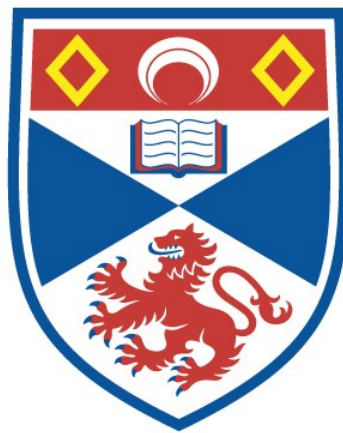


**There are going to be a lot of changes:
a full-length drama**

Emery Ann Schaffer

A thesis submitted for the degree of MFA
at the
University of St Andrews



2024

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There Are Going To Be A Lot Of Changes
A Full Length Play

by Emery Schaffer

6/9/23

Word count: 11,963

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CHARACTERS

SHARON - mid 50s. Mother.

AYELET - 25. Mother.

ISAAC - 30s. Fiancé.

TOM - 25. Father.

CASEY - 8. Son.

TIME AND LOCATION

Sharon's house and the surrounding neighborhood.

Over the course of three days.

NOTES ABOUT THE TEXT

Some Hebrew and Yiddish, look into those words when they appear.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank a few key people for their help and support throughout this incredibly rewarding process.

Oliver Emanuel and Zinnie Harris, thank you both for your commitment to my growth as a playwright. For your encouragement during the times I hit a wall. For reminding me to pat myself on the back for jobs well done. I am so glad to have been mentored by both of you, and hope we find each other again in the professional writing world.

Dina Nayeri, for our writing mornings and for all the soup. You've played such a key role in my finding community here. Thank you for taking me under your wing.

Catherine Massie and Nicole Gabrione, the MFA dramatic writers. We did it together.

Samir Diab, the ever pragmatic one. I love you.

Drew Schaffer, I'm grateful to have such a great brother. Yes, I'm serious. This is not a joke.

Mom and Dad, for everything. Literally everything.

To my friends and family in the UK and home in America, who have loved and supported me always. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

ABSTRACT

This play began for me conceptually as an investigation of a couple lingering questions I have always had: can one ever really change? How much of life do we have control over? How much does belief play a role in our abilities to move on? I have explored this question in this play through a strained mother-daughter relationship framed by a return home from prison, a custody battle, an engagement, and falling back on hold patterns.

Ayelet, the protagonist in this story, is hellbent on ensuring her new life will be nothing like her old one. Sharon, her mother, will do anything to keep things the same while welcoming her daughter back. The wants and needs of Isaac, Tom, and Casey come second to the tornado that is the relationship of Ayelet and Sharon. This is the method in which I've used to deliver themes of change versus stasis, rehabilitation, reform, and trying to evade our fates.

My interest in writing a story like this one comes from my experience in the Jewish community and the concept of *tikkun olam*, or healing the world. Reform, healing, and returning are large concepts in Judaism, and I wanted to write a story that reflected them while utilising the complexities that a mother-daughter relationship provides. Though this is not a story based on true events, the dynamics in it are also those of my life. In the beginning, I called this my "big Jewish play." It has evolved into a play not about religion, but instead one about cultural expectations in extreme situations.

"The home should be perceived as a microcosm of the universe."

- Rebbe Menachem Schneerson.

PROLOGUE

*A woman in a prison jumpsuit
addresses the audience. Her head is
wrapped in a headscarf.*

*She holds a notebook open in her
hands.*

AYELET

It's called *bayit*, home in Hebrew.

She begins to read.

AYELET

I go back to the sounds of laughter.
My old room frozen in time like a capsule under the ground.
I crawl into bed and when I wake up, I'm happy.
My family holds their hands out to me like I'm a soldier come
back from a mission.
I don't see their faces.
I can't see their gaze.
Their smiles are contagious.
And I am amazed.
Listen to my heart, it's beating so fast.
I'm home with my family.
Everything's in the past.

She closes the notebook.

AYELET

Yeah. I hate it too.

Blackout.

ACT I

SCENE ONE

A kitchen in a middle-upper class home. A banner that says "Welcome Home" hangs on the wall. There are balloons.

There are also pictures framed all over the room of family members, kids and adults together, just kids, etc...they seemed strategically placed where people can see them.

A door opens. Voices heard offstage.

Careful now. SHARON (O.S.)

I got it. AYELET (O.S.)

It's a heavy door— SHARON

I got it I got it. AYELET

SHARON (55) and AYELET (25) enter the room. Ayelet is dressed quite conservatively, a long skirt and long sleeves cover her limbs. Sharon is dressed casually in jeans and a top.

Sharon turns around, like "tah-dahhhh."

See what I did. SHARON

AYELET

I see.

SHARON

Do you like?

AYELET

It's fun.

SHARON

That's what I was going for.

Ayelet takes a blue balloon in her hands.

SHARON

Your favorite color.

AYELET

Is it?

SHARON

Blue is your favorite color.

AYELET

I don't really have a favorite color.

SHARON

Well it used to be blue. Blue blue blue. When I had a girl I thought it would be pink but nope, not with you. Blue.

AYELET

I guess it's still blue.

SHARON

I learned how to do all this on Youtube. You've used Youtube.

AYELET

Of course I have.

SHARON

There's all sorts of fabulous videos on how to craft and knit and bake. You can learn everything on there. There are these utterly ridiculous videos of younger kids taking things their parents bought out of boxes and talking about them, toys mostly. They're called *unboxing videos*.

It's like watching a monkey peel a banana. We get it, we know what's inside. But the kids are obsessed with them these days, what are you gonna do?

Sharon takes her jacket off and puts it on the back of a chair. Ayelet puts the balloon down and looks around.

AYELET

It's changed.

SHARON

I've redone some things.

AYELET

Everything.

SHARON

Oh, not everything.

Sharon pauses.

AYELET

I can't believe I'm here. It feels like a miracle.

SHARON

If you believe in those, sure.

AYELET

I do.

SHARON

Or it's just the legal system working, for once.

Pause.

SHARON

Sorry.

AYELET

We can talk about it. I'm okay to talk about it.

Pause.

AYELET

Maybe later.

*Sharon looks at her emotionally.
She goes in for a hug, Ayelet
accepts.*

*Sharon kisses the top of her head
and pulls away.*

SHARON

So.

*Sharon looks around for things she
stored away earlier in the day.*

SHARON

Sit.

