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# After Her Death

A Play by Motti Lerner

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Dramaturgy: Gad Kaynar Kissinger

This play was written in response to various events that took place during the Gaza war, which broke out on October 7, 2023. All the characters in the play, however, are products of the playwright's imagination and bear no relation to any actual persons. The events referred to in connection with the first hostage-release deal between Israel and Hamas were, nevertheless, inspired by actual events.

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## Characters

Oded (52) — Owner of a furniture store

Dina (48) — His wife, a physician

Shira (23) — Their deceased daughter

Ofer (19) — Their son, a soldier

Rachel (75) — Oded's mother

Maya (18) — Ofer's girlfriend

## The Plot

The play has two narrative layers. The present-day action takes place in Tel Aviv in early December 2023, about two months after October 7, the day Shira was abducted from the Nova music festival. It begins on December 4, at Shira's funeral, after her body was recovered from Gaza by the IDF, and ends five days later, on December 8, two days before the end of the shiva<sup>1</sup>.

The past action consists of a series of flashbacks in which Oded imagines conversations with Shira during the final days of November 2023, when the first hostage-release deal between Israel and Hamas was underway. The eighth round of releases, scheduled for December 1, 2023, did not take place. Shira, who was supposed to be released in that round, was found dead two days later.

## The Set

The set should be abstract and spare, allowing for scenes beside Shira's grave at the cemetery, in various rooms of Oded and Dina's apartment, and in Rachel's apartment.

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The traditional seven-day Jewish mourning period following a burial <sup>1</sup>

**1. Monday, December 4, 2023. A cemetery. Noon. Beside Shira's freshly dug grave. A wreath lies on the mound. Oded, Dina, Ofer, Maya, and Rachel are present. Oded recites Kaddish.**

Oded:       Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world, which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen. May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity...

**He cannot go on. He wipes away his tears and motions to Dina to deliver the eulogy.**

Dina:       Our dearest Shira... our child... our beloved... I can't do this. I don't understand. I can't believe it... We brought you into the world so you could live. So you could blossom. So you could be happy... And suddenly, this horror. Before you'd even begun... before you'd had the chance... before we'd had the chance... You didn't deserve to suffer like this, Shiraleh. You didn't deserve to die like this...

**Her voice breaks. Oded, Rachel, Ofer and Maya wipe away their tears. Silence.**

Rachel:     It's going to rain soon.

Ofer:       We should go.

**They all turn toward the exit. Oded looks back and sees Shira sitting beside the grave. She looks the way he imagines her in captivity. Only he can see her.**

Oded:       I want to stay a little longer.

Dina:       You don't have an umbrella.

Oded:       That's all right.

Ofer:       Come with us, Dad.

Oded:       Just a few more minutes.

Rachel:     People will be coming.

Oded: They can wait.

Dina: Are you all right? Do you want me to stay with you?

Oded: I'm perfectly fine.

Dina: Are you sure?

Oded: Yes.

Dina: We'll wait for you in the car.

**Dina, Rachel, Ofer and Maya exit. Oded turns to Shira. A flashback to the days of negotiations over the November 2023 hostage deal. The following conversation takes place, of course, in Oded's imagination.**

Oded: Don't lose hope, Shira. I just spoke to one of the prime minister's aides. The rumors are true. There's a deal. The cabinet will approve it tomorrow. The day after, they'll start releasing women and children. He promised you'll be in the first group of ten.

Shira: I can't hold out, Dad. Planes are bombing all the time. The ground is shaking. The windows have shattered. The room is full of soot. Dust. Smoke. I'm lying under the mattress. I can barely breathe.

Oded: People from the security service say the pilots know where you are. They won't hit you.

Shira: They don't know anything. Mohammed moves me from place to place every three days.

Oded: Those bastards need you. They'll do anything to keep you alive. The ceasefire starts tomorrow...

Shira: Here he comes. He's got a piece of glass in his forehead. He wants me to bandage him. You're in the fifth year of medical school, he says, waving his gun. You know how to bandage it. I tear a strip from a rag. Wipe away the blood. Tie it around his head... Boom. A missile hits near the building. The blast knocks me down. I crawl under the mattress. He crawls in after me. I can smell his sweat. His breath. Don't be afraid, he says. Nothing happened. It hit the building

across the street... Suddenly his hand is under my shirt...  
Leave me alone. Don't touch me... I've been protecting you  
for two months. Tomorrow they're releasing you... Get your  
hands off me. My husband, Uri, will kill you... I told him  
I'm married so he wouldn't touch me... Leave me alone. I've  
got my period.

Oded: Shira? Shira?

Shira: He believes me and backs off.

Oded: Tomorrow morning it'll all be over, Shira. Tomorrow  
morning...

**2. Later that night. At the end of the first day of shiva. The living  
room of Oded and Dina's apartment. The visitors have left. Dina,  
Rachel, Ofer and Maya are present.**

Dina: **(Toward the bathroom)** Oded?! Oded?!

Rachel: He went to throw up.

Ofer: He can't keep drinking like that.

Rachel: He's having a hard time.

Ofer: That only makes it worse.

Dina: I'm going to check on him.

Rachel: Sit down. He'll be back in a minute.

Dina: I'll make him some coffee.

Maya: I'll do it.

**Maya heads toward the kitchen. Oded enters after washing his face.  
He sits down beside Dina. She takes his hand.**

Dina: Are you all right?

Oded: Bastards. All of them.

Rachel: Enough. Stop it.

Oded: I don't want them coming here. I don't want to listen to them. I don't want to talk to them.

Dina: We're sitting shiva. They came to mourn with us.

Oded: They don't understand what we've been through these last few days.

Rachel: They do understand. They want to comfort us. They just don't know how.

Dina: You could have at least tried to listen to them.

Oded: I did listen. Even to the parents of Uri, who left her there alone in the wadi.

Dina: She sprained her ankle. He was trying to save her. He was killed when he went to get the car.

Oded: He was trying to save himself.

Ofer: How could you listen to them when you were drinking the whole time?

Oded: It's the only way I can make sense of anything.

Ofer: It makes you angry. You yell. You curse. No one can talk to you.

Oded: Don't lecture me, Ofer.

Ofer: You picked a fight with everyone today.

Dina: The Klonopin doesn't work when you drink like that.

Maya: **(Enters with the coffee)** I put in two sugars.

Oded: Thank you. **(Takes a sip)**

Rachel: Please try to control yourself tomorrow.

Oded: I'm not staying here tomorrow.

Dina: What do you mean? People are coming.

Oded: Let them come. I'm going to see Shira.

Ofer: That's out of the question, Dad.

Oded: One day was enough for me.

Dina: Try one more day and see.

Rachel: How can we sit shiva without you? Everyone who comes wants to talk to you.

Oded: I saw them. They think I've lost my mind.

Rachel: Because you're exhausted. Because you haven't slept in four nights.

Oded: Because I can't sleep anymore.

Maya: Maybe we should sit shiva with the hostage families in the square?

Dina: I can't go anywhere near that place.

Maya: There are some bereaved families there too.

Dina: I don't want to think about other people's children right now.

**Oded pours himself a glass of whiskey and drinks it.**

Ofer: Please, Dad. Stop drinking. We want to stay sane.

Dina: Leave him alone, Ofer.

Ofer: Somebody has to tell him.

Dina: I'll tell him.

Oded: Tell me what? That it's unhealthy?

Ofer: That we can't live with it.

Oded: And the rest we can live with?

- Ofer: We need you here with us, Dad.
- Oded: Shira needed me. **(Reaches for the bottle)**
- Dina: **(Moves it away from him)** Enough, Oded. Please. Look at yourself.
- Rachel: You fought for two whole months. You moved heaven and earth.
- Dina: And we won't let you fall apart.
- Rachel: That's why we're sitting shiva.
- Ofer: For you, too.
- Oded: People come, sit around, make small talk and go home. They don't even try to understand what happened. She should be here with us now. Alive, healthy and laughing.
- Dina: We'll go on living even if they don't understand.
- Oded: If anyone from the army or the government comes...
- Dina: Then you'll listen to them.
- Rachel: **(Angrily)** Stop feeling sorry for yourself. When your father was killed I was left alone. With a two-year-old baby. With a store. I never even asked myself whether I could manage. I went on. I had no choice. Neither do you. First thing, you stop drinking.
- Oded: Fine. One last one. **(Drinks another glass)**
- Dina: **(Angrily)** I asked you to stop!!
- Oded: I stopped.
- Dina: **(To Maya)** Don't buy him any more. Even if he asks you. **(To Oded)** Now take a Klonopin and go to bed.
- Oded: I already took one.
- Dina: When did you take it?

