

March 2025

Last Days

A play by Motti Lerner

©

Characters

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| Reuven (60) | - | Professor of Economics at Tel Aviv University |
| Ada (56) | - | His ex-wife – attorney |
| Avshalom (32) | - | Their eldest son, a painter, lives in Berlin |
| Omer (29) | - | Their youngest son, an unemployed teacher,
lives in his father's apartment |
| Meir (60) | - | Lecturer in economics at Tel Aviv University,
and Ada's partner |

The play takes place over the course of a week in Tel Aviv, in the living room of Reuven's apartment, in the apartment of Ada and Meir, in a café, on the beach.

5 Masada St., Ramat Hasharon 4729097
Tal. 054-4583356
motti_lerner@hotmail.com

1. The living room. Tuesday. 6 p.m. The room is empty. The doorbell rings. A moment later, another ring. Reuven leaves the study and walks toward the door. He is weak, but he walks on his own. He opens the door. To his surprise, Ada enters.

Reuven: Hello.
 Ada: Hello.
 Reuven: Couldn't you announce that you were coming?
 Ada: You'd tell me you're in the middle of work.
 Reuven: I can see in your eyes that a little bird has already told you.
 Ada: What happened to you? Are you out of your mind?
 Reuven: Ada, if you came to persuade me to continue with the treatments, then you can go.
 Ada: I'm not going anywhere. You don't give up so quickly, Reuven. There are other doctors. We will try other medications.
 Reuven: Thanks, but I'm really in the middle of work.
 Ada: If you work, then you can also do treatments. In New York there is a hospital that treats most types of cancer by strengthening the immune system...
 Reuven: The doctors say that my condition has worsened, and it may deteriorate quickly. I have two weeks left. Maybe three. I don't want to waste them.
 Ada: The head of the department there is an Israeli, who used to be a client of mine. He says that if you continue with the treatments, then there is a good chance that...
 Reuven: These treatments are futile torture.
 Ada: Who said that they were futile?
 Reuven: I say.
 Ada: I don't understand. Don't you want to continue living?
 Reuven: Enough, Ada. Relax.
 Ada: You are a strong man, Reuven. You have two sons who love you. Your granddaughter is crazy about you. You're at the peak of your career. You are writing an important book...
 Reuven: **(firmly)** This sentimentality doesn't help me.

Omer entered, holding Reuven's clean clothes.

Omer: Hi Mom. **(To Reuven)** I want to wash your clothes.
 Reuven: They are clean.
 Omer: We change clothes every day, Dad.
 Reuven: Later.
 Omer: I'm making a machine now.

Reuven: I'll change tomorrow.
 Omer: Stop arguing about anything.

Reuven takes the clean clothes and goes out to his room.

Omer: He gets terribly dirty when he eats. He also has some urine leak.
 Ada: He looks fine. He walks. He works. I don't understand his decision.
 Omer: He did CT this week. He consulted with the doctors.
 Ada: Is that what they told him? Two or three weeks?
 Omer: Yes.
 Ada: He loves life so much. How can he give it up so quickly. Do you think he'll be able to finish the book?
 Omer: He's in the last chapter. He is immersed in it up to his neck. The income inequality index rose again this year. He thinks that the rich already understand that the earth is shaking under their feet.
 Ada: He has to forget it now. He must concentrate on himself.
 Omer: He always concentrates on himself, Mom. Now even that is already difficult for him. He is getting weaker. I have to force him to eat. Soon we will have to wash him.
 Ada: I will try to postpone the court hearings. But I must be in the office from time to time.
 Omer: You probably don't understand what will happen here in the next few days.
 Ada: I'll do what I can, Omer.
 Omer: You were his wife for twenty years.
 Ada: I will try my best.
 Omer: Because of Meir? I'm sure he'll understand.
 Ada: Meir has a long account with him.
 Omer: Someone has to be with Dad all the time. Even at night.
 Ada: In two weeks, we are going to Paris.
 Omer: Can't you postpone it a bit?
 Ada: His children are also coming with us.
 Omer: I have to clear my head one or two days a week. To swim. Do some yoga. Otherwise, I'll go crazy.
 Ada: I understand, but...
 Omer: Can't you sleep here one night a week? Do you want me to talk to Meir?
 Ada: I'll talk to him.
 Omer: You'll sleep in my room. I hope that Avshalom will come tomorrow, and we will take turns.

Reuven returns dressed in his clean clothes.

Reuven: I put the dirty clothes in the machine.
 Omer: Great. Thank you.
 Ada: I'll come here every morning, Reuven. I will stay as long as I can.
 Reuven: It's not necessary, Ada. In the mornings I still work.
 Ada: I won't bother you.
 Reuven: I already know you. You are very present wherever you are.
 Ada: I will also be sleeping here one night a week.
 Reuven: **(To Omer)** Did you ask her? Why didn't you ask me?
 Omer: Because I knew what you'd say. Give me your socks, too.

Omer kneels next to him to take off his socks. The doorbell rings.

Omer: **(to Ada)** It's the delivery from the supermarket. Can you open?

Ada opens the door. To everyone's astonishment, Avshalom enters with a suitcase in his hand.

Ada: Avshalom?! **(Hugging him)**
 Omer: We thought you'd come tomorrow.
 Avshalom: I found a seat on a flight through Istanbul.
 Omer: **(Hugging him)** What happened? Did you cry?
 Ada: Why didn't you call us?
 Avshalom: I got on the plane at the last minute.
 Omer: It's good that you came.
 Avshalom: **(To Reuven)** Hello, Dad.

Silence.

Avshalom: Dad...
 Reuven: You could have told me that he's on the way.
 Ada: We thought he was coming tomorrow.
 Omer: Deep down you hoped he would come.
 Reuven: Why? To see me falling apart?
 Ada: Are you crazy?!
 Reuven: I wanted him to come visit when I could still fight with him.
 Avshalom: I didn't know that your condition had deteriorated, Dad.
 Reuven: I told him I was sick a year ago.

Ada: He had an exhibition in Berlin. He worked on it day and night.

Omer: Sophie was sick in the winter.

Reuven: She's already four years old. Eva can do without him for a few days.

Avshalom: She has concerts almost every night.

Reuven: Why didn't he call? Why didn't he write?

Ada: He came to reconcile with you, Reuven.

Reuven: Do you believe him? He is a narcissist. He is arrogant. He is one of those that art is more important to them than human beings.

Ada: His art is created out of compassion for human beings. You know it.

Avshalom: Let's try to talk, Dad.

Reuven: I have nothing to talk to him about!

Ada: **(angrily)** When will you have? In two or three weeks?

Avshalom: I'm sorry, Dad. I really didn't know. No one told me. As soon as Omer called, I started looking for a flight. How did it happen? What do the doctors say? I don't understand. So fast?

Reuven: It's not so fast. It took a year.

Avshalom: I was here two months ago. You didn't tell me anything.

Ada: I found out just yesterday.

Omer: He didn't want anyone to know. Yesterday I realized that I couldn't handle it alone anymore, so...

Reuven: **(To Avshalom)** If you had called and asked, I would have told you.

Avshalom: I called a few times. You didn't pick up. I left messages. You didn't answer.

Reuven: When did you call?

Avshalom: Two months ago. When I returned to Berlin, after the conversations we had here, I tried to understand why you were so angry.

Reuven: And during those two months you couldn't get on a plane, and come here to sit with me like a son with his father? And why didn't you bring Sophie? You know how much I love her. How I wanted to play with her. She speaks Hebrew with me.

Avshalom: When I left here, you said you didn't want to see me anymore.

Ada: You don't answer him, Reuven.

Reuven: So when will I answer him?

Avshalom: Please, Dad. I don't want to open it now. I'm very worried about you.

Reuven: You don't worry about me. You feel guilty.

Avshalom: That's not true.

Reuven: Was it so hard for you to write a few words? "How are you?" That's all! But you wanted to enjoy my pain. More, and more, and more...

Ada: Enough, Reuven.

Avshalom: I wrote, but I didn't send it.

Reuven: I can imagine why.

Ada: Shut up for a moment!

Reuven: You didn't send because you decided to cut off contact with me.

Ada: This conversation is over. **(To Avshalom)** We are going to my apartment.

Avshalom: **(To Reuven)** I didn't send it, because I was afraid you'd get even angrier.

Omer: Wait a moment. He will soon calm down. He's been very tense lately.

Avshalom: **(to Ada)** Just a second, Mom. I want to talk to him.

Ada: You'll talk tomorrow.

Avshalom: I've been waiting for this moment for a long time.

Ada: It hasn't arrived yet.

Avshalom: At least he's talking.

Ada: He should think a little about what he is saying.

Reuven: I thought about it for a whole year.

Avshalom: You're right, Dad. I had to call. I had to come. But I wasn't sure you'd want to talk to me.

Ada: Come on. **(To Reuven)** Goodbye.

Ada and Avshalom leave.

Omer: I don't understand you. Is it the time to fight? We need them.

Reuven: I don't need their mercy.

Omer: I thought you knew your condition.

Reuven: I know very well. Mercy will not help me anymore.

2. Next. Wednesday. 10 am. Omer sits in the living room folding laundry. A moment later, the door opens. Avshalom enters.

Avshalom: Good morning. How is he? Still asleep?

Omer: He's in the shower. Where's Mom?

Avshalom: She had some urgent court hearing.

Omer: Couldn't she reject him?

Avshalom: She will arrive in the afternoon.

Omer: So until she arrives, will she be left alone with Dad?

Avshalom: Do you want to wait and see if he talks to me?

Omer: I need to get out. I have a job interview at a high school in Jaffa.

Avshalom: Do not worry. I'll be fine. How did he get through the night?

Omer: It hurt him. At four o'clock I gave him another sleeping pill. He got up very nervous.

Avshalom: To make him breakfast?

Omer: Ask him what he wants.

Avshalom: Does he need to take medication?

Omer: He stopped everything. When he is in pain, he takes morphine. Maybe you'll fold laundry in the meantime?

Avshalom: Of course.

Omer: **(Giving way to him)** How long have you been here?

Avshalom: As much as necessary.

Omer: It won't be that much.

Avshalom: Say, has he been asking about me lately? Was he interested? I sent my mother pictures of Sophie. She says she showed him. In an exhibition I had this summer, I presented paintings of immigrants from the Middle East to Berlin...

Omer: He knows. I showed him the catalog. He tried to write to you. But after dozens of articles on economics, he can't write a few lines from the heart.

Avshalom: I can imagine what he was thinking. His criticism of my work can drive me crazy.

