

My Best Egg

A fertility fairy tale

A Dramatic Musical Comedy by Limor Naya Ziv

Characters

- **Tamar:** 43, single, witty, a little lost, determined, gracefully sloppy, very goal-oriented, biological clock ticking wildly, in a race against time.
- **Yonatan:** 45, divorced, Mizrachi, "man's man", has 2 older daughters from a previous marriage
- **Dr. Har Sinai:** 52, fertility doctor obsessed with the cash register, runs a private clinic, impressive, full of himself, arrogant, cold, controversial personality
- **Victor:** 35, X-ray technician, Russian origin, tough
- **Jacqueline:** 60, colorful character
- **Rabbi Steinmetz:** 80, ultra-orthodox rabbi
- **Israel:** 52, candidate for joint parentage, horny, looking for an affair under the guise of parenthood
- **Moshe:** 50, candidate for joint parentage, Yemeni, eternal boy, schemer
- **Joseph:** 75, art treasure, Israeli who immigrated to the USA

Note: Tamar is played by one actress. All other characters could be, but don't have to be, played by one actor.

Set Design

On stage are chairs that serve multiple functions - tombstones, gynecological chair, bar table, bed, hospital bed, toilets, etc.

In all scenes, the two actors stand facing the audience and perform as if they were in a scene with a partner. Eye contact is made only a few times. "Communion" scenes are symbolic, a dance, stylized, modestly comic, and without physical contact.

Prologue

(Opening music: night sounds, dog barking, bird screeching)

(Tamar is "pushed" among the graves, looking for the grave of the tzaddik, reacting with trembling to the sounds of the night.)

Tamar: Mama!... *(Hello Bruria Levy! Hello Cohen family... God bless you)* ... Here! Here's a burial. The Stephanesht... I heard you're the best. I brought everything. A candle. Siddur. Psalms. Complete. *(Pulls out a bottle)* This too. Arak. 40% alcohol... with a blessing! Cheers!

(She prostrates herself)

Tamar: Now to pray. *(Trying to pray)* Okay. Can I just speak from the heart?

(Singing)

If only I were an ordinary girl

Just Normal, and standard, simple, like pearl

Fall in love, getting married, conceiving

Working, functioning, achieving

Meeting deadlines without fight

At the ages deemed just right

Just blessed simplicity, flow free

Who will make a boring girl out of me

Tamar: Okay, "Stephanesht", enough with the formal prayers. The rabbi said it's a time of power on Tu B'Shevat night... you're powerful, right? I need your help because that blessed one up there isn't budging... and I'm running out of time. It's now or never. And believe me, I've done my part. Everything. What haven't I tried?

(A ticking clock turns into theme music)

Tamar: It all started 2 years ago. I was 42, my uterus was screaming, my clock was ticking, so I made an appointment with a fertility specialist.

Scene 1: At the Doctor's Clinic

(Tamar enters, frantically looking in her wallet for a magnetic card. Dr. Har Sinai is already seated.)

Tamar: (*breathless*) It's not too late, right?! Tell me it's not too late!

Dr. Har Sinai: (*dryly*) We really hope not. Magnetic card, please.

Tamar: You think it's too late, don't you?

Dr. Har Sinai: Let's try, Tamar. What do we have to lose? (*She hands him a card*) And that's not a magnetic card. Are you usually healthy?

Tamar: Oh yeah, too healthy! (*flustered*) How about this one? (*hands another card*)

Dr. Har Sinai: (*sighs*) Still not it. Is your cycle regular?

Tamar: Like a Swiss watch. Tick-tock.

Dr. Har Sinai: (*finally receives the correct card*) At last. Tamar, do you have a partner?

Tamar: A... partner? Oh, that's not a problem. Definitely not **The** problem.

Dr. Har Sinai: (*handing her a stack of papers*) I see. Here are references for tests to do between the second and fifth day of your cycle.

Tamar: (*overwhelmed, flipping through pages*) FSH, prolactin, estradiol, fasting glucose, testosterone culture... rubella? CMV, toxoplasma, varicella...

