff from the hookah.)

**Ronnie:** How is she with minorities?

**George:** She likes minorities.

**Ronnie:** Then let's make her the Minister of Minority Affairs.

**George:** What does that involve?

**Ronnie:** Minor details. (They laugh.)

**George:** Let's go for it, then.

**Ronnie:** Will that keep her quiet?

**George:** At least until the end of the term.

**Ronnie:** Deal.

(pause, they take puffs from the hookah)

**George:** That way, she can also bring me a regular supply of tobacco and coals.

**Ronnie:** We've made a deal.

**George:** Most importantly, this entire meeting between us never happened.

**Ronnie:** Yes, Commander.

**George:** Otherwise, she'll refuse the position.

**Ronnie:** Thanks, George.

**George:** But I want one more thing from you.

**Ronnie:** Whatever you say.

**George:** This time it's really secret.

**Ronnie:** I'm listening.

**George:** Tomorrow evening, you've got your big final rally at the Exhibition Grounds.

**Ronnie:** That's right.

**George:** And Paula and I are celebrating 30 years of marriage this week!

**Ronnie:** Thirty years!

**George:** Can you believe it?

**Ronnie:** I remember the wedding.

**George:** The whole division was there.

**Ronnie:** Rafael gave a speech.

**George:** Yes...

**Ronnie:** And then the entire division stood up and sang for you...

**Singing together:**

"Come on, George, go home today,  
Go quickly to your wife, don't stay,  
Turn in your gear, say your goodbye,  
To the brigade and to the sky.  
Wave to the medic, and her crew,

You've had your fun, they all knew you.

And a thousand more, it's true.

To all of them, to all of them,

You'll miss them when the night is dim,

Even the tanks, the turret too,

And all the girls who looked at you.

If you need a little rest,

To forget the one you love the best,

Come back quickly to the corps,

And we'll find you a clerk, for sure."

**George:** Those were the days.

**Ronnie:** We knew how to live.

**George:** Nowadays, everything's messed up.

**Ronnie:** Absolutely.

**George:** You're not allowed to hug, you're not allowed to touch, you can't pinch a butt or even give a nice compliment. Where's all the fun? Where?

**Ronnie:** Gone.

**George:** So here's the deal: Paula always forgets the date of our wedding anniversary, and you know there's this new trend...

**Ronnie:** Renewing vows.

**George:** Exactly. And they propose again, throw a big party... Now, I don't have the energy to organize a party, and since you're already organizing the rally tomorrow night, I thought we could take advantage of the timing, just a few days before the election, and I'll propose to her again. We'll make it a surprise, get the TVs ready, and everyone will film and talk about it on Facebook and all that nonsense. She'll be moved, it'll help your final poll numbers, and we'll all have a celebration.

**Ronnie:** That's a wonderful idea.

**George:** So you agree?

**Ronnie:** Of course. I'll do the same for Nina at the victory party...

**George:** Oh!

**Ronnie:** It's perfect.

**George:** Who should I coordinate with, secretly of course?

**Ronnie:** Talk to Ryan. He'll organize everything for you.

(As the door opens, **Paula** enters with a bag of clothes.)

**George:** Hey... (George tries to hide the hookah, but Paula ignores it.)

**Paula:** Ronnie...

**Ronnie:** Hey.

**Paula:** What are you doing here?

**George:** ...You said you had a busy day.

**Ronnie:** ...George invited me...

**Paula:** For what exactly?

**Ronnie:** For a hookah...

**George:** For a friendly chat.

**Ronnie:** To reminisce about the good old days.

(**Ryan** and **Rachel** enter, with Ryan carrying Rachel's suitcase.)

(**Rachel** sees Ronnie and is startled. **Paula** moves to support her.)

**George:** Oh! Now it's really a party meeting. Ryan, I need to have a word with you in private.

**Ryan:** Hi, George! Ronnie...

**George:** Come in, Rachel... Congratulations on your new assignment.

**Paula:** What assignment?

**George:** Ronnie told me that from now on, Rachel will be with you. Come in, Rachel. Go ahead, make some coffee for everyone. (notices the suitcase) What's this? Heading back to the Bedouins again?