Omer: He is not against you. He thinks that art is not the most effective way to engage in social struggles.

Avshalom: I have no other.

Omer: Don't argue with him about it. Tell him you're sorry you just came. If you knew that his condition had deteriorated, you would have come immediately.

Avshalom: Said. He doesn't believe it.

Omer: In his situation, he will believe.

Avshalom: He doesn't understand why I live in Berlin at all. When I was here two months ago, he tried to persuade me to come back. My struggles there seem really ridiculous to him.

Omer: But he is actually very proud of you before others.

Avshalom: When I painted here, I had no perspective. That's why my paintings were naïve. From Berlin I can see that several

other things are happening in the world besides our wars here.

Omer: He thinks you're not coming back, because you're more comfortable there. Because you get better reviews there.

Avshalom: He doesn't know what it's like to open an exhibition and find out Again, how strange you are.

Omer: Now he wants only one thing. Show him that you love him. That's all. Find a way to do it fast. You may only have one more week.

Avshalom: **(amazed)** Week? Mom said two or three weeks.

Omer: We increase the dose of morphine every day. In a week he will be too blurry, and it will be impossible to talk to him. **(Taking a keychain)** I will be back at noon. Good luck.

Omer leaves. Avshalom sits down and folds the laundry. Reuven entered. He heard the end of Omer and Avshalom's conversation. He sits down in an armchair.

Avshalom: Good morning.

Reuven: So it may be that in a week it will no longer be possible to talk to me.

Avshalom: I'm not sure the doctors really know.

Reuven: They should have told me.

Avshalom: They should have told you to continue the treatments.

Reuven: The treatments will no longer change anything.

Avshalom: Don't be sure. I spoke at night with an oncologist friend in Berlin. There are effective biologics in your situation as well.

Reuven: Did you come to offer me biological drugs? Do you want to give me hope? To show that you care about me?

Avshalom: Of course I'm worried about you.

Reuven: **(Mockingly)** Probably. When you moved to Berlin, I wrote to you every day. I called you. I came every two months to see you. When I started the treatments I couldn't fly anymore, so...

Avshalom: You said it was mild cancer. that you overcome.

Reuven: I thought you'd be interested. Call. That she might even come here with Eva and Sophie.

Avshalom: I came two months ago.

Reuven: You came to the opening of your exhibition at the museum. Alone. After I saw her, I wanted to talk to you about her, but you were busy. In the three days you were here, you couldn't find a single hour for me.

Avshalom: That's not accurate, Dad.

Reuven: I'm not blind. You went to Germany to escape me. Why? After all, it's not because of my criticism of your work. You saw that I was trying to strengthen you. Trying to show you that an artist can work to repair the world. If he dares. If he's brave enough. It was a loving review. I don't know a father who loved his son as much as I loved you.

Avshalom: I know.

Reuven: I was hoping you would come to visit because you want to see me. Not because I'm sick.

Avshalom: Enough, Dad, please. We'll settle it down after you recover. The biologics have almost no side effects. You do a biopsy. The tumor is examined, and pills are fitted to you.

Reuven: Don't deceive me, Avshalom. I'm not going to get well anymore. If you were a little interested, you would know this. You would come here. We would sit and talk. We would reconcile. You can't do it in a week like this.

Avshalom: You can try.

Reuven: If you wanted to try, you would speak frankly. But you don't want to, because you probably prefer to continue hurting me.

Avshalom: You know that's not true, Dad.

Reuven: If you're not going to explain to me why you ran away, then you can go.

Avshalom: I won't go even if you expel me. **(Reuven is silent)** What do you want for breakfast? **(Reuven is silent)** Very well. I make you an omelette and a salad. You will, you eat. You won't want to, you'll stay hungry. Would you like coffee as well? **(Reuven is silent)** I do it anyway.

He got up towards the kitchen. Adah enters. She has her lawyer's file in her hand.

Avshalom: It's good that you came. I don't know what to do. He thinks I want to hurt him.

But Ada passes him, sits down next to Reuven, and wipes away her tears.

Reuven: What happened?

Ada: Nothing.

Reuven: Anyway?

Ada: **(choked throat)** Suddenly it landed on me.

Avshalom: Don't cry, Mom.

Ada: I'm in the middle of a hearing before the judge... And suddenly I realize that you are going to die... that you also want to die... And this insight paralyzes me... And I immediately feel guilty. Maybe it's because I left you. Maybe because I live with Meir. Maybe because I didn't come to treat you as soon as you got sick... And I start crying... And I leave the hall... The judge calls me and I can't answer... Despite everything that happened, Reuven, I can't lose you like this all of a sudden... Without fighting for you.

Reuven: Enough, Ada.

Avshalom: Look what you're doing to her.

Reuven: In a day or two, she will recover.

Avshalom: Do you want us to feel guilty all our lives for not helping you?

Reuven: No one can help me anymore.

Ada: I announced in the office that I was taking time off. I will stay with you all the time.

Reuven: It's a little late, Ada.

Ada: I'll try anyway.

Reuven: You probably haven't come to terms with what's happening to me yet.

Ada: I don't want to make up.

Reuven: I didn't want to either. It's cruel. It's arbitrary. I am only sixty years old. I don't deserve it. But that's what it is.

Avshalom: You say this because you don't trust us.

Reuven: I say this because I don't trust myself.

Ada: We'll get through it together, Reuven. We'll get out of it together. Despite the divorce, I owe you the happiest days of my life. I owe you the two children. You also forced me to find out what I am capable of. Without you, I wouldn't have opened an office. I certainly wouldn't take on such complicated financial cases.

Reuven: You're exaggerating, Ada.

Ada: Now we're a little more experienced. A little smarter. We don't have to take out each other's souls.

Avshalom: These days with you are very dear to us, Dad.

Ada: Let's go to New York. At least we'll try.

Reuven: Don't fool me, please. You have no idea how easy it is to be seduced by these illusions, and how painful it is to become disillusioned by them. Let's make do with what we have. It could be a great week.

Ada: Week?!

- Reuven: Yes. Week. Probably in a week I'll be taking so much morphine that I won't be able to talk to me. Didn't Omer tell you? I don't want to waste this week arguing. **(To Avshalom)** You can already tell me the truth. Even if I get angry. Even if I am offended. I want to finally understand why you ran away from here.
- Avshalom: If you do treatments, we'll have enough time to talk about it.
- Reuven: We'll talk about what's left. **(La'ada)** With you too. You have no idea how sorry I was about our divorce. How I regretted hurting you. That I hurt the children. I was frivolous. Irresponsible. None of those women made it to your cramps.
- Ada: If you only have a week, then what's the point of opening it?
- Reuven: I want you to forgive me before I die.
- Ada: I won't let you die so quickly.
- Avshalom: Please, Dad. These treatments are lifesaving.
- Reuven: I can't do them.
- Ada: If it's hard for you, then we'll stop.
- Reuven: And will he defeat me again?
- Avshalom: Every additional day is another small victory.
- Reuven: I will know that I won, if we succeed in reconciling. You won't get away. Not even with the excuse that you are trying to prolong my life.
- Avshalom: I'm not looking for excuses, Dad. I want to be reconciled just like you. But it is much more important now to start treatment. Every hour can be critical. I'll make an appointment for you, whether you like it or not. You will decide what you will do with it.
- Reuven: There is no point, Avshalom.
- Avshalom: I'm not asking you.

Avshalom turns to leave, but returns.

- Avshalom: If you are so insistent, then I will tell you why I ran away. Because I've never been able to tell you what I think. What do I want? Because I always asked myself what my paintings would mean to you. Because instead of being preoccupied with them, I was preoccupied with your expectations. Because it was only in Berlin that I finally painted what I wanted...

He is leaving. Reuven and Ada digest what he said.

Reuven: He never told me what he thought?! Didn't he paint what he wanted?! Why? Did I threaten him? When? How?

Ada: He was afraid that you would stop loving him.

Reuven: Can I stop loving him?

Ada: That's how he felt.

Reuven: At least now he said something. Maybe he will also be able to forgive.

Ada: He will forgive if you stop accusing him of wanting to hurt you.

Reuven: I hope I have enough time left to explain myself.

Ada: You need to do something much simpler, Reuven.

Reuven: What?

Ada: Did you notice that from the moment he came in, you didn't hug him even once?

Reuven: Noticed.

Ada: So it's time.

Reuven: I didn't hug you either.

She laughs and gives him a polite hug. He senses it.

Reuven: I see that you haven't forgiven me yet, either. I don't want you to forgive me because I'm sick.

Ada: We'll find time to talk about it. Let me help you take a shower.

Reuven: I still shower myself.

Ada: Don't be so insistent.

Reuven: By the way, does Meir know that you're moving here?

Ada: I'll tell him tonight.

She grabs his arm. The door opens. Avshalom returns.

Avshalom: As for what I said to you, Dad, I don't blame you for anything. I only blame myself. I chose **Voluntary** To give up my desires. My mother always told me that, too.

Reuven turns to him and extends his arms to him. Avshalom is embarrassed. Approaching him. They hug.

3. Wednesday. Evening. Ada and Meir's apartment.

Meir: So you canceled your trip to Paris, in order to move in with him?!

Ada: I have no choice, Meir. He has another week.
 Meir: It can be postponed. I'll talk to the children. Maybe they can after all.
 Ada: I have to be with Omer and Avshalom at shiva. I also don't know how long it will take them to recover afterwards.
 Meir: You could have at least consulted me. I understand that you feel indebted to him. It's even very generous on your part. By the way, if necessary, I'm willing to help you take care of it.
 Ada: You?
 Meir: I've already forgiven him for what he did to me.
 Ada: Because he's sick?
 Meir: I owe him quite a lot, too. Without him, I would not have been able to finish my doctorate. He also never tried to stop my promotion, even though he belittled anyone who didn't fight like him to reduce poverty.
 Ada: He won't want you to see him in his situation. He barely agreed that I should stay with him.
 Meir: So maybe you'll actually sleep here for a night or two a week?
 Ada: He's dying, Meir.
 Meir: He is a manipulative person. He is arrogant. He's cunning. What He did to me is nothing compared to what He did to you. He will take advantage of his illness to force **You** Forgive him.
 Ada: Do not worry. I will not forgive.

He hugs her. She responds. He wants more.

Ada: I have more work to do tonight, Meir.
 Meir: Do it tomorrow.
 Ada: Two days ago we slept.
 Meir: So what?
 Ada: So what's the pressure?
 Meir: I always had the feeling that he never stopped loving you.
 Ada: But I stopped loving him.
 Meir: If you had stopped loving him, you wouldn't have moved in with him.
 Ada: I owe him even without loving him.
 Meir: He's a dangerous person, Ada. He never forgave me for living with you.
 Ada: Enough, Meir. It's really ridiculous.

