

“KETZER”

(Hebrew for “SHORT CIRCUIT”)

A play by Noa Lazar Keinan

Translated by Jephthah Ophir

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Characters

Dado Fux Mid-forties

Nati Fux Mid-forties

The audience could be seated facing the stage or in a traverse manner and a few will be active participants in the play when the actors direct them to act in specific roles.

Scene 1: Super Doctor

A large canvas sized poster of a children's book named "Super Doctor", next to a table with a pile of "Super Doctor" books, ready to be sold and signed. Dado enters wearing the "Super-Doctor" cape.

(Alternative beginning: Dado is already present as the audience enters. Helps them find their seats over small talk, hands out the book brochure until he hears the cue indicating the beginning of the talk).

Dado: Hello to all, it's a pleasure to be here with all of you. *(Gestures to an audience member in the front row)* and a special thanks to our lovely culture Coordinator for inviting me today. I'm sorry, I'm so excited I can't remember your name, remind me again?

Coordinator: *(audience member says her Name, eg: Rachel)*

Dado: *(Repeats her name)* Rachel! Of course. Let's give her a round of applause, she's always so supportive, this wouldn't have happened without her. Also I'd like to thank our two representatives from the Senior Club, "Beyond Bingo", who we have the pleasure of hosting today *(gestures towards two audience members)*. Sorry, your names again? *(audience members say their names, Dado repeats them, eg: Yael and Ben)* Yael and Ben! Yael and Ben will get to decide whether or not I make a living this year, but no pressure.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Dado Fux and I am the author of the bestselling book "Super Doctor" or in its full title: "The Adventures of Super Doctor in the Gastro Tunnels."

This is usually when everyone claps, and I won't stop you. *(audience hopefully claps)* I imagine most of you have this book at home, especially those of you with children.

One of the questions I get a lot is: Why does a serious man wake up one morning and decide to write a children's book about a character swimming

in the gastro tunnels? Well, it all happened around two and a half years ago.

It's Saturday night. The family and I are in the worst traffic jam, coming back from a camping weekend. Here was our first mistake: Camping. This is what I always say, if you have money, stay in a hotel, if you don't, stay at home. Especially if your kids are terrified of flies. Back to the traffic jam. It's taking hours, the kids in the back seat are killing each other, my wife is grumbling about my driving, and then the little one, back then he was three and a half, accidentally or not, swallows the key to his sister's "secret diary". The sister goes nuts because her diary harbors state secrets, the boy is screaming that he can't breathe, and my dear wife is ready to deploy helicopters. I cut the traffic jam, press the gas all the way straight to the ER. They X-Ray the boy and discover that the key is in the bowels. All the boy has to do is... Poop. However, now the boy is stressed, and his bowels are on strike. He's got the worst tummy pain of his life, my wife is ready for them to operate, and I find myself sitting with the boy in a filthy ER bathroom, rubbing his belly in circles, pouring prune juice down his throat, and sticking parsley root... you know where. And then, from pure desperation, I find myself saying to him: "You know what, let's call Super Doctor!" The boy loves superheroes, so he goes along with it. And that's how, in that very Moment, I became Super Doctor. The famous crazy doctor that mixes potions from broccoli, pretzels and farts. He's so dedicated that he's willing to dive head-first into the lower intestine to help release that stubborn poop. My boy is laughing his ass off, the bowel gates open, we all relax and the rest is history.

On that day I learned a valuable lesson I would like to share with you- (*Phone rings*) Did someone not turn off their phones? Oh, wait. I'm sorry it's mine. (*Takes out his phone, silences it*). Apologies, it's the wife. This is a good opportunity to remind everyone this is a phone-free lecture.

So. What I realized then, and the reason I'm here, is to explain how we can use the tools of humor, imagination and creativity, to find in every piece of, excuse me, Poop, a key to Change. How in hard times, we can extract ourselves from the bottom of the toilet bowl. Or simply: if life gives you shit, make fertilizer.

(Phone rings) Sorry, my wife again. Probably a minor emergency, excuse me... *(answers the phone)*

Hey, Nati, I'm in the middle of a talk. No, we said that You're picking him up today... we'll talk after. *(hangs up)* Sorry, the wife forgot she was picking up our boy today, which is weird cause she never forgets anything. We'll be ok. Where were we? *(phone rings again)* Sorry, guys, really. *(answers)* I'm in the middle of my lecture -

Nati's voice sounds over speaker phone:

Nati: I don't care; don't you dare hang up on me!

Dado: Oh, wait... *(tries to turn speaker mode off, apologizes to the audience)* It's a new phone, it's stuck on speaker - just a sec...

Nati: Monday is your day.

Dado: Nati, keep it down, my phone's stuck on the speaker.

Nati: Dado, go pick him up. Itamar is crying at the kindergarten.

Dado: I can't! I'm in the middle of a lecture, in front of the Golden Agers.

Nati: It's always something with you, a lecture, football with friends, or a hot bath for your hemorrhoids-

Dado: Nati! Nati, you're on speaker! Everyone can hear you. Please just check with the babysitter. Thank you *(hangs up)*. Alright. Sorry for that peek into my fascinating life...no worries, lucky for me I married Wonder Woman, she'll be fine. *(the phone vibrates again. He turns to the Culture Coordinator, eg: Rachel, from the audience)*. Rachel, do me a favor, answer my wife, tell her I'm in the middle and I'll get right back to her, okay?

Dado gives her the phone. Note: she is the only one that can hear Nati through the phone. They have a private conversation as Dado continues. He takes oversized surgeon glasses out of his Super Doctor suitcase.

Dado: Ok then! Let's go straight to the best part, how Super Doctor gets ready for a rescue mission...

Coordinator:*(Repeating Dado's request into the phone):* He's in the middle, he'll call you right back.

Nati: *(to "Rachel")* Please tell him loud and clear, I won't be coming back home.

Dado: *(to "Rachel")* Is everything alright? What is she saying?

Coordinator: She says she won't be coming back home today.

Dado: What does that mean, she won't be coming home? At all? Can I speak to her?

Nati: *(to "Rachel")* Tell him I'm not getting off the train.

Coordinator: She says she's not getting off the train.

Dado: Train to where?

Coordinator:*(repeats to the phone)* Train to where?

Nati: Tell him: up north.

Coordinator: Up North.

Dado: Up North?! What do you mean "north"? What is she, a pirate? Let me talk to her.

Nati: Tell him I don't want to talk to him.

Coordinator: She doesn't want to talk to you.

Nati: Tell him I need a night to myself.

Coordinator: She needs a night to herself.

Dado: Rachel, are you kidding me right now?! Just let me speak with my wife, thank you. *(takes the phone back)* Nati? Since when do you need a night for your-- Nati? *(Nati has hung up)*. Ok everyone, we were just talking about shitty situations, I need to stop the lecture, I'm so sorry. Golden

Agers, we'll reschedule for another time... And everyone, special for today, the books are fifty percent off! A price lower than your lower intestine. Sorry, I have to go pick up my son and figure out where my wife is.