AYELET

Can I—

SHARON

Sit.

AYELET

I'm not a dog.

SHARON

Well just sit, please. Let me spoil you.

AYELET

I don't want to be spoiled, mom.

SHARON

You're letting me.

AYELET

Alright, alright.

SHARON

Just hang tight. Don't move.

Sharon goes into the cabinet and takes out boxes of Girl Scout cookies. She flicks an already full kettle on.

SHARON

You're not moving, are you?

AYELET

No!

SHARON

Good.

She dumps the cookies onto a plate.

She sets down the plate.

SHARON

We are going to have a food extravaganza.

Ayelet takes one and gingerly bites into it. She puts it down.

SHARON

Are you sick.

AYELET

No.

SHARON

Tired? Cold?

AYELET

Why do you think something's wrong.

SHARON

You're not eating.

AYELET

I'm just not that hungry.

SHARON

How can you not be hungry?

AYELET

I'm just not.

SHARON

Well try to be because I've got a whirlwind of your favorite things coming at you.

AYELET

You really shouldn't have—

SHARON

I'm talking Dim Sum tonight, I'm talking pizza from Joe's. I'm talking egg creams from that horrible diner that only you like. I'm talking it all.

AYELET

Really, I—

SHARON

So make some room because you're gonna gain 100 pounds and it's going to be all my fault.

AYELET

I can't eat any of that stuff.

Shocked pause.

SHARON

Why not?

AYELET

It's not Kosher.

Pause.

SHARON

Right.

AYELET

I should have reminded you.

SHARON

No, no, I'll figure it out. I'm sure there's some good Kosher takeout, somewhere.

AYELET
Sushi is Kosher.

SHARON
Do you like it?

AYELET
I don't know.

SHARON
Sushi is amazing. We will have it tonight.

Sharon sits.

*She clinks her mug to Ayelet's and
takes a sip. Ayelet doesn't drink.*

SHARON
So your name.

AYELET
My name?

SHARON
Your new name.

AYELET
It's spelled right there.

SHARON
But you're definitely going with that?

AYELET
With Ayelet. Yes.

SHARON
What made you choose...

AYELET
Ayelet

SHARON
I liked your name before.

AYELET
It's nothing personal.

SHARON

I get it, I do.
But I don't. Honestly, I don't.

AYELET

I wanted something / different.

SHARON

More Jewish.

AYELET

Not entirely, no.

SHARON

I just figured.

AYELET

Do you have to say it like that.

SHARON

What? I can say Jewish, I'm a Jew.

AYELET

It sounds like a bad word when you say it.

SHARON

No no, I get it. You wanted your name to reflect who you are
and who you are is more Jewish now, the end.

AYELET

What's all this about? I changed my name three years ago.

SHARON

I'm just making sure I have it right.
What does it mean?

AYELET

It's Hebrew for gazelle.

SHARON

How symbolic. Of what, I don't know.

AYELET

Of grace, of beauty.

SHARON
Of running really fast.

AYELET
Where is Casey?

SHARON
He's at school.

AYELET
Is he back soon?

SHARON
Around three, usually. He sometimes likes to go over to his friends house after to shoot hoops.

AYELET
Shoot hoops.

SHARON
I don't know, whatever eight year old boys do.

AYELET
He's coming home today, right?

SHARON
I think so.

AYELET
You *think*?

SHARON
He usually just calls me after school to say.

AYELET
He knows I'm here though.

SHARON
He knows.

Pause.

SHARON
Leslie Brenman's son is a medical device salesperson and said he'd be happy to talk to you.

And Colleen Pearlson's son is an accountant and he says his secretary is just awful and he's looking for a new one. You remember all these people, right?

AYELET

Mom—

SHARON

But if none of those are speaking to you we've got the beauty of the world wide web. It's good to be busy, sweetheart.

AYELET

I—

SHARON

And you know what we should do tonight?
After we eat, we should go to the movies! When was the last time you saw a movie?
They're playing something new at the theatre around the corner. Do you remember it? It used to be an old one and now it's a new one where they bring you cocktails and food and things. Maybe we shouldn't eat before—

AYELET

Mom.
He is coming home, right?

Pause.

SHARON

I just remembered. He's sleeping at his friend's house tonight.

AYELET

You just remembered.

SHARON

Just popped into my head.

AYELET

Because it really feels like you knew where he was going to be but didn't want to say.

SHARON

I thought it would be easier if it was just us tonight.

AYELET

For who?

SHARON

For him, of course.

AYELET

He was fine when I saw him last week.

SHARON

I know.

AYELET

So what's the problem?

SHARON

I just thought it would be best.

AYELET

So he's not coming home tonight.

SHARON

No.

AYELET

I really need to see him.

*Sharon nods, she understands this
but it also worries her.*

SHARON

I know. But you're probably exhausted.

AYELET

Do I look tired?

SHARON

You look fine. Great.

AYELET

That means I look tired.

SHARON

It really doesn't.

Ayelet pauses. She takes a deep breath.

AYELET

There are going to be a lot of changes.

SHARON

I don't doubt it.

AYELET

I've changed. I've done a lot of work on myself to be better.

SHARON

I can see.

AYELET

I'm sober, I'm clean, I'm 25 and I've learned a lot about who I am and what I want.
I need you to know that.
Please believe that.

SHARON

I know that, sweetheart. I really do.

AYELET

So I really need to you to not be angry when I tell you this.

Pause.

SHARON

Okay.

AYELET

I'm getting married.

Sharon falls totally silent. Ayelet looks at her face for a response, but there is none.

AYELET

Mom.

Sharon gets up and turns around.

AYELET

Please don't leave.

I'm not leaving.

SHARON

Sit down, then.

AYELET

I can't.

SHARON

I want to explain.

AYELET

She sits down immediately, not facing her.

Thank you.

AYELET

This wasn't my choice, all the blood went straight from my legs to my head.

SHARON

A pause. Ayelet looks at her hopefully.

What do you mean.

SHARON

I mean that I'm getting married.

AYELET

But how?

SHARON

The usual way, I think.

AYELET

No.
How.

SHARON

Ayelet begins to say something, Sharon stops her.

SHARON

Wait.
It's not.

AYELET

It's not what?

SHARON

I've seen *Orange Is The New Black*. Is that what you mean? You know I'm very open minded but all that just seems so emotionally taxing.

AYELET

Are you asking if I had a *prison wife*.