Meir: Ridiculous? **(She doesn't answer)** Good. If that's ridiculous to you, then I'll go to Paris anyway. I shouldn't be here when all this is happening.

Ada: You said you would suggest that the children postpone.

Meir: I'm not sure anymore. Maybe it will be easier for me there.

Ada: What is so difficult for you? I can't leave him now. Not even Omer and Avshalom. They will not survive his death alone.

Meir: When you accompany someone to their death, you get closer to them. All the barriers are collapsing. The deepest and most intimate moments are created. I don't even want to think about what could happen to you there.

Ada: In a week he'll be dead, Meir. All these moments will be just memories.

She hugs him. He agreed.

4. Next. Thursday afternoon, Ada enters, suitcase in her hand. Omer, who heard it, entered from the corridor.

Ada: How are you doing? Where's Dad?

Omer: Worker.

Ada: He will not give up until his last moment. **(Laying down the suitcase)** I called you last night. How was the interview with the principal of the school in Jaffa?

Omer: Was.

Ada: You have excellent recommendations.

Omer: He claimed that I hid from him that I was a Marxist.

Ada: Are you a Marxist?!

Omer: No, but a year ago I shared an article by my father about how poverty harms growth and causes brain drain.

Ada: If you want, I'm willing to write to the municipality.

Omer: If that's why I can't teach at his school, then I don't want to teach there.

Ada: I've warned you so many times. You don't have to fight Dad's wars.

Omer: But he's right. Poverty really creates social backwardness. That's why I haven't been working for a year. Maybe I'll enroll in a doctorate after all. Finally Dad will be satisfied.

Ada: Me too.

Omer: I imagined. By the way, I vacated my room for you. I will sleep here.

Ada: I'll put the suitcase in. **(Turns out)**

Omer: Wait a minute. I want to talk to you before Avshalom returns.

Ada: What happened?

Omer: Dad had a hard night. He had pain all over his body. I gave him an injection. But in a week's time, shots won't help either.

Ada: I imagine.

Omer: What will we do then?

Ada: What do you mean?

Omer: You know exactly what I mean.

Ada: Why?

Omer: I don't think he should suffer so much.

Ada: **(Understand)** This is out of the question. I'm not even willing to think about it.

Omer: In two or three days you will see for yourself that...

Ada: Even if he asks us.

Omer: I have a few friends who helped their parents...

Ada: I'm not willing to talk about it.

Omer: What are you willing to talk about?

Ada: I'll sign it on the Ministry of Health's form, and we'll follow the instructions.

Omer: This form only allows you to stop treatments, but it doesn't...

Ada: He doesn't allow it because it's impossible.

Omer: You know I don't think about myself.

Ada: I know.

Omer: Will you be able to face his suffering?

She doesn't answer. Reuven leaves the study.

Reuven: Hi, Ada How good you came.

Ada: How are you?

Reuven: I've worked until now. I waited for you to come and help me take a shower. **(Seeing her suitcase)** I see that you are still passing here.

Ada: Yes.

Reuven: Are you sure?

Ada: I know what I'm doing.

Omer: We need her, Dad.

Reuven: What did Meir say?

Ada: He goes to Paris with his children.

Reuven: I imagined.

Ada: He needs some distance now.

Omer: It's natural that it's hard for him, Mom.

Reuven: Aren't you liable to lose him?
 Ada: Do not worry.
 Reuven: Of course I'm worried. He's a good guy, even though he opposes the reform I proposed in tax policy.
 Ada: I'm worried about you a little more.
 Reuven: You are truly unique and special. All my wives in the last few years flew away from here as soon as I got sick.
 Ada: You probably deserved it.
 Reuven: Thank you.
 Omer: Meir won't give up on you, Mom. He is a smart man. If he were you, he would do just as you do.
 Ada: Can I ask you to stop prying into my relationship with Meir?

Avshalom entered.

Avshalom: I have good news. The director of the Oncology Institute says that a liquid biopsy is a reliable test. It's also very simple. A nurse will come soon and take a blood sample. **(Hands him a brochure)** Call. He admires you, Dad. You were his company commander in the Golani. You saved his life in Lebanon.
 Reuven: **(Glances at the brochure)** There is no point in the nurse coming.
 Avshalom: Why?
 Reuven: I am familiar with this treatment. It doesn't suit me.
 Avshalom: How do you know? Have you tried?
 Reuven: I've already told you. There is nothing more to try. I want to live what I have left without deluding myself. Without deceiving you. I want to be able to think. I want to finish the book.
 Avshalom: The biological treatment shrinks the tumors, Dad. It will also reduce the pain.
 Ada: Reuven, we want to live with you for a few more months.
 Omer: At least read the brochure.
 Reuven: I read it a long time ago.
 Ada: It's just a blood test.
 Reuven: Why do I get tested, if I don't intend to do treatments?
 Avshalom: It takes less than five minutes.
 Omer: I don't understand why you insist.
 Reuven: I think I explained myself.
 Avshalom: Try to be a little more reasonable.
 Ada: Please, Reuven. You know how strong you are. Your desire to live can give you more time.

- Reuven: But I also know what my situation is. If I have five more days of diving, then I don't want to waste two days on hope, and another three on despair.
- Avshalom: Because of the book?
- Reuven: This book is too important. The income gap perpetuates the lag in the periphery. It creates gaps in education, health, and welfare. It will cause fermentation. to dangerous instability. If we succeed in narrowing this gap, growth will also increase, and life will look completely different here. I say this at every conference, at every lecture, and no one hears it.
- Avshalom: That's why you have to try the treatment. Maybe he'll give you a few more weeks to say that.
- Reuven: If I try it and get lost, I won't be able to write.
- Avshalom: You've been fighting all your life, and you haven't given up.
- Omer: We will fight together with you.
- Reuven: I only fight for what is possible.
- Ada: Maybe it's still possible? Give me a chance. I came here to help you. To make you stronger. To give you a few more good reasons to live...
- Avshalom: Your death is not just your business, Dad. It touches all of us more than you think. We also have something to say about him.
- Reuven: But the decision is only mine.
- Avshalom: You won't force us to hate ourselves because we didn't help you, and you won't force us to hate you because you didn't let us help.
- Reuven: **(in pain)** How can you help? In biological therapy? My body revolts and says enough. He insists on killing me. With terrible violence. Without any consideration. Without any explanation. Without any mercy. Cell after cell. It poisons the tissues, breaks them down, suffocates them. Sucking out of me everything that was generous and compassionate and loving, and leaving me resentful, sullen, and vindictive. I don't want to be that kind of person in the days I have left. **(Suddenly the pain passes through him. He doesn't want them to feel it)** Instead of working, I waste my time on stupid arguments that won't extend my life even a minute...

He goes out to his study.

- Avshalom: The nurse has to come.
- Ada: So let her know that she won't come.
- Omer: Why?

Ada: You've seen him.

Avshalom: I'm not going to give up on him.

Ada: Have you ever forced your father to do something he didn't want?

Avshalom: I want him to make an informed decision.

Ada: I think he made an informed decision.

Omer: If we insist, he will have no choice.

Avshalom: All our lives we have succumbed to his weaknesses.

Ada: I'm not sure it's a weakness. He thought about it a lot. He doesn't want to be what cancer forces him to be.

Avshalom: Cancer actually forces him to be better.

Ada: He doesn't think so. He is more afraid of this change than of death.

Omer: He only says that he is not afraid of death.

Ada: We are probably more afraid of him, but we can't force him to live because of it.

Avshalom: So leave him to die?

Ada: That's what he wants.

Omer: If he is not willing to do treatments, then he leaves us no choice. We won't be able to let him suffer like this.

Avshalom: What are you talking about?

Omer: You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Avshalom: Are you crazy? On my dead body.

Omer: In a few days, you'll think differently.

Avshalom: What are you silent about, Mom?

Ada: I don't know what will happen in a few days.

Omer: You know just as well as I do, but you're afraid to think about it.

Avshalom: What is there to think about here?

Ada: We will do whatever he wants.

Omer: And if he can't tell us what he wants?

Ada: I trust him that when the moment comes, he will say.

Avshalom: How can you trust a person in his situation? He can say something because of momentary pain. Because of a momentary fear. Because of momentary despair. Afterwards, it will be impossible to regret it.

Ada: Father will make his decision, only when he is sure of it.

Avshalom: The easiest thing is to hold him responsible.

Ada: He wants this responsibility.

Avshalom: I won't be able to do such a thing. I will also not be able to stand on the sidelines. If you're going to do that, then I'm going home.

Ada: Do not worry. We won't force you.

5. Next. Friday afternoon. Reuven sits in an armchair. Avshalom dials his wife Eva in Berlin.

Reuven: Tell her that we increase the dose of morphine every day.
 Avshalom: Still occupied.
 Reuven: And explain to her the meaning of this.
 Avshalom: I explained to her. But she has a concert on a Sunday night.
 Reuven: There are hundreds of pianists in Berlin. She can find a replacement.
 Avshalom: She tried, Dad. Their flight is on Monday morning. They land here at noon.
 Reuven: I'm not sure what will happen here until Monday afternoon.
 Avshalom: I will call the landline. **(Dialing)** Hello?... Sophie?! It's Dad. How are you?... Does Mom make you a cocoa? What a beauty. I'm at Grandpa Reuven's. He wants to talk to you.
(Hands Reuven the phone)
 Reuven: **(Excited)** Sophie sweetheart... Yes, it's a frog grandpa who misses you so much. Hope-Hope... I have a new story to tell you... About a girl who went to visit her grandfather... Who told you that I travel far? Mother?... Yes. She's right. I'm traveling far. But I promise to come back whenever you want... Yes. Every night, after Dad turns off the light, you close your eyes and call me, and I'll come and sit next to you, and tell you a story... Sophie? Sophie?... **(in pain)** Sophie, I'm waiting for you... Hope-Hope... **(But she slammed it, he turned to Avshalom)** Eva brought her the chocolate... **(Seeing that Avshalom wipes away a tear)** You're not crying for me now. Heard?
 Avshalom: Who's crying?!
 Ada: **(Coming in from the kitchen)** Is. Finished. We have lamb with potatoes, baked cauliflower, salad and ice cream.
 Reuven: Grandpa Ruby, she called me. She painted me walking through the clouds.
 Ada: It's a shame that you can't see how bright your eyes are.
 Avshalom: We'll talk to her tomorrow as well. You will see that you will feel much better.
 Reuven: I can't understand how you had such a wonderful girl.
 Ada: Do you want to have the conversation with us before or after dinner?
 Reuven: Before.
 Ada: What do you want to talk about? Why is it so secret?