Transition: the lecture is over, it's later that day.

Dado: I pick up the kids and go home. Nati's not here and she's not answering. Her phone is off. What happened? I don't get it. We didn't fight, there was no crisis, in fact we've been pretty good these last couple of months. Pushing through, just like everyone else. True, there was that one thing that happened last year that threw us off a bit... well, mostly her. But...
(pause)
It started on a pretty calm morning. I was working on my "Super Doctor" lecture, Nati was home too working, and then -

Suddenly there is a power outage. Darkness.

Scene 2: Flashback - The Phone Call

Nati is heard offstage.

Nati: Oh no! Dado!

Dado: Yeah, I saw, I got it! One sec!

Nati: My computer's off too. If it didn't save my Excel, I'm going to hang myself.

Dado: *(to the audience)* Meet Nati, my wife. A little dramatic at times but excels at Excels. *(brings a ladder)*

Nati enters.

Nati: I'm sick and tired of this house. You promised you'd call the electrician.

Dado: We don't need an electrician. Can you hold my ladder, please?

Nati: Would you like me to do it?

Dado: *(wary)* No, no, just hold it. Nati, do you mind putting two hands on the upper step please, one leg on the lower step, arch the back. Nati, please. It's home safety 101.

Nati: Dado, it's ok if you're scared...

Dado: I'm not!

Dado walks up the ladder, Nati shakes the ladder playfully.

Nati: How about now?

Dado: Nati! Nati!! Why?

Nati: *(laughs)* Call the electrician and you won't have to go up there.

Dado: We don't need an electrician. I'm climbing.

Dado climbs overly cautious and checks the fuse box.

Nati: Dado?

Dado: Huh?

Nati: You know you have nose hairs?
Dado: That's great, Nati...
Nati: You're officially old.
Dado: I'm old? Your favorite snack is bitter chocolate with soda.
Nati: Better than that black forest coming out of your...
Dado: Hold the ladder! *(pause)* I'm so lucky to have a woman who only sees my good sides.
Nati: Don't be like that...
Dado: Give me a compliment.
Nati: *(takes a long moment to think)* You're an amazing father.
Dado: Thank you very much.
Nati: You make me laugh and you're an idiot. In a good way.

Light comes on.

Dado: And the best electrician.

Nati walks up the other side of the ladder.

Dado: Nati, be careful.
Nati: You know; it turns me on to see you on that ladder. *(kisses him)*
Dado: Really? And what are you doing right now?
Nati: Why, what do you have in mind?

Dado kisses her, phone rings

Dado: Don't answer that.
Nati: Shit. The Kindergarten.
Dado: They probably want money, ignore. *(takes phone)*
Nati: *(answers)* Hello?... Hey Heli... what's going on? ... Oh no!
Dado: What happened?

Nati: Itamar's Super Doctor cape got torn.
Dado: Oh no... *(as she descends from the ladder)*
Nati: *(to the phone)* Don't you have a spare cape?
Dado: Nati, your foot!
Nati: *(to the phone)* What do you mean "this can't go on"?!
Dado: What what what?
Nati: What does that mean? What alternative? Heli, let's not rush to conclusions. Can you just... alright, just tell Itamar that Mommy's on her way with a brand new cape. *(Hangs up. Opens drawers in search of a cape).*

Dado is still stuck at the top of the ladder.

Dado: What's going on? What did she say?
Nati: There should be an extra cape here.
Dado: Wait a minute, what did she say?!
Nati: She said Itamar can't attend kindergarten anymore.
Dado: What?!
Nati: That he needs to be assessed and she wants to meet us.
Dado: But what happened?
Nati: He got a little scared that the cape tore and then he hit Danny Hirsch.
Dado: That's because Danny Hirsch is a snob.
Nati: He also hit Heli.
Dado: So now she wants to throw him out? *(about the ladder)* Can you help me please?
Nati: I'll go look in the laundry.

Dado is stuck at the top of the ladder scared to come down.

Dado: That is so typical Heli. She decided that he's a bully, so he's being a bully.
Nati: Dado, he's been acting out at home too.
Dado: He's a kid, kids hit things every once in a-

Nati: It's not "once in a", there's always something with him. And his speech, and his obsession with Super Doctor.

Dado: The boy likes the character his father made up. What's wrong with that?

Nati: A boy his age should Not know what a colonoscopy is.

Dado: No one should know what a colonoscopy is. *(about the ladder)* Can you please hold this?!

Nati: Dado, maybe the problem is not Heli nor the Kindergarten, but Itamar. *(about to leave)*

Dado: What about the cape?

Nati: I just remembered it's in the car. *(Exits)*

Dado: Wait, I want to come with you. Nati! *(tries to climb down the ladder, turns to the Culture Coordinator in the audience, whispering.)* Rachel? Rachel... *(He gestures for her to come on stage)* Do you mind helping me please?

She comes onstage.

Dado: Two hands on the top step, one foot on the bottom step, arch your back - weren't you listening? *(gets down from the ladder, gestures to the Coordinator to go back)* Thank you. People forget that 97% of all accidents occur within the home. *(to audience)*

After that phone call we had a sit down with the Kindergarten teacher. She sent us to the Center for Child Development, that recommended seeing an eye doctor, that urged us to visit an ear doctor, then to a neurologist, and a psychology assessment that ordered us back to Child Development, that sent us to another center for... I can't remember. And every time we asked a question, they just told us to wait for the "feedback meeting". So we waited.

Transition back to the present.

It's seven in the evening and Nati's not answering. Kids, come eat dinner!

Scene 3: Dinner

Dado brings in a table for dinner, on it are a toaster, a paper bag with bread in it, a kid's diary and a Super Doctor cape.

Dado: Kids! Put down the iPad, food's on the table!
(turns to audience member to play son Itamar) Could you please help me with this cape? Yes, just put it on for a sec? Wow, look at you, you'll make a great Super Doctor. Congratulations you got the part of Itamar. *(leads him to the dinner table)*. Itamar, all you need to know is that you're five and a half years old, you like your omelets cut straight and you can't handle Change. Lucky enough, you're not alone, 'cause your sister's here...
(sits him down and turns to another audience member) And you're going to play Noga, ok? You're nine, you're grown up and very helpful. *(sits her down at the table)*. Mom's not here, so today it's a super special, super fun dinner! Plain Toast with Jam! Yay!! Am I the only one who's happy?!
Itamar, what's in your pocket?

Itamar: *(checks the pocket, takes out the spoons)* ...

Dado: You've raided the spoons from the dishwasher, again? *(explaining how this works)* Now, you have the coolest part: every time I warn you **Not** to throw a spoon on the floor - you throw a spoon on the floor. Got it? Now throw! *(if he throws:)* I told you to throw it only when I warned you **Not** to! *(//If he doesn't throw, say:)* Great, now Don't you throw that spoon on the floor Itamar. *(Itamar throws, Dado picks it up)* Why Itamar?! *(encouraging the audience member)* Very good.
(now turns to Noga, shows her diary) Noga, look, this is your diary, the one we mentioned earlier. *(to the audience)* She looks like she's always writing in it, when in fact, she's listening to everything that's going on.
(back to Noga) Any questions?