Dr. Har Sinai: (*dryly, handing out more pages*) We've only just begun. Blood tests and ultrasound - follicles on days 10, 12, and 14 of the cycle.

(For each procedure, the doctor has a stylish movement with a lot of self-importance)

Tamar: For...?

Dr. Har Sinai: To check when you ovulate.

Tamar: Don't worry doc, I know exactly when I'm ovulating.

Dr. Har Sinai: (*unimpressed*) Let's do it anyway, shall we? So that I know too. (*holds out another reference*)

Tamar: What's this??

Dr. Har Sinai: Prescription for Ovitrel to induce ovulation.

Tamar: Ovi-what now?

Dr. Har Sinai: This is how we control the timing. It also supports the corpus luteum.

Tamar: Do I have a problem with the corpus luteum?

Dr. Har Sinai: Not necessarily. It also supports the mucosa. Be in touch with the nurses regarding the results of follicles and blood. Later, you'll receive instructions from me on when to have intercourse.

Tamar: *(sarcastically)* That would be wonderful! Finally, someone to manage my sex life. *(starts packing the abundance of references) (browsing through the pages)* The tests are between 7:00 and 8:00 in the morning?! Isn't that a little early?

Dr. Har Sinai: *(deadpan)* And isn't age 42 a bit late? Run to the train, Tamar, and good luck!

(Party music starts)

Tamar: *(to the audience)* So, I ran! I ran for my life. And everywhere I went, I was signed up, closed out, or locked in. I tried everything - I met with everyone! I didn't filter anyone... there might have been maybe one normal one in the bunch. Maybe.

(Tamar starts preparing for the next scene, taking off hair clips, releasing her hair, making eye contact with "Yonatan")

Party music

Tamar addresses the grave, moving to the left of the stage.

Tamar: So, I ran! I ran wild, signed up everywhere. Closed. Locked. I tried - met everyone! I didn't filter. Maybe there was one normal...

She releases her hair, makes eye contact with "Jonathan", walks to the front of the stage flirtatiously, and continues the scene by dancing separately, facing the audience.

Scene 2: At the Club

They dance frontally, distant from each other, coordinating movements as if together.

Jonathan: How's a cutie like you still single?

Tamar: How's a cutie like you already divorced?

Jonathan: Plus two lovely girls... I wanted more...

Tamar: Want to make more with me?

Jonathan: (laughs) What?

Tamar: Let's make more kids together!

Jonathan: Not sure you meet the criteria.

Tamar: What is the criteria?

Jonathan: Can't tell. I'd have to...you know ...kill you.

Tamar: Do you like me?

Jonathan: Yes. You're beautiful. Funny. Some Touch of sadness... aren't you hungry?

Tamar: Honestly? It's not kosher here.

Jonathan: You don't look religious Dosit?!

Tamar: I'm not... I'm on the spectrum: Shabbat, kosher, touch...

Jonathan: Huh?

Tamar: Kidding. No touch.

Jonathan: You're more interesting than I thought.

Tamar: Is that a yes?

Jonathan: Don't you want to do things in order?

Tamar: Oh yeah!

Jonathan: Coffee? Some meetings?

Tamar: Yes.

Jonathan: Falling in love? Tequila?

Tamar: Very much! In another life. I'm on the edge, it's an emergency!

Jonathan: Why is it have to be me?

Tamar: woman intuition, I have a good feeling about you.

Jonathan: You know nothing about me by the way.

Tamar: I Don't care. You're in.

Jonathan: (smiling, approaching) Can I sleep on it? Over night?

Tamar: Sure, but don't wait too long. I ovulate At Tuesday.

Cell Ring

Tamar: (answering reluctantly) Mom? Hi... What? No... I was in a... meeting. (rolls eyes)
You don't— Ah... But I called on your... Why doesn't that count?... Yes, mother, I'm very
busy... No, not even five min— Mom? Mom?