**Paula:** Rachel will be staying with us for a while.

**George:** With us? With us?!

**Paula:** Yes.

**George:** Sure, of course. What for?

**Paula:** She needs... support.

**George:** Support with what?

**Paula:** ...Women's issues.

**George:** Oh... well, that's always out of my jurisdiction. After 30 years of marriage, you learn there's a time each month when it's best not to ask too many questions. The cabinet of bandages and all that stuff is in the bathroom, on the left. Ryan, go make her some tea or something...

Rachel, feel at home.

**Paula:** I'm taking care of Rachel.

**George:** Best thing. Sit down, Ronnie. Sit, Ryan.

**Ronnie:** I have to go.

**George:** Sit for two minutes. Sit down, Ryan.

**Paula:** Come, Rachel.

**Rachel:** I want to go home.

**Paula:** Let's set up a place for you.

**Rachel:** I want to go home.

**Paula:** Rachel, I'm not leaving you alone.

**George:** Is this because of me?

**Rachel:** Let me out.

**Paula:** No one here will hurt you.

**Rachel:** (physically weak) Ryan, take me home.

**Paula:** No, Rachel, you're staying here.

**Rachel:** You've trapped me here!

**Paula:** I didn't know he would be here.

**Rachel:** I promise I won't tell anyone, just let me go home.

**George:** What is she talking about?

**Rachel:** I swear I won't tell anyone anything.

**Paula:** Rachel!

**Rachel:** I promise I won't hurt anyone.

**Ryan:** No one thinks that...

**Paula:** You're the one who's been hurt...

**George:** Will someone explain to me what's going on here?



**Rachel:** Let me go, please.

**Ronnie:** I'll explain.

**Paula:** I'm not sure that's the right thing to do.

**Ronnie:** Give me a minute.

**Paula:** George, help me.

**George:** But I don't understand what's happening.

**Ronnie:** (bursting out) I kissed Rachel last night. (pause) Without her permission. (pause) It was a moment of weakness. (pause) And I want to apologize to her. Will you forgive me, Rachel? Rachel, I'm sorry.

**Rachel:** You forced yourself on me.

**Ronnie:** That's true.

**Rachel:** You grabbed me by force.

**Ronnie:** That's also true.

**Rachel:** You kissed me against my will, and when I resisted, you pressed me against the car and forced your tongue into my mouth!

**Ronnie:** That's true. But I take full responsibility for my actions. (pause) It won't happen again. I swear to everyone in this room. This will stay between us, no one will speak about it again, no one will mention it again. It won't happen again. Rachel, I hurt you, I apologize, I'm kneeling

before you. We have an election to win, we have a whole country to run, we have a vision, and so many good things we want to achieve... Just say you forgive me.

**(Rachel curls up.)**

**Rachel:** I feel sick.

**Ronnie:** Rachel...

**Rachel:** I want to throw up.

**Ronnie:** Ryan, get her something, a bowl or something.

**Paula:** It's better if you step back.

**Ronnie:** Rachel, I didn't mean...

**Rachel:** Leave me alone!

**Paula:** Ronnie!

**Ronnie:** I just need a few minutes alone with her.

**Paula:** It's not right for you to approach her now.

**Ronnie:** Just a few words.

**Paula:** She's traumatized.

**Ronnie:** Why trauma?

**Paula:** What exactly don't you understand?!

**Ronnie:** It was just a kiss!

**Ryan:** Ronnie, maybe this isn't the time.

**Ronnie:** Don't try to confuse me too, Ryan. You knew about it and reported it to Paula before you reported it to me!

**Ryan:** She asked to meet with Paula!

**Paula:** You don't need to justify yourself.

**Ronnie:** Rachel, I promise you...

**Rachel:** Stop!

**Paula:** (yelling) Stop! Just leave! Go!

(pause)

**Ronnie:** You told me this morning it was behind us.

**Paula:** It's not behind us.

**Ronnie:** Have you decided to destroy me?

**Paula:** You're destroying yourself.

**George:** Calm down, both of you!

**Ronnie:** George... if this doesn't end today, right now... it will hurt all of us.

**George:** Trust me.

(**Ronnie** exits.)