Noga: ...

Dado: Yes you do have questions. Many. Look inside your diary - I wrote them all down for you. When I give you a sign, you can ask a question. Let's try.

Dado starts making toast.

Dado: Yes Noga, what did you want to ask me?

Noga: *(reads from the diary)* Why isn't Mom home?

Dado: She stayed an extra day at the nutrition conference. Next question.

Noga: Where is the nutrition conference?

Dado: Where? Hopefully somewhere in the country. Next question.

Noga: Why is she not answering her phone?

Dado: Because you're not allowed phones in a nutrition conference. Any more questions?

Noga: Why are you not allowed phones?

Dado: Because they're not nutritious!! Itamar, it's alright, Mom is fine and she'll be back soon. Noga enough with the questions, you know how it stresses out Itamar. *(takes out toasts)* Itamar, don't throw a spoon on the floor! *(Itamar throws a spoon, Dado picks it up)* Itamar, I haven't made your toast yet! *(spreads jam on toast)* Here we go, one toast for Itamar, and one for Noga. Ok Noga, give me the burnt toast, I'll give you a new burnt toast. Itamar, don't throw a spoon on the floor *(Itamar throws a spoon, Dado picks it up)*. Noga, did it hit you?! Itamar, say you're sorry to your sister, please. Noga, he says he's sorry. Yes, he does, he's saying it in his heart... *(to Itamar)* Just don't throw any- *(Itamar throws a spoon)*. What's with you? Look at the floor! It's covered in spoons, I can't make dinner like this, for fuck's sake- I mean fudge steak. We're having fudge for dessert, in the shape of a steak. As if this is not enough, Grandma and Grampa have dropped in for a visit!

(starts espresso machine, turns to a couple in the audience sitting in prepared seats, "Mom" and "Dad"). Hi Mom, hi Dad, sorry for forcing you to participate- even when my real parents were here they didn't want to

play my parents. *(instructing them)* Don't worry, this is going to be easy. You can stay in your seats. Dad, how are you feeling? Itamar, Noga, say hello to grandpa and grandma. *(to his parents)* Itamar's a bit upset, cause Nati is staying the night at the conference. Itamar, please don't throw a spoon on the floor. *(Itamar throws a spoon, Dado picks it up and explains how this works to:)* Mom, every time this happens, you say: "when will you teach him to eat like a normal person?" Okay? Perfect! Let's see how it works. *(to Itamar)* Itamar don't throw a spoon on the floor, *(Itamar throws spoon, Dado picks it up, and signals to Mom)*

Mom: When will you teach him to eat like a normal person?

Dado: Great Mom, you deserve a cup of coffee.

Dado: Dad, what's that under your seat? Your favorite folder! *("Dad" takes out a folder from under his chair)* Open it and read the Title out loud please.

Dad: *(reading the Title)* Summary of Monthly Credit Card Bill.

Dado: Summary of Monthly Credit Card Bill. Can you give it to me please? *("Dad" attempts to give it to Dado who refuses)* No, my real father would Never give it to me. My father has this hobby of going through every line of my monthly bill, and asking - what is this? That's how he lets me know how much he cares, while making me feel like a loser. *(to "Dad")* Dad, ask away. Read the first line.

Dad: *(reading the first line of the bill)* What is 3200 shekels for "Body First" ...?

Dado: Oh, that's my gym membership, I'm starting on Monday. Itamar, don't throw a spoon on the floor... *(Itamar throws spoon, Dado picks it up)*

Mom: When will you teach him to eat like a normal person?

Dado: Not right now. Yes, next question, please Dad?

Dad: What's 2400 shekels for Sigal Ramon?

Dado: *(In broken German)* That's for the speech therapist for the boy...*(English)* so we're not talking about it right now. Next line

Dad: What's "Jack the Ripper"?

Dado: An escape room. Not for the kids, for me, because sometimes I need to escape. Mom, you should try it sometime- (to Noga) Yes, Noga, I see you're dying to ask a question. Go ahead.

Noga: Why are you angry?

Dado: I'm not angry, you can ask whatever you want!

Noga: Does Mommy have a new boyfriend?

Dado: What?! Why would Mommy have a new boyfriend?! Next question?

Noga: Because she doesn't feel sexy anymore?

Dado: What?! Where did you hear that from? *(to his parents)* She's been watching too much TV. *(to Noga)* Have you been listening to Mom's phone calls? She probably didn't say sexy, she probably just needed a taxi to the train station... Are we done with the questions now? Have a look.

Noga: What does sexy mean?

Dado: Ask grandma. Don't ask Grandma! *(to Itamar)* Itamar don't throw a spoon on the floor! *(Itamar throws spoon, Dado picks it up)*

Mom: When will you teach him to eat like a normal person?

Dado: Mom!! *(in broken German, so the kids won't understand)* The boy has a problem, right? *(English)* So this is PART of the problem. Can you give me a minute to figure out where Nati is?! *(pause)* Nati's gone, Okay? She hopped on a train... I don't know where and I don't know why. So just enough with the bills and all the table manners, and can you please just take the kids for the night? Thank you!

Dado exhausted, he takes a Moment to breathe and begins to tidy up.

Scene 4: Flashback - Diagnosis

Nati enters and places two small chairs.

Nati: Dado, come on! It's almost our turn.

Dado: *(to the audience)* When the results were in, we had a feedback meeting.

Nati: You coming?

Dado: Nati couldn't sleep the whole night.

They stand and wait.

Dado: It smells in here. Of Omelet. And urine.

Nati: The omelet's coming from you.

Dado: And the urine?

Nati: From that kid over there...

Dado: Four eyes? *(Nati gives him a look)* Nati, let's take it easy. What will be will be.

Nati: *(nods)* And whatever happens, we'll handle it together. *(to the audience)* They call us in.

They sit down.

Dado: *(to the audience)* In front of us are seated: a neurologist, a psychologist and another one of those diagnosticologists. They start with compliments for Itamar, and then... the diagnosis.

Nati turns to an audience member, "specialist", and gives them a sheet of paper and a microphone.

Nati: Can you read that, please?

Specialist: *(reads)* The diagnosis results for Itamar Fux.

Organizational difficulty.

Dado: So? Nati takes an hour just to get out of the house.

Nati gestures to the woman to proceed.

Specialist: Difficulty learning new material.

Dado: That's because it's New material.

Specialist: Difficulty with sensory regulation.

Dado: What does that mean?

Nati: His senses are sensitive...

Dado: What's wrong with being sensitive?

Specialist: Difficulty with changes and transitions.

Difficulty in expressing emotions.

Difficulty with eye contact

Difficulty coping with noise and stress.

Difficulty with all aspects of attention and concentration

Difficulty in initiating connection with his age group.

Difficulty in asking for assistance and help.

Tendency to self-isolate.

Dado: What, no "difficulty"?