Oded: I took it.

Dina: How many?

Oded: One.

Dina: But you've been drinking too.

Oded: Enough, Dina. Stop.

Dina: Then go to bed. And get a grip on yourself. We'll never forgive the people who abandoned her there, but I won't let you take your anger out on us. We have enough anger of our own. And you're not leaving us alone. You're sitting shiva with us for the whole seven days. We mourn together and we comfort each other together. And on Sunday, all of us are going to the grave together. Do you hear me?

Oded: I hear you.

Dina: And I won't spend the rest of the shiva terrified that at any moment you might do something to yourself.

Oded: **(Firmly)** I didn't do anything to myself.

Dina: I really want to believe you.

Oded: **(Angrily)** I'm not listening to this anymore.

**He exits to the bedroom. Dina follows him.**

Ofer: **(To Maya)** You've been buying him whiskey?! Why?!

Maya: I bought him one bottle a week. He had a drink or two a day which calmed him down a little. He could listen. Think. He started drinking more yesterday, after they brought her back. This morning he asked me for another bottle.

Ofer: And you bought it for him?

Maya: I asked your mother, but by then she couldn't take anything in...

**3. Immediately afterward. The bedroom. Oded is sitting on the bed. Dina sits down beside him.**

Dina: We need to get through the shiva in one piece, Oded. We have no choice. I'll look after you and you'll look after me. We're strong enough.

Oded: I'm not so sure.

Dina: Then I'll be sure for both of us. And I'm not going to let you give up on yourself. Right now, we're mourning. We'll demand answers from the government later.

Oded: You think anyone there is going to give you anything?

Dina: We're bereaved parents. We're entitled to answers. There's no point wasting the shiva arguing over rumors. The day it ends, we'll demand the record of last week's cabinet meeting.

Oded: I already asked for it.

Dina: We'll ask again.

Oded: They'll never give it to us. They know why.

Dina: We'll sit outside the prime minister's office until they do.

Oded: We should have done that on Friday morning. When there was still time to save her. I'll never forgive myself. How can it be that I'm alive and she's dead?

Dina: I don't know. I don't have an answer. I don't know if I ever will. But we'll keep going, even without an answer. We'll get through tonight. We'll get through tomorrow. One day, then another. Maybe you'll even go back to the store for a few hours and I'll go to the hospital now and then to see my patients. We have to believe it's possible. **(He is silent)** Do you hear me? **(He is silent)** Answer me. We can't afford to fall apart. Look what happened to Ofer. He ran back to the army because of us. I don't want to lose him. **(He is silent)** I don't want to lose you either. Do you hear me? I need you here all the time. Until the end of the shiva. You're not

leaving me alone in this shit. Hold me. I won't make it without you.

Oded: **(Holds her)** I won't make it without you either.

#### 4. Immediately afterward. Ofer's room. Ofer and Maya.

Ofer: I don't know how I'm going to stay here until the end of the shiva. I can't keep an eye on them all the time.

Maya: They need you.

Ofer: Did he really try to jump out of the window at the hospital?

Maya: I don't know. He felt some pressure in his chest after the army told us they'd found her. We called an ambulance. But he didn't say anything, so we didn't suspect anything. The nurse told us this morning.

Ofer: I'm not sure I know how to help him.

Maya: Try going for a bike ride with him. I rode with him almost every day during the two months you were in Gaza.

Ofer: You?

Maya: Yes. So he could breathe a little.

Ofer: All right. We'll see how he is in the morning.

Maya: I missed you so much... **(Tries to embrace him. He hesitates)** What's wrong?

Ofer: Nothing. There were so many people here today. With all the commotion, I couldn't think about her. They probably raped her there every night.

Maya: Don't say that. We don't know.

Ofer: I think the pathologists told my father something.

Maya: Maybe that's why he started drinking like this.

- Ofer: Then my mother should take care of him. She's a senior physician. She knows specialists. What happened to Shira is hard enough for me.
- Maya: You have no idea how hard it is for her.
- Ofer: During those two months in Gaza, I looked for her in every house. Every basement. Every time I fired a shell, I was afraid I might be hitting her.
- Maya: You can't leave after the shiva. They might let you help them. Otherwise, they won't make it. Tranquilizers all the time. Sleeping pills. One night I woke up to someone knocking at the door. They didn't hear it. I went downstairs to open it. I was sure it was the army coming to notify us. I didn't know whether they were coming because of Shira or because of you. In the end, it was just the wind.
- Ofer: At least now we don't have to worry about her anymore.

**She looks at him and, after a moment, embraces him.**

**5. At midnight. Oded and Dina's bedroom. Dina is asleep. Oded lies awake beside her. A light comes up on Shira.**

- Shira: There's no ceasefire, Dad. Planes are bombing. Bombs are exploding. Most of the buildings around here have already been destroyed. I'm curled up in a corner under the mattress. Trying to think about Uri. He must feel guilty that he survived that morning. Probably reported for duty before he was even called up. Right? When I sprained my ankle there, he wanted to stay with me... **(Terrified)** Boom! That was close...
- Oded: These are the last bombs, Shira. The agreement has already been signed. The ceasefire takes effect in a few minutes. At midnight. You'll be released tomorrow. We'll be waiting for you at the border crossing.
- Shira: The door is opening. Maybe it's really happening. Yes. Mohammed is bringing me new clothes. Go take a shower. They'll come for you in the morning.

- Oded: He knows what he's talking about, Shira. The first ten are being released tomorrow. We're waiting to hear the names.
- Shira: I head for the shower. He follows me. Don't come in, I tell him. He pulls out his gun. I try to push him out. He slaps me. I bite him. You bitch. The pilots bombing us now are your friends. You drink with them in bars, dance with them at parties. You fuck them... So now take off your clothes... Go on. He presses the gun against my head. Take off your clothes. I'm too terrified to move...
- Oded: No... Shira... no... What matters is that you're alive... You're strong. You'll get through this. You won't forget it, but you'll come back here, to the life you had. You'll finish medical school, become a doctor, get married, have children... **(The light on her goes out)**

**6. Tuesday, December 5, 2023. The second day of shiva. Morning. The living room. Dina is sitting at the table. Ofer and Maya enter.**

- Ofer: Good morning.
- Dina: Good morning.
- Ofer: Is Dad still asleep?
- Dina: Probably.
- Ofer: We heard you moving around in the kitchen last night.
- Dina: I baked a cake.
- Ofer: You can buy a cake, Mom.
- Maya: I came down to help you, but I saw you dozing on the couch.
- Ofer: Maybe we should tidy up a little. People will be here soon. Why didn't the cleaner come?
- Dina: Her son was wounded there.
- Ofer: Wounded?

Dina: He'll be all right. A doctor from my department saw him.

Ofer: Do you want me to vacuum? Take out the garbage?

Maya: I'll do it.

Dina: You're going to school today. You have an exam next week.

Maya: Don't worry. I'll manage.

Dina: I hope it doesn't frighten you, seeing us fall apart like this.

Maya: You're the strongest people I know.

Dina: Not strong enough.

**She embraces her. Oded enters, carrying his bag.**

Oded: Good morning.

Dina: Where are you going?

Oded: To Shira.

Dina: You promised you'd stay. My sister will be here soon. Your friends, too.

Oded: I couldn't fall asleep last night.

Dina: I won't stay here alone. And I won't let you be there alone either.

Oded: Don't worry.

Dina: These people are coming to support us. Why are you giving up on that?

Oded: Because I don't believe them. Because if I stay here making small talk with them, I'm accepting what happened.

Dina: So you're running away?

Ofer: I need you too, Dad.

- Oded: Their grief is a lie. Even the people demonstrating in the streets are just trying to clear their consciences. But when we needed them, we were alone.
- Ofer: At least we'll be together.
- Oded: Then come with me to Shira.
- Dina: We'll go to her on the last day of the shiva.
- Oded: I'm not leaving her there alone.
- Dina: Yesterday, Uri's father asked about their apartment. We have to cancel the lease. Clear out her things. Her books, her clothes, her bicycle.
- Oded: We'll talk about it another time. **(Turns to leave)**
- Ofer: Wait, Dad. It's hard for us without you.
- Oded: I understand, but...
- Ofer: If you understand, then stay.
- Oded: If I stay, I might strangle someone here. **(Exits)**
- Ofer: **(To Dina)** He would have stayed if you'd insisted.
- Dina: I did insist.
- Ofer: Did you notice he stopped taking the Klonopin? Look in the medicine cabinet.
- Dina: He doesn't look like someone who's about to do something to himself.
- Ofer: Are you saying that as a doctor?
- Dina: Yes.
- Maya: Let's go after him. He's probably still in the parking lot. Maybe he'll want to go to the beach.
- Ofer: **(To Dina)** Will you be all right here without us?