Reuven: You'll know in a few moments.
 Ada: If it takes more than 15 minutes, I'll have to heat everything up again.
 Reuven: Do not worry. **(To Avshalom)** I really don't understand why Omer is delaying. We decided that we would start at four.
 Ada: I hope you don't want to make any more changes to the will.
 Reuven: Not.
 Avshalom: By the time Eva and Sophie arrive, you'll have three days to work. You may be able to finish the book.
 Reuven: Maybe you will call him again?
 Avshalom: I called a moment ago. He's on his way.
 Ada: You can start with wine. He will not be offended. White or red?
 Reuven: Red.
 Avshalom: For me, too.

Ada goes out to the kitchen.

Avshalom: By the way, Dad. Maybe you'll let me read a little bit about this book of yours?
 Reuven: I didn't know that the social gaps in Israel interested you.
 Avshalom: I'm also trying to figure out how they can be reduced. But from a different angle. In my exhibition last winter there were a few paintings that addressed the psychological toll that immigrants pay for their poverty. I wrote it in the catalog.
 Reuven: Yes, I did. I actually liked these paintings.

Ada brings a bottle of wine and glasses and pours it.

Reuven: **(La'ada)** It's already four and a quarter.
 Ada: He is looking for parking.
 Avshalom: I know you don't believe in the power of art to influence, but...
 Reuven: Is that what you think?
 Avshalom: You told me that on the day I started studying at Bezalel.
 Ada: He didn't say that. He said that art can only shape a spiritual world in the long run. I'm also not sure that it has an impact in the short term. Cheers!
 Reuven: Cheers!
 Avshalom: And didn't you realize that your doubt about the power of art discourages me?
 Reuven: What did you want me to do? Who deceived you?

- Avshalom: Don't try to force your opinion on me.
- Reuven: Are you coming back to it again? In the end, you always did what you wanted. You painted what you wanted. Both in Israel and in Berlin. You tried to be an international painter, and you succeeded. Unfortunately, I think your paintings are naïve. That your protest against capitalism is sentimental. You are trying to shock us about the suffering it causes the lower deciles, but you do not bother to convince us that proper education and proper taxation policies can move many of them to the higher deciles.
- Avshalom: I try, but I act in the language of emotional images that create empathy for the people in the lowest deciles.
- Reuven: And?
- Avshalom: You are fighting social gaps because they harm the national product.
- Reuven: Not because I'm not empathetic, but because economic arguments are more convincing than emotional images.
- Ada: Dad is one of the most empathetic people I know. But he is also a practical person, and he thinks about the effectiveness of his struggle.
- Avshalom: And because he is practical, he does not use his arguments in values, but in numbers, and therefore his struggle is a numerical struggle and not a moral struggle.
- Reuven: So that's why you ran away? Because my struggle is not a moral struggle?
- Ada: Enough, Reuven. We've already argued about it enough. There is no difference between you. You're both morbid idealists. You both delude yourself that the world can be fixed, and in the end you will both be deceived.
- Reuven: **(Frustrated)** I'm not arguing with him. I try to tell him how much it hurt me that he left. Why did I have to get sick like that? So that he would come to visit me?
- Avshalom: I didn't come because I got sick. I came because I missed it. Because I love you.
- Ada: **(To Reuven)** Listen to him.
- Reuven: Heard.
- Avshalom: And I want to read what you wrote. I want to talk to you about it. You are probably not afraid of my criticism.
- Reuven: If you love me, then I'm not afraid of anything.
- Avshalom: I just told you that. Haven't you heard?

Omer entered, holding a walker and an oxygen generator.

Omer: Sorry. I waited in line for two hours. **(To Reuven)** The treadmill needs to be adjusted to your height. You should practice it today or tomorrow. As for the oxygen generator, the doctor suggested that you use it when you work. This will improve your breathing. It may also hurt you less.

Reuven: Very well. Thank you. Sit down. We want to get started.

Ada: Do you want wine?

Omer: Of course.

Ada pours him a glass of wine.

Reuven: Allow?

Omer: Yes.

Reuven: Thank you. I ask that we try to overcome the residue between us, and conduct a substantive discussion. It's time to talk about My funeral arrangements. I assume that you too already You've thought about it.

Ada: Not really.

Reuven: I hope you didn't choose eulogists, and you didn't turn to them.

Ada: We didn't choose anyone.

Reuven: I imagine that behind my back You have already found a plot in a secular cemetery.

Ada: I spoke to several cemeteries. I didn't close anything. I wanted to ask you first.

Reuven: So it's good that we're having this conversation.

Avshalom: What's the matter, Dad? Where are you headed?

Reuven: I strive that at this stage there will be no funeral.

Ada: What do you mean there won't be a funeral?

Reuven: That means I donate my body to the university's medical school. I closed with them a few months ago. I signed all the forms.

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

Reuven: The family can't object.

Ada: But you can cancel it.

Reuven: If I want.

Avshalom: We want to.

Omer: You can't do such a thing on your own.

Reuven: Why?

Omer: I want to have a grave to go to. I want your name to be written on the tombstone.

Avshalom: It's important to us, Dad.

Reuven: In a year's time, the university will bring me back in a situation similar to the one it would accept me.

Ada: And in the meantime, the medical students will rummage through your guts?

Reuven: If you bury me, then worms will rummage through them.

Ada: Enough, stop. This is not a rational matter. It's an emotional issue. I'm not even willing to argue. I ask that you inform the university that you are canceling the donation.

Omer: You can't force us to make such a decision.

Reuven: I don't understand why my desire has no value in your eyes.

Avshalom: Because we don't understand it.

Reuven: That way, maybe my death will benefit someone.

Ada: Who? University? Science?

Avshalom: I'm trying to understand what you're telling us about this, Dad.

Omer: He doesn't tell us anything. We don't care about him. He has not considered us all his life, and he does not intend to consider us after his death.

Reuven: I haven't been considerate of you all my life?

Ada: If you were considerate of us, you would ask our opinion.

Reuven: When I decided, you weren't here.

Omer: I actually was.

Ada: If you want to be considerate of us, then cancel the donation.

Avshalom: Now, Dad.

Omer: If you want us to forgive you for your tyranny, then stop being a tyrant.

Avshalom: You donate your body, because you are considerate of us. Because you don't forgive me for not coming here when you got sick. Because you didn't forgive your mother for leaving you. Because you didn't forgive Omer for not doing a doctorate.

Reuven: That's not true, Avshalom.

Omer: **(furiously)** If you don't cancel your donation now, I don't take care of you anymore.

Avshalom: Enough, Omer.

Omer: I put my life on hold for a whole year. Servers You are like a slave. I never asked for anything. I never expected anything.

Avshalom: Enough already. **(Keeps him away)**

Reuven: This donation is not against you. It's an ideological issue. I want to bring some benefit to mankind even in my death.

Omer: People commit the worst sins on ideological grounds.

Reuven: What sin am I committing? Who?

- Avshalom: This is your way of disconnecting from us even after your death.
- Reuven: As soon as I died, I disconnected. Everything else is nonsense.
- Omer: What do you think? Shall we forget you?
- Avshalom: Maybe you're doing it To Let us forget you.
- Ada: If you want forgiveness from us, Reuven, then you will have to show us that you are no longer an egoist who thinks only of himself. but also on us... About the years we lived together... About our grief... About the longing for you after you leave us... Otherwise, you will not be worthy of any forgiveness.
- Omer: Can it change? He was an egoist and he will remain an egoist. Now I understand much better why you divorced him.
- Avshalom: Enough, Omer!

Silence. Reuven was upset.

- Reuven: All right. I understand. Give me a few minutes to think. A funeral is something else entirely. I've always hated funerals because of the lies that are told in them. I don't understand why you are so insistent.
- Ada: I suggest that you leave us alone. Go to my apartment. Dad and I will think together. I'll prepare a letter to the university, and he'll sign it.
- Reuven: I swear to you. I never imagined that this was important to you. I never imagined that you would miss me after my death. That you will want to remember me. I didn't want you to feel obligated to go to the cemetery every year.
- Ada: Go already.
- Avshalom: I thought we were eating together.
- Ada: Go to the restaurant.
- Omer: He might still convince you, Mom.
- Ada: Do not worry. **(They hesitate)** What are you waiting for?
- Reuven: Wait a minute. You're right. I am sorry. I apologize. I didn't think I was hurting you. That I hurt you. I want to hear that you accept my apology.
- Avshalom: I accept it.
- Reuven: **(To Omer)** You?
- Omer: Me too.
- Reuven: I didn't hear.
- Omer: Me too.

Avshalom: **(La'ada)** We will be back in the morning. If you need anything, then...

Reuven: So you go? Like that?

Omer and Avshalom hug him and leave.

Reuven: Can you give me a pill?

Ada: **(Gives it to him)** Hurts?

Reuven: In a few days it will pass. **(Takes)**

Ada: The children are very nervous. They feel helpless.

Reuven: Me too.

Ada: I see.

Reuven: I thought I was making it easier for you. That you don't have to go through this nightmare of a funeral and burial... I wanted our separation to remain only ours... No one else cares about me now...

Ada: You see how much they love you.

Reuven: I wasn't sure I deserved it.

Ada: Do you want us to prepare the letter now?

Reuven: I want to rest a bit.

He got up from the armchair. She supports him.

Reuven: Maybe you'll come and lie next to me?

Ada: Lying next to you?

Reuven: Why not?

Ada: I'm not sure I can.

Reuven: Don't be considerate with me now.

Ada: I'm not considerate.

Reuven: Are you still angry?

Ada: I'm not angry.

Reuven: So why can't you? Because of Meir?

Ada: Not. Not because of him.

Reuven: So for what?

Ada: Have you forgotten how difficult the divorce was? How humiliating were your infidelities? I had to step away a little, in order to overcome the pain.

Reuven: I think that in the last few days we have discovered that we are not that far away.

Ada: But they are also not close enough.

Reuven: Let's just hug, Ada. Just like with the children.

Ada: Our toughest fights broke out when we were close.

Reuven: What else can we fight about now? At most, I'll be able to convince you that I regretted what I did to you, and maybe you'll even agree to forgive me.

6. Friday. Cafe. Night. Avshalom and Omer drink beer.

Omer: Every day I tried to take him to a movie, to a concert, to a restaurant, to walk with him on the beach. He didn't want to.