Specialist: Repetitive speech pattern.

Dado: Alright, alright, what's the bottom line?

Specialist: The score for the diagnosis questionnaire matches that Itamar has ASD.

Dado: What's the score? How much did he get?

Specialist: The boy, Itamar Fux, is diagnosed with mild-moderate autism.

Scene 5 Flashback - He's "That"

Nati sits in a state of shock. Silence.

Dado: Nati, are you Okay?

Nati doesn't answer.

Dado: Unbelievable that after one and half observations, they think they know him. So arrogant, pretentious. It's a total sham. They're supposed to be professionals? They missed out on the coolest kid on earth. You have to be blind not to see his charisma, his humor, his heart and his brains! *(pause)* "Center for Child Development" more like the Center for child humiliation-ment. I mean the boy has an attention disorder, him and 99% of humanity, right? That doesn't mean he's -

Nati: Heli was right.

Dado: Nati, it's a misdiagnosis. We can sue. It's malpractice 101.

Nati: He doesn't even have one single friend.

Dado: When I was his age, I didn't have any friends. Now I do.

Nati: One friend.

Dado: Nati, they probably get a bonus every time they diagnose... like hospitals do with births.

Nati: We wasted so much time.

Dado: Then they recommend all these treatments, pills - it's an entire industry. They don't even care about the stigma he'll be carrying around for the rest of his life?!

Nati: Dado, what's going to happen?

Dado: Nothing's going to happen. I'm not worried.

Nati: Yeah? How's that?

Dado: Because we are his parents and we know him better than anyone else, and we know that he's not... "That".

Nati: And what if he is?

Transition to the next day.

Dado: *(to the audience)* The next day.

Nati: *(to "Itamar" in the audience)* Itamar, how are you? Do you want an apple sliced really really thin? Itamar, look me in the eyes, ok? C'mon baby, look at my eyes. Into the eyes. Let's play a game. We'll call it Eye to Eye.

Dado: I to I?!

Nati: Eye to Eye *(showing her eyes)*. Come on, Itamar, Eye to Eye... Eye to Eye...

Dado: *(To the audience)* Two days later.

Nati: Itamar, how are you feeling today? Wait.
(takes out a board with face emoji's)

Dado: Nati, he just got back from kindergarten, let him relax.

Nati: It's fine, it's relaxing... *(pointing to the board)* How do you feel, baby? Look at me, are you happy, sad, angry, or confused? Go ahead, choose.

"Itamar" chooses.

Nati: Good! I'm happy, and a little bit angry.

Dado: I'm just angry. *(to the audience)* A week later.

Nati: *(to "Itamar")* Oh Super Doctor, my eye hurts! Can you have a look?

Dado: *(to "Itamar")* Tell her you're tired and need to go to the ER.

Nati: *(to "Itamar")* Doctor, is it swollen? Just look me in the eye and say: "it's not swollen."

Dado: *(to audience member playing Itamar)* But Itamar, instead of saying "L", says "W" ... So it sounds like: "Swowen".

Nati: *(to "Itamar")* Let's give it a try: "It's not swollen."

Dado: *(making sure the actor says it incorrect)* It's not "Swowen".

Nati: Curl your tongue. SwoLLen...

Dado: SwoWen....

Nati: Swo-LLEN. Le, le, le... Look at me: SWO-LLEN

Dado: Nati, stop! Let's not go crazy, and drive him crazy.

Nati: It's not crazy, it's therapy. Did you talk to the horse riding therapy center?

Dado: They didn't answer.

Nati: Why didn't you tell me? We also need to reach the occupational therapist, Hydro therapist, gardening therapist-

Dado: Let's just take a breather.

Nati: Dado, if we give it all we have, we can get him out of this.

Dado: Get him out of what?!

Scene 6 Flashback - The Village

Dado: *(to the audience)* I know what it looks like. I'm not an 'involved' enough father, but that's just not true. I have my own way that is just as good as Nati's, maybe even more. What I thought we needed, after that 'feedback meeting', was a vacation. Get some fresh air. So I rented a cabin in a village near Tiberias.

Dado and Nati invite "Itamar" and "Noga" from the audience to sit in the car's backseat.

Dado: Not just any cabin, a cabin with a pool.

Nati: It was quite a surprise. *(looks at her)* What? Usually, I'm the one who plans the holidays.

Dado: I surprised big time.

Nati: We'll see when we get there.

Dado: If we ever get there... Nati loves taking her time.

Nati: *(to the audience)* "Taking her time" is code for me looking for Itamar's Doctor Medical Kit, that Dado forgot to pack, then finding it in the shoe drawer with a rotten banana, rinsing it out, and putting all the items back precisely in the order Itamar likes.

Dado: *(to Itamar and Noga)* and look what I've got here? Chocolate fingers! 'Cause you're So Sweet! *(gives them)* One for you, one for you. If Mom comes, tell her it's a carrot.

Nati arrives.

Nati: Why candy?

Dado: It's a vacation.

Nati: *(In broken German, so the kids won't understand)* you know that he is not supposed to eat Sugar

Dado: *(to the audience)* Ok, today I don't want to fight. I just want a good day.

But if you want to see how much I have to endure, let's count how many complaints I get in one ride.

Nati: *(part German)* Because you know that sugar ups his arousal state and it's already difficult for him the long ride.

Dado: *(to the audience)* That's the third complaint, right? *(chooses one audience Member, "the counter")* You! You, you know how to count? Count after me, 1, 2, 3... Can you count till 300 thousand? Great! You're hired.

Nati: *(to the "counter")* Stay sharp cause Dado thinks every time I open my mouth, it's a complaint.

Dado: *(to the "counter")* Was that a complaint or not?

Nati: You see?

Dado: *(to the "counter")* You know what? You be the judge.

Nati: Are we going?

Dado: Yes, but let's have fun?

Nati: Please, just help me with his diet. *(to the "counter")* That's not a complaint, it's a request.

Dado: *(starts ignition, to the kids in the backseat)* Hey kids, wanna play the ABC game? Ready? A!...

Nati: Stop.

Dado: A! Alright kids, diseases that begin with the letter 'A'. Itamar's favorite game category.

Nati: Diseases with A, come on Itamar, Noga *(to the audience)* You can help them out, don't be shy... Asthma!

The audience plays along naming diseases that begin with the letter 'A'.

Dado: Very good: Arthritis! *(audience participation: Appendicitis, Acne, Allergies, AIDS, Alcoholism, Amnesia, Alopecia, Arthritis, Anthrax, Anal cancer)*

Nati: Ok, my turn! Aaaaaaaaaa...

Dado: Stop!

Nati: C!

Dado: C? Alright 'C's easy.

Nati: Cancer!

Dado: Yeah! Cancer! What else? (Cellulitis, Chickenpox, Chronic pain, Cold sore, Coma, Common cold, Covid/Coronavirus!)

Nati: Cigarettes.

Dado: That's not a disease.

Nati: This is too depressing, let's do it with songs.

Dado: Ready? A! (*mouthng the alphabet silently and rapidly*)

Nati: Stop!