**Paula:** Come on, Rachel, let's set up your room.

(**Ryan** exits.)

(**Paula** leads **Rachel** to the room.)

## Scene 6

(**Ronnie** and **Ryan** are in the parking garage under **Paula's** apartment.)

**Ronnie:** Ryan!

**Ryan:** Yes, Ronnie.

**Ronnie:** Listen... I... I...

**Ryan:** You want to apologize to me too?

**Ronnie:** Yes.

**Ryan:** You're doing a lot of apologizing today, and you haven't even apologized to your wife yet.

**Ronnie:** Listen, listen... just hear me out for a second. I'm sorry I touched her. I know how much she means to you. It won't happen again, Ryan, I swear. And I'm sorry for lashing out at you earlier—you know I didn't mean it... I just got a little stressed... It's not an easy thing... Ryan! I need you with me.

**Ryan:** What do you want?

**Ronnie:** To know that you're with me.

**Ryan:** I've been with you for eight years.

**Ronnie:** And that you'll support my version of the story.

**Ryan:** What version?

**Ronnie:** If this thing blows up, I'll say she came onto me, forced her tongue into my mouth.

**Ryan:** But earlier you told a different story.

**Ronnie:** I'm the victim here, not her.

**Ryan:** You apologized to her in front of everyone, asked for her forgiveness.

**Ronnie:** Because I wanted to resolve it quickly, right then and there. But I miscalculated. I'm telling you, someone planted her to sabotage our campaign.

**Ryan:** Rachel has been with us for eight years.

**Ronnie:** And I wouldn't be surprised if Paula planted her to bring me down.

**Ryan:** Paula founded this party.

**Ronnie:** So someone bribed her.

**Ryan:** Paula?

**Ronnie:** Yes!

**Ryan:** You're paranoid.

**Ronnie:** Maybe, but I can't take any chances.

**Ryan:** So, you want to get rid of both of them?

**Ronnie:** That's exactly what I'll do if they don't fall in line today and deny this whole story. Ryan, we can't let this mess destroy the campaign and everything we've achieved. In eight days, I'm going to be the Prime Minister, and nothing will stop me. If you care about that girl, make sure she keeps quiet. And believe me, you won't regret it. Right after the election, I'll make you a Secretary in the Cabinet. You'll be the star of every studio in the country and around the world. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you.

**Ryan:** A secretary in the Cabinet?

**Ronnie:** My word.

**Ryan:** And the government spokesperson?

**Ronnie:** Done. I trust you.

**Ryan:** And Paula?

**Ronnie:** What about her?

**Ryan:** Will she stay quiet?

**Ronnie:** George will shut her up. (pause) Now go on and keep organizing tomorrow's rally, and... George needs your help with something, assist him.



## Scene 7

(Darkness. Night. **Paula** can't sleep. **George** senses she's awake and gets up too. They speak quietly, so as not to wake Rachel.)

**George:** Did she fall asleep?

**Paula:** Barely.

**George:** How long have you known about this?

**Paula:** Less than 24 hours.

**George:** And you didn't think to tell me?

**Paula:** I have to admit, it confused me.

**George:** That's why you should've told me right away when you found out. An event like this has to be managed. You have to close it off in time, don't let anything slip out. You've got to choke it while it's still in the bud.

**Paula:** I didn't know what to do.

**George:** You've lost control of it. Someone will say a word to someone, and it will destroy you.

**Paula:** What do you suggest?

**George:** You'll need to keep her under wraps until you win the election.

**Paula:** And what if it leaks?

**George:** It will leak. And you'll have to deal with it.

**Paula:** And if it doesn't?

**George:** If no one ever finds out, then everything will be fine.

**Paula:** And we'll live with this secret forever? Live with this shame forever? Never wash away this river of disgrace? Just accept violence and repression as part of life, as a fact?