Dina: No!

Maya: We'll be back before people arrive.

Dina: I'm not staying here alone.

**Silence. Rachel enters carrying grocery bags.**

Rachel: Good morning. I brought you breakfast. I have to stop by the store for a few hours. We started our year-end sale today. Is he still asleep?

Dina: He left.

Rachel: Where to?

Ofer: To Shira.

Rachel: Alone?

Dina: We're sitting shiva here today.

Rachel: Someone has to keep an eye on him. **(Calls Oded on her phone)** Did he sleep last night? Did he eat anything this morning? Have coffee? **(No answer)** He's not answering. Did he take his medication?

Dina: No.

Rachel: How could you let him leave like that? Did he talk? Say anything? Did he shave? **(Dina does not answer)** The store can wait. I'll call you when I find him. **(Exits)**

Ofer: I don't understand why she's so hysterical. He just needs some time to himself. That's all. I need it too.

Maya: **(To Dina)** Do you want some more coffee?

Dina: I want to die.

Ofer: Stop it, Mom. I can't bear to hear you talk like that.

Dina: I hope you never lose a daughter.

Ofer: I can't stay here looking after Dad. Or you.

Dina: Right now, we're all looking after each other.

Ofer: And we each have to look after ourselves too.

Maya: Don't yell at her.

Ofer: I wasn't yelling. **(Sits down on the couch)**

Maya: **(To Dina)** Can I vacuum in here?

Ofer: I said I'd do it.

Maya: Fine. I'll take out the garbage and wash the dishes.

Ofer: I'll do that too.

Maya: People will be here soon.

Ofer: Let them come.

Dina: **(In pain)** Stop it, both of you. Just give me a few minutes to cry...

**7. Later that day. Oded and Rachel are sitting beside Shira's grave.**

Rachel: Dina needs you.

Oded: I need her too. But I can't keep pretending. Everyone who comes to our house knows Shira could have been saved. She was still alive Friday morning. Saturday too. No one dares say anything about it. Instead, they make small talk. When I hear them, I can't control myself.

Rachel: Because you're not taking your medication.

Oded: I'll go home after they leave.

Rachel: And what about Ofer? I haven't seen him cry. That's not a good sign.

Oded: I don't know what to say to him. He's been avoiding me for two months.

- Rachel: Try talking to him about it.
- Oded: All right. Tonight.
- Rachel: Why not now?
- Oded: Because he's sitting there with them. Listening to them talk about buying, selling, renovating, traveling. I can't talk about anything but her.
- Rachel: They talk about her all the time.
- Oded: They talk about her and Uri's cat, who hasn't eaten in three days.
- Rachel: They're hurting too.
- Oded: Thank you. Anything else?
- Rachel: What are we going to do about the store? I've managed on my own for the past two months. But the year-end sale started today.
- Oded: I couldn't care less, Mom.
- Rachel: Ten of our employees are in the reserves. Office furniture sales has been dead for a month. We need to change the bedroom and living room displays.
- Oded: Change whatever you want.
- Rachel: I need your help.
- Oded: Don't you understand that I can't?
- Rachel: Why are you giving up on yourself?
- Oded: Don't try to fool me, Mom. You've been running sales like this for fifty years. You can run one more. You want me at the store because you think I'll recover there. You're wrong. I'm not going to recover because I don't want to recover.
- Rachel: You're not staying here alone, Oded.

Oded: **(Explodes)** Is that what this is about? I already told you. When I got to the hospital ward, I felt like I was suffocating. I wanted to open the window beside the bed so I could breathe. That's all.

Rachel: The nurses told us something else.

Oded: And you believe them, not me?

Rachel: I believe you, but...

Oded: If you believe me, then why did you come here?

Rachel: Because we need you at home.

Oded: I told you I'll come home tonight.

Rachel: Then I'm staying with you.

Oded: Do me a favor, Mom. Just leave me alone. Go home. To the store. The office. A café. Anywhere you want. I'll see you tonight. **(She puts her hand on his shoulder. He shrugs it off)** Shira won't let me do anything to myself.

**She exits. Oded covers his eyes with his hands. After a moment, he lowers his hands and sees Shira.**

Shira: I'm sitting on the mattress. Thinking about you. About Uri. About our studies. Mohammed comes in, holding a small bag. Did you come to take me? Answer me. When am I getting out? He doesn't answer. If you don't tell me, I'll tell your commander what you did to me.

Oded: I spoke again to the head of the security service, Shira. He says they have no control over the list. But he's sure you'll be released. You're a woman. Not a soldier. You have priority. We keep pressing. We're not giving up on you for a moment...

Shira: Answer me, Mohammed. Why am I not being released? He takes a plastic cup out of the bag and says: My commanders are afraid I made you pregnant. Come on. Pee in here. If there's no pregnancy, you go out. I slip the cup under my dress and pee. He dips the stick into it. Waits. No pregnancy.

So I'm getting out? The doctor wants another test next week. Next week?! Because of that I have to stay here another week?!

Oded: There's an agreement, Shira. It's still being carried out. Women and children are being released...

Shira: I can't stay here another week, Dad.

Oded: They won't keep you there another week. If they delay you even one day, the war will start again. They know that.

Shira: I can't stay here even one more day. Even one more hour. I spend all the time thinking of how to get to the window...

**8. That evening. Oded and Dina's apartment. Rachel, Ofer and Maya are present. Dina enters from the bedroom, wearing a coat.**

Dina: It's already dark. I'm going to the cemetery.

Rachel: You're not going alone.

Dina: Wait here. Maybe he'll come back after all.

Rachel: One of our salespeople saw him walking along the beach.

Dina: **(To Ofer)** Drive there in Grandma's car. Check the restaurants too.

Maya: **(To Ofer)** I'm coming with you.

Rachel: Take his coat.

**Dina, Ofer and Maya put on their coats and turn to leave. Oded enters, carrying his bag.**

Rachel: Why aren't you answering your phone?

Dina: We've been looking for you all day. Are you all right?

Ofer: We were worried about you.

Rachel: We were almost out of our minds.

- Maya: Do you want coffee or tea?
- Rachel: You're not turning your phone off again.
- Dina: You're shivering. Did you get wet in the rain?
- Oded: No.
- Ofer: I went to Shira's grave. I went to the store. The beach. Where were you?
- Rachel: We asked the visitors to leave so we could go looking for you.
- Oded: Stop worrying about me so much.
- Dina: **(Furiously)** From now on, you stay here all the time! You're not leaving this house again until the end of the shiva! Do you hear me?!
- Oded: I hear you.
- Ofer: So where were you?
- Oded: Shira was on the list of seven women who were supposed to be released Friday morning.
- Dina: We know that.
- Oded: Until now, all we had were rumors. Now I've seen the list.
- Dina: You saw it?!
- Oded: Here it is. **(Takes a sheet of paper from his bag and hands it to her)** The head of the security service gave it to me.
- Dina: **(Looks at the list)** Shira's first... **(Hands the paper back to him)**
- Ofer: **(Takes it and looks at it)** Motherfuckers...
- Oded: Now I'm also convinced that the government blew up the deal so it would have an excuse to continue the war.
- Ofer: They blew it up. Not us.

- Oded: It was the other way around. They had no reason to blow it up. They were committed to releasing ten women. They had seven. Instead of the three women they couldn't reach, they offered three elderly men.
- Rachel: **(After looking at the list)** Those old men... they'll probably die within days...
- Maya: **(Takes the list from her)** The girls too... all of them...
- Ofer: **(Takes the list from her)** I don't understand. In the middle of the day, you suddenly meet with the head of the security service? And suddenly he gives you a document like this?
- Oded: I called him. He told me to come. He said I deserved to know.
- Ofer: Deserved to know what?
- Oded: That the cabinet gave up on Shira even though it knew there wouldn't be another deal anytime soon.
- Dina: Is that what he told you? The prime minister told me on the phone that they insisted on all ten women because they knew those bastards could reach every one of them.
- Rachel: And he wanted to save all of them.
- Oded: So we had to lose seven young women and three old men? Who knows what's happening to those six women now.
- Dina: When we get the record of the cabinet meeting, we'll know exactly what happened there.
- Oded: The pathologists who examined Shira told me what she went through there...
- Dina: **(Firmly)** We're not talking about what she went through there.
- Rachel: Instead of blaming them, you're blaming us?
- Oded: Don't you understand what I'm telling you? Shira could have been saved. The other six girls could have been saved. The government gave up on them so it could go back to

fighting. Who knows when there'll be another deal? Who knows if they'll still be alive by then...