Avshalom: He wanted to finish the book.

Omer: He wanted me to serve him. Like his doctoral students. Like the secretariat. Every time I asked for permission to leave the house for a few hours, he sent me to the university to get something from the library.

Avshalom: Why didn't you tell me?

Omer: Didn't you imagine?

Avshalom: How could I?

Omer: You know him.

Avshalom: I don't know him that way. Do you want more beer?

Omer: Not. Thank you. When you stopped asking about him, I thought there was no point in asking you to come here.

Avshalom: When did I stop asking about him? I wrote to you every week.

Omer: You didn't write every week.

Avshalom: So every two weeks. I also asked my mother. She didn't say anything.

Omer: She didn't know. I was stuck at home with him. We only went to the hospital. Doctors. Testing. I didn't have a moment to myself. I couldn't find a job. I couldn't even think about a relationship.

Avshalom: If I knew, I would come here **for you**.

Omer: Probably.

Avshalom: Yes. Even though my father didn't want to talk to me. Even though he didn't even bother to call me once. **(Rises)** I will ask for an account.

Omer: Where are you in a hurry?

Avshalom: I still want to go home.

Omer: My mother said we'd go to sleep in her apartment.

Avshalom: I don't want to leave her there alone.

Omer: It will work out by morning.

Avshalom: And if he needs a shot?

- Omer: Then she'll give him a ball. I want to sleep one night peacefully. Without thinking about it. Without worrying about him. Without getting up twice to give him water.
- Avshalom: Very well. Go to her apartment. If there is a problem, we will call you. **(Rises)** I will already pay at the cash register.
- Omer: **(Rises)** I see how hard it is for you to hear me. But I had to tell you this. You didn't come to visit him, even though you knew he needed you. Even though you knew that only you could help him. That only you can strengthen it. He always loved you. Always admired you. He always accepted your opinion. If you had come here a month ago, maybe he would have continued with the treatments.
- Avshalom: I didn't come because I didn't know he was sick. I didn't know, because you didn't inform me. And now I also understand why you didn't inform me.
- Omer: I did not inform you because he did not allow me.
- Avshalom: You didn't inform me, so I wouldn't come here. So that I wouldn't sit next to him and take care of him. So you don't have to see that he still loves me. You used his illness to keep me away from him.
- Omer: What are you talking about? He insisted that no one knew. He didn't want to be pitied.
- Avshalom: So what if he insisted? Did you have to obey him?
- Omer: If I had told you, he would have thrown me out of the house, leaving me to die alone.
- Avshalom: Or I would come here and help you take care of him. **(Gets up and turns to leave)**
- Omer: That's not true, Avshalom. I swear to you. This is a baseless accusation. How can you even imagine such a thing? Wait. I'm coming with you. You have no idea how much I wanted you to come. I was afraid of him. You've always been scared, too. **(Follows him)**

7. The guest room. Everyone smokes from the medical marijuana that Reuven receives to relieve his pain. Despite the seriousness of the discussion, from time to time they giggle and joke.

- Reuven: Very well. I've already agreed. Cemetery"eden". Two adjacent plots. One for me and one for you. I hope Meir won't object. Without Chevra Kadisha. No Kaddish. Without

a merciful God. My tombstone will say "He tried his best to be a good person." Write whatever you want about yours.

Ada: Very well. With music, or without music?

Reuven: **(To Omer and Avshalom)** What do you say?

Omer: Without.

Avshalom: With.

Reuven: Pointing. Who is in favor?

Ada and Avshalom are in favor.

Reuven: A re-vote.

Now Reuven and Omer are also in favor.

Reuven: The decision was made unanimously. "For man is the tree of the field¹"? Do you sing?

Avshalom: Yes.

Ada: Me too.

Omer: I'll bring a guitar.

Reuven: What about the eulogies?

Ada: I will speak with the president of the university.

Reuven: He's been waiting for it for years. I'll mark two paragraphs from the book for him. If he is not willing to read them, he should not eulogize.

Ada: Who else?

Reuven: The Governor of the Bank of Israel? The Minister of Finance?

Ada: They will be very, very happy. **(Everyone laughs)**

Avshalom: Your friends from high school? Army?

Reuven: I'm too socialist for them.

Omer: Maybe someone from the House Committee? Still, you always paid on time.

Everyone laughs. Reuven ignites another joint.

Reuven: How about you? All three of you eulogize. Right?

Ada: Me too?

Reuven: Probably.

Ada: As your ex-wife?

Reuven: As my best friend.

Ada: You shouldn't.

¹ Lyrics by Natan Zach, melody by Shalom Hanoch

Reuven: Vice versa. You miss that you're flattering.

Ada: What do you want me to say?

Reuven: The whole truth and only the truth. **(To Avshalom and Omer)** So do you.

Avshalom: It's no longer your business, Dad.

Reuven: There will be hundreds of people there. I want to know what they will take home.

Omer: They will take what they already know.

Reuven: Don't tell me you didn't think about what to say.

Avshalom: We didn't talk about it at all.

Reuven: I can't believe it. Forward. I want to hear the whole truth. Without kohl and shrek. **(La'ada)** You have to say that I was an unreliable and irresponsible partner. That I wasn't with you during the children's births, because I was in the reserves. When they were sick, I was busy. Tell me about my infidelities, too. How much they hurt you. How humiliating they were. How stupid they were.

Ada: Enough, Reuven.

Reuven: With lecturers, with female students, with the American doctor who lives across from us.

Ada: Enough, Reuven.

Reuven: And also explain why I was so demanding. Why couldn't I make do with just you? Why did I think all these women would succeed in convincing me to love myself?

Ada: You loved yourself too much. That's why you thought every woman had to love you. The prettier it is, the more it must be. Even its beauty is meant to serve you.

Reuven: Excellent. I ask you to say this.

Ada: All right. I'll say.

Reuven: I'm serious, Ada. This is my last request.

Ada: And every time I blamed the poor for their poverty, You would go Comfort In What a flatterer who agreed with you that the government is to blame.

Reuven: Exactly. And say that I forced myself on you, even when you didn't want to. That I was aggressive. That I didn't control myself. That when you refused me, I was violent.

Avshalom: So far, Dad. So far.

Reuven: You're already a big boy. You can hear. **(La'ada)** Say you divorced me because of my obsession with you. Because of the outbursts of rage. And yet, you knew all along that you were the great love of my life, and that you didn't love anyone else as much as you loved me. Not even Meir.

Ada: All right.

- Reuven: Now you are. **(To Omer)** Yesterday you said I didn't take into account in you all my life, and that I am not going to consider you after My death. I want you to tell me what you meant.
- Omer: I'll say what I want.
- Reuven: Of course, you will say what you want, provided that it is the truth. I don't want to lie there on a stretcher and hear lies.
- Omer: All right.
- Reuven: Don't smear me, Omer. Say I was busy with myself. In my books. In my women. Politics. Say I was angry with you because you loved my mother more than I did. That I belittled you because you didn't do a doctorate. Say it.
- Omer: I won't say that.
- Reuven: If you don't, you'll live your whole life knowing that you lied.
- Omer: Didn't you ever lie?
- Reuven: Of course I lied. Say that too. And also say that despite this, you came to live with me when I got sick, and you took care of me with great devotion, and so we became very close to each other, and we also learned to love each other. Right?
- Omer: Right. I'll say that, but I'll also say that I didn't get a doctorate, because I wanted to be an educator. Working with young people. To help them develop. to build a future for themselves in an enlightened society...
- Reuven: Well done. And also say that I was impervious and didn't understand it. **(To Avshalom)** You will also tell the whole truth.
- Avshalom: Very well. I'll say you underestimated my art.
- Reuven: But also say that I still loved you.
- Avshalom: Mother is right. You loved yourself mostly, and you would only be willing to love me if I were an economist like you. Not an older person who scribbles on fabrics.
- Reuven: But also say that before I got sick, I came to every of your exhibitions, and we talked about it for hours. And say that I loved you despite the criticism I had, and even though you ran away from me as soon as you could.
- Avshalom: Very well. I'll say.
- Reuven: And say that you forgave me. Not because I'm sick, but because despite everything, you love me too.
- Avshalom: I'll say, Dad. I'll say. I really forgive. By the way, may I also say what I think of your book? I read it last night.
- Reuven: In one night?!
- Avshalom: It's quite interesting.

Reuven: And...

Avshalom: As soon as it is published, the income inequality index will immediately start to drop.

Everyone laughs.

Omer: Now Dad is satisfied. He will also lead us at his funeral.

Avshalom: And we will obey him as always with joy.

Reuven: And if you don't keep your promises, I donate all my property to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, to the struggle for every citizen's right to welfare. There is a lawyer here who was appointed to execute the will.

Everyone laughs again. Reuven ignites another joint.

Omer: If we're talking so frankly, Dad, then it's time to talk about the elephant in the room, too.

Reuven: What elephant?

Omer: We need more instruction from you.

Reuven: What instruction?

Omer: The most important teaching right now.

Ada: We're not talking about it, Omer.

Reuven: What instruction?

Omer: What are we supposed to do when...

Avshalom: Enough, Omer.

Omer: **(To Avshalom)** Don't you see that our time is running out?

Ada: We'll talk about it when Dad decides.

Avshalom: I don't intend to participate in this conversation.

Reuven: I understood. You're talking about the elephant **This**. Apparently the moment has really arrived. Until now, I haven't had enough courage, but I think about him all the time. I didn't say anything, because I didn't know what to say.

Ada: Now you know?

Avshalom: That moment is still a long way off, Dad. Eva and Sophie arrive the next day. Give them a chance. When you see how much Sophie loves you, you will get stronger, and your pain will also decrease.

Reuven: I know how much she loves me.

Avshalom: When it arrives, you will discover that you have powers that you did not know about.

Reuven: I hope.

Omer: We all hope. But still, it's worth taking into account that the next day we'll have to double the amount of morphine, and you'll probably be in a borderline situation.

Avshalom: Dad will decide for himself how much morphine he needs.

Omer: And if he can't decide? And if he can't say what he decided? You have to tell us what to do, Dad. Otherwise you may suffer terribly.

Avshalom: He doesn't have to decide anything now.

Ada: Dad will also decide when to decide.

Reuven: That moment will come pretty quickly, Ada. I'm not afraid of him. I'm not afraid not to be. Dying is just falling asleep and not waking up. When the moment comes, I...

Avshalom: Enough, Dad. Please.

Reuven: When the moment comes, I will decide for myself. It is immoral to ask you to decide for me. But if I can't **Do** I do it myself, so maybe it would be moral to ask you anyway...