(Crosses the stage, putting on a jacket)

Tamar: (muttering) I'm sorry, Mom, but I'm not a... What? Well, but... Try bananas... Well... Enough... You're not dying, you just have a furuncle... What does that have to do with you running in the rain to the bank? I'm in plus... Plus minus... Well. But I called! Sorry. How am I? I'm fine! No really, cause I'm a lousy person. Nothing special.

(Enters the clinic, ending the conversation in angry whispers)

Tamar: Fine. Shush! Enough. What is there to worry about? You won't have to support my baby; he'll have a father too. When it happens, I'll update you. Okay? Enough, maybe?

Sound: Number 117 for position number 3

Tamar: (exasperated) I don't want to talk about it. Bye, Mom. I said bye. I'm not slamming! I said bye!

Scene 3: At the ultrasound room

Technician: Is follicle tracking, da? You in treatment? Need magnetic card.

Tamar: My doctor wants me to check between days 3 and 5. (frantically searching for card)

Technician: What day of cycle you is? Count from heavy bleeding.

Tamar: I think it's day 4.

Technician: This not magnetic one. What you took? (reaches for the card)

Tamar: Nothing... Oh, wait. Here it is. (presents card)

Technician: Good. Get to bed. Take off his pants. Pelvis on cushion. (ceremonially putting gloves on) Raise her legs and lower his pelvis...

Tamar: Alright... (opens her legs as the technician puts his head towards the uterus)

Technician: (wraps one hand from bottom to top and waves the other fingers) You have myomas. You knew this?

Tamar: Is that bad?

Technician: This question for doktor. I just technician. (making seemingly swimming movements into her body) I see 8 mm follicle on right side. (moving to the right and forward waving the right hand) I see 5 mm follicle on left side. Mucous membrane 3.

Tamar: What does that mean? Is it normal?

Technician: (coming out of the body, Tamar falls forward, takes off the gloves) You get printed page. Show to doctor.

Tamar: These myomas... what exactly are they?

Technician: You have more than one and they very bolsшой!

Tamar: But is that okay? What do we do about them?

Technician: This question for doktor. Khoroshego dnya to you.

Tamar: But the myomas... are they serious?

Technician: You have more than one and they quite huge!

Tamar: Okay, but is that alright? Should we do something about them?

Technician: This question for doktor. Good day to you.

Sensual music

Chair dance - the players turn the stage into a bedroom while moving the chairs from side to side on the stage and building a bed. They navigate the Office chairs and build images of courtship through movement with objects. Tamar lets her hair down and takes off her scarf and jacket while dancing and releases the hair. Finally, they are in bed.

Scene 4: In bed

(She raises her legs high)

Jonathan: What on earth are you doing?

Tamar: Helping them swim uphill. Shh... Don't disturb their concentration.

Jonathan: How was it for you?

Tamar: (Laconic) Fine.

Jonathan: Just fine?

Jonathan: You're welcome.

Tamar: You know... when they do insemination, they filter out the best ones and catapult them into the uterus- (Doing yoga exercises, the "candle" pose with legs above head)

Jonathan: Well, mine swim like Olympians.

Tamar: This boosts chances by 27.2%!

Jonathan: Seeds like mine?! ...What if someone pilfers them?

Tamar: Who'd steal your sperm?

Jonathan: Can't be too careful. (She stands in a handstand, he grabs her)

Tamar: Come on, don't you want a mini-me?

Jonathan: Yes, but au naturel.

Tamar: Natural? (Balancing on her hands, leaning on his back, sideways to the audience)

Jonathan: Yes.

Tamar: Natural?

Jonathan: Yes. (She dismounts with a swing)

Tamar: Is it natural to do it on Dr. Har Sinai's schedule?

Jonathan: I'm a man. I'm always on schedule.

Tamar: Well, he prescribed today, tomorrow, and the day after!

Jonathan: Doctor's orders, eh? (Approaches the bed, reaching out)

Tamar: Let's skip the appetizers. Main course. Now. Then sleep.

Jonathan: Romance isn't dead, I see. Give me a moment...

Tamar: Time's not on my side, darling.