SHARON

I wasn't going to use that term.

AYELET

I'm marrying a man.

SHARON

How?

AYELET

He's a volunteer at the prison. He asked me to marry him, and I said yes.

SHARON

How.

AYELET

I just told you.

SHARON

How did I not know this?

AYELET

Because I...didn't tell you.

SHARON

I've seen you once a week for eight years. Sometimes twice, three times. You tell me about this friend you've made, and this roommate you've been given. All the drama with the two rival groups, the secret romances with the guards.

You tell me all the things that have happened to you over the last eight years in that hellhole.
But a month ago you got *engaged* and forgot to mention it?

AYELET

I wanted to tell you at home.

SHARON

Right
That makes sense.

AYELET

Really?

SHARON

No, not really.

Sharon gets up again, paces anxiously.

SHARON

What's wrong with him?

AYELET

Nothing.

SHARON

There has to be something.

AYELET

There's nothing—

SHARON

No young man in their twenties / has to meet women like this if they're normal. I / didn't mean it that way. I mean normal in the sense that, well—/

AYELET

He's 35.
Normal?
Go on.
No, please. What does normal mean—

Pause.

SHARON

Normal isn't bad is all I'm saying.

AYELET

I don't know what normal is.

SHARON

Oh, please.

AYELET

Going to prison at 17 isn't normal. Having a child while incarcerated isn't normal. But it's what happened.

SHARON

That's not—

AYELET

Can you really say that my entire experience of normal isn't normal then.

SHARON

Absolutely I can.

Ayelet stands up too.

AYELET

We really love each other. He always wanted to be a father, and he's the kindest man—

SHARON

When did you agree to this?

AYELET

You make it sound like a transaction.

SHARON

Because it is!
What were you thinking, Abby?

AYELET

Don't call me that.

SHARON

I can't believe you didn't say a thing.

AYELET

My name isn't Abby.

Right. Ayala.

SHARON

Ayelet.

AYELET

Gazelle.

SHARON

AYELET

Do you want me to be sorry about this?

SHARON

I want you to have told me before.

AYELET

I was always going to tell you.

SHARON

You had every opportunity, every change-

AYELET

I wanted it to be mine. Just mine.

SHARON

Fine.

AYELET

I am sorry. I am.

SHARON

You're really in love with this kid?

AYELET

He's not a kid.

SHARON

I suppose he's also like you.

AYELET

Meaning?

SHARON

Orthodox.

AYELET

Yes.

Pause.

SHARON

Well it all makes sense now, doesn't it.

AYELET

He isn't why I-

SHARON

Do you think I was born yesterday?

AYELET

I didn't do this for him!

SHARON

What are you trying to do here? Build some sort of wall around your life that I have to climb to get behind? If you want to shut me out just shut me out.

AYELET

Because I want to do things right. I want a family for Casey.

SHARON

Casey already has a family.

AYELET

I mean when I take him back.

SHARON

No.

Pause.

AYELET

What?

SHARON

No.

AYELET

No what.

SHARON

No...I don't think that's a good idea anymore.

AYELET

This was always the plan.

SHARON

I know.

AYELET

This was always what was supposed to happen.

SHARON

I don't think—

AYELET

What else do you want me to do.

SHARON

Nothing. You've done everything right.

AYELET

So what is it then? You bring him to visit me, you say you want me to have everything I want. What is it?

Pause.

SHARON

I changed my mind.

AYELET

You can't change your mind about this.

SHARON

We agreed that I would be best—

AYELET

While I was away. I'm not away.

SHARON

We agreed that he would call me mom and you—

AYELET

This is unbelievable.

SHARON

How can I tell him this?

AYELET

This was the plan. This was always the plan.

SHARON

I can't do it.

Things are fine the way they are. Why mess with a good thing?

AYELET

You think this is a good thing?

SHARON

It's working.

It's all working.

It's functioning perfectly, just like it's supposed to. And if we mess with it, who knows?

AYELET

My legal team might disagree.

Silence.

SHARON

A legal team. You have a legal team.

AYELET

Yes.

SHARON

You can afford a legal team, and they're *helping* you?

AYELET

What is that supposed to mean.

SHARON

I just thought after the system chewed you up and spit you out that you might not go running to them the second you could.

Ayelet takes a deep breath, then stands. She pushes in her chair.

AYELET

This is happening, and you're going to need to prepare yourself.

She goes to leave.

SHARON

Abby.

Ayelet turns around.

AYELET

I'm not Abby.

She exits.

Sharon stares at the door that she left from.

SHARON

(whispers under her breath)

Abby.

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

The next morning. A local park.

A man sits on a bench, looking around whimsically.

SHARON (OFF)

(on the phone)

The address, I'm calling for the address.

To the office.

No.

Not to the courthouse, I know where that is.

The office.

OFFICE.

YOUR office.

Sharon walks into the park on her way somewhere. She sits down on the same bench as the man.

SHARON

I can wait until then. Okay. Yes, I got it. Thanks.

She hangs up.

She takes cigarettes out of her purse and lights one.

SHARON

And now I'm smoking.

She smokes. It calms her down.

SHARON

Great. Just great.

Sharon's back is still turned to him.

She turns around to notice that the man isn't reading anymore, but looking at right at her. This is ISAAC.

SHARON

Sorry, I'm probably disturbing you.

ISAAC

No, no.

SHARON

I have a big mouth.

ISAAC

You don't.

SHARON

No really, I do. And a lot of multi-generational trauma to deal with.

ISAAC

I get that.

SHARON

I don't usually smoke.

ISAAC

Only when you're stressed?

SHARON

Yeah.

ISAAC

Me too.

SHARON

Want one?

ISAAC

I'm not stressed.

SHARON

So?

ISAAC

No thanks.

SHARON

Alright.

ISAAC

I was just leaving, if you want the bench.

SHARON

You were.

ISAAC

I can find another spot, I know where every bench is.

SHARON

I don't see another bench.

ISAAC

There's one over by the pond.

SHARON

You're a regular.

ISAAC

I come here most mornings.

SHARON

Pre-work ritual?

ISAAC

No work, just ritual.

SHARON

Lucky you.

ISAAC

I come here in the mornings for my morning *daven*.

SHARON

Oh.

ISAAC

That's praying.

SHARON

I know what it is.

ISAAC

You looked confused.

SHARON

Not confused.

ISAAC

Okay then.

SHARON

I just not my thing. God and I don't agree.

