

Next

By Christopher Haviv

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Table of Contents

Introduction by Moshe Perlstein [4]

Next - A Score To Settle [9]

Next - A Homosexual Self Reflection [41]

"Next" - Two Gardens - Two Plays

Moshe Perlstein

The two plays before you are, in essence, the same play. They return to the same characters, the same situations, the same unsettled scores again and again, but each time from a different angle, at a different pace, in a different tone. Like a musical variation - a single theme played over and over, until new shades are revealed within it. Here, precisely in the gap between the two versions, a space opens up to think, to feel, and to ask what isn't always comfortable to ask aloud.

The two plays included in this collection were hurled from the same explosion. Both take place in the same space of a gay sauna - a place of steam, nudity, corporeality, sexuality, games of control and release. The same characters appear in both: men moving and wandering between the closet and the dating app, between desire and shame, between trauma and the possibility of love.

Despite the great similarity between the two versions in their foundational materials, they offer two different ways to whisper - or to scream - the multi-vocal plot. The two variations, side by side, expose the depth of the wound and the power of theater to reopen it.

The play "Next - Opening the Account" was written in July 2024 to play at the "Laila Bar" in Tel Aviv (which was since closed, like other LGBTQ institutions in the city). The play was designed for a site-specific performance - the bar itself, not a space intended for theatrical performance. The purpose was to echo the music playing in the background, the glasses of alcohol being poured, the clouds of cigarettes and joints, the hurried flirtations, and the contact between men on the dance floor. Within a reality of erupting stimuli, the show itself had to become one of those stimuli - to fight for its place alongside the other temptations of the night. This is a version written almost as if it is happening inside a club. It lives in motion, and it is written in the blood and saliva of the moment. The dialogues in the play are fragmented, brittle, almost random, like an inhalation that ends mid-word. This version sucks you in, falls apart, and crashes, without offering a beginning or an end. The play, in its post-dramatic form, does not offer a plot, but a vortex. Its world is a playground with no beginning or end - only partial confessions, exposures, and encounters, that lead to no redemption. Everything happens - and then disintegrates.

The second version, "Next - A Homosexual Soul-Searching," was written in February 2025, to play at the School of Performing Arts at Kibbutzim College. In contrast to the previous institution, this is a version where the theater is at the center, not the nightly outing to the

bar. Of course, it is not "theater" in its respectable and heavy institutional sense, this is a school full of young students, yearning for "new forms", built from their personal materials.

The physical distance between the two spaces is short: only 600 meters (and half a year in time) separate the "Layla Bar" from the Faculty of Arts at Kibbutzim College. Despite this, there is a significant aesthetic and semantic distance between the first, post-dramatic version and the second, dramatic and Aristotelian version.

If the first version is written as if from within a club, the second seeks to stop the music and light up the room - to slow down the dance. Although the fictional space is preserved between the versions (it is the same sauna space) the later version deepens the fall: the dialogues become more exposed and direct, almost defiant. Thus, more layers of pain are exposed, of a sense of foreignness even within the community itself, of impossible parenthood, and of a love that does not know if it is allowed to exist. If in "Next - A Score to Settle" the gay existence is experienced as an endless chain of glances, touches, and white lies, then in "Next - A Homosexual reckoning" it is already a call to stand up and ask without fear: What does gay masculinity look like in a world that forgives no one?

The two versions, like two sides of the same coin, seek to expose the seams of identity - not as something being built - but as something coming apart. The sauna functions here as a "heterotopic" space in the sense of Michel Foucault - an "other" place, where contradictory elements of society and culture converge: nudity and law, intimacy and secrecy, liberation and coercion. It is a space where social orders are mixed and undermined, and where identity is revealed not as a stable entity but as a momentary, fragile, and multifaceted event. But the sauna is not just a place of freedom; it is also a space of entrapment. Like in Sartre's closed room in "No Exit," the characters find themselves trapped in the mutual gaze, exposed to the judgment of others. Thus the central image that "Hell is other people" is realized: the others are the source of desire, but also the source of threat, the place where possibilities of connection are always intertwined with the danger of dissolution.

A central conflict in both versions is the tension between a bourgeois vision of home-family-kids and the nocturnal dynamics of the sauna and the party. This can be seen in the character of Moshe, who embodies two practices of himself, which even have separate names: Moshe and Yaakov. Throughout the plays, Moshe is in conflict between the absence of his daughter, who represents his familial-bourgeois-heteronormative side, and the attractive men surrounding him. He is willing to pay the price of a split personality for the bourgeois vision, which is perceived as a comfortable picture of the future:

"He's just waiting for the kids to be grown, for me and Nava to sit on the balcony of our house enjoying the sea-view with a grandchild on our knees, telling him the story of how we met years ago"

Aviad is also in the conflict of fulfilling the fantasy with Shimri in the nightlife, versus his need for security, which is embodied as a bourgeois-homonormative life. The two variations together map the spectrum of bourgeoisie: not a one-dimensional ideal but a field of attraction and meaning, against which the night, the body, and the risk are arrayed - and all are fighting for the right to be called "life."

In both plays, intimacy, love, and desire are mixed with money and business. One moment the characters try to hold onto an embrace, and the next moment they themselves frame the encounter as a business negotiation. In Chen's plot in "Next - A Score To Settle" he thinks he is in the midst of an potentially adventurous and romantic night, only to discover he has actually become a bargaining chip in someone else's hands - his commander's:

Here's 500 shekels. you earned it" and shoved money into my shirt's pocket. "Eyal, What's the 500 shekels for? Did I win a bet?"

"it's for what you did there. That's what I told you before we went into the head commander's office, that it was a financial matter and that if you did everything he wanted it would pay off, and you indeed did everything he wanted." [...] "Don't tell me this is a first too... What's with you, it's easy money, especially with this lousy military salary. There are a lot of lonely people out there, Chen. You have an opportunity to make people happy, very happy."

In the second play as well, "Next - A Homosexual Reckoning" there is a direct connection between the need for intimacy and money and business. Thus, in the dialogue between Aviad and Chen:

Aviad: Shimri, tell me you didn't pay him to sleep together.

[...]

Chen: Oh, no, we didn't sleep together, because you were wasted. But we met, we definitely met. How high were you that I'm standing here in front of you and you don't recognize me? We talked on Grindr and then you came by and said you just

want to talk to someone who will listen to you, that you just want to talk to someone without them judging you, that you're even willing to pay for it.

Within this space, heavy questions of responsibility and parenthood, of memory and trauma, also arise. Alongside parenthood fantasies, testimonies of childhood sexual abuse unfold on stage, moments where the boundaries of consent are blurred. In "Next - A Score To Settle" Moshe recounts:

When I was 14, I used to help my dad at his restaurant in The Carmel, and there was this arab dishwasher that i always likes talking to. And that's it, it's not a soap opera, it was hot one day, and we were both boiling hot, and he took off his shirt, and asked me if I was hot too, and that's it, I sucked him off and it became a regular thing every time I came to work. We occasionally still see each other, and me and Nava come to visit him. He lives alone, poor guy, he has no family. I bring him food, we sit, we talk.

The simple and direct way these things are said, without embellishment and without a psychological framework, confronts the audience with a vulnerability that, in real-time, was dressed up as affection or experimentation, but in retrospect becomes clear to the audience as a violent event devoid of balance - childhood traumas that continue to shape the characters' adult identities.

The plays do not allow for clear lines to be drawn between victim and perpetrator. It is a delicate and unsettling game, in which power inverts again and again. He who is harmed can harm, he who seeks closeness can impose control. For example, Aviad confesses:

I froze on the spot. I wasn't able to move. Everyone kept looking at me and encouraging me, so... so... so... I dropped the towel and fucked him. I didn't know if he wanted me to keep fucking him or not so I mumbled sorry all the time. Sorry, sorry, sorry...

The words reveal how confusing memory itself is, moving between a sense of helplessness and aggression. The discourse on trauma, consent, and power is revealed here not as a stable fact but as a charged battlefield, where a one sided narrative is impossible.

In this sense, the two plays are not a "first version" and an "improved version," but two variations on the same theme - like in music, where the same motif returns in a different

tempo, in a different key, and receives new meaning. They are part of a broader theatrical tradition, identified with post-dramatic theater, in which a text is not a complete story but raw material for construction and deconstruction, and in which the repetition of the same scene invites multiplicity rather than uniformity. Just as creators like Thomas Ostermeier, Jan Fabre, or Katie Mitchell have done - who return in their direction time and again to the same text or myth to expose its additional facets - so too here, the play itself is not a finished product but a space for experimentation, an invitation to try and to dare to return to it again - but differently.

It is also possible to see the difference between the two versions through the image coined back in the eighteenth century by the author and playwright Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz: the Aristotelian play is compared to a French garden - orderly, symmetrical, where the entire structure is visible at a single glance; whereas the post-Aristotelian play is described like an English garden - an open and winding space, which invites wandering, surprises, and a structure that is revealed only while walking within it. In these terms, "Next - A Homosexual Reckoning" is closer to the French garden - built and structured, outlining a central conflict and narratives that can be followed clearly; while "Next - A Score To Settle" acts as the English garden - unfolding as an open performative space, which grows within the live happening of a Tel Aviv bar and invites the viewer to assemble the experience while wandering among its fragments.

The two versions of "Next" do not seek to close anything. They open a door to thinking about love and desire, about freedom and bourgeoisie, about parenthood and vulnerability, about the limits of power and speech. They offer viewers and readers not to choose one solution, but to remain within the spectrum, within the movement, within the scores that still remain unsettled.

Next - A Score To Settle

The Characters

Moshe

Chen

Aviad

Shimri

Moshe:

Nava, my wife of 17 years, asks why I'm so against it.

"Moshe, follow her to Eilat without her noticing and watch over her. She's only 16."

I laugh so she'll understand how absurd this idea is.

"Do you have plans for tomorrow night?" She starts with the interrogation.

"No, no, why would I have plans?" I shoot back immediately.

She doesn't have to know everything. Besides, how can I explain to her what the **sauna** is?

(Silence) Tomorrow there's a big event at the sauna, a one-time thing. There, it feels like being in the army. Something in the energy, in this masculinity, in being alone with someone, and another someone, and another one, especially when you're on all fours sucking someone's dick.



Chen:

"Time's up, listen up, Commander."

He is handsome, maybe a year or two older than me. He walks towards me, brings his mouth closer to my ear, opens his mouth and whispers "You're not on time, soldier".

"Yes, Commander, 30 push-ups"

He promised me that when he's done with me I'll become a real man. How much of a man do you need to be to serve in the human resources branch of the IDF? In 24 hours I'll be at the party and every push-up this commander is punishing me with is just an opportunity to get a little stronger and look better at the party. I've never kissed anyone. I'm good looking, I know, but I'm not willing to do it with just anyone. I'm 19 and I still haven't fallen in love. It might not sound like a lot of time, but it's 19 years without someone loving you. To me, it sounds like a lot.

"Yes, Commander, 20 sit-ups."



Aviad:

I close the classroom door. The first parent-teacher meeting I held with the parents of my new students just ended. It is the second high school I've moved to since I got my degree and I need this place to work out. At the school entrance, large letters make up the sentence: "Look at me, I'm a beautiful creature", and next to it a pride flag, and a flag of "Herzog" school in Holon.

"Did you see the sign we put at the entrance?" I hear Itzik, the principal, behind me. I smile awkwardly and he asks me to join him in his office.