Music, transition lighting

Tamar sits on the bed's edge, Jonathan in bed

Jonathan: So, where are we?

Tamar: I'm in a two-week limbo until the beta test.

Jonathan: Beta?

Tamar: Pregnancy test, but fair warning - I'll probably sneak a stick test first. Don't you dare stop me. (Dashes to the stand, returns with a comically large stick, hands it to Jonathan)

Jonathan: Alright... What's the deal?

Tamar: Listen up...

THE BETA SONG

Beta testing, we await

Fourteen days post intimacy's date

Three thirty-six hours tick by

Twenty thousand minutes pan fry (won't fly)

A million seconds, crawl by and won't rush though I try

Time standing still more or less

No hint that luck's on my best

Looking for fate, a miracle to see

And I've no control over it, no control over it,

Breast slightly touching, sensitive? Borderline

A small cramp in the womb, positive? Or decline

What's going inside? What could make an effect

Happen on its own, without no defect?

Waiting for fate, an answer for me

And I've no control over it, no control over it,

Magic reveals - At darkness, of darkness

Beyond any knowing of man

The wonder out of comprehend

A tiny bud takes root within your secret shade

Clinging to your walls and life has been made

How and why, we can't discern

In a week, the blood test will confirm

And I've no control over it, no control over it

I ate beets for the lining, pineapple for rooting, moringa in pills

Thirteen days, nine hours less

To pee or not to pee, that is the question at last

I must know! Even if not for certain

Two lines pregnant, one line clear

The second line - a faded spot

.Jonathan: Maybe in the light

Tamar: This isn't right

Waiting for fate, a miracle to meet

And I've no control over it, no control over it

(Ring)

Tamar: Yes? It's me. What? Okay. Negative? Ah. Thanks. No chance you're wrong, right?
What? Ah. I'm fine. What... yes, I'll sort it with him.

Jonathan: No worries, in two weeks we'll give it another shot.

(Lighting change to indicate passage of time)

A symbolic act "dance movements", short and technical against the background of oriental rhythmic music.

Tamar changes her hairstyle to a "soft ponytail" and dons a jacket, a scarf on her head. Jonathan transforms into Jacqueline with a giant orange fringed scarf. Jacqueline tidies the house, "energetically" cleaning.

Scene 5: At the Witch Jacqueline

Jacqueline: Enter! Silence, please. I must concentrate. (Gasps) Oh my! The Holy One! Why did you wait so long to come?

(Jacqueline stands behind a chair, distant from Tamar, who sits on a treatment bed. Jacqueline "treats" the air; Tamar reacts as if Jacqueline is behind her, waving hands above her head.)

Tamar: (raises head) What's wrong?

Jacqueline: You should've started at 17! With you, it's like parting the Red Sea! Everything's closed, locked, hermetically sealed!

Tamar: But why?

Jacqueline: Bismillah! It's a vow your soul made.

Tamar: A vow? Can we break it?

Jacqueline: Let me check... No. No permission granted.

Tamar: Permission? From whom?

Jacqueline: When Jacqueline doesn't get permission, it's serious business.

Tamar: Ask again! Promise anything!

Jacqueline: You think you can play games with the soul, dear?

Tamar: Flip the tables! Cause chaos! Get that approval!

Jacqueline: I won't deceive you, darling. Jacqueline has superpowers, but she's not omnipotent.

Tamar: Then why charge 1,000 shekels per treatment?

Jacqueline: Hush! I'm communing with the beyond... Yes... Aha... I see. You must buy a rooster, slaughter it, and remove its liver in the sea before sunrise!

Tamar: Before sunrise? Can't it work after, say, noon?

Jacqueline: Honey, your case isn't easy. I'm trying to help.

Tamar: Of course. And you guarantee pregnancy?

Jacqueline: If God accepts your sacrifice, it's out of my hands. But you'll need a home energy diagnosis, 40 days of psalms with two kilos of purified rubies on your body... 500 shekels per gram. If permitted, sleep on orange silk, eat fancy etrog fat with a piece of baby foreskin.

Tamar: Is that all?