Dado: !!

Nati: "I don't wanna talk, 'bout the things we've gone through
Though it's hurting me, now it's history.

Dado: (*to the audience*) And diseases were too depressing?

Nati: I've played all my cards
And that's what you've done, too. (*encourage the audience to join*)
Nothing more to say,
No more ace to play

Everyone: The winner takes it all! The loser standing small
Beside the victory-

Nati: Look out!!!!

Dado: What, what happened?

Nati: (*to the kids*) Everything's ok kids. Daddy didn't keep his distance.

Dado: (*to the "counter"*) Do me a favor, complaints in front of the children, under a different section.

Nati: He was too close.

Dado: We can all do without the... (*making panicked gestures imitating Nati*).

Nati: (*to the "counter"*) Make two sections, ok? Another for his complaints to me.

Dado: Kids look at the Sea...

Nati: Oh yeah, let's all look at the Sea (*pause*). Itamar, baby, look at the

Sea.

Dado: Sweetie, there's no tsunami. No tsunamis in Israel... one thing we don't have.// That we don't have.

Nati: Eye to Eye, Eye to Eye with the Sea honey.

Dado: Nati...

Nati: *(In german)* He doesn't respond. You see, he doesn't respond...

Dado: We said we're taking it easy this weekend, right?

Dado turns on the radio - eg: "Beach Boys".

Nati: *(explaining to "Itamar")* Itamar, let's play a game. Every time I scratch my back you ask, "When will we get to the Village?" But because of your "Ls", it sounds like: "When do we get to the Viwedge?" Got it? *(scratches her back)*

Itamar: When do we get to the Viwedge?

Nati: Vi-llage. It's going to take a while, keep looking.

Dado lowers the radio volume.

Nati: Why'd you turn it down?

Dado: You want to hear something nice?

Nati: Yea...?

Dado: The publisher called me yesterday, they want me to participate in a panel at a children's book conference in Rome.

Nati: Wow.

Dado: I was thinking you'd come with?

Nati: *(scratches her back)*

Itamar: When do we get to the Viwedge?

Nati: The V-I-L-L-A-G-E! When is the conference?

Dado: In September. *(turns off the radio)*

Nati: Then how do you expect me to come with you? It's the beginning of the year.

Dado: They'll sleep two nights with my parents, and two nights with yours.

Nati: *(In German)* He will be in a *(English)* new kindergarten.

Dado: But he's going to have an assistant with him the whole time, no?

Nati: Integrator.

Dado: Integrator.

Nati: *(German)* And who will *(English)* integrate the integrator? *(to the "counter")*
That's not a complaint, that's a question.

Dado: *(to Noga)* Noga, now you're starting to get nervous, so every time I fix my hair, you say "Why are you fighting?" Let's give it a try? *(runs hand through hair)*

Noga: Why are you fighting?

Dado&Nati: We're not fighting, we're talking.

Dado: So come for part of the week. It's Rome, Nati.

Nati: I realize it's Rome. *(scratches her back)*

Itamar: When do we get to the Viwedge?

Nati: *(in german)* We also need to prepare his *(English)* Birthday

Dado: It wouldn't hurt us, some quality time.

Nati: Don't you have lectures that week?

Dado: I'll cancel.

Nati: You can't cancel lectures when I'm hardly working. *(scratches)*

Itamar: When do we get to the Viwedge?

Dado: *(to Nati)* How about "Wow, good for you Dado"?

Nati: I said "Wow" at the start.

Dado: You never said "Wow".

Nati: I said a huge "Wow". *(to the audience)* Didn't I say "wow"?

Dado's hand goes through his hair.

Noga: Why are you fighting?

Dado: *(to Nati)* If it stresses you out, I won't go.

Nati: No, go. Have fun.

Dado: I'm not going.

Nati: I want to be here when he starts school. *(To the "counter")* and that's not a complaint, that's a fact.

Dado's hand goes through his hair.

Noga: Why are you fighting?

Dado: We're not fighting, Noga, enough!

Nati: Why are you shouting? We're trying to have fun!

Dado: So Make It Fun.

Nati: Ok, so try to be HERE, instead of running away.

Pause.

Nati: What are you doing?

Dado: I need a break.

Gets out of the car, takes out a packet of cigarettes. Nati goes after him.

Nati: You're smoking again?! When did you start smoking again? Great! Why don't you just die! Of a heart attack or lung cancer or both!
And leave me alone to take care of him, of both of them. You're such a Loser.

Dado puts the cigarette back in the package, enters the car slowly. Nati enters after him, scratches her back.

Itamar: When do we get to the Viwedge?

Dado: We're not going to the village. We're going home.

Nati: *(to the kids)* Absolutely not! We're not going home. *(to Dado)* Dado, what are you doing? Turn around, please.

Dado's hand goes through his hair.

Noga: Why are you fighting?

Nati: Dado, act like an adult and turn around! (*scratches*)

Itamar: When do we get to the Viwedge?

Nati: You're exactly like him, you can't control your anger! (*Scratches three times*).

Itamar: When do we go to the Viwedge? When do we go to the Viwedge? When do we go to the Viwedge?

Dado: (*to Itamar*) "Village", Village! With an L. V I L L A G E!

Nati: Dado, that's enough.

Dado: L! L! Make that tongue touch the roof of your mouth!

Nati: Dado!

Dado: And look me in the eyes when I'm talking to you!

Nati: Dado, stop.

Dado: I'll stop when he starts acting like a normal kid! (*to Itamar*) Can you start acting like a normal kid or are you a complete moron?! Answer me, are you a complete moron?! (*Pause. To the audience-*)

We drove back home. The entire way, no one said a word.

Nati gets up, gestures to the kids to go back to their places. Dado hugs Itamar, and apologizes quietly.

Scene 7: Ethan

Dado: *(to the audience)* I apologized a thousand times since, and Nati, sort of forgave me... but if she forgave, then why did she leave me? It's 9 PM. Nati's not answering. Her phone's out of service. I have to talk to Ethan. *(look for Ethan in the audience, turns to audience member "Ethan")* Hi Ethan. Ethan's been my best friend since kindergarten. *(turns to "Ethan")* What's up, Ethan? *(brings him on stage)* We never needed a lot of words to communicate. He's got the same shtick every time. He always repeats the last word I say and adds a question mark at the end. For example: "All this talk is making me thirsty".

Ethan: Thirsty?

Dado: Great. You've earned a beer, it's on me. *(gives him a beer)* L'cHaim! So what's up, Ethan? How are you?

Ethan: You?

Dado: Me? Not that great, to tell the truth. There's... stuff.

Ethan: Stuff?

Dado: Have you been following so far? Give you the highlights: Nati. Train. Not coming home. Not today.

Ethan: Today?

Dado: Maybe never. I don't know. I think she's been upset with me since the drive to the village.

Ethan: Village?

Dado: What? You think it's something else, maybe?

Ethan: Maybe?

Dado: Ethan, why are you being weird?

Ethan: Weird?