ISAAC

What's not to agree with?

SHARON

I don't want to get into it. You do what you want.

ISAAC

Fair enough.

Isaac takes a deep breath, exhales.

ISAAC

You spend your life in classrooms, and then at a job. And for what?

SHARON

Money, I think.

ISAAC

Sure.

SHARON

Pretty important.

ISAAC

Yes, but not everything.

SHARON

What for then?

ISAAC

Pride. Power. Ego.

SHARON

Geez.

ISAAC

At the end, none of those things matter.

SHARON

You talk like a dying man.

Isaac smiles weakly and averts his gaze. Sharon realizes.

SHARON

No.

ISAAC

It's fine.

SHARON

I'm an idiot.

ISAAC

You didn't know.

Sharon looks down, then back at him.

SHARON

Sure you don't want one?

ISAAC

Screw it. Yeah.

Sharon gives him a cigarette and lights it for him.

Isaac holds it between his fingers but doesn't smoke it.

SHARON

For what it's worth, you don't look like someone who's dying.

ISAAC

What does a dying person look like?

SHARON

I...I'll just stop talking.

ISAAC

No, really! What does death look like? I've been trying to figure it out myself.

SHARON

I don't know.

ISAAC

I'm just hoping I'll know it when I see it.

Isaac smiles.

ISAAC

That was a joke.

SHARON

I don't know when to laugh at a joke like that.

ISAAC

Whenever you think something's funny.

SHARON

I'm glad I have your permission.

ISAAC

You sounded upset on the phone.

SHARON

Yeah, well. It's been an upsetting one.

ISAAC

Day?

SHARON

Life.

ISAAC

What's wrong then?

SHARON

You don't want to know.

ISAAC

I might have some sage strangerly wisdom for you.

SHARON

Really, you don't want to know.

ISAAC

Come on. I'm dying for some drama here.

Isaac smiles wider.

ISAAC

Because I'm—

SHARON

Alright, ha ha.

ISAAC

So?

SHARON

My daughter, who has recently returned from prison, wants full custody of her son who I have raised as my own, and now I need a lawyer.

She looks over at Isaac.

SHARON

I told you.

ISAAC

I'm just processing it all.

SHARON

There's more, but that's the gist.

ISAAC

Wow.

SHARON

Fun.

ISAAC

She was in prison?

SHARON

It was an accident, the prosecutor used her as an example for all teens everywhere. She really shouldn't have had to go but...

Isaac pauses for a moment.

ISAAC

That's terrible.

SHARON

Yeah.

ISAAC

I know someone in a similar position.

SHARON

How are they?

ISAAC

She's okay, I think. But it's different.

SHARON

My daughter is like you. She took up the whole Torah thing while she was there.

ISAAC

And you think that's a problem.

SHARON

Frankly, yes.

She pauses.

SHARON

It's not anti-semitic. I'm Jewish too.

ISAAC

Okey-dokey.

SHARON

It's really not.

ISAAC

What's it really about then?

SHARON

I just don't agree with it.

ISAAC

Why?

SHARON

Because it's not safe.

ISAAC

Judaism isn't safe?

SHARON

Today, no. It's not safe.

Sharon chooses her words carefully.

SHARON

My daughter chose this for herself in a vacuum where the outside world couldn't get her. She was safer there, in some regards. My son didn't get to chose. He's going to have this thrust upon him, I don't want him getting beat up in the streets.

Do I sound totally bigoted.

ISAAC

Not totally.

Isaac pauses.

ISAAC

This happens a lot, people turn to religion because they have nowhere else to turn.

SHARON

In your vast experience with female inmates?

ISAAC

Something like that.

SHARON

I just always imagined us picking up where we left off, only better. She's older. We could be more like friends. But it's like she's rejecting me and everything I tried to give her at every turn.

ISAAC

Well you could never do that.

SHARON

I thought I could.

ISAAC

Do you want to know how I see it.

SHARON

Why not.

ISAAC

Religion can be very healing, you know. When you believe in God and all he has, all the answers and reasons He has for why things are the way they are. It's a freeing idea.

SHARON

Okay.

ISAAC

Is that wrong to you?

SHARON

I can't imagine there would be a reason for going through all this.

ISAAC

I think there is.

SHARON

What is it then?

ISAAC

I don't know.

SHARON

That's the part I hate.

ISAAC

To each their own.

*Sharon drags on her cigarette.
Isaac puts his out.*

ISAAC

I think talking about it is good. Have you talked about it with her?

SHARON

A little.

ISAAC

You know, I used to be a family lawyer.

SHARON

NOW you tell me.

ISAAC

And I always told every single one of my clients the same thing.

SHARON

That you accept payments 24 hours before each meeting?

ISAAC

That they should try to work it out themselves before getting me involved.

Sharon pauses, nods her head.

SHARON

Right.

ISAAC

You never want to do something you can't take back. Both my religious convictions and my professional ones believe that.

SHARON

I don't know if I can.

ISAAC

It's worth a try.

SHARON

Okay.
Thank you.

ISAAC

No problem.

SHARON

You said used to be a lawyer.

ISAAC

I stopped when I found out I was—

SHARON

Dying.

ISAAC

It's not how I wanted to spend my time.

SHARON

What do you do instead?

ISAAC

A lot of volunteering.

SHARON

Any one place in particular?

ISAAC

Here and there.

SHARON

You don't give out much, do you.

ISAAC

I just gave you a lot!

SHARON

I know, I know.

No chance you'll live to be my lawyer?

ISAAC

Not one.

SHARON

You seem so...fine about it.

ISAAC

I'm practicing radical acceptance.

SHARON

I guess that's good.

ISAAC

Sure. It's good.

Sharon nods.

ISAAC

So you promise you'll try to work it out first?

SHARON

I promise.

Isaac holds out his hand. They shake.

ISAAC

I'm Isaac.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE

Sharon's house.

TOM (25) is under the sink head-first tinkering away. He curses under his breath.

Ayelet comes downstairs with a plastic bag of coins in her hand. She's running out the door, when she sees him. She doesn't expect him to be there.

She takes a look at him, then realizes who it is.

AYELET

Hello?

TOM

Just a second.

She recognizes his voice.

AYELET

Tom?

Tom lifts his head up. He sees her.

TOM

Hold on.

He puts down his tools and gets up to dust himself off. Ayelet takes a reactionary step back.

TOM

Welcome home.

AYELET

What are you doing here?