**George:** Once you're elected and at the center of decision-making, maybe then you'll be able to change something. But if Ronnie doesn't win, you'll never be a minister. You'll go back to being a history teacher at an elementary school, without influence, without power, without action—just another gray teacher. Is that what you want to be?

**Paula:** Wouldn't you want to live in a better world?

**George:** There is no better world. Life is compromise. Push it down, suppress it, hide it, as if it never happened. Victory will erase everything. We have to protect Ronnie... at any cost.

**Paula:** And what about her?

**George:** She'll get over it. They all do in the end.

(pause)

**Paula:** Who do you mean by “they all”?

**George:** All the complainants. There are thousands of cases like this every day.

**Paula:** And that’s okay with you?

**George:** (laughs) If we stopped the world every time someone got kissed...

**Paula:** He forced himself on her.

**George:** He didn’t rape her.

**Paula:** He grabbed her by force and shoved his tongue into her mouth.

**George:** He didn’t deny it, and... he apologized.

**Paula:** That doesn’t erase it.

**George:** He shouldn’t have to castrate himself over a kiss.

**Paula:** You’re dismissing it like it’s nothing.

**George:** Men and women fool around all the time.

**Paula:** She didn’t feel like it was fun.

**George:** Well, now she has a story that the Prime Minister kissed her. In thirty years, she’ll brag about it in some bestseller she wants to promote. We live in a twisted world.

**Paula:** Yes... a twisted world.

**George:** A man shouldn't lose his entire life over kissing his secretary or patting her on the behind.

**Paula:** Why should anyone pat their secretary on the behind?

**George:** I was speaking metaphorically.

**Paula:** A metaphor for what? The unchecked lust of men?

**George:** A metaphor for the fact that men now feel like they have to walk on eggshells around women.

**Paula:** Would you be okay with someone patting my behind?

**George:** I'd like to do it myself.

**Paula:** Answer me seriously.

**George:** I'm a man.

**Paula:** A man?!

**George:** Yes, a man.

**Paula:** And this is the essence of manhood? Shoving hands or tongues wherever you feel like it?

**George:** We're pathetic, I admit it.

**Paula:** And you're okay with having a Prime Minister who...

**George:** If the criterion for political elimination is whether someone kissed a woman inappropriately, then by that measure, more than half of our Prime Ministers would have been kicked out. I'd bet the only prime minister who didn't kiss anyone was Golda Meir... as far as we know.

(pause)

(**Rachel** walks across the stage, weak and confused, wearing just underwear and a tank top.)

**Rachel:** Sorry... I forgot where the bathroom is.

**Paula:** It's on the right, sweetheart.

(**Rachel** exits. They resume whispering.)

**George:** Well...

**Paula:** Well what?

**George:** You can understand him...

**Paula:** You're annoying me.

**George:** Didn't you see how she's walking around?

**Paula:** She got up to go to the bathroom.

**George:** I don't know a man who could remain indifferent to something so beautiful.

**Paula:** You see underwear and you lose control?

**George:** I'm just saying...

**Paula:** That you men can't control your tiny little urges.

**George:** You're overreacting.

**Paula:** I'm appalled at how pathetic you can be.

**George:** I'm just saying we're human, and when we're stimulated, we react. That's it.

**Paula:** You talk about yourselves like you're wild animals that can't be approached when hungry.

**George:** It's a tough image, but I wouldn't dismiss it.

**Paula:** Are you like that?

**George:** Come on, stop pretending... the man saw a poll saying he's going to win the election, suddenly felt like king of the world, got a little horny for a moment, saw fresh young meat in front of him...

**Paula:** Stop...

**George:** He couldn't resist, took a bite out of the hamburger...

**Paula:** You disgust me.

**George:** But it's normal.

(**Rachel** returns from the bathroom.)