Shimri:

As I fasten my zipper I see another missed call from my husband. The German guy wipes his mouth and we both exit the bathroom cell at the Berlin airport. I want to call him back but it's already late and he's probably gone to sleep anyway. Just a few more hours and I'll be home to take care of it. I stayed at the sauna in Berlin until six in the morning yesterday. I haven't slept since, how could I? The body can't go back to normal after such intense energies. Ahhh these Germans... their sauna... dark, scary, looks like a torture site, but oh boyd do they know how to party... As soon as you enter the room 400 hot naked men are having sex right to your face. At the entrance there are three Germans that take all your clothes. You're only allowed to enter the sauna with a towel on, just in case. Before I went in, I saw I had a message from my husband. I wrote to him that I was a bit busy at work and that I'd get back to him when I'm free, and I went in. A big black guy looked at me and signaled me to follow him into the bathroom. In the sauna, there are almost no words. You talk with your hands, with your eyes, your body does the communication. It's this kind of primal connection, a dance, a look, a caress, a look at the lips, yes - yes, no - no, a look, a caress, a look at the lips. It's a kind of "live and let live".



(The characters enter the space from stage right, the room they are talking about is on stage left. **Moshe**, 42, enters the space holding a glass of alcohol, scanning the space. After a few seconds, he answers his phone.)

Moshe: Nava, I'll be back to Haifa in an hour. Fine, I'll finish quickly. She's a big girl, Nava. Come on. I don't know at what time-

(**Aviad**, 29, enters with a note in his hand, examines the space, scans Moshe and the place, and sits down.)

Moshe: Fine, fine, there's people here. (Aviad looks at him, keeps a low profile and doesn't make eye contact.) I love you too. I'll talk to you. Bye. (Moshe sits down.)

Moshe: Hey you, d'you know how long it's gonna take? (Aviad doesn't answer) Do you come here often? (Aviad doesn't answer) Does it move quickly here?

Aviad: I'm not really interested, sorry.

Moshe: What?

Aviad: You were talking to me.

Moshe: Umm yeah, it's a queue, people talk, right? What else is there to do? (Short silence and then) Yaakov.

(Silence. Moshe returns to his phone. Aviad collects himself.)

Aviad: How come they didn't take your phone at the entrance, there's a sign "No phones allowed".

Moshe: If I had followed every stupid sign out there, I would never find a parking spot in Tel Aviv (Moshe laughs, Aviad doesn't. A woman's voice announces "**Number 25**" over the PA system. Other numbers will continue to be announced via the PA throughout the play. They look at their notes.) There's just the two of us.

Aviad: No. There are several rooms here. When it's your turn you go there (signals towards stage left) and there's someone who lets you into the sauna with the others. They want to keep it organized, clean, and phone free.

Moshe: Fine. They want to do it clean, we'll do it clean. (Laughs) So what was your name again?

Aviad: I haven't told you yet. Aviad.

Moshe: Aviad, nice to meet you. So what does a guy like you do in a place like this?

Aviad: nothing.

Moshe: Fine, so I'll sit here... and wait for my turn... quietly... ("**Number 26**" is heard from the PA system) oh gosh, this could take forever. What number are you?

Aviad: 41.

Moshe: 42. Are there really 40 more people out here?

Aviad: Yes, there are. Do you come here often?

Moshe: Yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes. I've been here a few times, but I've never really entered down stairs. I always wandered around here in the neighbourhood with my wife, Nava, and the kids. We'd eat at the ice cream parlor up there.

Aviad: (Chuckles) Your wife?

Moshe: Yes, my wife. a person of the female gender, and two kids. (Shows him a picture on the phone) Tal, Moriah, they go to the "Reali" school in Haifa, top of their class. (The phone rings) My wife. (Answers) Yes, Nava. I haven't had a chance to send it yet. fine, I'm sending it. (Hangs up, starts typing a message, and while typing, turns to Aviad) My girl went on a trip alone for the first time. She's 16 years old, so we're a little stressed. (Silence) I wanted to be a father.

Aviad: I'm not judging.

Moshe: So what did we say a guy like you is looking for in a place like this?

Aviad: Love?

Moshe: Love... did you lose it here? (**Shimri**, 29, enters) Want me to help you find it? Your love?

(Moshe gets close to Aviad, touches his hair, but Aviad doesn't react. It's clear he doesn't really want his touch. Moshe gets closer, kisses him on the lips, one kiss, Shimri notices the kiss.)

Moshe: But I'm discreet, huh? (Shimri lets out a laugh, Aviad turns away in embarrassment)

Moshe: Something funny, kiddo?

Shimri: Nothing, I just didn't think that **this** is what I'd see. (Notices the phone in Moshe's hand) What's this, you brought your phone in? There's a sign.

Moshe: If I followed every stupid sign out there... (Aviad joins him and recites sarcastically) I would never find a parking spot in Tel Aviv.

(Aviad and Moshe laugh).

Moshe: Nice, you've learned, kiddo. (Moshe gives Aviad a kiss and Aviad goes with it. Moshe looks at his phone) I'm going to make a quick call. Wait for me, huh?

(Moshe moves away slightly to stage right and talks on the phone)

Moshe: Nava, Moriah isn't answering my messages, make sure she'd got to the hotel. What? (Looks at Aviad, then back at the conversation) This is going to take me longer than I thought. It's nothing, ask Tal to text her.

("Number 32" is announced through the PA system. Moshe continues to talk on the phone in the background.)

Shimri: "Kiddo", huh? (Shimri sits down relatively close to Aviad) So, do you come here often?

Aviad: What number are you?

Shimri: 57.

Aviad: Wow, 57 is a lot.

Shimri: Yeah, they say its the best party in town so more people come-

Aviad: Did you have fun with the guy at the front desk, Shimri?

Shimri: How do you know my name? And you're pronouncing it wrong either. it's Shimri (stressed on the first syllable, not the last) and what were your names again? Because I wouldn't guess you like them pre-historical.

(Moshe comes back, Shimri come closer to him and wraps his arms around his neck)

Shimri: So what was your name?

Moshe: Yaakov.

Shimri: Ooh... a biblical name, sexy... (Shimri kisses Moshe passionately)

Moshe: And what's your name?

Shimri: You can call me Romeo.

Moshe: Romeo... d'yuwanna role play? I'll be the balcony and can climb on me. Or d'yuwan me to be your Juliet? Are you not into Russian girls?

Shimri: (Laughs) Russian **girls** definitely not... and you?

Aviad: He's more into girls named Nava.

Shimri: Nava?

Moshe: Nava, my dear wife. It's been 17 years. We didn't even know what "gay" was back in our days. She and the kids are everything to me. I'll give my life for this family.

Shimri: Okay, okay, it's gotten intense here. ("Number 33" is announced through the PA system) Want to play a game? Until they let us in.

(Shimri takes out a small bag of drugs and takes one bump, he offers Aviad too, but Aviad reacts with a dismissive look)

Moshe: Have you ever been in love?

Shimri: Mmm, no, that doesn't sound like a fun game. Maybe "seven minutes in heaven"?

(Shimri takes a bottle of G out of his bag, takes two cups from the bar and prepares a dose for himself)

Moshe: "21 questions"? "Truth or lie"? "Blind man's buff"? "Truth or dare"? Classic.

Shimri: Classic!

Moshe: (sees the drugs) What is that?

Shimri: Want some? It loosens up.

Moshe: loosens what up?

Shimri: It will make you fly. Come on, try, I'll watch over you.

(Shimri prepares a dose for Moshe. Moshe approaches with the virginity of one taking his first steps in this field. Aviad remains by himself, closed off and angry. Shimri instructs Moshe to get on his knees so he will give him the dose. Moshe laughs, then looks straight at Shimri who signals him again to get down. Moshe looks at Aviad and finally decides to get on all fours and take the dose of G. He swallows it all and then coughs. Satisfied Shimri offers Aviad too.)

Shimri: Want some?

(Aviad ignores)

Moshe: (Laughs and coughs) What is that?

Shimri: That? G.

Aviad: You gave him G? On his first time? He just drank alcohol!

Moshe: G as in GAY?

Shimri: Relax, I gave him a mil' or so. It will just make him fly a little. What did we say your name was?

Moshe: Aviad. Is it wrong, the G?

Shimri: Truth or dare, Aviad?

Moshe: Am I supposed to feel it tingling on my tongue?

Aviad: Dare.

Shimri: I dare you... (Shimri approaches him with the G)

Aviad: (Dismissively) Truth.

Shimri: So, truth. What's the most liberated thing you've ever done in your life? Anything.

Moshe: No, no, why are you wasting a turn? Ask him about sex. What's the sexiest thing you've done in your life? Or what's your favorite position? Or what's the size of the (gestures a male genitalia with his hand) of your last partner?

Shimri: That's a very specific question.

Moshe: I'm a curious guy. Or did you not have a partner? You've never been in a relationship? And in love? Have you ever been in love?

Aviad: Yes, yes, I was in love, once. I had this big love for 11 years, but he just ran away from me because I told him I wanted kids.

Moshe: What a shame, kids are such joy! What about you Shimri, have you ever been in love?

Shimri: can't you let go, Yaakov? It's not even your turn.

Moshe: Here, now it's my turn.

Aviad: Have you ever been in love?

Moshe: Was there someone you loved so much that you wanted to stay with her forever?

Shimri: (takes another bump and gives some to Moshe while answering) I don't believe in such a big commitment, but yes, I've been in love. But it's not as it used to be, we're always fighting. Sometimes it feels like we just need to loosen up a little. Truth or dare?

Moshe: Aviad, truth or dare?

Aviad: Dare.

Shimri: I dare you-

Aviad: Give it (Aviad gestures for the G. Ceremoniously, Shimri takes the G out of his fanny pack and prepares a dose for Aviad. Shimri pulls Aviad close to him, looks him in the eyes. He is just about to give Aviad the drink when Aviad stops for a moment)

Shimri: You don't have to if you don't want to.

Moshe: You have to, you have to, you chose "dare". Besides, it makes you fly.

Aviad: I want to. (Shimri is about to give him the drink. Aviad recoils.) Is it strong?

Shimri: Don't worry, you'll feel it strikes.

(Aviad opens his mouth slowly. Shimri gives him the drink. Aviad coughs. Shimri kisses Aviad in an attempt to calm him down. Moshe's next sentence breaks the silence of the long kiss between Aviad and Shimri.)

Moshe: So, where did you fellas serve in the army?

Shimri: Oh god, you're really straight. (Laughs)

Moshe: Wanna see how straight I am?

(Moshe gets close to Aviad, gently opens the buttons of Aviad's shirt, and then kisses him.)



Aviad:

I'm sitting in the principal's office opposite Itzik.

"Tell me, why did you leave your previous school?" he asks, and in my head, I can only think of how I'll have to look for another job again.

"Something didn't work out between me and some of the teachers" I say, "but I didn't let it affect me. I finished the year on a good note and the students-"

"And how did your students take it that you're gay?" he shoots before I can finish.

I'm surprised by the question. In the corner of my eye, I see a picture of him with his wife and his daughter, hugging.

"Not that it bothers me, it's just that some of the parents feel uncomfortable with the lifestyle you and your boyfriend have chosen to lead. "

"He's not my boyfriend, he's my husband. "

"You saw the sign at the entrance. We are a very liberal school and we really believe that everyone should do what's good for them. It's just that the people that come here aren't always that liberal. And sometimes there are situations where it might be necessary to tone it down"

"Itzik, I don't understand what you're talk-"

"Aviad, I need you not to tell the kids that you and your friend are so close. Several fathers (hesitates) and mothers have already approached me on this matter. Even if their concern is unfounded, they are parents, and it's a concern that I have to respond to-" A phone call from his daughter stops him. He just smiles at me, asks that we continue this conversation at another opportunity, and leaves the office.



Moshe: Want to see how straight I am?