TOM

The sink's broken.

AYELET
Okay, I mean what are you doing here?

TOM
I just said—

AYELET
Tom.

TOM
Abby.

AYELET
That's...not my name anymore.

TOM
Right.

AYELET
Ayelet.

TOM
Ayelet.

AYELET
Yeah.

TOM
It's nice. It suits you.

AYELET
Thanks.

TOM
Why'd you change it?

AYELET
I don't have time for this.

TOM
Woah woah wait.

He stops her, gently.

TOM
Hey.

AYELET

We've done this already.

TOM

How are you?
How was... it?

AYELET

You ask me that like I went to Aruba.

TOM

I don't know how to ask it.

AYELET

It was what it was.

TOM

I'm glad you're out. We all are.

AYELET

Okay, Tom.

TOM

Your mom is especially—

AYELET

How often do you talk to my mom?

TOM

Most days.

Pause.

TOM

What?

AYELET

Most days. You're here most days?

TOM

To help out, yeah.

AYELET

Help out.

What's the problem?
TOM

That I didn't know.
AYELET

...okay.
TOM

I knew sometimes. I knew occasionally. Because that's what I was told.
AYELET

So—
TOM

A lot of the time. You're around a lot.
AYELET

She hires me, she needs help around here.
TOM

You're like one big happy family.
AYELET

We're not—
TOM

Don't say anything else.
AYELET

I thought you knew.
TOM

Yeah, well I didn't.
AYELET

Pause.

Your hair got long.
TOM

That's what happens.
AYELET

Pause.

TOM

What's all that.

He motions to the bag of money.

AYELET

It's *tzedakah*. Charity.

TOM

Huh.

AYELET

What?

TOM

I can't remember you ever doing something like that.

AYELET

I'm not the same teenage idiot anymore.

TOM

You were never an idiot.

AYELET

I was.

TOM

You know what happened to you wasn't fair.

AYELET

Tell that to my manslaughter charge.
I have to drop it at the synagogue.

TOM

In the little gold box on the wall, right?

AYELET

Yeah.
How did you know that?

TOM

I saw one once, I renovated Beth Israel's kitchen a few years ago. I just figured that's what it was for.

AYELET

That's what it's for.

TOM

I think it's cool that you've found this. That you believe in it.

AYELET

Alright.

TOM

I'm trying to be nice here.

AYELET

I know.

Pause.

AYELET

I'm assuming my mom has told you everything, since you're so close.

TOM

Told me?

Sharon enters through the front door.

SHARON

Hey, Tommy.

TOM

Morning.

SHARON

Sink all good?

TOM

I've patched it up for now, I'll go to the hardware store later.

SHARON

Is it bad?

TOM

Not too bad.

SHARON

Thanks for doing that.

TOM

No problem.

Sharon gives Tom a quick, mindless kiss on the cheek. The way a mother would to a son.

Sharon sees Ayelet, who is looking at them with a shocked expression.

SHARON

You two catching up?

TOM

Yeah.

AYELET

No.

SHARON

You were always fighting.

AYELET

We're not fighting.

SHARON

You hungry?

AYELET

No, thanks.

SHARON

Sleep okay?

AYELET

Yeah.

SHARON

Good.

Good.

I'm just going to—

AYELET

Okay.

Sharon exits.

AYELET

You're really just playing house here.

TOM
I'm not! It's / work.

AYELET
Are you fucking / her?

TOM
NO. Oh my God, no.

AYELET
Looks pretty cozy.

TOM
She's like a mother to me!

AYELET
You have a mom.

TOM
She's my friend. She's known me a long time.

AYELET
"You two are always fighting." Like we're still kids. Like we don't have adult problems.

TOM
We are fighting.

AYELET
There's nothing to fight about.

TOM
Are you serious?

AYELET
About what?

TOM
Are we going to talk about the obvious thing or are we going to keep dancing around it?

Pause.

TOM
I'm here every week. I pick him up from school. We play legos. He knows me, and I know him, and I'm ready now.

AYELET
You're ready now.

TOM
I am.

AYELET
What makes you think that?

TOM
I can't get over the fact that his entire life is a lie.

AYELET
That's not true.

TOM
He has no real idea who anybody in his life is. Your his
sister, Sharon's his mother, I'm his—

AYELET
Handyman.

Pause.

AYELET
I'm going to tell him at the right time.

TOM
When?

AYELET
Tomorrow. With...

TOM
With who?

AYELET
With my fiancé.

TOM
What are you talking about?

AYELET
So she didn't tell you?

TOM
You're getting married?

AYELET
Yeah.

TOM
Oh. Well. No wonder.

AYELET
Tom—

TOM
You can't just hire a replacement for someone who already exists.

AYELET
You said you wanted nothing to do with it!

TOM
When?

AYELET
Are you joking?

TOM
You stopped talking to me! I show up to visit you and you tell me that—

He stops in his tracks.

AYELET
So you didn't tell me you didn't want to be a father? Is that right?

TOM
You didn't tell me to stay out of things?

They look at each other, then at the door.

TOM
She wouldn't have.

AYELET
Yes, she would have.

Pause.

AYELET

But this is how things are now. No use in going back. Nothing we can do.

TOM

I want to tell him. I want us to tell him.

AYELET

Sorry. No.

TOM

Come on.

AYELET

Can you please get out of my way.

TOM

Have you even thought about it?

He doesn't move. They look at each other.

AYELET

Of course I have.

It's an ideal situation.

But it's also not realistic. It could never happen. Because we could never happen. He needs a mother and a father, not whatever this is.

TOM

What is this?

AYELET

A teenage relationship with too much of a history to pretend everything is just going to be fine.

We can't start again. There's too much.

TOM

I wasn't saying we should.

AYELET

Oh.

TOM

I didn't mean for that to sound-

AYELET

I just misspoke.

TOM

Okay.

AYELET

Tom. Let me go.

TOM

Don't be all metaphorical.

AYELET

I mean right now. Move.

He moves. She goes to leave.

Before she does, she turns around.

AYELET

I used to wish it was you who was in my place.
 Because really, it was you who told me to go upstairs to
 check on Carrie.
 She was so drunk and those drugs she had were suspect and we
 all knew it. But we let her do them. We all laughed at her.
 And then she went upstairs to stand in the open window.
 I saw her there and she looked so peaceful.
 Just standing in the breeze, watching the sky.
 I wished it had been your hand on her back.
 I shouldn't have been helping anybody.
 Now I live with that. Yeah.
 And you live with my family.