Dado: Ethan, come on, I know that smile. Did you and Nati talk behind my back? I can't believe it. When?! Tell me everything. Who said what. EVERYTHING.

Ethan: Everything?

Dado: Yes, Ethan, Everything, and don't repeat after me anymore.

Nati enters into the present scene between Dado and Ethan, as a flashback scene that occurred between Ethan and Nati.

Nati: Thanks for meeting me, Ethan.

Dado: When did this happen?

Nati: I just had to talk to you.

Dado: You guys Met in Person? She never heard of texting?!

Nati: Listen. Ever since Dado returned from Rome, he's been acting weird. Do you know something I don't?

Dado: I don't know, I can't remember. That's what you said right? Interrogation 101! // the ABCs of Interrogation!

Nati: Was he at the Casino? Did he lose money?

Dado: Just like my Dad. (*To "Dad"*) Dad, see? This is your fault.

Nati: I just want to know if my intuition is right. Say "yes" or "no".

Dado: You said that there was nothing, right?

Nati: I won't say anything. I just want the truth.

Dado: You're a true friend, a brother. I trust you, right?

Nati: Please tell me.

Dado: You're strong. Just like your name means. Ethan.

Nati: Ethan, look me in the eyes.

Dado: Look me in the eyes, Ethan.

Nati: No words, just with your eyes.

Dado: You told her about the kiss?!

Nati: What?!

Dado: No...

Nati: No...

Dado: It was nothing. Nati and I were going through a rough time, some girl hit on me at the bar, I regretted it a second later.

Nati: Did he sleep with her?

Dado: No! Just a single stupid kiss. You calmed her, right?

Nati: Motherfucking asshole! Lying piece of shit! And in Rome, our Rome?! He asked me to marry him in Rome, we had our honeymoon in Rome. That stupid, stupid -

Dado: Thanks for your discretion, Ethan.

Nati: So ungrateful. You know, while he was doing his “panel” in Rome, Itamar drank an entire bottle of Advil syrup, without me noticing? The entire bottle! Did Dado tell you that? No, he didn’t, because he was too busy smooching some Italian slut.

Dado: It was just a kiss!

Nati: I rushed him to the hospital, and they had to pump his stomach, while the doctors looked at me like I’m some “terrible mother” and then of course, in the middle of the ER, Itamar has a fit again, and the last thing they cared about was his autism. I had to wave his handicap card in their face -
(*pause*) What’s wrong? Why the shock? You don’t know Itamar is autistic?

Dado: Because he’s not, he’s not... that.

Nati: Dado didn’t tell you...

Dado: He’s got ADHD, you know that.

Nati: He’s been diagnosed. He’s on the spectrum.

Dado: High Functioning.

Nati: He’s autistic, Ethan.

Dado: Nati needs labels. It helps her put things in order.

Nati: Dado thinks that if he doesn’t talk about it, it won’t be true. But to endanger everything, for his little hard on? Did he think for a second what would happen if we got a divorce? If Itamar had to switch between houses?

Dado: Who’s getting a divorce?

Nati: If you move one item in his Super Doctor kit he goes crazy. He’s such a Sensitive soul.

Dado: I get along with Itamar better than she does.

Nati: I’m with Itamar all day Every day. I left my job to take care of him, I fall

asleep every night reading studies, searching for treatments, while Dado was searching for his lost youth with some Italian bimbo. I'm sick of him, Ethan. I'm sick of him.

Walks away broken.

Dado: Thank you, Ethan. Now it all makes sense. She heard about the kiss, she looked for revenge, she found a guy, and now she's with him. "A Night to Myself". Yea right. Nutrition conference... How didn't I check the dates? *(searches his phone)* It happened two months ago! And Noga overheard Nati say she doesn't feel sexy anymore. What have I done Ethan? I'm such an idiot. I hope I can fix it. Nati, where are you?

Dado exits.

Scene 8: Top Spot

Nati enters.

Nati: *(to the audience)* I'm in the middle of nowhere, in Neharia. I'm standing in the lobby of the "Top Spot" hotel in Neharia. Honestly, I was on my way home, but Dado called me, and I missed my stop, and then I realized that I was on an express train to the north. And then it dawned on me. I just can't take it anymore. I need peace and quiet and a boutique hotel.

(Rings hotel lobby bell)

Excuse me? Is anyone here? *(rings again)*

Can someone help me please? *(picks someone from the audience, "lobby Receptionist")* I'm sorry, could you please be the receptionist from the hotel? Don't worry, it's a part time job and this is the end of your shift.

What is your name please? *(writes her name on a worker's tag and hands her a piece of paper)*. These are the questions you need to ask me, but first, start with the usual "Top Spot" greeting.

Receptionist: Welcome to the "Top Spot" hotel, where luxury meets nature.

Nati: Thank you, do you have a room available?

Receptionist: How many nights?

Nati: One. One night.

Receptionist: Business or pleasure

Nati: Business and pleasure

Receptionist: Single room?

Nati: Yes, for one.

Receptionist: Married?

Nati: Wow, that's a lot of info you want here at "Top Spot" ... write down: "Divorced".

Receptionist: Kids?

Nati: Why are you asking? No. No kids. *(to the audience)* Don't give me

that look, it's a hotel questionnaire not an Interpol investigation. If I'm already here alone, let me fantasize. *(to the audience)* But then the receptionist tells me there are no rooms available. The entire hotel is booked for a wedding. The only room they have is the Presidential Suite. The... presidential suite? What Presidents come to "Top Spot" hotel in Neharia? *(to the "Receptionist")* Out of curiosity, how much does it cost, the presidential suite? *(explains to "Receptionist")* You can say whatever number you want.

Receptionist: *(improvises a number)* X.

Nati: Wow. What does it include? What is so special about the Suite?

Receptionist: *(improvised answer to be used later)* Y.

Nati: You know what, I'll take it. Do you need any more details?

Receptionist: Name?

Nati: Name... Penelope. *(to the audience)* That's what came out. I have no idea why. I know why! Because of Dado's Italian bimbo from Rome. *(to "Receptionist")* Penelope Balucci. *(to the audience)* And I'll take that suite. Because Penelope Balucci knows how to put herself first. Penelope knows that this is not a treat- it is a necessity, because otherwise she will have a meltdown. *(to the "Receptionist")* Thank you very much.

Enters the suite.

Oh my god, look at this suite. The kids would love this- Shh! Who is this woman? I can't breathe. Am I hormonal? Maybe I'm hormonal. Is this a panic attack? Am I psychotic? Whatever, don't think about it. Think simple thoughts. Red pepper, Cottage cheese. I'm a terrible mother. No, I'm not! But even the receptionist thought so. *(turns to the "Receptionist")* You think I'm a terrible mother?

Receptionist: *(answers)*

Nati: *(turns to a different audience member, "Critic")* And you? Do you think I'm a terrible mother? Can you please say out loud: "You're a terrible mother".

Critic: You're a terrible mother.

Nati: Louder.

Critic: You're a terrible mother.