Rachel: There'll be another deal within a few days. This time it'll go through as agreed.

Oded: And Shira had to die because of that?

Dina: This discussion is over, Oded. I don't want to think about it now. Right now, we have to choose a headstone for her. A man from the monument company was here today. He brought a catalog of samples. **(Hands it to him)** We have to decide what to write on it.

Oded: I'll look at it later.

Dina: If you don't look at it now, I'll decide without you.

Oded: Listen to me, Dina. The parents of those six girls also need to know why their daughters are still there.

Dina: I don't care about those girls anymore. I don't want to hear about them. We'll ask the prime minister our questions after the shiva. **(To Oded)** What's that stain on your shirt? Did you spill coffee on yourself? Did you have dinner?

Oded: I'm not hungry.

Ofer: I was there Friday morning when the deal fell apart. It didn't happen because of us. It happened because of them. They violated the ceasefire. They fired rockets. They planted explosives.

Oded: The government could have waited a day before going back to fighting.

Dina: I said this discussion is over. **(To Oded)** Take a sleeping pill and go to bed. And I won't go through another day like this because of you. You have no idea what was going through my mind.

Oded: Can you calm down a little, please?

Ofer: And you're not running away again. We need you here with us for the whole shiva.

- Oded: I'm not running away, but...
- Ofer: You spent most of the day walking on the beach while we sat here crying over Shira.
- Oded: And where were you for two months while we were fighting for her?
- Ofer: I was fighting for her there.
- Oded: You ran off to your friends.
- Ofer: If we hadn't been fighting, there wouldn't have been any deal and she wouldn't have had any chance at all.
- Dina: Will you both just shut up?

**She takes Oded by the arm and leads him to their bedroom.**

- Maya: You shouldn't have spoken to him like that.
- Ofer: You heard how he spoke to me.
- Rachel: You can see what state he's in.
- Maya: He wasn't running away. He was trying to understand how the government decided to give up on Shira.
- Ofer: The government didn't decide to give up on her.
- Maya: Then who did?
- Ofer: They did.
- Maya: There was a cabinet meeting. There was a vote. They made a decision to...
- Rachel: We all thought there would be another deal within a couple of days. He thought so too. We were sure those bastards would keep Shira alive so they could get their prisoners back.
- Maya: We should still talk to the parents of the other girls. They need to know that it may still be possible to stop the fighting and talk about a new deal.

Ofer: They know that. **(To Rachel)** Good night.

Rachel: Good night.

**Ofer and Maya exit to Ofer's room. Rachel remains alone. The list of women slated for release in the canceled round lies on the table. She picks it up and studies it.**

**9. Immediately afterward. Dina and Oded in the bedroom. He is sitting on the bed. She is standing in front of him.**

Dina: What's happening to you?

Oded: What's happening to me?

Dina: Have you lost your mind?

Oded: Why would you say such a thing?

Dina: You have to go back to taking Klonopin.

Oded: Why? Because I refuse to accept that she died like this?

Dina: I told you, we'll find out what happened after the shiva.

Oded: Why wait until then?

Dina: Because finding out won't bring her back to life. Today, Uri's father brought me the messages they wrote to each other. The army had downloaded them from his phone. **(Hands him a sheet of paper)** They wanted to get married this summer, after he finished his internship at the hospital.

Oded: **(Reads the page)** I can't believe it. Why didn't they tell us? We could have celebrated with them. Look. She wanted a child. Uri suggested waiting until she finished medical school. She probably didn't know he'd been killed. Maybe it's better that she didn't.

Dina: Nothing about it is better. I sit alone with his father. Listen to him alone. Cry alone. And when he asks me about you, I don't know what to tell him.

- Oded: Tell him the truth. I'm trying to get answers about what happened to them.
- Dina: We'll try to get those answers after the shiva. Right now, you sit with us. You receive the visitors with us. You don't argue. You don't accuse anyone. You don't pick fights. Can't you see what it's doing to Ofer?
- Oded: He needs to know what happened to his sister.
- Dina: Right now, he needs you to help him mourn her.
- Oded: It'll be easier for him when he knows why it happened.
- Dina: Is that how you think you're making it easier for him? By accusing him of not fighting with us to get her released?
- Oded: I'm not accusing him of anything.
- Dina: Then stop saying it to him. And for God's sake, stop drinking already.
- Oded: When I drink, it hurts less. **(Takes a drink from the bottle on the shelf)?**
- Dina: **(Takes the bottle from him)** But it hurts us.
- Oded: All right. I'll stop.
- Dina: And your mother is right. You need to go back to work. Two hours every day.
- Oded: It'll take some time.
- Dina: You're starting tomorrow morning. I stayed sane because I went back to treating my patients.
- Oded: And left me to fight for her alone. Just like Ofer.
- Dina: I went to the Red Cross in Geneva four times. I went to the UN twice. To the Vatican...
- Oded: I know.
- Dina: I wanted to stay sane for both of us.

Oded: Are we going to start keeping score now?

Dina: We're never going back to our normal lives. But maybe we can fool ourselves into believing we have. I'm willing to settle for that. So now we're getting every bottle out of the house, and after the shiva we're going to therapy. In the meantime, take a Klonopin.

Oded: When I take Klonopin, I can't think.

Dina: Just take it!!

Oded: Could you please be a little nicer to me?

Dina: **(Angrily)** No!!

**Dina exits, carrying the bottle of whiskey. Oded follows her. They enter the living room. She opens a cabinet and takes out another bottle.**

Oded: Wait a minute.

Dina: You're not drinking another drop.

Oded: Let's be reasonable about this.

Dina: If you were reasonable, you would have stopped long ago.

**Dina exits to throw the bottles in the trash. Oded turns toward the bedroom. Rachel rises from the couch and blocks his way.**

Rachel: You have to stop.

Oded: Do me a favor...

Rachel: She's trying to save you.

Oded: It's none of your business, Mom.

Rachel: It certainly is my business. I've lost enough. I'm not going to lose you too. Dina and Ofer also need you. So now you stop this war of yours. I don't want you to win it. I want all of you to go on living. So you stop looking for someone to blame. You stop keeping score. And you stop drinking. Is

that clear? And if I have to stay here day and night to watch over you, then I'll stay here day and night. Do you hear me?

**He moves past her toward the bedroom, but stops, turns and enters Shira's room.**

**10. That evening. Ofer's room. Ofer is packing a duffel bag. Maya enters, having just come out of the shower.**

- Maya: What happened?! What are you doing?! You were given leave until the end of the shiva. You can't go back to the army now.
- Ofer: I can't stay here. My father is driving me crazy. My mother is falling apart. I don't understand what he's blaming me for. What am I supposed to apologize for?
- Maya: He blames everyone. Mostly himself.
- Ofer: He forgets that I fought for Shira much more than he did. While he was giving speeches at rallies, I was looking for her there, in the tunnels underground.
- Maya: He knows that.
- Ofer: I almost got killed every day for her. He blames me for being alive. **(Closes the duffel bag)**
- Maya: That's not true, Ofer.
- Ofer: And my mother hears him and doesn't say anything.
- Maya: It's hard for them. During the two months you weren't here, they could barely function because they were so worried. If they have to worry about you now too, they won't make it.
- Ofer: If they've made it this far, then they...
- Maya: They haven't made it. They've broken down. Look at the state they're in. They needed you the whole time. Now they need you even more.
- Ofer: Are you blaming me for something too?