(Moshe gets close to Aviad, gently opens the buttons of Aviad's shirt, and then kisses him passionately. Shimri looks at them, stunned. Suddenly Aviad breaks free from Moshe's grip and starts to laugh and dance by himself. It's clear he's enjoying himself. Moshe and Shimri start making out. **Chen, 18**, a soldier, enters in uniforms. Aviad spots him, pounces on the prey, and kisses him. Shimri notices them and tries to take Chen for himself. They fight over Chen. Aviad tries to push Shimri away and separate the kiss between the two unsuccessfully and finally falls to the floor. A long and awkward silence. Aviad remains defeated on the floor for a long moment until he gets to his feet and straightens up awkwardly.)

Chen: Hi, how is it going? The guy at the front desk asked me to tell you that they apologize for the delay. (Laughs awkwardly, looks at Shimri) The uniform? They said soldiers in uniform get to skip the line so I put them on, is it not ok?

Aviad: They just say that because soldiers always "raise morale".

Chen: oh... do you come here often? (Chen hands Aviad a cup of water, and he drinks)

Aviad: Thanks. Yes. The guy at the front desk, Oshri, he's a good friend of mine. (Notices the unit tag on Chen's shoulder) Intelligence Corps? Me too.

Shimri: Me too.

Moshe: I was Combat.

Chen: Human resources. I also walk around with the tag just for show. (Silence. Then to Shimri) So how often does this happen?

Shimri: Kiddo, what "happens"? Shhh! You're not supposed to talk about it. (Moshe and Shimri suddenly become serious, then laugh, Aviad joins in)

Chen: Oh, sorry. Sorry, I thought it was allowed here. So what were you talking about until now?

Aviad: We weren't talking about-

Moshe: We already told you, it's a secret!

Chen: Secret?

Aviad: What?

Shimri: Yes, yes, we said it's a secret, kiddo, unless you're good at keeping secrets. You know what? Let's see. Choose a game, if you win it - we'll tell you. (Shimri hands Chen one bump to take)



Chen:

Finally, my commander lets me go to shower. In 12 hours I'm home. I run to my quarters, throw off my uniform and run to the showers. In the showers, I'm alone, singing to myself. I hear the commander's voice calling me. Why won't he leave me the fuck alone? What did I do now? What punishment could possibly... Fuck, my Weapon! I forgot my weapon unwatched in my room! I get out of the shower, start to run back to my room hoping the commander didn't get there before me. I open the door and the commander is there. He's standing in front of me. He's in uniform and I'm with my towel on, hardly covering myself and embarrassed.

"Commander?"

"Chen" he calls me. He's close to me. He's examining me. Just don't let him notice the weapon. I'm about to say something and he suddenly... kisses me? What? My brain is screaming at me to stop, this is your commander!, but the commander pulls me into the showers and kisses me. Wow, wow, it was like, really bad. He pulled hairs from my beard, but he was really INTO IT.



Moshe:

"You're not attracted to me?" Nava looked and asked me.

"What?" I asked, surprised by the honesty of the question.

We've been in this argument for hours now. It's three in the morning. I tried to tell her that I don't want to go after Moriah because I need my time in Tel Aviv, a moment alone to let loose.

"Are you not attracted to me anymore?" Nava asked again, trying to see if I understood that there's no way back after this question,

"I know we agreed that you'll continue with your thing and go to Tel Aviv once in a while to do what you need, but what about me? I thought that when you come back home you'll come back to me. Back to sleeping with me, wanting to be with me, wanting me. But you don't even touch me. Are you not attracted to me anymore or were you never even attracted?"

I'm silent. I know this is the scariest thing someone can hear, that you're not attracted to them anymore (silence). I told her that I love her very much and got up to kiss her. She cried. I felt like I had to do something so I undressed her, and caressed her, and hugged her, and we had sex. It's five in the morning. Me and Nava are lying in bed. She hugs me and tells me that if I really insist I can go to Tel Aviv tomorrow but that she wants me to talk to Moriah beforehand because she has a bad feeling.



Shimri:

I'm at the sauna in Berlin. I'm thinking that if my husband was here he would definitely be scared for me. A big, scary, black guy, signals me to come with him. We start making out and after a few seconds he brings me down to go down on him. The next time I lift my gaze I spot another two black guys who have joined our little party, and before I know it I'm in a crazy orgy with five black guys. Did I cum? I didn't cum. How can you if there are like 400 other men? I went to refuel for a second in the bathroom and when I came back to the center of the club a crazy party had started there. Everyone dancing with everyone, on everyone, I can't tell if the sweat on my skin is mine or someone else's , and some Latino guy signals me to follow him.



Chen: So, it's a secret?

Shimri: Yes, yes, we said it's a secret. Kiddo, go and watch for us, please. Unless you're good at keeping secrets. You know what, let's see. Choose a game, if you win it - we'll tell you. (Shimri hands Chen one bump to take)

Chen: What game?

Moshe: "21 questions"?

Chen: I'm good at that!

Moshe: "Truth or lie"? "Blind man's buff"?

Shimri: "Blind man's buff"! (Teasing) wait, should we really? Blind man's buff?

Moshe: I'm in.

Chen: Me too.

Shimri: Aviad?

Aviad: I'm in.

Shimri: Excellent! But who will be "the blind man"? (Chooses Chen) Kiddo (presents the cast of characters to him) Yaakov, Shimri, and Aviad. For each one you identify, you get a point and a wish.

(Shimri lets Chen finish the cup of G that Moshe left behind, spins him around and the game begins. Shimri pushes Aviad towards Chen so they have to kiss. The two kiss.)

Chen: Aviad? (Removes the blindfold and sees he was right) Another round?

Shimri: The kid wants another round, are we in?

(Chen bumps into Moshe. Moshe stops him, examines the uniform, gets close to him and spins him around.)

Moshe: Halt! Truth or dare, soldier girl? I dare you to be my soldier.

Shimri: Yaakov, leave him alone, he's still young. He's a little kiddo who doesn't know what he wants and what he's doing.

Chen: Hey, we're all big boys and we can do what we want (Chen takes off his shirt while Aviad and Moshe cheer him up). How do I look to you, Yaakov, do I look like a little kiddo?

Moshe: (While making out with Chen) Like a kid who's not a kid at all and he's a big big boy (Aviad and Moshe lift him up), Shimri maybe we'll give him this G thing, it's good stuff.

Chen: G?

Aviad: What, you're a drug dealer now?

Shimri: I'm not giving him anything...

Chen: Why? I want to have what you are having. I'm a big boy. Please.

Shimri: I'm not taking responsibility for this.

(Shimri takes out the G, puts it in a cup, and gives it to Moshe. Moshe tries to hand the G to Chen in a sexy way, but without success. Chen drinks.)

Moshe: (To everyone) Well, should we tell him the secret? He almost won (to Chen) each one of us told our best sex stories, now it's your turn.

Chen: Me?

Shimri: Stop, Yaakov, leave him. Kiddo, it's all good. Even if you don't have one, you don't need to make one up.

Chen: Will you Shut up?

Shimri: Rarr, feisty.

Chen: I'll tell you, but beware, it's a romantic tragedy!

(Moshe and Aviad sit down to listen and occasionally, during the monologue, throw in comments)

Chen: It's Winter, about a month ago. I went on Grindr for the first time. I wanted to find someone to go out on a date with. All kinds of 40-year-old guys started hitting on me, sent me pictures and invited me over, and then I started talking to someone named "Knight on a White Horse". He was older than me but we talked all night. We laughed about the army and he told me not to worry about my enlistment because once you are in the showers you suddenly discover that everyone everywhere is super gay. He asked me if I wanted him to swing by. I told him my mom was home but he promised we'd be quiet so I invited him over. I set a nice map on the bed with two glasses of wine, took a shower, and lit some candles across the room. He came and sat on the bed. We were quiet for a moment and then he told me "it's okay that you don't know what to do, give me your hand". He took my hand, laughed, and then asked if he could kiss me. I nodded my head and he got closer, slowly, and kissed me like I've never been kissed before. His hand climbed up my thigh really slowly. When he reached my belt he stopped and whispered "may I?". I asked him if it would hurt and he promised it wouldn't. I nodded and he undressed me, laid me on my stomach and got undressed himself. He put on a condom, spread coconut oil on both of us, whispered to me "you're the most beautiful boy I've ever met in my life" and got inside all at once.

Shimri: kiddo, you can't have sex with coconut oil, it tears the condom.

Chen: Yeah, but we didn't care. When he came he smiled and told me "maybe you should run a pregnancy test, kiddo. Sorry, the condom tore". We both laughed and he said he can't believe it's my first time, and suggested if I wanted to he'll come back every week.

Moshe: Nice story. ("**Number 37**" is announced through the PA system)

Shimri: Yaakov, the first sex story, GO, where was it? On a plane? On top of a washing machine? Did you break into her house or were you her plumber? (Everyone rolls their eyes at Shimri) Come on, these are the plots in straight porn.

Chen: Straights?

Moshe: (Laughs) It wasn't with Nava. When I was 14, I used to help my dad at his restaurant in The Carmel, and there was this arab dishwasher that I always liked talking to. And that's it, it's not a soap opera, it was hot one day, and we were both boiling hot, and he took off his shirt, and asked me if I was hot too, and that's it, I sucked him off and it became a regular thing every time I came to work. We occasionally still see each other, and me and

Nava come to visit him. He lives alone, poor guy, he has no family. I bring him food, we sit, we talk.

Shimri: Well, interesting. Thank you very much for the moving stories. One is ashamed that he's still in the closet and the other that he is still a kid. I should go check why the line is moving so slowly... (heads out).

Moshe: (Laughs) I'm not in the closet.

Shimri: Sure.

Moshe: I'm not.

Shimri: Darling, say what you want, YOU DO YOU.

Moshe: Don't talk to me like that. I'm not. I'm not!

Shimri: Sweetie, it's all good, you're in a safe space. Kiddo, Aviad, am I right? We won't tell, not to Nava and not to your daughter and not to your son, that their dad likes to fuck guys in the ass. Or does he actually like being fucked in the ass?

Moshe: (Gets up to Shimri) Listen to me very carefully, keep my kids out of your dirty mouth, you hear me?

Shimri: or what? You'll hit me? There's guards right outside. This place has rules, Yaakov.

Aviad: Babe, calm down, Shimri!

Shimri: Don't interfere, Aviad.

Chen: You don't remember me?

Shimri: What?

Chen: You don't remember me? "Knight on a White Horse."

Shimri: What do you want? Are you mad?

Chen: It's you! Don't you recognize me? How high were you that even when I'm standing right in front of you, you don't recognize me?

Shimri: Me? I'm "Knight on a White Horse"? That's my nickname on Grindr? My name is "Pounds Hard". I think you're hallucinating, kiddo.

Chen: We were at my place, and you said that you hadn't felt this in years, my body heat, and this closeness, and the desire to talk to someone without them judging you, and that you're sick of your routine life and you just want someone to really love you.

Aviad: I don't understand what's going on.

Chen: Your voice gets really high when you cum, and your dream is to grow up and tell about the success story you have become.

Shimri: I don't know who you are, kiddo. Aviad, I don't know who this poor kid is. I've never seen him in my life.

Moshe: Do you know each other?

Shimri: Aviad, I've never met him.

Moshe: Hello!

Aviad: This asshole douchebag who fucks 18-year-old virgins is my husband.

Moshe: So why did you act like you didn't know each other?

Shimri: Kiddo, tell him we haven't slept together.

Aviad: So how does he know about your dream? Or about the voice you make when you cum? How? Shimri, you promised me you wouldn't lie to me, that you'd tell me who you're sleeping with! You told me I have nothing to worry about and that you'd take care of yourself. Tell me you got tested. The condom tore, right? You got tested, right? (Shimri is silent) If you have an STD you'll be a man and take the shots, you hear me? Fucking loser! Mr. "I don't take heterosexuals' shots."

Moshe: What? "heterosexuals' shots"?