Omer: Do you want us to help you do that?

Reuven: If I don't eat.

Avshalom: I can't hear that conversation anymore.

Omer: How do you know that this moment has arrived?

Avshalom: **(firmly)** I asked for enough.

Reuven: It will come when the morphine no longer has an effect.

Omer: And if you can't, can you tell us that you've decided?

Ada: If he can't say, it means that the moment has come.

Reuven: If I can't say, it means that this moment has already passed.

Avshalom: You can't ask us for something like that, Dad. We can't do that for you either. I can't even think about it. **(To Omer and Ada)** Since we've been here, he's feeling better. We see it with our own eyes. If we continue to strengthen him, we will have a few more days. Maybe even a few weeks.

Reuven: I want to die sane, Avshalom. I want to die happy. With a smile on his lips. I want to die with love. I want to look straight at death and laugh. I want to make fun of him.

Ada: I will be by your side all the time, Reuven.

Omer: Me too.

Ada: I will not stop loving you, even if you ask me to help you.

Omer: Me too.

Reuven: **(To Avshalom)** You?

Avshalom: I don't know, Dad. I know myself. I won't be able to do that. I was never even able to stand in front of you and fight with you. That's why I ran away. That's why I didn't go back. Now you want me to...? **(With tears)** It's too big for me. It's bigger than me...

Reuven: You will save me a lot of suffering, Avshalom.
 Avshalom: I will never forgive myself.
 Ada: You won't be alone. We will help each other.
 Reuven: This is the most generous thing you will do for me. You have no idea what relief I feel now. That's a good reason to celebrate, Ada. Give me a hand and we'll dance. One last dance. As long as I'm on my feet. Put on some tango, Omer. Put, and look how we danced on our wedding day. Mother was already pregnant with you, Avshalom. After a few steps, she suddenly vomited on me, on the suit I had borrowed from a friend, because we didn't have a penny in our ass. What a great start it was. At the end of my life, I suddenly became a romantic. Do you see how ridiculous death makes me?

He laughs. Omer sends a tango from the phone to the speakers. Reuven grabs Ada's hand and manages, despite his weakness, to perform a few dance moves, until suddenly he is hit by severe pain in his stomach and he falls into an armchair.

Reuven: Give me a shot, Omer... **(Emitting a deep moan)** Before I go crazy. This motherfucker is not willing to give me a moment of contentment... Every time he sees me happy, he sticks his jaws at me again... Now you understand why I'm going to need you when the moment comes?

8. Saturday. Night. Cafe. Meir sits alert and waiting. Adah enters. They hug.

Ada: I'm sorry I'm late. He couldn't fall asleep. I gave him two pills.
 Meir: That's perfectly fine. I understand.
 Ada: He's already really weak.
 Meir: Maybe you will transfer him to a hospice?
 Ada: I don't think he deserves it.
 Meir: Of course not. But if there is no choice, then...
 Ada: There is a choice.
 Meir: I understand.
 Ada: Are you travelling to Paris next week?
 Meir: **(Negative)** I have already informed the children. We'll be waiting for you.
 Ada: After the shiva we will let them know.

Meir: Do you really have to sleep at his place every night? Maybe you'll sleep at home tonight?

Ada: I really want to, but...

Meir: But he needs you.

Ada: Omer and Avshalom need me too.

Meir: I never imagined that I would worry about you so much.

Ada: You have no reason, Meir.

Meir: I called you because I suddenly felt that you had disconnected. We haven't spoken for two days. We did not correspond. I didn't know what was going on with you.

Ada: It's not that simple there. He asked me to help him end his life while he was still sane.

Meir: Did he ask you?! What did you say?

Ada: Agreed. The children agreed, too.

Meir: You know it's illegal.

Ada: I know.

Meir: You may lose your license.

Ada: I don't believe we'll get there.

Meir: For a moment I thought that maybe it was revenge for what he did to you, but I'm very afraid that it's your love for him.

Ada: I'm doing this to spare him some suffering.

Meir: Yes. I imagine. By the way, why are you telling me this? So that I know how devoted you are to him?

Ada: I'm telling you this because I want you to tell me that it's the right decision. Let me promise that I won't regret it.

Meir: I think it's a very correct decision. I'm sure you won't regret it.

Ada: Thank you.

Meir: I still don't understand. If he's already fallen asleep, then what else do you have to do there tonight?

Ada: He wakes up every few hours with terrible pain. We may need to increase the dose of morphine.

Meir: I'm sure the kids know what to do.

Ada: You can't imagine how much strength they need to deal with his pain. How much power does he need? Every time he looks at me, I think he'll decide to finish in a moment.

Meir: You think about him all the time. Right? For two days he managed to sink into you and hold on to you. Even after all this is over, he will not let go.

Ada: After all this is over, we are going to Paris to meet your children.

Meir: Are you sure? When?

Ada: I told you. I'll know after the shiva. **(firmly)** Please, Meir. Don't you see how hard it is for me? Try to be more generous to me. Let me be kind to him, even if you don't think he deserves it. It's not at your expense. Let me close this circle without leaving all of us with too deep scars.

Meir: Can I at least hug you?

They hug.

9. The next day, Sunday. Morning. Omer in the living room. Avshalom leaves Reuven's room.

Avshalom: She gave him one hundred and twenty milligrams. I hope it will be enough.

Omer: I don't understand where she has the strength to do it.

Avshalom: Mother was always strong.

Omer: I think he can't do it anymore. also Our Presence Not really I help him.

Avshalom: I'm not sure.

Omer: Therefore, he asked for two hundred and forty milligrams.

Avshalom: He asked because it hurt him.

Omer: Or he's already decided.

Avshalom: He can live a few more days. He knows it.

Omer: I hope.

Avshalom: I suggested that she go and rest for a while. She didn't agree. She was afraid that he would continue to fight with me. He insists that I return to Israel, so that Sophie can grow up in Hebrew. It won't be so simple with Eva. In Berlin, it's easier to be a humanist.

Omer: He still manages to get everything he wants from you.

Avshalom: I want to come back here because of you too. At the end of the day, you're my best friend. **(Silence)** Maybe change your mother for a few minutes?

Omer: I can't anymore.

Avshalom: Maybe he'll apologize for what he told you.

Omer: I wasn't offended by what he said. I was offended by what he didn't say. I've been taking care of him for a whole year now. I didn't hear any thanks from him even once.

Reuven and Ada come in. Reuven walks with the help of the treadmill. Ada accompanies him to an armchair.

Avshalom: How do you feel?

Reuven: Recovers. **(To Omer)** Sorry I screamed at you. You don't deserve it. I love you just as much as I love Avshalom. But in a different way. When you have children, you'll see.

Omer: Do you want to eat something?

Reuven: Can you make me a coffee?

Omer: Yesterday you didn't have dinner.

Reuven: I'm not hungry.

Omer: You have to strengthen yourself.

Reuven: So put me three sugars. I want to work a little.

Avshalom: You can? Take one hundred and twenty milligrams now.

Reuven: I am fine.

Avshalom: Do you want yogurt?

Reuven: I want coffee.

Avshalom: I'll do it for you. **(Going out to make coffee)**

Ada: I still think you should take a bath.

Reuven: I want to work now, Ada.

Ada: You will feel much fresher.

Reuven: I know.

Omer: **(furiously)** You're doing it on purpose. Right? Do you want to see when our patience will expire?

Ada: Leave him alone, Omer.

Omer: That's why you don't eat either. So that I may beg you.

Ada: His appetite waned. You can't force him.

Omer: He wants me to blow up, so he can accuse me of not loving him.

Ada: He knows you love him.

Reuven: You're fed up. Right? You would be very happy if this nightmare was already over. But what can I do, I intend to live a few more days.

Ada: Enough, Reuven.

Omer: Do you want us to take you to hospice? There they will know how to feed you.

Reuven: Don't threaten me.

Ada: We don't take him to any hospice.

Omer: So let him eat.

Ada: He will eat after he works. **(To Reuven)** Right?

Avshalom enters and serves Reuven coffee.

Omer: **(To Reuven)** If you really wanted to live a few more days, you would eat. But you don't want to anymore. At night you asked for two hundred and forty milligrams.

- Avshalom: Two hundred and forty is not enough to.
- Reuven: When I decide to, I'll tell you.
- Omer: If you ask for two hundred and forty, it is a sign that you have decided.
- Avshalom: **(To Omer)** Leave it alone. What do you want from him?
- Reuven: He tries to convince me that I want to die now.
- Ada: We'll help you keep going as long as you can.
- Reuven: If you want to help me, then let me work a little.
- Avshalom: **(To Omer)** You don't have to rush it. He wants to write. He also wants to see Eva and Sophie.
- Omer: If he doesn't eat now, then when the moment comes, I won't help him.
- Ada: Dad will eat when he wants. And we will stand by him all the time. As we promised. **(To Reuven)** I suggest you take a bath anyway. It will take a few minutes. We also need to change diapers.
- Reuven: **(angrily)** I want to work now.
- Ada: You will have a rash. It will itch.
- Reuven: **(To Avshalom)** Help me get up.
- Omer: Don't help him.
- Reuven: **(Exploding)** I'm talking to you, and you don't hear. If I can work two hours now, then I don't eat, I don't bathe, and I don't change any diapers. Who knows when I'll have two more hours like this.
- Ada: You will have them.
- Reuven: if I not I will write the book This, no one will write it.
- Ada: It's a shame about the argument, Reuven.
- Reuven: someone Need tell here that our lives Can be seen Completely different.
- Omer: I find it hard to believe that this is really what is bothering you now.
- Reuven: Because you don't understand why I'm writing. Even a foreign worker would have already understood this. Maybe it's really the best solution. You can go. I don't want you here. I will be ordering a Filipino for me. He will do everything I tell him. **(La'ada)** Bring me the phone.
- Omer: This Filipino won't help you at the last minute when you need it.
- Reuven: He will help because he will understand.

Reuven gets up from the armchair to pick up the phone, but fails and falls. Omer, Avshalom and Ada rush to help him get up and return to the armchair. His pain increases.

Reuven: Give me another sixty milligrams, Ada.
 Ada: Take a dose an hour ago. You can't take another one now.
 Do you want marijuana?
 Reuven: I want a ball.
 Omer: If you want a ball, then eat first. **(Takes the packet of pills)**
 Avshalom: **(To Omer)** Are you crazy?
 Omer: If he doesn't eat, he won't get it.
 Avshalom: What happened to you, Omer? Do you hear yourself?
 Omer: He doesn't appreciate what I do for him at all.
 Ada: **(To Omer)** Give me the pills.
 Reuven: I can write two or three more pages today, Omer.
 Ada: **(angrily)** Give me the pills, Omer. We don't have time for games like this now.