- Maya: I'm not blaming you for anything, but you have to be more considerate of them and stay with them.
- Ofer: I can't take care of them, Maya.
- Maya: We'll do what we can. I've been doing it for two months.
- Ofer: After Shira was abducted, I stayed here for a whole week. My father screamed. My mother cried. Shira was my sister. They didn't even see me. And now I come home for her funeral, and they blame me for not staying here to fight for her.
- Maya: You're right, but...
- Ofer: Then why are you saying I'm not considerate enough?
- Maya: Because you're going back to the army.
- Ofer: Because there I don't have to take care of anyone.
- Maya: Give them a chance, Ofer. At least until the end of the shiva. They've always been reasonable people. After they visit the grave, they'll start to recover. They don't deserve to have you leave them now. Neither do I.
- Ofer: I'll come back in a few weeks.
- Maya: I don't know if I can hold this house together until then.
- Ofer: You don't have to hold it together.
- Maya: Someone has to.
- Ofer: They do.
- Maya: They don't have the strength anymore. Tomorrow he might try again to...
- Ofer: I don't want| to hear this. **(Sits down on the bed)**

**11. That night. Midnight. The living room. Rachel is asleep on the couch. Oded rushes out of Shira's room and turns on the light.**

Oded: Shira?! Shira?! **(Shouts)** Shira?!

**He hurries to the front door, opens it and shouts outside.**

Oded: Shira!

Rachel: **(Sits up on the couch)** Oded?

**Oded grabs his phone and dials. There is no answer.**

Rachel: Oded, it's me. Mom. I thought you'd fallen asleep. I stayed here tonight. Are you all right?

Oded: Just a second. Just a second...

**He looks at her as if he does not recognize her. Dina enters, terrified.**

Dina: What happened?

Oded: Shira was here just now. She made herself coffee. She was talking on the phone.

Dina: **(To Rachel)** She was here?! Did you see her?!

Rachel: I was here, Oded. No one came in.

Oded: Uri was waiting for her outside. I called her and she didn't...

Dina: **(Screams)** Uri was waiting for her?! Uri?!

Rachel: Sit down, both of you. Calm down. **(To Oded)** Do you want a glass of water?

**He shakes his head. He pulls himself together, sits down on the couch and breathes heavily.**

Dina: For a moment, I believed you. **(In tears)** What an idiot I am...

Rachel: Nothing happened. He was dreaming.

Dina: He wasn't just dreaming.

Rachel: He's with us now.

Dina: I hope so.

**She takes a Klonopin pill from her purse and gives it to him.**

Dina: Take it. It's Klonopin. **(He shakes his head)** In the morning, I'll get you some Clopixol. Otherwise, we'll all go crazy in this house. Take it... **(Firmly)** We have to go to therapy. Tomorrow. If we want to go on living together, we have no choice. **(He gets up and turns to leave. She shouts after him)** If you don't come to therapy with me, I'll have you hospitalized! Before I lose my mind too...

**Oded exits to Shira's room. Rachel turns to Dina firmly.**

Rachel: What's wrong with you? You're not his doctor now, and you're not going to have him hospitalized because of a bad dream. Can't you see what he's going through? So don't break down. Don't threaten him. And don't fall apart. And what do you mean, "if we want to go on living together"? Of course you do.

Dina: **(Angrily)** Don't tell me what I want, because I don't even know if I still want anything. But I can't go on living with his madness anymore. And don't give me advice. If you know how to save him, go into her room and get him out of there. **(Exits)**

**12. Wednesday. The third day of shiva. Morning. The living room. Ofer is sitting on the couch in uniform, lacing up his boots. His duffel bag is packed and his rifle is beside him. A moment later, Rachel enters carrying grocery bags.**

Rachel: What are you doing? Where are you going? Have you lost your mind?

Ofer: It's none of your business, Grandma.

Rachel: Over my dead body, Ofer!

Ofer: Do me a favor and calm down.

Rachel: Take off your uniform before your parents wake up.

Ofer: Tell them not to worry.

Rachel: You're not leaving.

Ofer: I'll call them on the way.

**Dina enters from the bedroom, followed immediately by Maya from Ofer's room. They are both still in their pajamas.**

Dina: What happened? Why are you in uniform? What's with the duffel bag? You're on leave. You're not going anywhere.

Ofer: Just for a few days.

Dina: I'll talk to your battalion commander.

Ofer: He needs me now.

Rachel: So do we.

Dina: We need you more.

Maya: Yesterday you said you were staying until the end of the shiva.

Ofer: That was yesterday.

Dina: Take off the uniform. Take it off. Now. **(Shakes him)**  
You're not leaving me alone with Dad.

Ofer: Enough, Mom.

Dina: This is hard enough for me, Ofer. If anything happens to you, I'll die.

Ofer: I know how to take care of myself.

Dina: Don't give me that crap. **(Tries to pull off his uniform)**

Maya: You can't go now. You're tired. You're angry. You're confused. You don't know what you're doing.

Ofer: I know exactly what I'm doing.

Maya: I heard your conversation with your company commander.

Dina: When? What did he say?

Ofer: He didn't say anything.

Maya: You asked him to let you come back, and he told you to stay home.

Dina: What happened? Why do you want to go back?

Ofer: I just do.

Maya: If you leave now, you'll never forgive yourself.

Dina: Answer me. Why do you want to go back?

Ofer: I can't take it anymore, Mom...

Rachel: Don't talk nonsense. Of course you can. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. You're stronger than you think.

**Oded enters, still wearing pajamas.**

Oded: What can't you take?

Dina: You're staying with us until the end of the shiva. Then we'll see.

Ofer: I'm telling you I can't.

Oded: You're not going back to the army.

Ofer: Then where am I supposed to run to? Abroad?

Oded: If you have to.

Ofer: While my friends are fighting?

Oded: Yes.

Maya: Your company commander said they're managing without you.

Dina: I don't care about your friends.

Rachel: The army has enough soldiers there.

- Maya: He said that if you go back, they'll put you on trial.
- Dina: You're an only son now. We won't sign the consent form.
- Ofer: You don't need me here. You never did. You never will. You'll be much better off without me.
- Maya: What happened to you there, Ofer? Look at them...
- Ofer: Nothing happened to me.
- Oded: Who are you so eager to fight for? This government?
- Ofer: No.
- Dina: Shira doesn't need you there anymore.
- Rachel: If we lose you, who are we supposed to go on living for? The dead?
- Ofer: **(To Dina)** I heard you last night. I can't stand seeing you like this. You both need to be hospitalized.
- Oded: Who needs to be hospitalized? Me?! Your mother? For what?
- Ofer: Even Mom said you needed to be hospitalized.
- Dina: I said it in anger. I wanted him to stop drinking.
- Rachel: Would I let anyone hospitalize him?
- Ofer: You meant every word, Mom.
- Dina: No, I didn't.
- Ofer: If I stay here with you, I'll go crazy too.
- He takes his duffel bag and rifle and heads for the door. Oded blocks his way.**
- Oded: Shira is already dead, Ofer. Now we're doing everything we can to keep you alive.
- Ofer: There are other hostages there who need to be freed.

- Oded: This government doesn't care if the hostages die.
- Dina: You're a bereaved brother. You need to be discharged.
- Maya: And come protest with us for all the other hostages.
- Rachel: And for your friends who are being killed there every day for nothing.
- Dina: Okay. Thank you. We've all heard you. We all understand. **(To Ofer)** Now take off the uniform and hang it in the closet. You're staying here until the end of the shiva. After that, we'll ask the army to transfer you to a base near home.
- Oded: Absolutely not. You're done with the army. We're not asking them for anything. Nor from the government. We're not asking anyone in this country for anything ever again. The deal that was supposed to bring Shira home fell apart on Friday morning. Shira was murdered on Sunday. Forty-eight hours later. Did anyone in this country beg for her life during those hours? Did anyone go on a hunger strike for her?
- Maya: There were thousands of people in the square Saturday night.
- Oded: If there had been hundreds of thousands, she'd still be alive.
- Dina: Stop, Oded. Enough.
- Oded: I screamed until my throat was raw. No one heard me.
- Dina: Enough already!
- Oded: There's nothing left for us here. Nothing. And there never will be...

**She slaps Oded across the face. Shock.**

- Oded: They didn't care that Shira was abused, that she was raped, that she was murdered. The moment they gave up on her, they gave up on us too. All of us. And even after she was murdered, they still blame us for complaining. For demanding answers. They hate us because we're the proof of their failure... their helplessness... their defeat...

**He begins to breathe rapidly. He looks confused, as if he does not recognize anyone in the room. A moment later, he runs to Shira's room. Ofer hurries after him. Silence. Ofer returns.**

Ofer:           **(To Dina)** Go to him. He needs an injection.