Jacqueline: Your energy's a mess, Mami. Everything's stuck. We'll need weekly sessions at a special rate... Where are you going?

(Tamar tiptoes away. Jacqueline continues "treating" until she notices Tamar's gone. She arranges chairs and "clears" the room's energy.)

(Phone rings)

Tamar: Hello? Yes, it's me. What? Beta 314 is positive, right? I'm pregnant? I'm pregnant!!! That fraud was wrong! Wait, is this beta good? What now? What can I eat? No sushi, right? Wine? Mayonnaise? I'll be fine! Thank you!!! (Sticks out tongue) Enjoy your banana foreskin, witch!

(Tamar sits on an executive chair, sliding to the stage front during the song. The chair becomes a baby, stroller, swing, etc. Jacqueline removes her veil, transforming into the doctor, who sits in the treatment chair.)

A Song for the Fetus

I will love you, precious one

Girl or a son

Perhaps I won't be the earthly perfect mom

Perhaps in the mornings I'll be a bit glum

Showers may not come for each day,

Fresh-cooked meals daily might slip away.

I won't spend all day in the kitchen or night

But promise I will love you from the first of sight.

I already love you much, little one

All you need to do is just stick to my womb

I'll tell you a story before you will sleep,

Sing you songs, to the garden we'll leap

And I'll hug you and kiss you and squeeze you until you shout (out loud)

I love you, I love you, I love you without a doubt

Or her, that's right.

At the end of the song, she takes the chair to the left of the stage next to the doctor, a scarf around her neck, both have their backs to the audience. Taking the bag on her lap, turning to the crowd.

Scene 6: At the doctor's office

Tamar: Come on, doctor, let's see my medical miracle!

Dr. Har Sinai: First, your card. Tamar, there's nothing to see yet.

Tamar: What? Then why am I here?

Dr. Har Sinai: I'll give you a referral for tests. Let's check your iron, sugar...

Tamar: Is that all you care about? Forget the referrals, show me my fetus!

Dr. Har Sinai: I'll schedule a 3D ultrasound in two weeks.

Tamar: Why wait?

Dr. Har Sinai: To avoid disappointment if there's no heartbeat yet.

Tamar: I'm disappointed now! Can't you see anything, even tiny and blurry?

Dr. Har Sinai: I'm sorry, Tamar. There's a long queue outside. Good luck.

Tamar: Aren't you happy for me?

Dr. Har Sinai: (flatly) Certainly.

(Tamar removes her jacket and scarf, covers herself with a gray scarf, and lets her hair loose. The bag stays on the chair. The doctor remains seated, back to the audience. Tamar sits on a small stool stage left.)

Scene 7: Abortion. In the bathroom at home

(Between calls, Tamar rises from the toilet and checks between her legs)

1. (ring)

Tamar: Hello? Nurses' clinic? Ruhama? It's Tamar, remember? The stressed one... Yes, thanks. The beta doubled. What? Listen, I have some brown spotting. Is that normal? Old blood? From where? Oh. So, I shouldn't worry? But I have cramps. Is that okay? No, no bleeding. Just spots. Make an appointment? Rest? Okay. Thanks, Ruhama. Keep your fingers crossed for me.

2. (ring)

Tamar: Nurses' clinic? Is Ruhama there? Aliza? Can you... I don't know if you can help. I'm pregnant, but spotting. Pink now. A bit more. I'm terrified. No, not bleeding, still spotting. Anything to stop it? What? This is normal? Aliza, can I see my fetus? I'm five weeks... Nothing to do now? Rest? Okay, I will. Yes. Okay. Thanks.

3. (ring)

Tamar: Hello? I'm bleeding heavily. Red. Bright red. It won't stop. What? Reception? Get Ruhama! Wait, there must be something - refer me to anyone! Don't hang up! What do you mean there's nothing to do? Yes, I'm resting! Your name? Don't hang up! What should I do? How do I stop it? Hello? Hello!