Aviad: Yes, this guy is afraid that straight people are trying to kill him somehow, (for the rest of his answer to Yaakov, he answers while looking at Shimri deep in the eyes, accusing) that's why he doesn't want to have kids. Right, Shimri? He's afraid our kids will turn out straight, that he wouldn't know how to love them. He's afraid his kid's teachers will be straight, and his friends, and the girls he'll sleep with, that our kid will be so straight that he'll wake up one morning and beat up his gay dad's ass just because he is a gay man who gets fucked in the ass! Did you tell that to your fucking virgin friend?

Moshe: Wait, so all three of you have an STD?

(**"Number 40"** is announced through the PA system. They are silent. **"Number 41"** is announced through the PA. Aviad looks towards the sauna door.)

Aviad: I'm going in, and I'm going to enjoy it like my life depends on it.

Moshe: Wait, what about your STD?

Aviad: It's none of your fucking business, Mr. Yaakov-married-to-Nava-from-Haifa! (Aviad exits the stage through the sauna door)

Moshe: Fine, I'll tell the guard at the entrance not to let me into his cubicle. (Moshe laughs, Silence)



Shimri:

I'm in Berlin, I don't remember how many hours it has been but I'm on the dance floor and dancing. I still haven't finished but I'm exhausted. I tried to go to the bathroom to pee. One of the guys I had sex with tried to help me but when we got to the bathroom he just wanted to go down on me. I laughed and asked him to stop but he insisted. It took him a while but he then realized I wasn't interested so he stopped trying and let me pee in peace. I went out and I looked in the mirror. I smiled to myself. I wondered if Aviad would hate seeing me like this or if he would be happy for me. I tried counting how many men I had slept with in the last few hours. I think it's around 32 men. I washed my face and went back to the sauna through an exit I hadn't seen before. From afar, I see a queue of men looking at something. I knew what it was, porn. They were all mesmerized. I had to know what was so interesting to them. What are they watching? What turns them on? Orgies? Black and white? Cops? Twinks? The light of the screen flickered on everyone's bodies while they were masturbating. It was a beautiful sight. They all looked like little kids coming back home to watch the episode of their favorite TV show while their mom cooks them a meal in the kitchen. None of them were smiling and they were all insanely curious. On the huge screen were three tigers eating a deer, National Geographic. Literally three tigers tearing apart a deer, and they are standing in line and masturbating to it. I threw up. I tried to call Aviad, but he didn't answer.



Moshe:

It's seven in the morning. I'm knocking on Moriah's door. She's awake.

"Were you planning on going out without telling us?" She hugs me and starts crying.

"Dad... maybe I won't go?", she asks with her face deep against my chest.

"There's nothing to be afraid of, my sweet girl, I won't let them hurt you. You know that, right?"

"So why is mom so scared?" she asks.

"Because it's a scary world, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try something new just because you're scared, right? I'm also going somewhere tonight for the first time, and even at my age I'm still scared"

"Of what?"

"Of not having fun, or not finding friends, of missing you and mom"

"Maybe I won't go?" Moriah cried again.

"No, no. We're both big kids now and we'll each confront our fears, and then when we see each other on Sunday we'll laugh about it all, okay?" Moriah nodded and hugged me,

"Come on, I'll take you to the bus?"



Chen:

"You don't recognize me?" The commander stopped kissing me and said, "We talked on Grindr before you became a soldier here. I didn't send you a face pic because I'm in the closet but I thought maybe you'd recognize my body. I thought you recognized me and you were just playing hard to get."

I laugh politely. Eyal, that's the commander's name apparently, saw what time it was, got startled and started getting dressed quickly.

"I'm going to some meeting I have with the head commander, a financial matter, maybe you'll come with me? Just don't forget your weapon this time." He laughed. The base was empty. It seems as if everything stopped while we both walked together to the head commander's office. Eyal told me about all the moments he almost broke and wanted to kiss me. I blushed. When we got to the head commander's room Eyal asked me to leave my weapon at the entrance.

"Do whatever he wants. Trust me." he whispered to me, and we went inside. After an hour we both came out laughing.

"Is it like this every weekend in the IDF? A 'fuck protocol' before the weekend?"

"Only if you stay with me." Eyal said and kissed me. I blushed again. "You're gorgeous."

"That was my first time, you know?" I told Eyal.

"Wow. I can't believe you were this good on your first time, it's crazy. But you know what you need to do now? Go get tested for STDs. He intentionally uses coconut oil and it tears the condom every time. He thinks I don't know it, but I let him."

Eyal ran his hand over my beard and said "I think you're capable of so much and you don't even know it... Here's 500 shekels. you earned it" and shoved money into my shirt's pocket. "Eyal, What's the 500 shekels for? Did I win a bet?"

"it's for what you did there. That's what I told you before we went into the head commander's office, that it was a financial matter and that if you did everything he wanted it would pay off, and you indeed did everything he wanted."

I'm confused, standing there and staring at Eyal. "Don't tell me this is a first too... What's with you, it's easy money, especially with this lousy military salary. There are a lot of lonely people out there, Chen. You have an opportunity to make people happy, very happy."



Shimri:

I started getting nauseous again, so I wandered the streets of Berlin a bit. The street lights were on and the house's windows were dark. People were sleeping in their homes. How strange it is to think that there are men (hesitates) and women out there sleeping, sharing bed, and not thinking about me, or about what I did tonight, and if they did, they'd probably say "these gays...". I stopped in front of one of the bar windows and peeked inside, it was a gay bar. I saw a few lonely people dancing, some with themselves, some with other people. I went inside and a wave of warmth washed over me. In the background the singer sang a jazz version of a familiar song. What song is that? I stood next to the bar to order some beer. "Romeo", by Yehuda Poliker, but it's an english version of the song. When the song ended everyone sat down and one of the younger gays went up on stage. He read a poem he wrote. It's 4:30 in the morning, I'm at a bar in Berlin after hours of being at the sauna, listening to a German gay man reading poetry, and I start tearing up. I don't know if it's the drugs, but I cried like I haven't cried in years.



("Number 41" is announced through the PA system)

Shimri: Kiddo, look at the mess you have made....

Chen: Stop calling me a kid.

Shimri: Did we have sex? (Silence) Kiddo, did we have sex? Tell me the truth.

Chen: Wouldn't you have sex with me?

Shimri: Answer my question.

Chen: No, we didn't.

Moshe: So how did you know about the dream and the voice?

Chen: To become a success story? That's everyone's dream, isn't it? It was easy to guess...

Shimri: Shut up kid, you're playing with my marriage here, not with some gay guy on Grindr.

Chen: But if I met you on Grindr, wouldn't you fuck me?

Shimri: What do you want, kid?

Chen: A date.

Shimri: What?

Chen: A date, with you, one on one.

Shimri: I don't do dates, I'm in a relationship, kiddo.

Chen: But you will have sex with me?

Shimri: Do you see me having sex with you right now, kiddo?

Chen: Call me Chen. (Close to him)

("Number 42" is announced through the PA system)

Shimri: You're beautiful, kiddo, you're a beautiful kid, really.

Chen: Call me Chen. (Silence) Come on, one date.

Shimri: I'm married, kiddo.

Moshe: (Approaches them) I'm up for a date, kiddo. What do you feel like? A movie? The beach? Cuddling on the couch?

Shimri: Be careful, kiddo, there's nothing less sexy than a slut who sleeps with everyone. You don't want to be a whore.

(Chen cuts off abruptly, takes his stuff and heads out to leave)

Moshe: Kiddo, kiddo, enough with the drama. Take my turn, I'm the next number anyway. Go have sex in peace, and calm down. Tomorrow is a new day.

(Chen is hesitant, turns to Shimri but then takes the note from Moshe and exits towards stage left)

Shimri: Just don't forget to put on a condom, huh?!

(Chen enters the sauna, Shimri and Moshe are alone on stage. Silence.)

Moshe: Shimri?

Shimri: What?

Moshe: What did you give us?

Shimri: G.

Moshe: I know, but what is it?

Moshe: It's good.

Moshe: Are you really afraid? That we want to kill you?

Shimri: Who is 'you'? Who is 'we'? What do you want from me?

Moshe: The heterosexuals and the gays. You said that's why you don't get tested for your STD.

Shimri: For God's sake, leave me alone, Yaakov.

Moshe: Moshe.

Shimri: What?

Moshe: My name is Moshe. Yaakov is a stage name.

Shimri: So your wife won't find out?

Moshe: She already knows. Not all of it, but she knows.

Shimri: She caught you?

Moshe: No, I told her. I didn't want to cheat on her.

Shimri: So she knows you're gay?

Moshe: That I sleep with men. She accepts me as I am. We see each other as a refuge.

Shimri: Yeah? Does she know you came here to fuck some guy's hole along with 70 other guys? I bet she doesn't know that, doesn't she?

Moshe: It's not the same.

Shimri: There's no difference between sex with Arabs in Haifa or sex with a slut here.

Moshe: It's not ok you played with the kid like that, you know that, right?

Shimri: Don't try to educate me, Yaakov-Moshe.

Moshe: And Aviad? Why did you hide it? Is he your husband?

Shimri: He suggested it. We fought this morning because I didn't sleep at home again. He wanted us to make up and go out on a date. He suggested we pretend as if we don't know each other. Every time I come back home the first thing he does is judge me. How is that helpful? I need him to understand me. How does it make anything better to be angry at me when I'm high and drunk? I need a hug. You know, his biggest dream was for us to live in Tel Aviv and to have kids, but I can't give him that, this commitment to this bourgeoisie. I'm gay, Moshe, and I'm proud of it more than anything. It's my identity, my values, my nature, and if God or the state or I don't know who decided that I shouldn't get married and have children then why do I need to fight it? It's a date-rape drug, G.

Moshe: What?

Shimri: That's what straights call it. That's what they put in girls' drinks so they lose consciousness and then forget afterwards. But I gave you a small amount. Without alcohol it just relaxes everything, loosens you up. That's what we need, to loosen up a little. (They laugh together) Are you afraid of getting old, Yaakov-Moshe?

Moshe: Depends on who you ask, Yaakov or Moshe? Moshe? No. He's just waiting for the kids to be grown, for me and Nava to sit on the balcony of our house enjoying the sea-view

with a grandchild on our knees, telling him the story of how we met years ago. Yaakov? He's scared to death. I deserve love too, you know, not just 18-year-old kids with abs. Has my time passed? Why didn't anyone send a notice from the authorities "notice, you are entering an area where no one will want you. Please, have as much sex as possible and make sure to find love before the age of 35 because then you'll already be irrelevant."?

Shimri: Stop, you're talking nonsense.

Moshe: You tell me.

Shimri: I used to play superheroes when I was a kid, and I always had the power to go back in time. It was the coolest superpower. Even if you made a mistake, everything could be fixed. And that's how I lived my whole life, with the thought that everything could be fixed if I just went back in time. I'm 29, Moshe, I'm fucking 29, where did renting over homework go?, where did "reheated chicken fingers and watching the kids' channel" go? You know when it hit me I really lost my superpowers? The first time I told Aviad I didn't want to have kids. He was so hurt and left the house for a few days. I wasn't able to tell him that it's not that I don't want kids with him, I just don't want kids. I don't want to be a father, I don't want to. I'm not ready to have a kid when I'm a kid myself. (Collects himself) No, it will never happen.

Moshe: (Looks at his phone) oh Shit, excuse me, 11 missed calls from Nava. I should head out and call her back.

Shimri: Don't worry, Yaakov, your secret is safe with me.

(Yaakov exits to stage right, Chen enters from stage left, he is happy, only a towel wrapped around his body)

Shimri: What, kiddo?

Chen: No. What's my name? Come on, you know it, what's my name?

Shimri: Chen. Chen. Your name is Chen. Chen the beautiful kiddo. Did you take a shower?