**Dina hurries to Shira's room. Rachel follows her. Maya starts after them, but Ofer stops her.**

Ofer:           I don't want you to see him like this.

Maya:          Maybe he needs help.

Ofer:           You can't help him. I'm not sure he recognized me. He looked at me as if I were holding a grenade.

**She embraces him. Dina returns.**

Dina:          I hope he'll sleep for a few hours now.

Ofer:           I had no idea he was so...

Dina:          I don't know what happened to me. For a moment, I lost control.

Ofer:           We can't take any more of his despair.

Dina:          Don't argue with him again.

Maya:          Do you want me to straighten up a little? People will be here soon.

Dina:          Go get dressed.

Ofer:           Do you really want me transferred to a base near home?

Dina:          You need to be discharged. Dad is right. We're done with the army. I need you here. He needs you too.

**13. Thursday. The fourth day of shiva. Morning. At Shira's grave.  
Oded and Shira.**

Shira: I sit on the mattress all day. I haven't slept for three nights. I can't stop crying. There is no bombing. There's a ceasefire. Hostages are being released. Every time the door opens, I'm sure they've come to take me too. I'm so tense I don't feel hungry. I won't eat anything until they get me out of here. Mohammed comes in. Brings me a plate of beans. In three days they're giving you a pregnancy test, and then you're going home. Come on, eat. If you die on me here, they'll kill me. I hope they kill you, I tell him. Come on. Eat. I throw the plate on the floor. He gets angry. Eat off the floor. I don't move. I keep crying. He loses it. You're going to pay for everything the Jews did to me, to my family, to my home. To my life. He grabs my hand and forces it down his pants. I bite him. I hit him. He doesn't stop...

Oded: We know what he's doing to you, Shira. They talk. Word gets back to us. We're doing everything we can to get you out of there. The head of the security service told me this morning that your turn has come. That you'll be released tomorrow. I want to believe him. I want you to believe him too...

Shira: He throws me a rag. Wipe your hand. If you don't eat, I'll force the food into your mouth. You hear me? He leaves. A moment later, he comes back with shackles. Puts them on my ankles. Why? I ask. So you don't try to jump out the window at night.

**14. The same day. Evening. The living room. Dina, Rachel, Ofer and Maya are waiting for Oded. Oded enters carrying his briefcase. He sees everyone staring at him.**

Oded: What happened?

Rachel: What happened to you?

Oded: Nothing.

Rachel: You're selling the store? Without telling us?

- Oded: I was just about to tell you.
- Dina: In the middle of shiva? Can't you wait a few days? I can't even think about this right now.
- Oded: You don't have to. I'm handling it myself.
- Rachel: The buyer called to ask if everything was all right. That store is worth twice what you're asking for it. He could tell right away you'd been drinking.
- Oded: I haven't had a drop since yesterday.
- Dina: I suggest you think about it before you make such a terrible mistake.
- Oded: I've thought about it a lot. I told you. I don't want to live here.
- Rachel: What do you mean, you don't want to live here?!
- Dina: You fell apart yesterday because you let yourself fall apart. Because you gave up. Because you surrendered.
- Oded: I still want to leave.
- Dina: Where to?
- Oded: Toronto.
- Dina: Toronto?! What about us? What about your mother?
- Oded: You can all come with me. You can be a doctor anywhere. People need furniture everywhere. Mom and I will open a store. Ofer can go to university there.
- Dina: Since when do you make decisions like that for all of us?
- Rachel: That store belongs to me too, Oded. I worked there for fifty years. I'm not selling it. Certainly not for half of what it's worth.
- Oded: It's been mine for more than ten years.

- Rachel: I've run it since your father was killed, and I'll work there until the day I die.
- Oded: You can work in the store there.
- Rachel: I'm not opening any store there.
- Dina: Do yourself a favor, Oded. Think about it for another day or two. You're still feeling the effects of yesterday's injection.
- Oded: I want to live in a place where life is still possible.
- Rachel: They hate us in Toronto now too.
- Dina: This war will be over in another month or two. Maybe something good will still come out of it.
- Oded: The only thing that'll come out of it is another war.
- Ofer: You can't force us to leave, Dad. Maya's here. My friends are here. Shira's here.
- Dina: Let him sit shiva. Let him mourn his sister. He needs to be discharged from the army.
- Rachel: We're strong enough to keep living here. When your father was killed, I didn't give up and I didn't run away, even though I was alone.
- Oded: We're not giving up and we're not running away. We're starting a new life. We'll take Shira with us too.
- Dina: I'm not sure we can take Shira with us, but we'll carry her loss wherever we go.
- Ofer: We can also start a new life here.
- Oded: Everyone I meet here, I ask where they were when Shira was abducted. Where they were while she was being held captive. What they did to get her released on Friday morning. Or Saturday. Or Sunday...
- Ofer: And what came of everything you did?
- Oded: I did all I could.

- Dina: We've heard you. We understand. Thank you for the suggestion. We'll talk about it after the shiva. Now take a pill and go to sleep.
- Oded: I'm not sure you understand. I won't live in a country run by the people who voted Thursday night to leave her there.
- Dina: We understand perfectly. Here's the pill. Go to sleep.  
**(Hands it to him)**
- Oded: **(Pushes it away)** I've already seen a lawyer. He's drawing up the sales contract. I'm signing it tomorrow.
- Rachel: In your condition, you can't sign any contract.
- Dina: And you won't. You're calling him now and telling him you're putting everything on hold.
- Oded: I'm not putting anything on hold.
- Dina: If you don't call him, I will.
- Oded: What will you tell him? That I'm not responsible for my actions? He happens to think I'm doing the most responsible thing possible.
- Dina: I'm not leaving the country!
- Oded: When you think about it, you'll realize that you don't feel any guilt. After what this country took from us, we don't owe it anything. **(Heads toward Shira's room)**
- Dina: Wait.
- Rachel: **(Calling after him)** I have a lawyer too. Tomorrow I'll get an injunction. You're not selling the store. This family is mine too. You're not taking it away from me.

**She picks up her bag and exits. Dina follows Oded. Ofer and Maya remain in the room.**

- Ofer: What are we going to do with him?
- Maya: We need him. We need to believe it's possible to live here. That there's still some hope here. Let's tell him that.

- Ofer: I'm not sure he's listening to anyone.
- Maya: He'll calm down and listen.
- Ofer: I'd lock him in the house and not let him out. **(Furiously kicks Oded's briefcase, which is lying on the floor)**
- Maya: Have you lost your mind?
- Ofer: He's lost his mind. He's running away. Leaving me here with my mother completely shattered... my grandmother... this house... He can't dump all this on me...
- Maya: You're not alone. I'm staying with you.
- Ofer: This is too much for me, Maya. It's too much for you too.
- Maya: If we tell him that, he'll understand.
- Ofer: If he can run away, so can I.
- Maya: And leave me here alone with them?

**He does not answer. She sits beside him on the couch and tries to embrace him. He turns his back to her.**

### **15. Shira's room. Dina is already facing Oded.**

- Dina: I don't think you understood what I said.
- Oded: I understood perfectly.
- Dina: I'm not going to Toronto with you.
- Oded: I'll wait for you there until you join me.
- Dina: There's no point in waiting.
- Oded: I suggest you think about it a little longer.
- Dina: You're leaving me no choice. The day shiva is over, I'm moving out.
- Oded: Excuse me?!

- Dina: You heard me.
- Oded: Moving out?! Where?!
- Dina: I'll get a hotel room and start looking for an apartment.
- Oded: What happened? Why? I don't even want to hear about it.
- Dina: **(Furiously)** I can't live with you anymore. I can't keep arguing with you. I don't understand the decisions you're making. I need this shiva, and you're not going to ruin it for me. The store belongs to both of us. You're not selling it without my consent. And you're not deciding to leave the country without discussing it with me.
- Oded: I'm offering you a way to survive, Dina.
- Dina: You're tearing the family apart at the worst moment of our lives.
- Oded: It seems to me you're the one tearing it apart.
- Dina: Because you're forcing me to. Yesterday you had an episode. You lost touch with reality. You stopped functioning, and you're making no attempt to pull yourself together. You won't take medication. You refuse treatment. You leave me to cry alone.
- Oded: That's out of the question, Dina. I'm not letting you go.
- Dina: You're doing everything you can to drive me away.
- Oded: On the contrary. I want you to come with me. If not Toronto, then New York or Los Angeles.
- Dina: Can't you hear me? I'm not moving anywhere. I was born here. I work here. My colleagues are here. My department. My patients. Ofer and Shira are here.
- Oded: We'll take Shira with us.
- Dina: How will we take her? Who's going to let you take her out of the country?
- Oded: No one has to know.