**Rachel:** You two remind me so much of my parents.

**Paula:** Really?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**George:** How so?

**Rachel:** They used to argue all night long too.

**George:** And how did they manage it?

**Rachel:** They're divorced... But you two really seem like you belong together.

**George:** Yes.

**Rachel:** What's your secret?

**George:** Our secret is absence. We're absent from each other's lives, and that's how we keep our relationship alive.

**Rachel:** Funny. Good night. (exits)

**(Paula pauses.)**

**Paula:** Was I once just a hamburger to you?

**(George tries to get closer.)**

**George:** You were always the finest steak.

**Paula:** Is that what I am to you after thirty years? A steak?!

**Paula:** Are you asking me what was between us thirty years ago?

**Paula:** I'm asking what still exists between us right now.

**George:** Are you doubting my love? (pause) I've been waiting for you in bed for three months.

(Morning, the TV is on, with the **TV host** talking about the abusive husband and wife. **George** is holding his morning coffee, **Rachel** is ready to leave, the TV is on in the background.)

**TV host:** This morning, we continue to follow Mrs. A, which will remain nameless and who has chosen to accept her abusive husband M back home. Perhaps today, we'll understand why she did it. And another thing that surprised us is that M, the abusive husband, has agreed to join us this morning, along with A. Good morning, M.

**Abusive Husband:** Good morning.

**TV host:** So, how do we begin?

**Abusive Husband:** Look... I...

**TV host:** You hit your wife.

**Abusive Husband:** Yes.

**TV host:** Severe beatings that led to her hospitalization.

**Abusive Husband:** I think...



**TV host:** In fact, you hit her dozens of times, and she repeatedly chose not to report you to the police.

**Abusive Husband:** And I'm very grateful to her.

**TV host:** The question is, A, why? Why do you think she never reported the violence against her for years? Why did you suppress it and agree to take the beatings over and over again for so many years? And why now did you agree to let him return home?

(pause)

**Abusive Husband:** Can I speak for a moment?

**TV host:** I have to admit, it's hard for me to even give you the floor...

**Abusive Husband:** Do you think it's fair that you're not letting me speak?

**TV host:** I'm sorry, but I find it difficult to stay silent in front of you. You know what? I'll stay quiet now, and you can say what you want to say, even though what I really want to do is shout. Why haven't you shouted until now?

**Abusive Husband:** (bursting out) First of all, I admit my guilt. I did hit my wife, but I take responsibility for my actions.

**TV host:** What does that mean, "I take responsibility"? What exactly does that mean?

**Abusive Husband:** It means I take responsibility.

**TV host:** And how does that manifest?

**Abusive Husband:** I'm asking my wife to forgive me.

**TV host:** And...?

**Abusive Husband:** That's it.

**TV host:** For you, it's over? It's behind you?

**Abusive Husband:** Of course, it's behind her.

**TV host:** Are you willing to let her speak?

**Abusive Husband:** I want to say that you're rude! And you're lucky there are cameras here...

**TV host:** I'm asking to have this violent person removed. I'm not willing to continue the interview like this.

**A:** You don't understand.

**TV host:** Understand what, exactly?

**A:** The silence. The fact that suddenly you have no voice. That you can't get divorced because it would ruin your kids' lives, so instead, you

choose to ruin your own. And you suffocate. And you learn to live with the suffocation. For your kids.

**TV host:** How long will you live with the suffocation?

**A:** Until the end.

## Scene 8

(**Paula's** home. **Rachel** enters with a suitcase, looking a bit shaken.

**George** mutes the TV. )

**George**: Crazy people...

(**Rachel** is dressed and ready to leave, holding her bag. **Paula** comes out of the room, still in her bathrobe, not understanding where Rachel is going.)

**Paula**: Rachel, where are you going?

**Rachel**: I'm feeling much better now.

**Paula**: Are you sure?

**Rachel**: Yes.

**Paula**: Where are you going?

**Rachel**: Ryan called me...

**Paula**: Are you meeting him?

**Rachel**: Yes... he invited me to a café...

**George**: That's nice.

**Rachel**: I think it will do me good... and really, thank you for everything.

**Paula**: Are you okay?

**Rachel:** Yes, yes, it's all behind me now. Ryan told me he's setting up an interview for a new job... I'm starting a new life.

**George:** Good luck.

**Rachel:** I really appreciate you hosting me here, it's not something to be taken for granted.

**Paula:** Are you sure you're okay, Rachel?

**Rachel:** I'm perfectly fine. And don't worry, everything that happened here will stay a secret. I'll never tell anyone.