TOM

I live with it too.

AYELET

Not the same.

TOM

We all knew you didn't do it on purpose.

AYELET

But I did it, didn't I?

TOM

Ayelet—

AYELET

They all told me I did, so I did.
I forgave you a while ago.

TOM

I'm so sorry.

AYELET

I really have to go.

*She goes to leave when CASEY (8)
enters, back from school.*

*Ayelet freezes, Tom looks at her,
then at Casey.*

TOM

Hey, Case. Look who it is.

Ayelet chokes out her words.

AYELET

Hi.

CASEY

Hi, Abby.

AYELET

It's, uh, yeah. Hi.

CASEY

You look different than when I saw you last week.

AYELET

I'm a little different.

*Casey gives Ayelet a hug. Ayelet
hugs him tightly, closing her eyes
tightly. Tom watches them, standing
back.*

They break the hug.

CASEY

I have homework.

AYELET

Okay.

CASEY

Bye Tom.

TOM

See ya.

Casey and Tom fist bump, Casey exits.

Ayelet watches him leave, welled with emotion.

Tom thinks, isn't sure what to say next.

He has an idea:

TOM

Do you want to go somewhere tomorrow night?

AYELET

With you?

TOM

Me, some friends.

AYELET

What do you do.

TOM

Talk, drink, play darts.

AYELET

Why would I want to do that with you?

TOM

For fun. We used to have fun.

AYELET

I can't really go out.

TOM

Well since we're old now, we don't tend to stay out past midnight.

AYELET

My curfew is 10.

TOM

I'll have you home by 10.

AYELET

It's *Shabbos* the next day.

TOM

That's me out of loopholes then.

Tom picks up his tool kit and turns to go.

TOM

If you change your mind though.

AYELET

Why did you never tell him?
You could have and you didn't.

Tom turns back around.

TOM

Everything was fine the way it was.

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

Casey and Sharon are in the kitchen, Sharon is doing the dishes after dinner.

Casey sits at the table, playing with uneaten food.

CASEY

And dinosaurs are real, by the way.

SHARON

Yes, I know that.

CASEY

But you said they weren't.

SHARON

I said they weren't *anymore*.

CASEY

Dinosaurs were real, and they were alive during the *crematius* period.

SHARON

Cretaceous, darling.

CASEY

We learned about them in school. They're real.

SHARON

What else did you learn about them?

CASEY

They have scales and some can breathe underwater so they can't drown. And some even survived the meteor that killed them all, and they became crocodiles.

SHARON

Is that right?

CASEY

It's so weird.

SHARON

What's weird.

CASEY

All these things used to be one thing but then they changed into other things.

He continues to push food around.

CASEY

I saw my sister.

SHARON

What do you think?

CASEY

Is she going to live here?

SHARON

She's going to live with her husband.

CASEY

Where will they live?

SHARON

They'll live...wherever they live.

CASEY

Will she come visit like we used to visit her?

SHARON

She loves you very much.

CASEY

I like her I think.

SHARON

Nothing's going to change much. I promise. Your life will be more or less the same as it was before.

CASEY

What would change?

SHARON

Well, you know.

Sharon pauses, thinking of how to say this.

SHARON

Things. Things might.

CASEY

You're being weird.

SHARON

Yeah, I am.

Ayelet enters the house.

SHARON

You look nice.

AYELET

Hi, Casey.

CASEY

Hi.

SHARON

Casey was just telling me about the Cretaceous period.

Casey nods.

CASEY

Dinosaurs.

SHARON

And what about them?

CASEY

They're real.

AYELET

What's your favorite one?

CASEY

T-rex.

AYELET

That's cool.

CASEY
Is Tom here?

SHARON
He'll be back another day.

CASEY
Why not today? I want to tell him about dinosaurs too.

AYELET
You can tell me.

CASEY
I want to tell him.

A pause.

CASEY
(to Sharon)
May I be excused?

SHARON
Sure honey.

Casey hops out of his chair and exits.

Pause.

SHARON
So how was he.

AYELET
He's coming here.

SHARON
Here?

AYELET
We were going to meet out but—

SHARON
Too nervous.

AYELET
I thought here would be better.

SHARON
You thought *here* would be better?

AYELET
His family doesn't exactly know yet.

SHARON
Ah.
And he lives at home.

AYELET
To save money.

SHARON
No judgement.

AYELET
Sounds like some judgement.

Pause.

SHARON
I should be honest with you that I spoke to a lawyer this morning.

AYELET
Okay.

SHARON
I just wanted you to know.

AYELET
And?

SHARON
That it's not that difficult of a case to solve, and that he'll represent me.

AYELET
Oh. Good.

SHARON
But I also was thinking—

AYELET
What you talk about with your lawyer isn't my business.

SHARON

-that I think we should try to work this out ourselves first.

AYELET

Ourselves.

SHARON

Yes. Before he or anybody gets involved.

AYELET

Right.

SHARON

Before this becomes something it's not.

AYELET

I think it's pretty obvious what it is.

SHARON

We can do this on our own, it's us.

AYELET

So let's talk.

Long pause.

AYELET

We need a professional to do this the right way.

SHARON

That's not exactly what I thought we should talk about.

AYELET

That's what I think.

SHARON

I think we should try to work it out ourselves.

AYELET

Work what out?

SHARON

A custody arrangement.

AYELET

There is no custody arrangement. He's my-

Sharon holds up a hand.

SHARON

Keep your voice down.

AYELET

There is no custody arrangement because there is no custody.

SHARON

You're not being reasonable.

AYELET

And you're going back on our deal.

SHARON

What does your lawyer say about it.

AYELET

That's private.

SHARON

Who are you working with?

AYELET

I said that's private.

SHARON

Who did you contact?

AYELET

It's not your business.

SHARON

Who?

AYELET

Shut the fuck up, mom.

SHARON

There's nobody.

AYELET

There is!

SHARON

Then who is it?

A knock at the door. Ayelet stands urgently. She looks at Sharon, who stands too.

SHARON
Should I go.

AYELET
Yes, you should go.

SHARON
Is that—

AYELET
Mom.

SHARON
Alright, alright.

She can't seem to leave.

SHARON
Maybe I should stay. Just in case.

AYELET
Just in case what?

SHARON
Something happens.

AYELET
What do you think is going to—

Another knock.