Nati: You know what, here, take this (*takes out a Megaphone*) Now say it again, but only when I give you the signal (*rings the hotel lobby bell*).

Critic: (*in the megaphone*) You're a terrible mother.

Nati: Yes, that's what it sounds like in my head. (*rings the bell again*)

Critic: You're a terrible mother.

Nati: You know how long it's been since I've been alone? I mean alone alone? Probably since Itamar was born. Five and a half years. They can figure things out for one night. One night! (*rings the bell again*)

Critic: You're a terrible mother.

Nati: I need time to think. Or for once, NOT to think. (*rings the bell*)

Critic: You're a terrible mother.

Nati: No, I'm Penelope Balucci! I'm in the "Top Spot" Hotel, in the presidential suite, that costs (*X price*) with (*all the Y things listed before*), and I'm alone. Just me and the minibar. (*opens the minibar*) Ohh, what a minibar. Look what they have here? Grisini! And wine... Penelope Balucci eats whatever she wants, she doesn't count calories, and she loves wine. She drinks a bottle of wine with every meal-

Scene 9: Flashback: Birthday

Dado enters with a box of birthday stuff.

Dado: I brought the decorations you made. They're beautiful.

Nati: *(hides the bottle)* Great.

Dado: *(to Itamar)* Itamar, we're preparing a special surprise for you. Let's go to your room for a second and you come out ONLY when we call you, Okay?

Takes Itamar out to the backstage area. Nati takes his chair and decorates it for his birthday.

Nati: *(to the audience)* A month after Dado returned from his Italian kissing trip, Itamar was turning five. I couldn't look Dado in the eyes, but the things you do for your children *(to Dado)* Come on, Dado!

They put up the birthday decor. Birthday music starts playing.

Nati: Hats, Dado. Balloons... *(brings the cake)*. Look at the Super Doctor cake Noga and I made. Isn't it beautiful? Hats! *(gives people birthday hats)* I can't believe it, look who's here? Danny Hirsch! Thanks for coming.

Dado: Danny Hirsch the snob...?

Nati: Confetti! *(hands out confetti to the audience)*. Hey everyone, ready to sing Itamar his birthday song?

Dado and Nati entice the crowd to sing a birthday song.

Dado&Nati: "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you dear Itamar..."

Itamar isn't coming out. Dado goes to get him.

Nati: "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you dear Itamar..."

Nati gives the cue to throw the confetti. Dado returns alone.

Dado: Wait, not yet, false alarm. *(to Nati)* He doesn't want to come out.

Nati: What do you mean?

Dado: He's anxious from all the guests.

Nati: He's just excited.

Nati gestures to the "Critic" with the Megaphone.

Critic: You're a terrible mother.

Nati: Really? Have you seen the chocolate syringe?

Itamar is nowhere to be seen. Dado and Nati look at each other.

Dado: I know, let's give him our birthday wishes, and then he'll come out. Itamar, my boy, can you hear us? *(pause)* Itamar, listen: my beautiful, beautiful boy. You are so smart, so talented, and already know exactly what you want at five years old! If only I were the same. I hope that things become easier for you, and life less scary, and that you'll overcome any challenge that comes your way, with your great imagination and HUGE sense of humor. We are always here for you and love you just the way you are.

pause

Dado: Mom? Any wishes? Remind him of one of your trips together... We just want him to come out.

Mom: *(improvised)*

Nati: Itamar, did you hear Grandma?

Dado: Anyone else? Danny Hirsch? A snobby wish?

Danny:

Dado: Itamar, did you hear what Stav wished for you? *(to his Dad)*

Come on, Dad, how about you? A finance wish?

Dad:

Nati: Now me. Baby, did you hear how much everyone loves you? I believe in you so much. I'm your number one fan. I know that you're capable of anything, and that with a little effort you'll beat every life challenge. It will make me so happy if you come out, so we can all dance and sing and celebrate just for you.

Itamar: *(from backstage)* I hate you!

Nati: What did he say?!

Nati loses her patients, goes backstage to Itamar.

Itamar: I hate you! I hate you!

Nati: Itamar, don't you dare call me stupid! Why are you hitting me?! Ow!! Let go of my hair!!! Dado!!!

Itamar: I hate you!

Nati: That hurts, Itamar!

Dado rushes out.

Dado: Itamar! Don't hit Mommy. Enough. Stop. I'm canceling the party. We won't force you anymore. Let's go back to your seat.

Dado comes out with Itamar.

Dado: Everyone, Itamar's a little upset today so we'll call it off for today, but we

promise we'll find another way to celebrate.

Nati returns.

Nati: Two weeks of preparations down the drain.

Dado: *(to the audience)* Truth is he just didn't want a birthday party.

Nati: If it were up to Dado we would never do anything for him.

Dado: No. If it were up to Dado, we wouldn't have tons of people over. He's afraid of germs.

Nati: You shouldn't have let him drink the Cola.

Dado: "Shouldn't" is the name of my next book.

Nati: You know very well that it makes Itamar edgy.

Dado: Of course it's my fault. You see what I mean, Ethan?

Nati: *(to Ethan)* You see what I mean? Living with someone you can't trust!

Pause

Dado: Oh, that you can't trust. You can't trust me, can't trust Itamar. Who do you trust? Have you ever tried seeing your child as he truly is?

Nati: I see my child perfectly.

Dado: Then why does he have more fun with me?

Nati: Cause you let him do whatever he wants.

Dado: Really? Maybe because I accept him for who he is. Have you ever tried being with him for one whole minute, without trying to change him? One minute!

Nati: You can't even say what he is.

Dado: He's Itamar. And stop putting all your anxieties on him.

Nati: I should just ignore them?

Dado: Sometimes it's better to ignore.

Nati: You'd do anything for your father not to think you're a loser.

Dado: *(to Dad)* Nonsense.

Nati: *(to Dado's parents)* He's smoking again, by the way. Did he tell you that?

Drinks all the time.

Dado: Very mature, Nati.

Nati: Sorry, Menachim and Nurit - but that's how You raised him.

Dado: *(imitating her voice)* 'That's how you raised him'... Could you be any more patronizing?

Nati: This is when Dado turns into a teenager again.

Dado: This is when Nati really gets to shine, you know why? Cause everything truly went to shit, all her greatest fears came true, and now she can sit back and enjoy the show.

Nati: Bullshit. You don't even know me.

Dado: I know you so well it's actually getting a bit boring. You're obsessive, predictable, and you can take your negative attitude and shove it up your ass!

Suddenly a power outage. Darkness.

Dado: Shit. I'm on it... Nati I'll fix it. *(in the darkness)* Nati!! Where are you?!
Where are you, Nati?

Scene 10: Short Circuit

Lights on. On the back wall a red neon light is turned on. Dado sits on the ladder, drunk, wrapped in a Super Doctor cape, holding a beer.