Chen: Are you worried about me?

Shimri: Listen, I have no problem sleeping with you, kiddo.

Chen: Yeah? Really? (Shimri nods in agreement) You'd sleep with me?

Shimri: Of course. But I sleep with everyone, so don't take it personally.

Chen: So... do you want to fuck me hard?

Shimri: Oh no, kid. Too direct. You were almost there, it almost went perfectly... Where's your class? Are you a virgin?

Chen: Not anymore...

Shimri: But before that, was there the Knight on a White Horse?

Chen: No, before today I didn't have sex. That was my first time.

Shimri: I have no problem being your Knight on a White Horse.

(Aviad bursts onto the stage from the sauna, only a towel wrapped around his body, looking for something to hold on to. Shimri leaves Chen and tries to support Aviad who is spinning around possessed.)

Aviad: Let's go, Shimri. I don't want this anymore, I don't want this. They're just lying there, three men, like corpses, and like five men are penetrating some guy, one after the other, and they're whipping him and yelling "slut, slut, spread it". Some guy is just navigating the crowd, who fucks who, and then he smiled at me, and like some prize I won, he directs me to some guy and tells me "he's the best, he gets the best reviews". I froze. He doesn't even know if they're conscious at all, I asked him. I wasn't able to move but he didn't stop staring at me, so I dropped my pants and fucked the guy I was assigned. I wasn't sure if he wanted me to keep fucking him or not, he didn't make any sound. I mumbled "sorry" all the time. And then I came all over myself. I felt like this was my punishment, that this semen must stay on me and that no shower and perfume will clean this. I'm not allowed to hide this shame. I can't go back and go on with my life when this is what's happening in the room next to me, you understand? If this is sex, and this is what it means to be gay, then I'm not gay. And if this is what it means to be a person, maybe it's better if we all die. (Chen chuckles, and Aviad continues in response) You son of a bitch! And I'm also a son of a bitch! And we're all sons of bitches for agreeing to stand in this line!

Chen: Hey, hey, hey, watch your words. Who did you call a son of a bitch? They invited us. They wanted it. This guy who navigates at the front desk said "put a smile on, here's Noam, Gilad and Roi. Each one of them wanted to be your slut tonight. Make them happy.", so how is it my fault the choices of Noam, Gilad, and Roi? They came here alone, they chose to be high, they chose to be penetrated, they even laid down like that in that position.

Aviad: Did yours even breathe? I don't know which one of them it was, Roi, Noam, or Gilad...

Chen: I don't know and I don't care. (Stumbles) Shimri, join me outside for a second to wash my face before we go in for another round?

(Shimri looks at Aviad. Aviad lowers his gaze. Chen exits to stage left.)

Aviad: I need you to never leave me like this anymore. stop this nonsense. (Silence) I think we went too far this time.

Moshe: (Enters from stage right in anxiety, like an animal) Shimri, help me. Help me, **Shimri.** You said they know you here. They took my phone and they won't give it back to me. Shimri, my girl isn't answering.

Shimri: Here, here, take my phone.

Moshe: Nava? Yes, it's Moshe, I'm using someone else's phone. What happened to my phone? Never mind, Nava, is Moriah ok? The hotel isn't answering? Did she get to Eilat?

Chen: (Enters back from the sauna laughing) Shimri, you were right, these straights are awful. The guards are laughing about some rumor of 30 men who raped some 16-year-old girl in Eilat. They're sitting there fantasizing about it, searching the web for videos that have already been uploaded to some porn site.

(Moshe turns off the phone. He cries, stops, cries, and exits)

Chen: I'll go see if I can help him. (Chen exits, "**Number 54**" is announced through the PA system. "**Number 55**" is announced through the PA system.)



Aviad:

The day before Shimri flew to Berlin I told him that I'm taking the job at the new high school and that this time I have a good feeling. He started with his regular speech about how I don't need these homophobes, and why don't I go to a place where there are people of our own, like in high-tech or even a gay fund.

"What does 'people of our own' even mean? If we have our own children then at least there were one or two or three more people on our side in this war" I told him, but he, as always, was silent. And then he flew for four days to Berlin. So yesterday I made dinner and I waited for him to come back from the flight. He didn't come. At four in the morning he came back home high and drunk.

"How was Berlin?" I asked him.

"Fun" he answered.

"Did you end up sleeping with someone or did you not get a chance because of work?"

"No, I wasn't with anyone"

After a few minutes of silence, he said that he thought of us at a gay bar he was at. He recalled our second date, at the Evita bar, which was the only place we could go out to then without getting beaten up. The Britney song was playing in the background and we both sang it like crazy and when it ended I told him it was my favorite song. He laughed at me for being so gay. And then the song "Romeo" by Yehuda Poliker started to play, so I said that actually this is my favorite song.

"You can't be both Britney Spears and Yehuda Poliker type of gay, it's not the same type" he laughed at me, and told me he thinks we'll be together forever.

"Do you want to go to the party at the sauna today? Let's spice things up a bit?" I asked him when we got up this morning. He was surprised I made this suggestion.

"Let's spice it up a bit" I suggested, "we'll play a game, like you love. We'll pretend we don't know each other and then through the crowd I'll find you and you'll find me." *

Aviad: (Sits down) Shimri... (wants to tell him something but stops himself, starts to cry and wipes away the tears.) Tomorrow we'll wake up and forget all this happened.

(Shimri helps Aviad get up and Aviad exits to stage right. "Number 56" is announced through the PA system. Shimri is alone on stage.)



Shimri:

If you ask the people in Berlin
they will tell you that I am the best tavern there is.
My body is like a port city and the passersby anchor within me.
And like the best tavern there is at a remote crossroads I provide them a place to rest, to be
comforted and to feel.
And when my parents ask me how the party was, I will have no words to describe it to
them. Not because I have no words, but because we don't speak the same native tongues.
How can I convey to this man and woman before me the feeling of dancing in a dress
and a whole dance floor embracing you
if they never looked in the mirror and felt like they don't belong to themselves?
What words are there in their language that can convey the moment when you see a couple
of 60-year-old men kissing and you say to yourself
"Look, maybe I have a future after all."
What syllables can express, without judgment, that I am gay,
And that I love it.



("Number 57" is announced through the PA system. Shimri is alone on stage. He debates whether to enter or not.)

Curtain.



Next - A Homosexual Reckoning

The Characters

Shimri

Moshe

Aviad

Chen

(Inside the locker room of a gay men's sauna. **Shimri** sits alone on a bench and tries to memorize words from a note. When **Moshe** enters, Shimri hides the note. Moshe sits down at a distance from Shimri. Shimri examines him, and out of his drug bag, he takes out a bag of meph and does two bumps. Shimri offers Moshe some, and in response, Moshe shows him three shots he brought with him. Silence. The two look at each other in amusement. Silence.)

Shimri: I just got back from Berlin a few hours ago. Literally 12 hours ago I was still there at the sauna in Berlin, do you know it? It's like in here, only there they have much hotter men. They walk around there, only towels on, looking for prey. Their sauna maybe looks like a torture site, but oh boy, how they love to party... Ahhh these Germans. Wow, wow, wow. But I was low-key last night. Maybe not so low-key. Depends, who's in comparison. In any case, that was my last time. My last time with all these celebrations for a long time. What are you looking at? Here it's different, it's modest, it's local, "Sauna" my ass. Besides, I'm here for other purposes, for business, and you? Why did you come here? Do you come here often? Fine... Anyways, their sauna is crazy. Right at the entrance to the "Boiler Room" there are 400 men having sex, just like that, in your face. Primal, but sexy, right? There's nothing like the liberation, the fantasy. That's the most fun, the fantasy, no? Ahhh I'm going to miss this, I'm going to miss this so bad, the bump, the meph, the sniff, the puff, the dose, the G, the partying, what's wrong with a little party? And you, do you like to party? Am I rambling? Never mind, it's part of my personal charm. Anyways, I'm there on the dance floor, dancing. I'm dancing for hours, dancing, dancing and suddenly I spot a black guy signaling me to follow him, isn't it worth the check? It is. Oh boy, was it worth it. I'm in Berlin, it's allowed. He lifts me up, takes me to the corner, lowers me slowly, and also lowers his towel, and before I notice three black guys joined. It's not politically correct to say black, is that what's bothering you? African-Americans? Afro-Berliners? Doesn't matter, multicultural, because then three Latinos joined the party and from here to there I realize I'm in a c-r-a-z-y orgy. Meph? You should, it will loosen you up! Fine... did I cum? I didn't cum. You think I came? How could I when there's like 400 other men around me. So I did a bump and went to the bathroom to pee, but some guy wanted to go down on me. We had sex. We had sex? We had sex... We had sex? I don't remember, but when I came out of the bathroom I looked in the mirror, smiled to myself: hottie. I tried to count how many men I had slept with in the last few hours. I got to about 14 men. But that's it, period, this world disgusts me, it's not for me. I'm a different person now, totally different, enough. You know there's this saying by Tennessee Williams, he's this gay writer, it goes like... (tries to remember) "Gays abroad always realize how lonely they are." Tennessee Williams? Did I say Tennessee Williams, never mind, I totally understood how together I am, how much I exist, how everything is good, and needs to change. Meph?

Moshe: 14 is a lot.

Shimri: Oh, he speaks! God, he speaks! Blessed is the creator of dialogue! 14 is a standard number.

(A woman's voice announces "**Number 29**" through the PA system. During the play, additional numbers will be heard over the PA.)

Moshe: What's your name?

Shimri: Shimri.

Moshe: Yaakov.

Shimri: Yaakov. Nice name, biblical, sexy. So, do you come here often, Yaakov?

Moshe: (Moshe's phone rings) I have a call.

Shimri: So answer.

Moshe: I'm answering.

Shimri: So answer.

Moshe: Here, I'm really answering. (Answers)

Shimri: He answered.

Moshe: Yes, Nava. No, she's not answering me either. No, I didn't go to Eilat. I'm in Tel Aviv. I just arrived. Fine, fine Nava. I'm sorry I went. Come on, she'll answer you, she's a big girl, she's 16, don't worry. Fine, Nava. Nava, I'm busy here, I'll talk to you? I love you too.

Shimri: So, you didn't tell me if you come here often.

Moshe: Me and my wife, Nava, we come to the neighbourhood a lot and eat ice cream with the kids but I've never gone down here.

("**Number 30**" is announced through the PA system)

Shimri: Your wife?

Moshe: Yes, my wife. A person of the female gender.

Shimri: I don't care.

Moshe: What?

Shimri: That you're in the closet.

Moshe: I'm not in the closet.

Shimri: Fine, want some meph?

(**Aviad** enters)

Shimri: (To Moshe) Did you like it? Hottie.

Moshe: (To Shimri) Hottie. Do you know him?

Shimri: Here and there.

Moshe: I'm going to hit on him.

Shimri: Go ahead, approach him. I'm sure he will be flattered.

Moshe: (To Aviad) Tell me, do you come here often?

Aviad: I'm not interested.

Moshe: What?

Aviad: You were talking to me.

Moshe: Sure, it's a queue. People talk in a queue, right? I wanted to ask what number you are.

Aviad: 41.

Moshe: 42.

Shimri: 43.

Aviad: (To Shimri) Hi.

Shimri: (To Aviad) Hi.

("Number 31" is announced through the PA system)

Moshe: Shimri, tell me, are there really 30 more people here somewhere?

Aviad: Do you come here often?

Moshe: Yes, yes.

Shimri: With the kids.

Aviad: With the kids?

Moshe: With my wife.

Aviad: With your wife?

Moshe: Yes, my wife. My wife, a person of the female gender, Nava, and the kids, Tal and Moriah. They go to the "Reali" school in Haifa, top of their class. We love eating ice cream upstairs. They are my whole life, my family, the kids. There's nothing like kids.