Dina: What are you going to do? Hide her inside a sofa?

Oded: Yes.

Dina: Do you hear yourself? I don't even understand how you can sleep in her room.

Oded: When I'm in her room, I can feel her.

Dina: **(Shouting)** She's gone! She's dead! You can't feel her!

Oded: I know she's dead. That's why we have to save ourselves.

Dina: That's why I'm leaving you. Because I don't matter to you. Because you're not willing to mourn with me. Because you don't want us to heal from this pain and move on. You're trapped inside yourself. Inside your self-pity. Your despair. Your rage. Your self-destruction. I want no part of it. Go. Run wherever you want. Finish destroying yourself. I won't let you destroy what I have left.

**She exits into the living room and heads toward the bedroom.**

**16. The living room. Maya and Ofer. Dina enters. Ofer turns to her.**

Ofer: Why were you shouting?

Dina: Not now, Ofer.

Ofer: I asked you a question!

Dina: I'm leaving after shiva. **(Turns to leave)**

Ofer: Leaving? Moving out?! Wait. Where are you going? What happened? You're leaving me here with Dad?

Dina: You're coming with me.

Ofer: Why, Mom? Wait. Explain it to me...

**But Dina wipes away her tears and exits toward the bedroom.**

Ofer: She's also completely lost it.

- Maya: Let's go in and see her. Maybe she needs something.
- Ofer: They both need treatment. I'll call the Hostage Families Center in the morning. They already know us.
- Maya: We can't leave her crying like this.
- Ofer: If she hasn't changed her mind by morning, I'm going back to the army.
- Maya: It'll hurt her terribly.
- Ofer: If she can leave my father, I can leave her.
- Maya: You can't.
- Ofer: Stop lecturing me all the time. **(Heads toward his room)**  
Aren't you coming?
- Maya: What about your father?
- Ofer: He brought this on himself.
- Maya: Maybe he still needs someone with him right now.
- Ofer: I need someone with me too.
- Maya: I'm with you all the time.
- Ofer: Then come with me.
- Maya: I don't understand, Ofer. What's happening to you? They're your parents...

**But he exits toward his room. She remains alone. She looks toward Dina's bedroom, then toward Shira's room, where Oded is. She hesitates. Finally, she gathers the glasses and cups left in the room, picks up the garbage bag and exits to take out the trash.**

**17. Friday. The fifth day of shiva. Morning. The living room. Oded is alone, waiting. Rachel enters carrying grocery bags.**

Rachel: Good morning. What are you going to do?

Oded: I don't know. I'm asking you not to interfere. This is between her and me.

Rachel: She asked me to move in here after shiva.

Oded: Thank you very much. I'll manage.

Rachel: I'm not going to impose myself on you, but you're going to need help.

Oded: She'll be here any minute. Can't you leave us alone?

Rachel: No.

Oded: Please, Mom.

Rachel: Neither of you can make rational decisions right now.

Oded: Do me a favor...

Rachel: I am.

**Dina enters.**

Oded: Good morning. **(She does not answer)** I'm staying here today. I'll sit shiva with you.

Dina: All right.

Oded: I'm also putting the sale of the store on hold for now.

Dina: All right.

Oded: And I'm postponing my trip to Toronto for a few days.

Dina: You can leave whenever you want. It's none of my business anymore.

Oded: Why, Dina?

Dina: Because I'm not going anywhere.

Oded: All right. After the shiva, we'll talk about that too.

Dina: Didn't you hear me? I'm moving out after the shiva.

Oded: I heard you. I suggest you think again.

Dina: I've thought enough.

Rachel: You've been married for twenty-five years, Dina.

Oded: I've stopped drinking, Dina. I also think we should go to therapy.

Rachel: You're both grieving. You both need time to process what happened. Ofer needs both of you too.

Dina: I know.

Rachel: And you're still leaving?

Dina: I'm leaving because I'm alone. Because I've been alone from the moment Shira was abducted. Because even if I stay with you, I'll still be alone.

Oded: You were alone because I was fighting to get her released. I begged you to join me at the protests.

Dina: I fought for her in my own way.

Rachel: I think this discussion can wait a few days.

Oded: We're going to talk about it now.

Rachel: Talk about it in therapy.

Oded: I asked you not to interfere.

Rachel: **(To Dina)** Tell him you agree to go to therapy.

Dina: **(To Oded)** All this time, you kept saying I was stronger than you and I didn't need you. It was convenient for you to say that because you didn't want to see how much I did need you.

- Oded: I'm here with you now.
- Dina: Now I don't want you with me.
- Oded: There's something else you should know before you move out. I spoke to the head of the security service again about that Cabinet meeting.
- Dina: I don't want to think about that now.
- Oded: Now I'm even more certain we'll never be able to live here.
- Rachel: She asked you not to talk about it now.
- Oded: **(To Dina)** The deal didn't collapse because of the ten women who were supposed to be released. It collapsed because those bastards knew that if the deal happened and the war ended, a few goddamn ministers would resign and the government would fall. They weren't willing to wait one more day for Shira. One day. Her life meant nothing to them.
- Dina: I'm not leaving this country because of them.
- Rachel: And you can't leave him either. He went through something last night. Give him another chance.
- Dina: I've given him two months.
- Oded: **(Angrily)** You're not walking out on me just when I need you most.

**Dina does not answer. Ofer and Maya enter.**

- Ofer: Is everything all right? We heard you arguing.
- Dina: We weren't arguing. We were talking.
- Ofer: I've had it up to here with your fighting.
- Dina: We're going through a difficult time, Ofer. You could try to understand.
- Ofer: I don't want to understand. You need to understand. I just spoke to the Hostage Families Center. They're sending a psychiatrist. He's on his way.

Dina: What for?

Ofer: To explain to you that this can't go on.

Dina: We know that.

Rachel: Call him and tell him not to come.

Oded: We can manage perfectly well on our own.

Ofer: He just wants to examine you. I'm asking you to cooperate.

Oded: I don't need to be examined.

Ofer: You had an episode two days ago. Mom gave you an injection.

Oded: **(Angrily)** I'm the only sane person here.

Ofer: **(To Dina)** You see that he needs help?

Oded: The only sane thing to do now is sell the store. The house. The cars...

Rachel: Calm down.

Ofer: **(Desperately)** What do you want us to do with you, Dad? If you won't let this psychiatrist examine you, I'll ask him to have you hospitalized.

Oded: Why? Because I'm trying to save you? Look outside at the people in the street. Are you really willing to fight for them? Is your mother willing to treat them at the hospital? Am I supposed to sell them furniture? Can't you see they betrayed us? Betrayed Shira? If we get away from here, maybe we can still recover from that betrayal... **(To Dina)** Why are you silent? Do you think I need to be hospitalized too? Answer me! Why? Because I can see it?

Ofer: Because you don't see us.

Rachel: She doesn't think you need to be hospitalized. **(To Dina)** Tell him. **(Dina remains silent)** Tell him. **(Dina remains silent)** Why is that so hard for you?

Ofer: If you don't want us to have you hospitalized, then stay here and sit shiva with us. Take your medication. Mourn. Stop fighting the whole world.

Oded: I understand. **(Picks up his briefcase and turns to leave)**

Ofer: You're still going? **(Blocks his way)** Don't you understand you have no chance? Not here. Not in Toronto. Not anywhere. Look at what you've become. You're surrendering. You're giving up. You're running away. If you hadn't broken down like this, maybe Shira would have been among the first to be released.

Rachel: Ofer!

Maya: Shut up, Ofer.

**Oded is shaken, but a moment later he regains control.**

Oded: Now I understand. **(Exits)**

Maya: **(Calling after him)** I'm coming with you.

Ofer: Wait. I want to talk to you.

Maya: I don't want to talk to you anymore.

**She exits after Oded. Rachel puts on her coat and follows her out. Silence.**

Dina: You shouldn't have said that.

Ofer: You shouldn't have told him you were leaving.

Dina: He'll never forgive you.

Ofer: I won't forgive either of you.

Dina: For what?

Ofer: I'm nineteen, Mom. I'm mourning my sister. My friends. Myself. You're supposed to take care of me. I'm not supposed to take care of you.

Dina: I'll take care of you. I promise.