(Tamar speaks from her position, looking towards the cemetery)

Tamar: How naive to think all you need is sperm and an egg! Everything can go wrong! The sperm, the egg, the timing, the mucus, the ovaries, the tubes, the doctor's approval, the universe's cooperation! Everything went wrong!

(Clock ticking, theme music plays. The doctor is in his chair. Tamar sits with a bag on her lap, a scarf for her bag, facing the audience)

Scene 8: At the doctor's

Tamar: Fertilization? Why do I need fertilization?

Dr. Har Sinai: And that's not the magnetic card!

Tamar: You said my profile was fine.

Dr. Har Sinai: The hormonal one.

Tamar: Normal ovaries, excellent mucus, open tubes, ovulation-

Dr. Har Sinai: Tamar-

Tamar: Two pregnancies in eighteen months!

Dr. Har Sinai: Look-

Tamar: Spontaneously!

Dr. Har Sinai: And miscarriages.

Tamar: What are you saying?

Dr. Har Sinai: I'm saying you're 43. (Pause) Your chances are very low.

Tamar: Says who?

Dr. Har Sinai: Statistics. 5% pregnancy, 3% live birth. And I'm being optimistic.

Tamar: What about acupuncture?

Dr. Har Sinai: Excellent, but it won't rejuvenate eggs.

Tamar: Detox? Ovarian massage?

Dr. Har Sinai: Listen-

Tamar: Yemenite gum?

Dr. Har Sinai: Tamar, decide what you want. There's a queue outside.

Tamar: Fertilization isn't natural, it's hormones... my partner won't agree... what's the issue, not enough eggs?

Dr. Har Sinai: At 40, eggs are older. The shell thickens, sperm struggle to penetrate. (mimics movements of eggs, shell, and sperm)

Tamar: But isn't there one high-quality egg?

Dr. Har Sinai: That's what we're looking for. Your best cell egg.

Tamar: My best cell egg. If I do IVF, will I find one?

Dr. Har Sinai: We'll have more eggs to choose from, better chances of a good one.

Tamar: Is there something between natural and artificial insemination?

Dr. Har Sinai: We can do hormone-stimulated insemination. I'll prescribe 150 Gonal-F, daily injections to ripen more eggs. But tell me, any chance your stubborn partner will do a sperm test?

Tamar: He says his seed is...

Dr. Har Sinai: Excellent? I know. They all say that.

(The doctor leaves his shirt on the chair and transforms into Jonathan. Tamar puts on a jacket, hands Jonathan a huge cup, and forcefully drags him to the clinic, puts him in line, and gives him a friendly push. During the song, she sits stage left, injecting herself while visibly struggling with inserting the needle.)

The Song of the Sterile Cup

Jonathan:

If I could trust the travel time wouldn't spoil

And do it at home without all this toil

If they'd let us finish in peace within the hour

No need to rush for results with such power

If we just mumbled "for seed enhancement" with shy voice

And no stares were fixed on us along the way

If only we could ride the elevator alone today

Not with the man who in line behind me did stay

"Didn't bring from home?" "No, I'm doing it here, okay?"

We could have rolled together on the beach at dawn

We could have simply loved to be a family, come on

If the room wasn't a disabled toilet stall

If there were chairs, not just one, damp and warm to recall

If only the walls were relatively thick

And nurses' laughter in Russian didn't make us feel sick

We could have rolled together on the beach at dawn

We could have simply loved as family, come on...

It would have been enough!

If only I had reflexes of a wildcat

To jump when needed, to a strange squatting format

That would allow me to extract all the liquid into a narrow cup

If not every drop was crucial, I'd give up

On squeezing 5 times, and shaking that, until it turned pale purple hue

Just to have a bit more, you know, to accrue -

It would have been enough, been enough, been enough

If you haven't shaken it and eyed the amount with doubt,

If you hadn't asked " Deed you thought of me throughout"?

If only you understood, you wouldn't have asked

Try to understand me, and see what I've been through

Try to understand me, and that would be enough.

He put the cup on the chair at the "reception". He took a small chair and faces the other direction where Tamar is sitting "at home" sits down with his back to her, taking a distance.