Omer gives up and gives Ada the pack. Ada gives Reuven a ball. He swallows it.

Ada: Go to work. We'll take a bath later.
 Avshalom: I remind you that Eva and Sophie are coming tomorrow.
 Let's try to stay sane.
 Omer: I can't do it anymore. Can't... **(Turns to go out and returns)**
 You fell on purpose. It was a despicable manipulation. Just to abuse us. That's why you also allow yourself to say whatever you think. Am I a failure? Am I wasting my time? Why? Because I'm not an economist like you? The only time I wasted was taking care of you... **(To Ada and Avshalom)**
 And you left me alone for a whole year, and you never bothered to ask if I needed a little help.
 Ada: Enough, Omer. Please. Not now.
 Omer: Right now. **(Exiting)**
 Reuven: I didn't say that he...
 Avshalom: Said.
 Ada: You know it's not a failure. He's smart and valuable, at least like you. He educates out of a mission. Right. It's hard for him. In the past year, he has devoted himself to you. He is attached to you. He's afraid of losing you. Try to be a little considerate of him. I ask that you call him and apologize.
 Reuven: When I'm done working.
 Ada: Now.
 Reuven: I want to think about what to say to him. **(Trying to get up, but having trouble)** Can you please take me to the study?
 Ada: You may never have another chance to reconcile with him.

Reuven: I'll call him in an hour.
 Ada: **(firmly)** If you call now, you'll save him some grief. He deserves it. Yesterday he told me that he intends to do a doctorate.
 Reuven: Really?
 Ada: Yes.

She hands him his phone. He takes it and dials.

Reuven: He filters me. I'll try again in a bit.
 Avshalom: I'll try.

Avshalom tries, but there is no answer.

Reuven: I still think I need a Filipino. On nights like this, I'd rather you not be near me. You don't deserve to see me like that.
 Ada: Filipino garlic. Me and the children. Only us. Until the end. You can cry. You can shout. You can scream. But think for a moment before you open your mouth. And if you don't control your tongue, then bite it and shut up. Put goodness in your head. You have no one but us now. And if you want my forgiveness so much, then make a little effort. At least as much as I try to forgive.

10. Sunday. In the afternoon, the beach. Omer is sitting on a beach chair. Avshalom entered.

Avshalom: Here you are. He sent me to look for you.
 Omer: I imagined.
 Avshalom: He called you a few times. Why don't you answer?
 Omer: What does he want?
 Avshalom: Let her go home.
 Omer: I'm not going back.
 Avshalom: He wants to apologize.
 Omer: I'm not ready to accept his apology.
 Avshalom: You have to apologize too.
 Omer: Are you by his side again?
 Avshalom: If you don't apologize now, you're going to curse yourself for the rest of your life.
 Omer: I'm not sure.
 Avshalom: This is not the time to be petty, Omer.

- Omer: Am I petty? I? Maybe he? You heard him mock me. He belittles me. Am I zero? I didn't do a doctorate because I can't do a doctorate?
- Avshalom: Of course you can.
- Omer: So why did you keep quiet? Why didn't you tell him that? Just when I needed you, you left the room.
- Avshalom: I went out to get him water.
- Omer: You went out, because you're afraid to open your mouth next to him.
- Avshalom: **(angrily)** Enough already. Stop complaining. We don't have time for self-pity now. You can't escape to the sea every time you're offended.
- Omer: I think you ran away.
- Avshalom: Don't settle accounts with me now. I came here for you. Not for him.
- Omer: I'm not sure.
- Avshalom: He had only two days left.
- Omer: I know. I will be in my mother's apartment. Let me know if anything happens.
- Avshalom: You might be late, Omer.
- Omer: I don't understand what you want from me. Here I am giving you the place next to him. From now on, it is only yours.
- Avshalom: Thank you. **(Turns to go out and returns)** I've been thinking about it a lot in the last couple of days. You're right. I accused you of not wanting me to come here, just to justify my indifference to him. I knew he was sick. I also imagined what you're going through here. I didn't come because I couldn't bear the fights with him. **(Quotes Reuven)** Yes. You are a successful painter. But I'm doing much better. I influence the public agenda much more. You're a charlatan. Coward. A dilettant without roots. A wretched son of a genius. Wherever you go, I'll get more. **(Silence)** Do you really think he admires me? He despises me. In his eyes, I failed more than you, because I wasted the talent I could have used to repair the world. But when he's dying, I'll be by his bedside. **(Exiting)**

11. Sunday. Evening. The guest room is empty. Avshalom's phone, which is lying on the dresser, rings. Avshalom hurriedly enters from the corridor and answers.

Avshalom: Yes. I hear. Where are you?... It's good that you got wisdom... Yes. He ate. Mom is bathing him now. Come up already... **(Turns off the phone and turns into the hallway)** Mother? He arrived. He's in the elevator. He sounds fine.

A moment later, Omer entered through the front door of the apartment.

Avshalom: How are you?

Omer: I meditated on the beach. Suddenly it gets cold.

Avshalom: Do us all a favor. Don't be right now. Don't argue. Don't blame and don't be calculating. It's all over.

Reuven enters, walks with the help of the walker. Ada helps him. He sits down in an armchair. Silence.

Omer: Dad, I... I am sorry. I have no way of justifying... It's despair. That's the fear. That's the pain. I guess I'm not as strong as I thought.

Reuven: I totally understand. But you have Mom's genes. You will endure. Much more than me.

Omer: I was angry with myself, because I felt that I was breaking down. That's why I said what I said.

Reuven: I know. Luckily, you can still correct your mistakes. I can't fix much anymore.

Omer: You can't imagine how much I regretted it.

Reuven: I regretted it too. I said things I never thought of. It was as if someone else had said them. Even the worst pain doesn't justify such things. You know how much I love you.

Omer: I love you too. I thought about what else I could do to appease you, so I brought you some cocaine. Really good material.

Reuven: Cocaine?!

Omer: It will set you in a great mood. You no longer have to worry about becoming addicted. **(To Ada and Avshalom)** I brought enough for all of us.

Ada: We'll wait another two hours. Dad wanted to work a little. Right, Reuven?

Reuven: I'll be working tomorrow.

Ada: Are you sure?

Reuven: Yes. Yesterday I made quite a lot of progress.

Ada: I don't know if you can tomorrow.

Reuven: Why?

Ada: Because we decided that tonight she would take 180 milligrams.

Avshalom: We don't want another night like yesterday.

Ada: The doctor said it was already a borderline dose.

Reuven: How borderline?

Ada: At this dose, you will be vague. It will be difficult for you to communicate.

Reuven: I understood.

Ada: Do you want to stay at yesterday's dose?

Reuven: If tonight I take one hundred and eighty milligrams, then tomorrow night I will have to take two hundred and forty...

Ada: Apparently.

Reuven: So that's it? Finito La Comedy? Won't I finish the book?

Avshalom: We find out who can finish it for you.

Ada: I spoke with the president of the university. He will come back with an offer.

Reuven: I was hoping to get a little more done.

Avshalom: So are we, Dad, but...

Ada: But you have accomplished the main thing. There is only ...

Reuven: Just the most important episode.

Ada: You leave behind dozens of articles about narrowing the income gap.

Reuven: Yes. Right. There's something to that. Eva and Sophie will arrive tomorrow evening. Right?

Avshalom: Yes.

Reuven: In other words, there's a chance that I won't have time to be with them.

Avshalom: But there's a good chance you'll be enough.

Reuven: I hope. Suddenly I started to worry. Is there anything else I haven't done? Something I forgot? Something I hadn't thought of? Help me remember for a moment. There is a leak in the children's shower. You need to hire a plumber. The air conditioner in my car has weakened a bit. You have to go to the garage. The insurances need to be canceled. To give you permission to the bank account. I'm sure that's not all. I have a list. I don't remember where she is. Maybe she's in a drawer with the notes to the book...

Reuven covers his face with his hands. Silence. A moment later, he removes them.

Reuven: So that's it? Twenty-four hours. It's pretty safe. Right? No overtime? No injury time? Twenty-four hours. Unbelievable. On the other hand, it's also a great relief. This is coming to an end. No more pain. There is no more fear. There is no more despair. That sounds pretty good. Damn the book. I thought the meaning of my life would fade away if I didn't finish it. Wrong. Suddenly, even reducing poverty has no meaning. Luckily, I don't have time left to mourn it. If I can still be happy about something, I want to be happy. I'm glad that this moment has arrived. For you, too. Admit. You will also be relieved. And that makes me even happier. By the way, I think that when the moment comes, I'll manage on my own. You won't have to help me. **(To Omer)** So go ahead. Bring the cocaine. I've heard so much about him. Now let's see what is in these rumors.

Omer arranges the cocaine on a piece of paper. Reuven aspires, followed by Ada and Avshalom and Omer himself. The effect of cocaine is quite rapid.

Reuven: Wow. What material. Do you feel it too? What an elation. I never imagined. Nothing scares me anymore now. Give a little more, Omer. I really I'm not afraid. Death, come. Here I am. Take me. I'm ready. Ready and knowing. There is no secret here. No mystery. It's simple The end... **(Laughs)** These will be the happiest twenty-four hours of my life.

Ada: You deserve it, Reuven. We all deserve it...

Avshalom: With such material, Dad, you should last a few more years.

Omer: Come on, a celebration. Applause! Applause!

Reuven: **(Minister)** Play, play for your dreams, it's me who dreams chess. Play because I believe in man, because I still believe in you²...

Ada: **(Sarah)** For I will still believe in man, in his spirit, in a strong spirit.

Reuven: I suddenly have an idea, Ada.

Omer: No, Dad, don't spoil us now.

Avshalom: Now we're just happy.

Reuven: This time it's a pretty happy idea.

Ada: Will it make us happy too?

Reuven: I want to offer you something.

Ada: What do you already have to offer now?

² Lyrics by Shaul Tchernichovsky, melody by Tuvia Shlonsky

Reuven: Let's get married.
 Ada: Shall we get married?!

Reuven: Why not? We don't need a rabbi. You don't need a chuppah.
 Avshalom: Yes, a wedding. Wedding.
 Omer: If we need witnesses, we are the witnesses.
 Ada: Wedding now?!

Reuven: Another half hour. We will change clothes. We will order a cake. A bottle of wine was opened.