Aviad: There's nothing like kids.

Moshe: What, you have kids too?

Shimri: Things just got heavy here, am i right? Meph? We've flirted with the idea long enough.

(This time Moshe decides to agree to Shimri's offer, after he takes the bump-)

Moshe: So there are 30 people here? (Aviad and Shimri nod) And then they announce the number, and it's your turn, and...?

Shimri: And then you enter a land full of magic. Come on, another bump. (Shimri and Moshe do another bump)

Aviad: (Corrects him) No. You then leave this waiting room, put on a towel and enter the sauna, that is where the party takes place.

Moshe: And just have sex? Just like that, have sex? So why the queue?

Shimri: Selection.

Moshe: (In fear) Selection?

Shimri: Yeah, whoever doesn't look good enough doesn't get in, Yaakov.

Moshe: Really?

Aviad: No, not really. Usually, there's no queue. It's only today because of the "special event". They want to keep it organized, clean, and discreet.

Moshe: Ah, I'm a discreet guy. I'm Yaakov, and what did we say your name was?

Shimri: We didn't.

Aviad: Aviad.

Shimri: Shimri.

Moshe: And what does a guy like you look for in a place like this, Aviad? Love?

Shimri: No, no, no. You're totally off track, honey. In the sauna, there are almost no words. You talk with your hands, with your eyes, your body does the communication. It's this kind of dance, a look, a caress, a look at the lips, yes - yes, no - no, a look, a caress, a look at the lips. It's a kind of "live and let live". (To Aviad) And you, have you ever been to a sauna?

Aviad: Maybe once, but not for an event like this, and you?

Shimri: Once maybe, I don't remember.

Moshe: You just said you were at the sauna in Berlin yesterday.

Aviad: oh, you were at the sauna in Berlin yesterday, Shimri?

Shimri: No.

Moshe: But just now, you told a whole story about the sauna in Berlin.

Shimri: You must be confusing me with someone else.

("Number 32" is announced through the PA system. Moshe's phone rings.)

Moshe: (To Shimri and Aviad) Nava. (Answers) Yes, Nava. No, I'm still here. Come on, I haven't had a chance to send it yet (Hangs up and tries to call Moriah. She doesn't answer.)

Aviad: So, were you at the sauna in Berlin yesterday, Shimri?

Shimri: No, and you? Besides, you're pronouncing the name wrong. (Stressed on the first syllable) Shimri, they call me. Meph?

Aviad: I don't do this kind of stuff.

Shimri: What is "this kind of stuff"?

("Number 33" is announced through the PA system)

Shimri: What is "this kind of stuff"? Fun, you mean?

Moshe: (To Nava over the phone) No, she's not answering my phone either. Fine. Here, Nava, I'll send her another message now. Bye. (Hangs up and types a message while talking to Aviad and Shimri) Our girl went on a trip alone for the first time. She's 16 years old, so my wife is a little stressed. (Silence) I wanted to be a father.

Aviad: I'm definitely not judging.

Shimri: Okay, okay, I am bored. (To Aviad) Meph? ("Number 34" is announced through the PA system) Maybe we should play a game until they let us in?

Moshe: Do you want kids?

Shimri: Mmm, no, that doesn't sound like a fun game. But what about... "seven minutes in heaven"? (Shimri takes a small bottle of G out of his bag, takes a bottle of Coke and two cups from the bar, and prepares himself a "dose")

Moshe: "21 questions"? "Truth or lie"?

Shimri: No, come on, something juicy.

Moshe: "Truth or dare"?

Shimri: Classic!

Moshe: Classic! (notices shimri's cup) What, there's free alcohol here?

Shimri: You shouldn't drink alcohol with this, it's dangerous.

Moshe: Dangerous?

Shimri: You want to try? It will loosen you up.

Aviad: Did you drink alcohol?

Moshe: Just a little, bring it.

(Shimri prepares a dose for Moshe. Moshe approaches with the virginity of one taking his first steps in this field. Aviad remains by himself, closed off and angry. Shimri instructs Moshe to get on his knees so he will give him the dose. Moshe laughs, then looks straight at Shimri who signals him again to get down. Moshe looks at Aviad and finally decides to get on all fours and take the dose of G. He swallows it all and then coughs. Satisfied Shimri offers Aviad too.)

Moshe: What is that?

Shimri: That? G. I gave you a mil' or so, it will just make you fly a little. So what game are we playing? Truth or dare? Aviad?

Aviad: Dare.

Shimri: I dare you... (Shimri approaches him with the G)

Aviad: Truth.

Shimri: So truth. What's the most liberated thing you've ever done in your life?

Moshe: No, no, why are you wasting a turn? Ask him about sex. What's the sexiest thing you've done in your life? Or what's your favorite position? Or what's the size of the (gestures a male genitalia with his hand) of your last partner?

Shimri: A very specific question.

Moshe: I'm a curious guy. Or did you not have a partner? You've never been in a relationship? And in love? Have you ever been in love?

Aviad: Yes, yes, I was in love, once. I had this big love for 11 years, but he just ran away from me because I told him I wanted kids.

Moshe: What a shame, kids are such joy! What about you Shimri, have you ever been in love?

Aviad: have you?

Moshe: Was there someone you loved so much that you wanted to stay with her forever?

Shimri: "Forever"... I've been in love, but it's not as it used to be, we're always fighting. Sometimes it feels like we just need to loosen up a little. Truth or dare? (Shimri does a bump of Ketamine and gives some to Moshe)

Moshe + Shimri: Aviad, truth or dare?

Aviad: Dare, bring it.

Shimri: For real? (About to give him a bump)

Aviad: No, I want what he drank.

(Shimri prepares a dose in a cup. He pulls Aviad close to him and looks him in the eyes. Aviad opens his mouth slowly, Shimri is about to give him the drink.)

Shimri: You don't have to if you don't want to.

Aviad: I want to. Is it strong?

Shimri: Don't worry, you'll feel it when it kicks in (Shimri gives Aviad the drink. Aviad coughs. Shimri kisses Aviad in an attempt to calm him down.)

Moshe: So, where did you fellas serve in the army?

Shimri: Oh god, you're really straight. (Laughs)

Moshe: Wanna see how straight I am? (Approaches Aviad and opens the buttons of his shirt. The rest of the conversation happens while there is continuous contact between Aviad and Moshe.)

Shimri: (Still laughing) I was in the intelligence corps!

Aviad: So, Yaakov? Did Shimri have fun at the sauna in Berlin?

Moshe: Shimri, did you have fun at the sauna in Berlin?

Shimri: I don't know what you're talking about.

Moshe: He was with five black guys and one Latino.

Aviad: Oh, only five black guys and one Latino?

Shimri: Do you really want to know?

Aviad: Yes.

Shimri: Curious?

Aviad: I'm a curious guy.

Shimri: So when I entered the sauna in Berlin, right at the entrance, a black guy came and signaled me with his eyes to follow him, and I thought like "wow, I've never been with a black guy." I'm following him to the bathroom, and then, boom, he brings me down to the floor to go down on him. Sexy, right? I open my mouth really big so that his whole...

Aviad: (Cuts him off) So, what do you do for a living, Yaakov?

Moshe: What?

Aviad: What do you do for a living?

Moshe: What's the rest of the story?

Shimri: No, I'm not telling. If it's hard for Aviad, Aviad, right? Then I won't tell.

Moshe: Aviad, is it hard for you? Come on, I'm curious! Come on, I work as a contractor in Haifa, will you continue?

Shimri: High-tech.

Aviad: I'm a teacher and an educator.

Moshe: oh, what grade?

Aviad: No, I'm not teaching at the moment.

Moshe: A teacher who doesn't teach?

Aviad: Yeah, I just got fired.

Moshe: Why did you get fired?

Shimri: Maybe they're afraid of gay teachers educating their children? They don't want you to pass it on to the kids by mistake. Just kidding, I was joking. Poppers? Trust me, it will loosen you up. That's what we need right now, to loosen up.

(Shimri hands Aviad the poppers to smell. "Number 35" is announced through the PA system.)

Moshe: Wow, we're never going to get in.

Shimri: Are you not having fun?

(Shimri hands the poppers to Moshe to smell. The three of them are close. Shimri leads Moshe's face to kiss Aviad. Aviad and Moshe kiss sensually until Shimri grabs Moshe and kisses him himself. Aviad, who is dancing on the side, notices **Chen**, a soldier, who enters the waiting area in uniform. Aviad takes him to dance and the two kiss. When Shimri sees this, he approaches them, separates them sensually. Shimri almost kisses Chen, but finally turns to kiss Aviad. Chen tries to draw the attention back to him, but Moshe accidentally knocks over a chair, which cuts off the sexual situation at once.)

Moshe: Sorry. Continue, continue. I didn't mean to interrupt. (Silence)

Shimri: Yaakov, you're quite something.

Chen: (To Aviad) The uniform? Is it weird? They said soldiers in uniform get to skip the line so I came like this.

Aviad: They just say that because soldiers always raise morale.

("Number 36" is announced through the PA system)

Chen: What number are you?

Aviad: 41.

Moshe: 42.

Shimri: 43.

Chen: 67. Do you come here often?

Moshe: And you? What did you come to look for here? Love?

Shimri: He doesn't let go...

Chen: Oh, this place is also for dating and stuff? (They laugh at him)

Shimri: Hey, hey, don't laugh at him. He's just a kid and it's probably his first time. Is this your first time, kiddo? (Chen nods) What's the name?

Chen: Chen.

Shimri: Shimri, Yaakov, meph? Ever tried?

Aviad: I want some too, (to Chen) Aviad.

(Shimri gives Aviad a bump. Aviad kisses him at length. "Number 37" is announced through the PA system.)

Chen: So what's special about the event today? How often does this happen?

Shimri: Kiddo, what "happens"? Didn't you hear you're not allowed to talk about it?

Chen: Oh, sorry. Sorry, I thought it was allowed here. So what were you talking about until now?

Moshe: We said it's a secret!

Chen: Secret?

Aviad: What?

Shimri: Yes, yes, we said it's a secret, kiddo.

Moshe: Should we tell him, Shimri? Are you good at keeping secrets, kiddo?

Aviad: Tell him what?

Moshe + Shimri: The secret...

Moshe: You know what? Choose a game.

Shimri: Yeah, if you win it - we'll tell you.

Chen: What game?

Moshe: "21 questions"?

Chen: I'm good at that!

Shimri: Stop, Yaakov.

Moshe: "Blind man's buff"?

Shimri: "Blind man's buff"!

Moshe: I'm in.

Chen: Me too.

Shimri: Aviad?

Aviad: I'm in.

Shimri: Excellent! But who will be the "blind man"? (Chen volunteers) Excellent, kiddo.

For each one you catch and identify, you'll get a point and even a wish.

(Moshe goes to cover Chen's eyes)

Chen: Shimri?

(Chen lets Shimri cover his eyes)

Chen: Wait! Can I also have what you gave him?

(Shimri gives Chen a bump, covers Chen's eyes, and signals Moshe to spin Chen. Moshe spins Chen and they start playing "Blind Man's Buff")

Shimri: Kiddo, do you know what we were talking about? Each one told about the last time they got laid. Now it's your turn.

Chen: Now?

Moshe: Tell us, we're very curious...

(Chen moves around the space searching for them. Shimri goes to Aviad to check if he's okay.)

Chen: It was last week, at the base, in Beit Lid. My commander and I were in his office. He called me because he heard I wasn't happy with my placement. We started talking and then he told me I'm a very beautiful boy and that I look a little stressed, and I didn't know what to answer. Suddenly, he got close to me, took off his shirt, started to take off my shirt and put my hand on his pants and asked me if I was hot and-

Moshe: (Catches Chen and presses him to his body) Well, and now are you hot, kiddo? Shimri, maybe we'll give him this G? It's good stuff.