Ofer: Together with Dad. **(She does not answer)** If you don't go back to him, you'll never see me again.

Dina: You saw the state he's in.

Ofer: That's on you, Mom. Not me.

**18. Noon. The same day. At Shira's grave. Oded and Shira.**

Oded: I'm at the entrance to the Prime Minister's Office. With the other families. Thousands of people are standing outside. Shouting. Crying. Begging. Hoping their voices are heard inside the Cabinet meeting. Every five minutes, I send messages to the ministers' phones, reminding them that you're on the list.

Shira: Mohammed comes in. More agitated than ever. Have you come to take me? Not yet. We're waiting to hear what your people decide. If you want war, you'll get war. He takes off my shackles. Puts the plate of beans in front of me. I don't touch it. Eat. Eat. You need your strength to stay alive until the next deal. If you eat, I won't touch you again.

Oded: Eat, Shira. Eat. The meeting has been going on for four hours. They still haven't decided. There are tens of thousands outside now. I'm screaming into the megaphone with all my strength. Calling your name again and again. Shira! Shira! Don't forget Shira!

Shira: Eat already. Eat. I need you alive. What are you going to do to me? Shoot me? Go ahead. Shoot. I'm not afraid. Shoot me. You fucking coward. You fucking son of a bitch. He slaps me and leaves.

Oded: I swear to you, Shira. If the Cabinet blows up the deal, we'll set the whole street on fire. We'll burn the cars. We'll storm the building. We'll block the doors. We won't let them out. Not until you come home to us...

Shira: I don't believe you anymore, Dad...

**19. The living room. That evening. Ofer enters.**

Ofer: He's not at the beach or at the store. I also checked at the restaurants on the promenade.

Dina: Did you call his friends from the cycling group?

Ofer: No one knows anything. I'm going back to the cemetery. Maybe he went back there.

Dina: We'd better go to the police.

Ofer: I've been there. They won't start looking for him until he's been missing for twenty-four hours.

Dina: If we scream a little louder, maybe they'll try to track his phone.

**They both turn to leave.**

Ofer: Did you find his passport?

Dina: No.

Ofer: Maybe he's already left the country.

Dina: The police checked. He didn't go through passport control. I just hope he hasn't done anything to himself.

Ofer: Are you blaming me for that too?!

Dina: I only blame myself.

**Dina's phone rings. She answers.**

Dina: Hello?... Yes... Is he all right?!... Are you sure?... I want to talk to him... I want to hear his voice. Tell him to answer me... Tell him I have something important to say to him... All right. We're coming... **(Ends the call)** He's on his way to Grandma's.

**20. The same evening. The living room in Rachel's home. Rachel and Maya are waiting for Oded. He enters.**

Maya: How are you? How do you feel?

Rachel: Where were you? We've been looking for you. Why aren't you answering your phone?

Oded: I want to sleep here for a few nights.

Rachel: Of course. As long as you want. Dina's looking for you.

Oded: If she still thinks I need to be hospitalized, I have nothing to say to her.

**He takes a bottle of whiskey from his briefcase and drinks from it.**

Rachel: You said you'd stopped.

Maya: Have you eaten anything today? Do you want me to heat something up for you?

Oded: Thank you. **(To Rachel)** I won't bother you for long. I'm getting my Canadian visa next week.

Rachel: Think about it again. Dina has changed her mind. She isn't moving out. You can still work things out with her.

Oded: Work out what? She refuses to face what happened to us. She's the one who needs to be hospitalized.

Rachel: Maybe you're the one who refuses to face what happened to us.

Oded: Maybe.

**He opens his briefcase and takes out a sales contract.**

Oded: I sold the store. Here's the contract. I've already signed it. I'll get the first payment. The rest will be divided among you, Dina and Ofer.

**He hands her the contract. Without looking at it, she tears it up.**

Rachel: We didn't sell the store when your father was killed, and we're not selling it now. We go on living. Like other bereaved families.

Maya: Dina and Ofer have been looking for you all day.

Oded: Because they don't want me to sell the store.

Maya: They're worried about you, Oded.

Rachel: Dina is willing to go to therapy with you.

Oded: She should have said that when I suggested it.

Maya: But why leave? Give us another chance. A few more weeks...

Rachel: In another two or three months, this goddamn war will be over. In time, the scars will heal. We'll learn to live with them, the way we did after the other wars.

Oded: You can't live with them, Mom.

**Ofer and Dina enter.**

Oded: What are they doing here?

Rachel: I invited them.

Oded: What do you want?

Dina: Are you all right?

**Ofer tries to take Maya by the arm, but she pulls away. Oded drinks from the whiskey bottle. Shira speaks to him.**

Shira: The bombing start again. Boom. Another one. And another. The ground is shaking. I'm lying on the floor under the mattress... crying... sweating with fear... I understand. There's no ceasefire. There's no deal. They're not going to release me...

- Oded: You're right, Shira. The deal fell apart, but there'll be another one. It'll take a few more days. I promise you. You have to believe me. There will be another deal, and you will be released...
- Dina: I'm staying with you, Oded. We'll go on living together. I broke down from grief. That's why I said what I said. You didn't deserve it.
- Rachel: Listen to her.
- Shira: Mohammed comes in, terrified. Come on. We're going down into the tunnel. He takes off my shackles. Come on. Put on the hijab. Move. Now. Before a missile hits us.
- Oded: Go with him, Shira. You have to save yourself.
- Shira: I'm not moving, Mohammed. You can go. Go on. Go.
- Oded: Please, Shira. Go with him. You'll be safer in the tunnel.
- Shira: He tries to drag me with him. I push him back. Another slap. I fall. He grabs my leg. Pulls me across the floor.
- Ofer: I'm sorry, Dad. I panicked. That's why I said those stupid things. I know how hard you fought for Shira.
- Maya: I'll stay with you until you feel better. We'll go to the protests every evening. Until all the hostages are released. Until the war is over.
- Ofer: I'm not going back to the army. I'll work with you at the store.
- Rachel: You have a loving family, Oded. They want to help you.
- Oded: **(Mockingly)** They certainly do.
- Dina: We'll go to the hospital now. You'll have a few tests. You'll start taking medication. After shiva, we'll go away for a while...
- Oded: You're the ones who need tests. You.

Dina: It's only an ECG, Oded. A few blood tests. If everything is all right, we'll go home.

Ofer: Come on, Dad. Please.

**Dina and Ofer try to lead Oded toward the door. He pulls away from them and returns to Shira.**

Shira: I kick him... bite him... I'm not going anywhere with you. Shoot me. Shoot me. Right in the head. Here. In the middle of the forehead...

Oded: Go with him... please... A missile could hit you at any moment...

Shira: He takes hold of me with both hands. Pulls me to my feet. I hit him. Suddenly, I feel something in the pocket of his vest. Yes. It's a grenade... a grenade... I grab it from his pocket. He tries to take it back. I pull the pin. He stops...

Oded: No, Shira. No... Give him back the grenade... please...

Shira: Tell Uri I never stopped loving him.

Oded: Uri is dead. He was killed that same day. Right after you were abducted.

Shira: He's dead?! How?! Why?!

Oded: For no reason... no reason at all... like hundreds of others...

Shira: If I'd known, I wouldn't have waited this long...

Oded: He's dead, and you have to live. You'll be released tomorrow. You'll come home to us. We'll start over. We'll help you live with everything that happened to you.

**The sound of a grenade explosion is heard. Oded covers his ears and breathes heavily.**

Dina: Enough, Oded. Enough. We won't force you to go to the hospital. We'll wait until you're ready.

Rachel: **(Offers him a glass of water)** Drink some water...

Dina: We'll go home. We'll sleep. In the morning, we'll wake up a little more sane.

Maya: We'll run together on the beach. We'll ride our bikes to Shira's grave...

Dina: Whenever you're ready, we'll ask for the record of that Cabinet meeting...

**Oded continues breathing heavily.**

Oded: She could have run away... She could have hidden... She could have gone on living... But she didn't want to... She was right... There's no point... no point... I don't want to live anymore either... Not here... not anywhere else... Only with her... Bury me... beside her... Bury me beside her...

**Dina takes a syringe from her bag and gives him an injection. He calms down. She takes his wrist and checks his pulse.**

Dina: **(To Ofer)** His pulse is fine. Let's take him home. Maybe he'll calm down and manage to sleep. We'll have to sit with him all night...

**Blackout.**

**End**