(**Paula** and **Rachel** hug. **Rachel** exits.)

**George:** (laughs) Ronnie always had more luck than brains.

(**George** turns on the TV, showing another news update on Ronnie's rising poll numbers, still muted.)

(**Paula** stares at the door from which **Rachel** exited, unsettled. **George** is absorbed in the TV, predicting Ronnie's victory. **Paula** hears distant wedding sounds, "Where's our bride gone? The audience is asked to find our bride and carry her to the dance floor on their shoulders..." In a sound effect, **George** is a young, drunken groom with a bottle, running toward her...)

**Young George:** Hey... You disappeared in the middle of the wedding?!  
Where were you? The guys want to take us in an APC convoy to the  
hotel. Crazy!

(Back to the present.)

**George:** You're winning... It's time to start celebrating.

**Paula:** (snapping back to reality) I need to settle the issue of my position  
with him before the election.

**George:** I've already sorted that out for you.

**Paula:** What do you mean you "sorted it out"?

**George:** We talked.

**Paula:** You talked about me?

**George:** Yes.

**Paula:** When?

**George:** Yesterday, before you arrived.

**Paula:** I asked you not to interfere.

**George:** I did what I thought was right.

**Paula:** I told you this was my issue to handle.

**George:** If you don't secure a position now, there won't be anything left for you after the election.

**Paula:** I want to do it my way.

**George:** I did it your way.

**Paula:** How, exactly?

**George:** I told him you weren't happy with the... Community Relations role.

**Paula:** And...?

**George:** He insisted... We argued... I gave him a piece of my mind... and we reached an understanding.

**Paula:** What understanding?

**George:** That you'll get something else.

**Paula:** Something else?!

**George:** A different role.

**Paula:** But I know exactly what I want.

**George:** Sometimes you have to compromise.

**Paula:** I don't want to compromise.

**George:** But you've compromised your whole life, and it's a good thing because compromise is essential. That's the only way to achieve anything. So why suddenly refuse to compromise?

**Paula:** So, what did you "compromise" for me?

**George:** You'll be... the Minister of Minority Affairs.

**Paula:** I'm not interested in that.

**George:** Why are you being so arrogant?

**Paula:** I'm not being arrogant. I think the Minister of Minority Affairs should be a minority, just like the Minister for Women's Affairs should be a woman.

**George:** I suggest you take what you're given.

**Paula:** But I don't like what you're "giving" me.

**George:** Paula, you're not going to be the Minister of Internal Security.

**Paula:** Why not?

**George:** Because both Ronnie and I agree that you're not suited for that role.

**Paula:** Why?

**George:** Because you're not suited.



**Paula:** Why?

**George:** Because the position requires skills you don't have.

**Paula:** And why do you think I don't have them?

**George:** Because it's a fact.

**Paula:** What fact are you talking about?

**George:** Either nature gave you those abilities or it didn't.

**Paula:** And what exactly did nature give you?

**George:** I think we should stop here.

**Paula:** No, we're not stopping, and you're going to call Ronnie and tell him that all the agreements between you are null and void!

**George:** Paula!

**Paula:** George!

**George:** I'm not going to do that. (he goes over and caresses the hookah)

**Paula:** I'm asking you to.

**George:** It's impossible.

**Paula:** Leave that stupid hookah alone.

**George:** Do you realize you're being hysterical?

**Paula:** No, I'm not hysterical. I just refuse to give up on something I really want because you think I'm not suited for it.

**George:** But you're not suited for it.

**Paula:** That's how you also stuck me with Ronnie in the party. I founded this party, I built it from scratch, and you convinced me, with your authoritative, masculine voice, that I wasn't suited to lead it. That I needed a man in the first position, and you pushed Ronnie on me.

**George:** You needed him.

**Paula:** I would've managed just fine without him.

**George:** You wouldn't have passed the electoral threshold.

**Paula:** You're my threshold. You!

**George:** That was hurtful.

**Paula:** You and I, we're no longer commander and secretary.

**George:** I need to go.

**Paula:** Go!

(**George** exits. **Paula** walks over to the hookah and smashes it.)