Chen: G? (Chen removes the blindfold)

Shimri: G? No. Leave him alone, he's still young. He's a little kid who doesn't know what he wants and what he's doing.

Chen: Seems to me we're all big boys and we can do whatever we want (Chen takes off his shirt) How do I look, Yaakov? Do I look like a little kid?

("Number 38" is announced through the PA system)

Moshe: Like a kid who's not a kid at all but a big big boy. Shimri?

Chen: You heard him, Shimri, I'm not a kid, I'm a big big boy. So can I?

Shimri: Kiddo, I'm not taking responsibility for this. Open wide. (Shimri gives him the drink) Yes, all the way kid (Shimri and Chen kiss).

Chen: Another round?

Aviad: The kid wants another round. Come on, let's give the kid what he wants. (Aviad ties his blindfold tightly in a way that hurts him. He spins him quickly and another round of blind man's buff begins. The men make animal sounds that slowly turn into groans. The leader among them is Aviad. He is aggressive. Finally, Chen bumps into Shimri.)

Shimri: Do you feel it kicking in?

Chen: I'm hot.

Shimri: Enjoy it. So what's the end of the story, kiddo? We're hanging on.

Chen: It ends with me on the table in his office and he takes out his-

Shimri: Dick?

Chen: Yes, his dick, and he lays me on the-

Moshe: Table?

Chen: Yes, table, and we kiss, and then he got inside me...

(Shimri kisses Chen. Moshe comes from behind and takes Chen to him. Shimri finds Aviad angry and tries to appease him. They kiss while Moshe continues to make out with Chen. Chen looks for Shimri. Moshe tries to take off Chen's pants and humps him.)

Moshe: (Chuckles) Shimri, what did you give us? What is this stuff?

Shimri: It's good stuff, it loosens you up.

(Moshe starts to sing "**The Man I Love**". In the second verse, Aviad joins him while cradling Shimri.)

Moshe: Aviad, when was the last time you got laid? GO.

Aviad: I don't remember.

Moshe: What?

Aviad: I don't know, it was a long time ago. Yours?

Shimri: Yeah, yours, where was it, Yaakov? On a plane? On a washing machine? Did you break into her house or were you her plumber? (Everyone rolls their eyes at Shimri) Come on, that's what happens in straight people's porn.

Moshe: It's not as easy to be straight as you think.

Shimri: No? What's so hard about being straight? Tell us. having rights? having society accept you? Having all the movies and stories being about you?

Moshe: Last night I had sex. "Makup sex", the sexiest. You're both angry at each other, you want to tear each other apart. Nava was just fighting with me about her not wanting Moriah to go to Eilat alone, and she insisted that I have to go after her to Eilat. All the way to Eilat, she's gone crazy. I told her she's 16 and a big girl and besides there's this special event at the sauna that I told her I want to go to.

Aviad: She knows you're gay?

Moshe: That I sleep with men. That I occasionally need to let loose a little. We were both sitting on our bed, she looked at me and told me that Moriah needs me. And then she suddenly fell silent, looked at me, and asked "Are you not attracted to me?". I laughed from the surprise. She started to cry, so I undressed her, and caressed her, and hugged her, and we had sex. (Silence) I know this is the scariest thing someone can hear, that you're not attracted to them anymore.

Chen: Wait, you're straight? What a lame story. My story is better. It has everything. It's comic, emotional, and dramatic. Right, Shimri? Besides, I definitely get extra points for my first sex being with my commander, right? And not just any commander, the unit commander!

Aviad: What? How old was he, Chen?

Chen: I don't know, 50, what does it matter.

Aviad: And you wanted to have sex with him?

Chen: What does it matter? I'm telling you that he changed my role and I also stopped being a virgin. I won.

Shimri: Kid, if he received sex in return, then you definitely didn't win.

Aviad: Shimri.

Chen: Fine, it only happened once or twice.

Shimri: And the second time, he also gave you something?

Chen: No. (Silence) 500 shekels. But it's because he told me I'm really special and that even his wife doesn't pamper him like that.

Moshe: And what do you do for 500 shekels? (Approaches Chen and cups his butt)

Chen: (Dismissively) I don't do anything, it was a one-time thing.

Aviad: Wait, Chen, did you want to have sex with him? If you need help or someone to talk-

Chen: What? I don't need help.

Shimri: Of course the kid doesn't need help, he just needs 500 shekels.

Chen: Don't call me kid.

Shimri: What can I do? not realizing you're a whore when you have sex for money is being a kid...

Chen: Don't call me kid.

Shimri: Being a man is something you have to earn, kiddo.

Chen: That's rich coming from you.

Shimri: What?

Moshe: Do you know each other?

Chen: Do you want to tell them or should I tell them?

Shimri: Tell them what?

Chen: We've already met, Shimri and I.

Shimri: No, we haven't.

Chen: I actually thought it turned you on, the whole "paying" part.

Shimri: The "paying" part? I paid you money? For what? For us to sleep together?

Aviad: Shimri, tell me you didn't pay him to sleep together.

Moshe: Do you know each other?

Aviad: Shimri...

Moshe: Oh, suddenly everyone knows each other except me?

Chen: Maybe we didn't sleep together, but we did meet, and let's just say he spent quite a lot of money on this meeting.

Shimri: Are you insane? I don't know this kid, Aviad. You think I'd pay him? You think I need to pay someone to have sex with them? Kiddo, tell him we didn't sleep together.

Chen: Oh, no, we didn't sleep together, because you were wasted. But we met, we definitely met. How high were you that I'm standing here in front of you and you don't recognize me? We talked on Grindr and then you came by and said you just want to talk to someone who will listen to you, that you just want to talk to someone without them judging you, that you're even willing to pay for it.

Aviad: I don't understand what's happening.

Chen: Shimri, tell him, stop, it's not nice.

Shimri: Why are you talking to me as if we know each other? Aviad, we don't know each other.

Chen: Your dream, when you grow up, even though you're already almost 30, is to be on your favorite kids TV show "Hani's room" and tell about the success story you became.

Shimri: Aviad, I don't know who this poor kid is. I've never met him in my life.

Aviad: Are you stupid? You pay someone to go to sleep with them? To listen to your stories? Why? Am I not enough for you, Shimri? Every night I wait for you to come back from your drugs and your parties, every night I try to ask you how are you, to see if everything is okay, every fucking night I imagine the kids we'll have, what kind of father you'll be. But what are you spending the money on? On talking to some 18 year old stupid prostitute kid? instead of talking to me?

Chen: Hey, I'm not a kid!

Aviad: Shut up!

Shimri: Kid, tell him we didn't meet.

Aviad: So how does he know about your infantile dream, oh? Shimri, you promised me you'd stop lying to me, that you'd tell me who you're sleeping with!

Moshe: Wait, how do you know each other?

Chen: That's his boyfriend...

Aviad: His husband!

Moshe: His husband?

Aviad: Yes, Mr. Straight. (To Chen) Did you know, for example, that Shimri is afraid of straights?

Shimri: Aviad.

Aviad: Oh, he didn't tell you that? You didn't tell him?

Shimri: Aviad.

Moshe: Afraid of straights?

Aviad: Yes. Oh, yes. This Mr. COOL GUY is so afraid of straights. He's so afraid of them that he doesn't want to have kids with me. Right, Shimri? He's afraid our kid will turn out straight, that he won't know how to love him. He's afraid his teachers will be straight, and his friends, and the girls he'll sleep with. That our kid will be so straight that wakes up one morning and beat the hell off of his gay dad just because he gets fucked in the ass! Did you tell that to your fucking virgin?

Shimri: Aviad!

("Number 39" is announced through the PA system)

Chen: Whoa, the line is moving.

Shimri: Shut up, kid.

Aviad: Why? Why are you silencing your virgin kiddo? You know when I had sex last? I don't remember because every night I go to sleep alone while he's busy hanging out with 18-year-old kids. (To Shimri) Were you at the sauna in Berlin? Shimri, answer me. Answer me, Shimri! For three days I've been trying to reach you while you are in Berlin and you didn't have a minute to get back to me? Do you even know what I wanted to tell you, Shimri? I called to tell you that I was accepted to be the new grade coordinator at the high school in Holon.

Shimri: You got accepted?

Aviad: After all these homophobic schools I've been stuck in for the last two years, finally there was some light at the end of the tunnel.

Shimri: That's wonderful.

Aviad: No, it's not. If you had answered me you would have known that the principal called me yesterday morning and told me that the parent-teacher committee is concerned that I will expose their children to "values like mine". What are "values like mine"? And I just

waited for you to come home from Berlin today, so you could hug me, and to tell me it will be okay, and I wanted to cry to you, but... (falls silent)

Shimri: It was your idea to come here.

Aviad: Don't put this on me! Don't put this on me! I suggested it because I thought that's what you wanted. You wanted us to let loose, didn't you? I thought we'd come here and among all the people you would see me, and want to be with me, want to sleep with me, want to love me. Do you even remember what it's like to love me, Shimri?

Moshe: I thought you said that's not the format here.

Aviad: It's really not the format. It's... it's really not the format. It's just that I'm stupid. How stupid... How stupid...

("Number 40" is announced through the PA system)

Aviad: I'm going home, Shimri, are you coming?

Chen: Wow, Shimri, he really needs to let loose a bit.

Aviad: Let loose, huh? Let loose?

("Number 41" is announced through the PA system)

Aviad: You know what? FUCK YOU. I'm going in. I'm going to get fucked like crazy, Shimri, get fucked like crazy! I'm going to enjoy my life, get fucked while high like you, and maybe then you'll be satisfied.

Shimri: Aviad!

(Aviad exits in a storm from the waiting area to the sauna area)

Shimri: Look at the mess you have made, kiddo.

Chen: Don't call me kiddo.

Shimri: Did we have sex? (Silence) Kiddo, did we sleep together? Tell the truth.

Chen: Wouldn't you sleep with me?

Shimri: Answer my question.

Chen: You really don't remember me? You told me I remind you of yourself.

Shimri: What do you want from me, kid?

Chen: To get to know you, really.

Shimri: What?

Chen: Let's go on a date, one on one.

Shimri: I'm married, I don't do that.

Chen: But you do fuck me?

Shimri: Do you see me fucking you right now, kiddo?

Chen: Call me Chen. (Gets close to Shimri) Come on, one date, with someone who really accepts you.

Moshe: Wait, but what about your lover, kiddo? The commander, is he real or not?

Chen: Of course.

Shimri: So why are you here and not with him?

Chen: (Goes to Shimri's substances left on the table and does a bump for himself) Because he's with his wife.

Shimri: His wife?

Moshe: A person of the female gender.

Shimri: He prefers to be with his wife rather than with some 18-year-old kid.

Moshe: And he's in love with you, kiddo?

Chen: Madly in love with me!

Shimri: So what are you doing here? Why are you here if he loves you so much, huh? If there's someone who loves you so much, why are you hanging around here? He doesn't love you.

Chen: You don't know what you're talking about. He doesn't care about my age, or my pimples, or that I have no experience. He loves me as I am, and it feels simple when I'm with him. I don't need to try hard, he just sees me, as I am.

Shimri: So call him. Invite him here, to join us. I'm sure he'd be happy, right?

Chen: He's busy. He asked me not to call him when he's with his wife, it bothers him.

Shimri: But he's madly in love with you, isn't he? Apparently, even for him, you're just a kid.

Chen: There are people in the world who experience actual, good and accepting love, your failed relationship is not my fault.

Shimri: You want a date, Kiddo? What do you like to do? Do you have a hobby? A talent? Things you like to do?

Chen: Like to do?

Shimri: Do you know how to sing?

Chen: Umm yeah, What should I sing?