Ayelet looks at her pleadingly.

Sharon exits.

Ayelet looks at the door and takes a deep breath. She walks to it and opens it.

Isaac is standing there, dressed in a different suit. He's holding flowers.

She opens the door for him, he comes in.

They take each other in.

He steps inside the door, but only just.

AYELET

Do you want to come in?

ISAAC

Yes.

AYELET

Okay, well...

She stands out.

He steps inside a little more.

She sees the flowers.

ISAAC

They're not for you.

AYELET

Oh. Okay.

ISAAC

I could get some for you. I should have gotten some for you.

AYELET

It's okay—

ISAAC

They're for your mother. If she's home.

AYELET

She's, uh...

Ayelet takes the flowers from him and sets them on the table.

AYELET

Busy right now.

ISAAC

My *ima* would kill me if she knew I showed up empty handed to your mother's house.

AYELET

Right.

ISAAC

You can give them to her for me.

AYELET

Yeah.

Pause. They both stand there uncomfortably.

AYELET

I could make us tea?

ISAAC

Sure.

Isaac sits down very quickly.

She goes into the cabinet. She begins to prepare everything.

AYELET

I just bought these mugs, so they're Kosher.

ISAAC

Wouldn't want a shrimp-mug.

AYELET

A shrimp mug?

ISAAC

A mug that had shrimp in it.

AYELET

We don't, I mean, I don't think my mom-

ISAAC

Kidding. Just kidding.

AYELET

Oh.
That's funny.

ISAAC

Yes.

Isaac sits uncomfortably, Ayelet brings over tea. She sits.

AYELET

I don't know what you take in yours.

ISAAC

Nothing.

AYELET

Me too.

They look at each other. They are the closest they've ever been.

AYELET

You're trembling.

ISAAC

Am I.

AYELET

A lot.

He looks at her hands.

ISAAC

Can I...

She nods. He takes her hands gently, and bows his head.

ISAAC

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, shechechianu, vikiamanu, vehigianu, lazman hazeh.

AYELET

Amen.

He lets go of her hands.

ISAAC

The *shechechainu*. For the first time we're together.

AYELET

We've been together.

He looks at her.

ISAAC

You've been crying?

AYELET

I'm not.

ISAAC

Your eyes are red.

AYELET

I'm just tired.

ISAAC

What happened?

AYELET

Nothing. Really.

ISAAC

What can I do?

AYELET

Nothing. Just be here with me.

ISAAC

Did you see Casey?

AYELET

Yeah.

ISAAC

That must have been wonderful.

AYELET

Yeah.

Pause.

AYELET

It will just take some time.

ISAAC

It will all work out.

AYELET

I hope.

Pause.

ISAAC

Are you sure you're feeling—

AYELET

Please don't ask me again.

ISAAC

Okay.
This is so exciting.

AYELET

Yeah.

Pause.

ISAAC

I have—

AYELET

What if we—

ISAAC

Go ahead.

AYELET

No, you.

Longer pause.

AYELET

I was thinking that maybe we could move things up.

Things? ISAAC

Our wedding. AYELET

Oh. ISAAC

Just a little. AYELET

Why? ISAAC

I don't want to wait. AYELET

Ayelet— ISAAC

Let's get married tomorrow. Or today. AYELET

Where is this coming from? ISAAC

It's coming from me. AYELET

But what's going to happen between now and in two weeks? ISAAC

I don't know! AYELET

I'd love to marry you tonight.
But there are people to include, a party. A celebration of us
and of you. Our family. ISAAC

But it's not about them. AYELET

I want to wait ISAAC

Pause. She gets up.

AYELET

Okay.

ISAAC

You're upset.

AYELET

No, I'm fine.

ISAAC

Just sit down with me.

AYELET

What if we sit in silence like this when we're married? What if there's nothing left to say, what if we said it all in that horrible place where we met and now in this nice open outside world we're not going to have anything to talk about?

ISAAC

You think getting married earlier will change that?

AYELET

At least we will have already done it.

ISAAC

Ayelet, come here.

She pauses, then goes to him. He gets up and takes her hands.

ISAAC

The words will come.
There's not enough time in our lives for us to never have anything to say to each other.

AYELET

If we're married now, it will be harder to—

She stops herself. Isaac tries to catch her eyes.

AYELET

Harder to fail.

ISAAC

As in...

AYELET

Divorce. Or you leave. Or I leave.

ISAAC

That's not going to happen.

AYELET

Did we make an enormous mistake?

ISAAC

Ayelet—

AYELET

You proposed to me in *prison*. Why did you do that?

ISAAC

Because I love you.

AYELET

We've never even gone for a walk.

ISAAC

Where is this coming from?

AYELET

From everywhere.

ISAAC

Ayeleh, royk zikh.

AYELET

Ihk ton nit trakhtn ikh ken.

ISAAC

Atem nar.

AYELET

Ikh ken nisht.

*Ayelet begins to breathe very fast.
Isaac brings her to a chair and
puts his hands on her shoulder.*

ISAAC

Just breathe, *shefelah*.

*Ayelet's breathing slows, she calms
down a little.*

*Isaac sits down next to her and
waits for her to re-compose.*

AYELET

Did you just call me a sheep?

ISAAC

Your Yiddish has gotten better.

He takes her hands.

ISAAC

Let's just enjoy each other now.

Sharon re-enters abruptly.

SHARON

Sorry, sorry. I just forgot my...

She sees Isaac, her eyes go wide.

SHARON

(quietly to herself)

Isaac.

*She realizes she's actually just
said his name aloud.*

SHARON

Eyeglasses.

AYELET

I don't think they're in here.

SHARON

They're not. I thought they were but they're not.

AYELET

Mom, this is Isaac. Isaac, mom.

Isaac and Sharon have a shared moment of realization.

Isaac takes the flowers and stretches them out towards Sharon.

ISAAC

For you.

Sharon gingerly takes the flowers from him. She puts them back on the table.

AYELET

Maybe in some water, mom.

SHARON

I'll get it.

She doesn't move.

AYELET

Mom, Isaac is—

SHARON

Isaac.

Pause.

ISAAC

I'll be leaving shortly.

AYELET

What?

ISAAC

I've got an early day tomorrow, I better—

AYELET

Early day for what?

SHARON

If he says he has an early day he has an early day.

Pause.

SHARON

Come back for dinner tomorrow so we can all get to know each other.

AYELET

We're doing *Shabbos* at his parents.