## Scene 9

(Outside the party's final rally, **Ryan** and **Rachel**.)

**Ryan:** Hey.

**Rachel:** Hey.

**Ryan:** You're doing the right thing. Ronnie needs you to win.

**Rachel:** Does he really mean it?

**Ryan:** He's genuinely sorry. And he's willing to give you everything.

**Rachel:** What does "everything" mean?

**Ryan:** Even a ministerial position in the next government.

**Rachel:** Really?

**Ryan:** All you have to do is ask.

(**Ronnie** enters the stage, dressed sharply but slightly tense. **Ryan** and **Rachel** enter, and **Rachel** stands in front of **Ronnie**.)

**Ronnie:** Hey.

**Rachel:** Hey.

**Ronnie:** I've already asked for your forgiveness.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Ronnie:** I'm ready to ask again.

**Rachel:** It's okay.

**Ronnie:** Can we forget it all?

**Rachel:** I'll try.

**Ronnie:** From today, a new world. You're no longer behind the scenes.  
From today, you stand on the same level as me. Together. With respect.  
With love.

**Rachel:** That sounds like a campaign ad.

**Ronnie:** I'm choosing you to lead this country with me.

(**Rachel**, speechless, nods.)

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Ronnie:** We have a chance to change the world. Let's not miss it.

**Rachel:** I'm in.

**Ronnie:** Have you chosen a position?

**Rachel:** I'll choose.

**Ronnie:** Whatever you want.

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Ronnie:** Welcome aboard.

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Ronnie:** Hug?

(**Ronnie** opens his arms, and **Rachel** walks toward him. They hug.)

**Ronnie:** That's my girl. (He moves closer to her, and she freezes.)

(**Ronnie** holds her firmly, his masculinity overpowering her. He leans her back. **Rachel** is paralyzed. He kisses her on the forehead. **Paula** enters.)

**Paula:** Rachel! What are you doing here?

**Rachel:** Ronnie and I have sorted things out.

**Ronnie:** That's right. It's behind us now. Come on, ladies, we're about to start. Rachel... they're waiting for us on stage.

**Rachel:** I'll be right there.

(**Ronnie** exits.)

**Paula:** What are you doing?

**Rachel:** I want to be a part of it.

**Paula:** And you're erasing your pain? The humiliation you went through?  
The coercion?

**Rachel:** I'm not erasing it, I'm overcoming it. There are things more important to me than sitting at home and whining.

**Paula:** Did he promise you something?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Paula:** What?

**Rachel:** That it won't happen again, and that's what matters.

**Paula:** And a position?

**Rachel:** That too.

**Paula:** What position?

**Rachel:** Whatever I want.

**(Rachel exits.)**

**Paula:** (to **Ryan**) Was this your idea?

**Ryan:** What?

**Paula:** This reconciliation.

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Paula:** You're fired. I don't want to see you anymore.

**Ryan:** I don't work for you anymore, Paula. I work with Ronnie.

**(Ryan exits.)**

**(Sound of rally audience cheering)**



## Scene 10

(Amid fireworks and moving lights, **Ronnie** enters, warmly receiving the cheers of his supporters. He turns to the audience.)

**Ronnie:** Ladies and gentlemen, our victory is just days away. One final push, and we can change the face of this country. And we deserve to win. We've run a clean, restrained campaign—no smears, no slip-ups, no unnecessary drama. And now, I'd like to invite to the stage...

(**Paula** prepares to go on stage.)

**Ronnie:** My friend, my comrade, and my commander—**George Silverstein.**

(**George** enters from the other side of the stage.)

**George:** Hello, everyone... something small, and then I'm out. I'm here today only to make my beloved wife, your Number 2, **Paula Silverstein**, happy. You all know Paula. She never forgets anything, except for this day—our wedding anniversary. And it happened on this day 30 years ago. So today, Paula, on the occasion of our 30th anniversary, I'm renewing our wedding vows and proposing to you again. Paula, will you marry me?