Shimri: Any song that comes to your mind, Anything. Anything, anything, do you have one? Sing. (He forces Chen to sing. Chen sings "**The Man I Love**". Shimri makes Chen dance and forces him to get on his knees.) On your knees, good boy. Come here. Here, yes. Sing louder. Louder. Sexy. What would you do for 20 shekels, Kiddo? 50 shekels? Get undressed? Spread your legs?

Chen: What do you want from me?

Shimri: what if I gave you 200, what would you do for me?

Chen: Leave me alone.

Shimri: Why? I love you, kiddo. I love you. I love you, kiddo.

(Chen cuts this off abruptly, gathers his stuff and heads out to leave the premises.

"**Number 42**" is announced through the PA system.)

Moshe: (To Shimri) Enough with the drama, stop. (To Chen) Take my turn, I'm the next number anyway. Go have sex in peace, and calm down. Tomorrow is a new day.

(Chen hesitates, turns to Shimri but then takes the note from Moshe and exits towards the sauna)

Moshe: He's just a kid, you know...

Shimri: It was for his own good. So he knows that's not what real love looks like.

Moshe: What did you give us, Shimri?

Shimri: G.

Moshe: I know, but what is it?

Shimri: It's good. (Silence)

Moshe: What scares you so much about kids, Shimri? Is it really that they'll be straight? You know my daughter is the greatest gift I've ever had in my life? I didn't know it was possible to love like that. I regret a lot but not her. This morning she was so scared to go to Eilat. She cried and asked if she would be okay so I hugged her and told her that when fear takes over, the most important thing is to stand tall and face it. A dad-like sentence. Before she got on the bus to Eilat she asked me if there's anything I'm afraid of, smart girl. I regret a lot but she is my light in life. After she got on the bus, I sat in the car and debated whether to go after her to Eilat or to go to Tel Aviv. On the radio was the song "**The Man I Love**". I haven't cried in years, years, but suddenly I thought about what would have happened if I was born at a different time, like now for example. I drove straight to Tel Aviv just out of fear of nava seeing me and forcing me to stay. I owe this to myself. I must feel who I am when I'm not just a father. My name is Moshe.

Shimri: What?

Moshe: My name is Moshe. Yaakov is a stage name. I try to keep a low profile. So that all kinds of 18-year-old kids I slept with don't come and say things in front of my wife just because we slept together once.

Shimri: Or 14-year-old kids.

Moshe: 14?

Shimri: Nothing, leave it. Are you afraid of getting old, Yaakov-Moshe?

Moshe: Depends on who you ask, Yaakov or Moshe? Moshe? No. He's just waiting for the kids to be grown, for me and Nava to sit on the balcony of our house enjoying the sea-view with a grandchild on our knees, telling him the story of how we met years ago. Yaakov? He's scared to death. I deserve love too, you know, not just 18-year-old kids with abs. Has my time passed? Why didn't anyone send a notice from the authorities "notice, you are entering an area where no one will want you. Please, have as much sex as possible and make sure to find love before the age of 35 because then you'll already be irrelevant."?

Shimri: Stop, you're talking nonsense.

Moshe: You tell me.

Shimri: When I was 14 I had a crush on one of my dad's colleges. The way he used to look at me (trying to put the words together). He always gave me special attention. There wasn't a night I went to sleep without thinking about him or jerking off to him. And I had a dream that one day he would sober up and leave his wife and come to be with me. There was this office trip with the kids, SUV's trip in Ben Shemen Forest, and I remember I went to the

side to pee, and I saw him walking after me and choosing the tree closest to me and starting to pee too. When he finished he left his dick in his hand, and looked at me with that look of his, and then he signaled me to follow him and he fucked me there in the bushes. When we got back he gathered everyone for an announcement, and I thought that the moment I dreamed about every single night would finally come true, but he just told everyone that he's going to be a father and that his wife is pregnant. I'm gay and I'm proud of it, more than anything in the world. It's my identity, my values, my nature. But he just stood there, surrendered to his bourgeoisie life, to his "father-mother-child" type of family. I want to live my life, to look back at it and know that I lived, that I had fun, that I was true to myself, with pride. You know, Aviad's biggest dream was for us to live in Tel Aviv and have kids, but there's something in me that can't give him that. The first time I told Aviad I didn't want kids, he was so hurt and left the house for a few days, and I wasn't able to tell him that it's not that I don't want kids with him, I just don't want kids. I don't want to be a father, I don't want to. And if God or the state or I don't know who decided that I shouldn't get married and have children then why do I need to fight them? (Silence) It's a date-rape drug, G.

Moshe: What?

Shimri: That's what straights call it. That's what they put in girls' drinks so they lose consciousness and then forget afterwards. But I gave us a small amount. Besides, everyone here in the sauna is on it. Without alcohol it just relaxes everything, loosens you up. That's what we need, to loosen up a little. Do I need to apologize to the kid?

Moshe: He'll grow up... Feeling attractive for one night, is that too much to ask? One night of not feeling like some prehistoric monster, the way this kid looks at me, as if my time has passed... I know I'm already a father, and that I chose this for myself, and I also love Moriah. I just want to be 20 again, for one night, to be Yaakov, to be loved. Are you attracted to me, Shimri?

("Number 43" is announced through the PA system)

Moshe: Your turn.

Shimri: Do you want to go in?

Moshe: What's the point?

Shimri: Go figure, Yaakov-Moshe. We're in a sauna, anything can happen. Go in.

(Moshe enters the sauna area, leaving his phone behind. Chen enters the room, only a towel on his body, and spots Shimri mumbling something to himself from a page)

Shimri: (Memorizing to himself, as if trying to remember) "If you ask the people in Berlin they will tell you that I am the best tavern there is. My body is like a port city and the passersby anchor within me, and like the best tavern there is at a remote crossroads I provide them a place to rest, to be comforted and to feel."

Chen: What is that?

Shimri: It's a poem. Today, early in the morning, I was sitting in a gay bar in Berlin after being at the sauna all night. I sat there, and listened to a poem that some German kid read. He got off stage and I chased after him to get the words and I translated it on some napkin I found. The whole flight I try to memorise it. (Approaches Chen) Can I sit next to you? (Continues) I sat there, in that crappy bar in Berlin, and I promised myself that I would read this poem to Aviad, that From now on it would be different, I would be different, I would be a better Shimri, a better person, a better husband, a better gay.

Chen: I think you're charming. (Shimri wipes his tears. Chen tries to touch him, slowly kisses Shimri, Shimri pushes him away.)

Shimri: Why didn't the commander come with you? Tell the truth, is it because of his wife?

Chen: He asked me to stop calling him. Said I don't understand anything, that I'm just a kid who knows anything, and told me I need to get my hands dirty or to go through some "baptism".

Shimri: Well, and did you get baptized inside?

Chen: Yes, yes I got baptized.

Shimri: And how was it?

Chen: Would you have sex with me?

Shimri: Of course. But I have sex with everyone, it's not personal. (They are close, Chen tries to kiss him. Aviad bursts onto the stage in a storm, only a towel wrapped around his body, looking for something to hold on to. Shimri leaves Chen and runs to support Aviad who is spinning around possessed.)

Aviad: Let's go, Shimri. I don't want to anymore, I don't want to. They're just lying there, three men, like corpses, and like five men are penetrating some guy one after the other, and they're whipping and yelling "slut, slut, spread it". I have no idea if he's conscious at all. And then the guy at the front desk smiled at me and directed me to one of the men who were lying down and told me "he's the best, only good reviews" as if it was a prize. I froze on the spot. I wasn't able to move. Everyone kept looking at me and encouraging me, so... so... so... I dropped the towel and fucked him. I didn't know if he wanted me to keep fucking him or not so I mumbled sorry all the time. Sorry, sorry, sorry... (Chen laughs) What are you laughing at, you son of a bitch?

Chen: Hey, hey, hey, watch your words. Who did you call a son of a bitch? They invited us, they wanted it. This guy from the front desk said "put a smile on, here's Noam, Gilad and Roi. Each one of them wanted to be your slut tonight. Make them happy.", so how are the choices of Noam, Gilad, and Roi my fault? They came here, they chose to be high, they chose to be penetrated, they even laid down like that in that position.

Aviad: Did yours even breathe? I don't know which one of them it was, Roi, Noam or Gilad. (To Shimri) I need you to not leave me anymore, to stop with the nonsense. I think this time we went too far.

(Aviad starts to convulse, falls and loses consciousness, and at the same time, a vibration is heard from the phone Moshe left behind.)

Chen: What's wrong with him?

Shimri: It's called "crashing", it's from the G.

Chen: Is it dangerous? (Shimri pours water on Aviad and tries to calm him down. Chen looks on with jealousy. The phone doesn't stop vibrating.)

Shimri: What's with the phone?

Chen: (Checks the phone) It's Yaakov's phone. It's Nava. 11 missed calls. She wrote to him "Where are you? There's a rumor about a 16-year-old girl who was raped by 30 men in Eilat! Moriah isn't answering, call me!"

(Moshe returns to the waiting area from the sauna, only a towel wraps his body, singing "The Man I Love", he is happy.)

Moshe: Shimri, you were right, there's nothing like the sauna. What a selection, beautiful guys. There were like three beauties lying there and you can just choose from the selection. Some guy looked at me, caught me with his eyes, told me in a French accent "Ooh-la-la, what a daddy we have here". What happened? What's wrong with you? What happened to Aviad? (Chen tries to answer but Shimri stops him)

Shimri: Nothing. We're fine. Everything is fine. Go, keep on partying, Yaakov. Go have fun, go.

Moshe: Yeah? Are you coming in, Shimri? you're next in line, I'm waiting for you!

Shimri: We're coming in. (Moshe enters, singing, back into the sauna)

Chen: What are you doing? His daughter-

Shimri: No, it's not. It's just a rumor. It's just a rumor, Chen. Let him enjoy, let him be who he is, for a moment. For a moment let him let loose, for a moment let him not be a father, let him enjoy, let him not know until he is done partying. If it's true he'll have his whole life to deal with it. Go celebrate with him.

Chen: Me?

Shimri: You wanted to stop being a kid, right? You have an opportunity to finally choose to be a man. Being a man is understanding that sometimes you need to sacrifice a little for someone else.

Chen: You'll come in too, right? (Chen exits)

Shimri: Aviad, do you hear? "If you ask the people in Berlin they will tell you that I am the best tavern there is. My body is like a port city and the passersby-"

(Suddenly Aviad coughs, and starts to mumble)

Aviad: Shimri, Shimri, tell me the truth, were you at the sauna in Berlin? Don't lie to me.

Shimri: No, no, no.

Aviad: (Tries to grab onto something and get up, and starts to exit) Good. Tomorrow is a new day, and you'll do better, you'll stop with the drugs and the alcohol, and we'll be parents, parents to one or two kids who will be on our side of this war.

(Aviad exits the sauna. Shimri is left alone. He looks around him. He starts to recite the poem of the kid from Berlin)

Shimri:

If you ask the people in Berlin
they will tell you that I am the best tavern there is.
My body is like a port city and the passersby anchor within me.
And like the best tavern there is at a remote crossroads I provide them a place to rest, to be comforted and to feel.
And when my parents ask me how the party was, I will have no words to describe it to them. Not because I have no words, but because we don't speak the same native tongues.
How can I convey to this man and woman before me the feeling of dancing in a dress and a whole dance floor embracing you
if they never looked in the mirror and felt like they don't belong to themselves?
What words are there in their language that can convey the moment when you see a couple of 60-year-old men kissing and you say to yourself
"Look, maybe I have a future after all."
What syllables can express, without judgment, that I am gay,
And that I love it.
(**"Number 44"** is announced through the PA system. Shimri takes one last look towards the sauna but chooses to exit.)

Curtain.