Dado: Eleven pm. Three beers in, could be six, could be eleven. Nati's not here to keep count. What I'm saying is: if your wife leaves you like that, it's probably because you're a shitty person. Dad always told me: "Just you wait, you'll get yours when you'll have a son just like you". What, I don't know Itamar? I don't know his loneliness? I was alone for most of my childhood. This whole thing is my fault, my crappy genes. But we didn't have those things when we were growing up, right? You were either naughty, weird, spacey or an idiot. I remember that time I decided to walk only in diagonals... It took me fifteen minutes extra to get everywhere. That's not an "idiot"?! I don't know how my Mom suffered me, but don't all parents suffer?

Sometimes I wonder... If I could choose, not that I can, what would I prefer: A kid on the spectrum, as they say, or a kid with a severe nut allergy?

(to the audience) What would You prefer? Terrible question, I know... But we're not judging anyone. Feel free to answer truthfully. Who would prefer a kid with a nut allergy? Raise your hand. No nuts allowed, but with 100% potential. *(waits for them)*

Ok now, what would you prefer? A kid with mild to moderate autism or hard core ADHD? *(waits for audience)* Right, cause you can always give them Retelin.

Forgive me, I'm just trying to figure out where "the spectrum" lies on the spectrum...

What would you prefer, an Autistic kid or a Mentally Ill kid? How about depression? Suicidal tendencies? Addiction problem? Abnormal sexual

tendencies? Narcissistic? Paranoid? Schizophrenic? Eating Disorders?
Low IQ?

What cards would you choose? Not that you can choose... What card?
(waits for audience)

A high card, right? The ace! A strong, healthy, smart kid. No handicaps, no issues, no psychological problems... a perfect child. There's probably parents here with perfect children. Is there anyone here with a child on the spectrum? Anyone?

(optional: if there are raised hands, Dado can choose one audience member, ask them about their child's name, age, hobby and give them a hug)

Dado: *(raises his hand)* Me. And I love him so much. Hi, I'm Dado Fux, and I have an autistic child. And a wife that left me 'cause I couldn't admit it.

Phone rings, Dado looks.

Dado: Unknown number. I'm not answering *(answers)* Hello? Yes? Why is the credit card company working so late? What? What bill? How much?! *(recalling the number the receptionist made up)* X Dollars?! That fucking bitch! Sorry, no, not you... that must be my wife. "Top Spot"? Where's that? *(hangs up)* Ladies and Gentlemen, this sounds like a job for... Super Doctor!

Scene 11 The Wedding

Wedding music. Nati is dancing, drunk.

Nati: I want to die. I just bought a dress that costs more than my entire wardrobe. I didn't - Penelope did. It was either that or stay in my room, and hate myself, and that's not what I paid Xnis for. So I drank the whole minibar, and came down to the lobby, to look for the wedding. Where's the happy couple? *(finding them in the audience, improvising)* Wow, Mazal Tov! Buona Fortuna! Who's into dancing? Let's make the bride and groom happy! Come on!

(optional: gets people to dance in a cha cha cha train)

Let me tell you a story, I got on a train today and never made it home. Beware of express trains! Always make sure you can get off along the way.

(talks to the newlyweds) Listen. Don't vow "till death do us part", vow "till things get tough", "till money runs out", "till the kids freak out." And you dear groom, don't say from the Torah, "If I forget thee Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth" say "If I forget to pick up my kid from kindergarten, let my tongue cleave." ... or "If I don't notice my wife's haircut... "

And you beautiful bride, forget about Jerusalem, and swear that you won't be bitter and judgmental all the time and be happy for fuck's sake.

She throws up. Dado arrives.

Dado: Nati?!

Nati: Super Doctor!

Dado: Where is he?

Nati: Where's who?

Dado: I know there's someone here with you! *(to the audience)* who is it?!

(random guy from the audience) Is this the guy?

Nati: I'm here alone... What are you doing here?

Dado: Why are you dressed like that?

Nati: Why are you dressed like that?

Dado: I'm here to save you.

Nati: Are you drunk?

Dado: Yes. You?

Nati: No.

Dado: What happened, Nati? Why'd you run off? Was it because of the...
Rome thing? I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

Nati: I'm pregnant, Dado. *(In German)* pregnant.

pause

Dado: You're pregnant?

Nati nods

Dado: Are you sure? Did you go to the doctor?

Nati: Yes, and genetic counseling.

Dado: That's the "conference"?

Nati: Who ever thought I could actually get pregnant at my age?

Dado: Looks like Super Doctor has Super sperm!

Nati: What are we going to do, Dado? What if the next one will turn out like...?

Dado: Autistic?

Nati gives him a look

Dado: He's autistic. Itamar is beautiful and smart and funny and curious and a scientist and a hypochondriac and autistic.

pause

Nati: You were right. I don't accept him as he is. I was sure I could get him out of the "spectrum". *(pause)* I'm a terrible mother, Dado.

Dado: You're an incredible mother.

Nati: He's not the child I dreamed of. I hoped for a different child. I'm constantly afraid of how he'll be. Will he be ok? Will he ever have friends? Will he work, get married, have children? Will his kids also be autistic? What will he do when we're not here?

Dado: You can't think that far ahead. And we don't know about Noga either...

Nati: Noga's normal.

Dado: And what if she joins a cult? Gets addicted to drugs? How can you know?

Nati: Noga will be fine.

Dado: Itamar will be fine too.

pause

Nati: It's shit, Dado. It feels like shit.

Dado: Lucky for you, I'm the guy that teaches that in every pile of shit, you can find the key to change...

Nati&Dado: if life gives you shit, make fertilizer.

Nati: But how do we find that shitty key?

Dado: Not a clue. One step at a time. Little victories.

They hold hands. Nati gestures to "Critic" with the megaphone.

Nati: Can you say it again without the bell?

Critic: You're a terrible mother!

Dado: I think we got the message!

Nati: *(to the Critic)* Thank you...

Pause

Dado: How long has it been since we had a night to ourselves?

Nati: Maybe check on the kids?

Dado: I don't want to check on the kids.

Nati: Check if there's a message from your Mom.

Dado brings his bag, takes out a red cape.

Dado: Shit.

Nati: What? The cape's here?

Dado: Oh no. I forgot to give it to Mom.

Nati: Itamar's without his cape? Check your phone if your Mom called...

Dado: *(checks phone)* She didn't.

Nati: You're telling me that he went to bed without the cape?

Dado: Seems like it.

Nati: He went to bed without the cape! That's my boy.

Dado: He's got superpowers! The boy's got superpowers!

Nati: He went to bed without the cape, Dado!

Dado: You see? One step at a time.

Epilogue:

Dado looks into his bag again and takes out Noga's diary.

Dado: Look what else I forgot...

Nati: (to "Noga") Can we? Just a peek.

Dado: "Dear Diary..."

"I'm really upset. Itamar called me names today and Mom and Dad let him off the hook again. I'm sick and tired of them. They let him get away with everything and always only notice him. Today at drama class I thought that if we wrote a play about my family, it would probably be only about Itamar and I would have a teeny, tiny role. And then I imagined that I would tell Mom and Dad, that if all I get is this tiny role - the very least they could do is let me have the last word.

End