(**Paula** is stunned.)



**Ronnie:** And... we have a surprise for you. In honor of your anniversary, I'm announcing right here, in front of everyone, a gift for you and George. Paula, you will serve under me in the government I'll form, and you'll be the Minister of Internal Security.

(Applause, Paula steps to the mic)

**Paula:** What makes a person truly alive? A person is truly alive when they aspire to grow, to progress, when they love—then they are truly alive. What turns a person into someone who only seems to live but is actually dead inside? When they fail to do what they must.

Thirty years ago, on the night of my wedding to George, while the entire Northern Command stood and sang for us, and my newlywed husband celebrated and drank with his subordinates, I was overwhelmed by tears as a bride... Suddenly, a strong hand pulled me into a side room, grabbed me by the throat, pinned me against the wall. Cold, stiff lips pressed against mine, and a violent, invasive tongue forced its way into my mouth, without permission. I tried to push him off, but he was stronger than me. When he was done, he stood there, embarrassed, and asked me to keep it a secret and tell no one. And indeed, I never told anyone. Not even you, George. But tonight, I want to apologize to all my sisters, all women everywhere, for choosing to remain silent, for swallowing the humiliation and the shame, and in doing so, putting you

at risk of the same degrading experience that maybe I could have stopped thirty years ago.

George, my love, I have no intention of marrying you again or renewing any vows. Tonight, I choose to expose the man who violently imposed himself on me on our wedding night, a man whose brutality and coarseness my body and soul will never forget, and who is now doing the same to other women. **Ronnie Coleman!** He is the man who forced himself on me thirty years ago. And I'm calling for your resignation.

(**Ronnie** grabs the microphone.)

**Ronnie:** This is a lie! It's a vicious lie meant to remove me and prevent my victory. You won't find a single woman who will testify that I did anything like this to her...

(His voice echoes, and behind him, news broadcasts show images of other women coming forward.)

(Darkness.)

## Scene 11

(TVs on mute show news broadcasts with **Ronnie's** shocked face, wearing sunglasses, and images of **Paula** and **George** leaving the rally, along with images of **Rachel**, hiding her face. **Ronnie's** campaign poster disintegrates and disappears from the screen.)

(**Paula** and **George** are at home.)

(A tense silence like a knife.)

**George:** I... what... I...

**Paula:** Did you know... all these years?

**George:** I knew about other women...

**Paula:** And about me? Did you know about me?

**George:** If I had known, I would've killed him. I'm sorry.

(pause, **Paula** is about to leave.)

(The TV shows **Ronnie** reading his resignation letter.)

**George:** He resigned. Ronnie resigned.

(**Paula** understands without words.)

**George:** From this moment, you're Number One in the party.

(**Paula** understands without words.)

**George:** The election is in three days. (The sound of text messages fills the air.) The studios will want to have you on.

**Paula:** I have nothing more to say to them.

(**Paula** leaves.)

(Election night, exit polls are about to be released. **George** watches the poll results. **Paula** wins the election.)

**Yoni:** For the last three days, we haven't been able to conduct or publish polls, but now, the exit poll results: the next Prime Minister is... **Paula Silverstein!**

**George:** Paula! Paula!

(**Paula** enters, shaken. Outside, there's the noise of dozens of journalists and flashing cameras.)

**George:** You won. You're the next Prime Minister.

**Paula:** What's all the commotion outside?

**George:** The security service is trying to clear out the journalists.

**Paula:** Why is the security service here?

**George:** To protect you. From this moment, you're the Prime Minister elect. We'll have to form a coalition, of course, but everything will be fine, everything will be fine.

(All the phones start ringing like loud bells, growing louder.)

**Paula:** (moving between the phones and disconnecting them—she sits)

Do you love me?

**George:** Only you.

**Paula:** I want us to start over.

**George:** Agreed.

**Paula:** From this moment, you're not my husband, you don't own me.

You're my partner, my friend, my advisor, my companion.

**George:** Agreed.

**Paula:** Shall we go out to them?

**George:** After you. Madam Prime Minister.

(The End)