Ada: **(Hesitating)** Give me a moment to think.
 Reuven: I thought you loved me.
 Ada: Of course I love you.
 Reuven: So what's the problem? Do you want to consult with Meir? It won't change much for him. In two days you will be a widow.

Ada: It's not a joke, Reuven. I have to explain to him. **(Crying)**
 Reuven: If he doesn't understand, then you really shouldn't live with him.

Avshalom: Well, Mom. Don't hesitate so much. When will you get another offer like this from your father?

Omer: Say it after, Dad. Are you, my beloved Ada, ready to be my wife, for better or for worse, until my last day?

Avshalom: Well, Dad. Mom is waiting.
 Ada: **(To Reuven)** You leave me, precisely when I love you so much.

Avshalom: Actually, Mom is right. She needs to put her life in order. Eva and Sophie are also coming tomorrow. It's worth waiting for them.

Omer: So a wedding tomorrow! Wedding tomorrow!

Avshalom hurries to open a bottle of wine and pour it into glasses.

Reuven: At least say yes, Ada. I won't hold out with such a supplier until tomorrow.

Ada: **(With tears)** Yes. I say yes. I say yes to you, and I say yes to myself. I say yes to my great love for you, which has been hidden. Because Too long. I say yes to forgiveness. I forgave you for everything. For everything you did to me in those bad years. About the pain. About the anger. About the insult. I say yes to joy. Yes. I can be happy, even though you're going to die. I say yes to the damn death that brought you back to me. I can even thank him for this death, thanks to which I have loved you all my life... **(Picking up a glass)** Cheers!

Everybody: Cheers!

12. Sunday. Night. Ada and Meir's apartment.

Meir: I don't understand. Are you out of your mind?
 Ada: It's only for two days.
 Meir: That's out of the question, Ada. All these years I didn't insist that we get married, because I thought it wasn't necessary. So now you're getting married **Him**?
 Ada: We'll live together for many more years, Meir.
 Meir: And after all these years, will you be buried next to him?
 Ada: I don't know what will happen after all these years. This wedding has no meaning either. It will not be recorded anywhere. I could not have told you about it.
 Meir: This wedding shows that you are choosing him. You didn't give up on him, despite all your weeks.
 Ada: I'm not giving up on you either.
 Meir: If you don't understand how much you hurt me, I'm not sure I can live with you.
 Ada: I actually understand, but if I can make it a little easier, then...
 Meir: My generosity towards him has a limit.
 Ada: Mine too. But I can't settle accounts with him now. I want to let him die happy. If you were in my place, you would do exactly as I did.
 Meir: I am sorry. I am flesh and blood. I'm a jealous. I'm possessive. I'm not willing to share you with him. Not even for his last two days.
 Ada: You are neither jealous nor possessive. That's why I agreed to his request.
 Meir: I warned you, Ada. The first time you went to him. Death has enormous power. Reuven uses it to squeeze your love out of you. If he persuaded you to marry him and be buried next to him, you would never break up with him. He will lie in wait for us day and night. He will wait for every opportunity to pollute our most intimate moments. I really want to live with you until my last day. But without him. I'm not ready for you to come back to him tonight. There will be no wedding tomorrow. Call the children now, and tell them that you will only come to the funeral. If you want, I'll come with you.
 Ada: I can't.

Meir: It's either him, or me.
 Ada: Don't force me to choose.
 Meir: You've already chosen. **(Turns out)**
 Ada: Wait a minute, Meir. Give us another chance. It's very easy to be offended and say goodbye. I went through it firsthand. Pretty quickly I realized that I didn't have to give up so easily. That I could contain the insult. Reuven understood this, too. But then it was too late...

But Meir is leaving.

13. Monday. Afternoon. Omer places a cake on the table, and places flowers in a vase. Ada enters from the corridor, dressed in a white dress, and places a bottle of wine and glasses on the table. It is evident that she is very tense. From time to time she finds it difficult to hold back her crying.

Ada: He is recovering. Avshalom dresses him.
 Omer: When I washed him, he was barely breathing.
 Ada: The oxygen strengthens it.
 Omer: Did you see how excited he was?
 Ada: Me too.
 Omer: It's a shame that you waited until now.
 Ada: We were arrogant and stupid. We didn't know how to forgive. Now it's suddenly so obvious.
 Omer: Do you think it will last another day or two?
 Ada: I don't know. **(wipes away a tear)**
 Omer: Enough, Mom. You can afford to be happy now. We'll have plenty of time to cry.

Avshalom and Reuven enter. Reuven is in a wheelchair, oxygen glasses attached to his nose. The oxygen generator hangs on the back of the chair.

Avshalom: The groom is ready.
 Ada: You look great. **(Kissing him on the forehead)**
 Reuven: I feel much better.
 Avshalom: Maybe we'll wait a few more hours for Eva and Sophie to arrive?
 Ada: He took a dose an hour ago. After the next dish, it will already be quite fuzzy.

Reuven: I'm not sure, Ada. Apparently, towards the end, the dying are filled with new strength. What kind of dormant instinct of life suddenly awakens in us. **(Laughs)**

Omer: I suggest that we begin. Sit down, Mom.

I place a chair next to the wheelchair. Ada sits down, holding Reuven's hand. Avshalom pours wine into a festive glass.

Avshalom: Omer and I have written special greetings in your honor. **(Shelf Reader)** Dear Mom and Dad, we raise this glass to your life of deep and wonderful love. **(Sipping)** Cheers!

Everybody: Cheers!

Omer: Blessed are you who have found within you the powers of the soul to reconcile, to forgive, and to rediscover this love, despite all the residues of the past.

Everybody: Welcome!

Omer: Blessed are you that you have decided to marry each other, and to live together again in joy and happiness, until death separates you.

Everybody: Welcome!

Omer: Blessed are you that you have challenged death, and you have chosen to prove to all of us that even in its shadow you can remain human beings, acting according to their desires and desires.

Everybody: Welcome!

Avshalom: **(Giving rings to Reuven and Ada)** Now you wear this ring on your mother's finger and say: After all, you are sacred to me. And you wear this ring on your father's finger and say: You are sacred to me.

Reuven: After all, you are sacred to me.

Ada: You are sanctified to me.

Reuven: In this ring.

Ada: In this ring.

Avshalom: With eternal love.

Ada and Reuven: With eternal love.

Avshalom: Congratulations.

Omer: Congratulations.

Reuven and Ada kiss.

Avshalom: Cheers!! Cheers!!

Everyone sips from the glass. Ada bursts into tears.

Reuven: Enough, Ada. Sufficient. Please. A few more minutes.
 Omer: Now Mom and Dad will bless each other.
 Ada: We are giving up. We greeted each other all night.
 Avshalom: It's your wedding, Mom, but you don't have to be so nervous.
 Omer: You know very well who you're marrying.
 Ada: No bride in the world knew her groom better than I did.
 (Crying again)
 Avshalom: So will we cut the cake?
 Reuven: First of all, a mother's gift.
 Omer: Did your mother make you a present?
 Ada: Yes.

Ada chokes her crying, takes an envelope out of her dress pocket, and gives it to Reuven. Reuven opens the envelope and takes out a syringe.

Reuven: Dear children, my mother and I have thought about this a lot, and we have come to the conclusion that it is best to end it now.
 Omer: **(amazed)** Now?!
 Avshalom: Now you feel better.
 Omer: You can't drop it on us like that.
 Ada: We have no choice. If we wait, it will end more painfully.
 (wiping away her tears)
 Reuven: In a few hours I will no longer be able to be with you.
 Avshalom: Then we will wait until then.
 Reuven: I don't want to go there. I want to do it with full awareness, and with the clear knowledge that it's the right thing to do. Out of choice, not out of pain.
 Omer: I don't understand. Do you want to do it right now?
 Reuven: Yes.
 Omer: I'm not sure I can see it, Dad.
 Avshalom: Give us some time to say goodbye.
 Reuven: It won't be such a difficult separation. We'll hug. Let's say hello. I'll inject it into myself and fall asleep.
 Omer: You know it's not that simple.
 Ada: We will do everything to make it simple. Dad wants you to see that it is possible to do it without fear.
 Omer: I don't want to see.
 Avshalom: If we have two more hours, then let's be happy with them.

Ada: In two hours he will be in a lot of pain. If we give him more morphine, he won't be able to do it himself. **(wiping away her tears)**

Reuven: Give me a hug, Omer.

Omer: Wait a minute.

Reuven: Come on, Avshalom. Let's.

Avshalom: We will do it when there is no choice.

Omer: Please, Dad.

Reuven: Don't force me to beg.

Ada: Maybe we can still make it easier for them, Reuven. Let's do it in the bedroom. You and me. I will stay with you all the time.

Reuven: Very well. We will do it in the bedroom. **(To Omer and Avshalom)** Can I still ask you for a hug?

Omer: Give us a few moments to get used to the thought.

Reuven: We had a whole year.

Avshalom: Where are you in such a hurry?

Reuven: I'm in a hurry, because I'm afraid.

Ada: We are all afraid.

Reuven: I thought I'd have more courage. That I'll be cold-blooded. Sure. Even proud. Suddenly all the pride I had dissipated.

Omer: It doesn't have to be this way... In such a hurry...

Avshalom: Those two hours are very precious to us, Dad.

Omer: That's one last request, Dad. You can't refuse.

Avshalom: Even if it's only an hour. Even if it's only half an hour...

Reuven: All right. Very well. **(La'ada)** We'll wait another hour. I think I'll hold on.

Ada: Are you sure?

Reuven: When it starts to hurt, I'll tell you.

Omer: So cut the cake?

Avshalom: Of course.

Reuven: You're right. This hour can be the sweetest hour of my life. It would be a shame to give it up.

Omer: First, let's raise another glass.

Reuven: Of course.

Avshalom pours wine into glasses. Reuven passes the syringe into Ada's hands.

Reuven: Cheers!
Everybody: Cheers!

Reuven: What wonderful children you are. Your insistence on being with me for another hour is so exciting. Right, Ada? Isn't it true that we have a great family?

But Ada shoves the syringe into his shoulder and injects him with the lethal dose of morphine.

Ada: I love you, Reuven.

Reuven is stunned. He looks at her in amazement.

Reuven: Ada?

Avshalom: Why, Mom? Why?

Ada: **(With tears)** He wanted to die before he got tired of it...
When he still wants to live...

Omer: **(choked throat)** You did it, Dad... You did it in a big way...

Reuven: Thanks, Ada... Thanks, kids... I Going not My Death Like a bed My daughter-in-law...

Ada hugs Reuven. Reuven responds to her hug. Dusk.

end