SHARON

Shabbat happens every week, right?

AYELET

We can do it here another night.

SHARON

Oh, come on.

AYELET

We've made plans-

ISAAC

I can change them.

Ayelet looks at Isaac surprisedly.

ISAAC

It would be nice to get to know everyone.

SHARON

We probably know more about one another than we think.

AYELET

(to Isaac)

Are you sure?

ISAAC

It's fine.

SHARON

Settled.

They all stand there in silence.

Isaac takes his coat.

ISAAC

I'll see you tomorrow.

He kisses Ayelet on the head exits quickly.

Sharon goes to the door to watch him leave.

AYELET

What was that?

SHARON

What was what?

AYELET

That whole thing?

SHARON

I don't know, I didn't notice a whole thing.

AYELET

You practically held a knife to his throat.

SHARON

Ayelet, I know him.

Pause.

AYELET

What?

SHARON

I met him in the park today.

AYELET

So you don't know him.

SHARON

I do.

AYELET

You met him once. That's not knowing someone.

SHARON

He's not who he says he is.

AYELET

You're paranoid.

SHARON
No, I'm not—

AYELET
Unbelievable.

SHARON
He's not telling you the truth. You have to believe me.

AYELET
I don't.

SHARON
You need to / talk to him.

AYELET
Oh fuck off don't tell me what I need.

SHARON
I don't want to be right about this.

AYELET
I'm going out.

SHARON
Where?

AYELET
For a walk.

SHARON
You can't go alone.

AYELET
I'm meeting someone.

SHARON
Abby, please—

AYELET
Stop calling me that! Stop insisting that I stay the same!

SHARON
That's—

AYELET

STOP.

*Pause.**A phone pings.**Ayelet picks it up. She reads the message.*

SHARON

Ayelet.

Consider that I'm not lying to you.

That I have no reason to tell you anything but the truth right now.

You need to talk to him.

Ayelet looks up at Sharon.

AYELET

You want to blow it up?

Fine.

Let's blow it up.

She slips on shoes and puts on a jacket.

SHARON

You can't leave now.

AYELET

I'll be back.

SHARON

You could get in trouble.

AYELET

You'd love that.

*She turns around and exits, the door slams.**Sharon yells out the door after her:*

SHARON

You're being a brat!

She turns around and sits down. She puts her head in her hands.

Casey comes downstairs.

CASEY

Is she gone?

SHARON

Yeah, but she'll be back.

Pause.

CASEY

Mom?

Sharon looks at Casey.

SHARON

I'm going to handle it.

Blackout.

End of Act I.

ACT II

SCENE ONE

9 pm that night.

A clearing in the woods. A couple logs that are clearly used for benches surround a defunct fire pit. Cans and bottles litter the area.

Footsteps, branches cracking, leaves rustling. Laughing and shushing become louder.

Ayelet and Tom enter. Tom is holding Ayelet close to him so that she won't fall over. She's drunk.

AYELET

It's dark.

TOM

That's what happens.

AYELET

But it's so dark. The darkest I've ever seen. And it smells like—

TOM

Grass.

AYELET

Weed.

TOM

That's what I meant.

AYELET

And that horrible vodka out of the plastic jug.

TOM

Just as crappy as you remember?

AYELET

Just as *crappy*?

TOM

I can't believe nobody's here.

AYELET

I never thought I'd come back here.

TOM

Welcome back.

AYELET

You welcome back.

Ayelet sits down on one of the logs.

AYELET

I'm frozen in time.

I've been here the entire life I've had because I'm forever meant to be fifteen and a mess.

You know.

On my 21st birthday a guard snuck me a flask of rum and coke.

I drank the whole thing, threw up, and had to hide my clothes so nobody would know.

I think he just wanted to fuck me but he was disgusting.

TOM

That's terrible.

AYELET

It was terrible that a boy liked me?

TOM

I was talking more about the blatant abuse of power.

AYELET

A boy liked me.

TOM

Stop saying boy.

AYELET

Gimme that.

She puts her hand out, Tom looks at her skeptically.

AYELET

Tom.
Tommmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

He hands her a flask.

TOM

I guess you're breaking some rules now.

AYELET

About?

TOM

Are you allowed to drink?

AYELET

Oh, Jewish people love to drink. We're basically commanded to do it.

TOM

Maybe I should be Jewish.

AYELET

Right.

TOM

Hey. I could.

AYELET

You can't follow rules.

TOM

Yeah I can.

AYELET

I'm breaking a lot of rules right now. I know it. But...

She looks at the flask.

AYELET

Doesn't really matter.

TOM

You're awfully poetic when you're hammered.

AYELET

Hey.
I'm a poet.
And I didn't even
...realize it until just now.

Ayelet laughs.

AYELET

But seriously.
You couldn't be Jewish. Not seriously at least.

TOM

Why?

AYELET

Takes a lot of discipline and you've always struggled with
that concept.

TOM

I'm not seventeen anymore.

AYELET

Yeah. I know.

*Pause. Ayelet looks up at the
stars.*

AYELET

What time is it?

TOM

Nine.

AYELET

I turn back into a pumpkin in an hour.

TOM

Your neck's gonna freeze that way.

AYELET

I don't care.

She looks up in awe.

AYELET

Look up.

He does.

TOM

Why did you come?

AYELET

Come where?

TOM

To the bar. And then why did you ask to come here after?

Ayelet pauses. She looks at Tom.

TOM

Ayelet.

AYELET

I like the way you say my name. Say it again.

TOM

Why did you come out?

Ayelet pauses.

AYELET

He doesn't want to get married.

TOM

What?

AYELET

Not tomorrow. I asked him.

TOM

So is it...are you...

AYELET

Next week.

TOM

So what's the problem.

AYELET

I asked him, I said, "let's get married tomorrow, Isaac!" And he said no, he wants to wait. And then mom...

TOM

Did something happen?

AYELET

Something's always happening.

TOM

Come on.

AYELET

She's crazy.

TOM

I think she's just worried about you.

AYELET

Whose side are you on?

TOM

I'm not picking a side.

AYELET

Everybody knows everything about my son, and I don't have a clue. And my mom said...

TOM

What?

AYELET

He's lying to me, maybe.

She holds her hand out expectantly.

TOM

Are you sure?

AYELET

Yeah I'm fucking sure.

TOM

I don't think you should.

AYELET

Tom.

*Tom hands her the flask again
reluctantly. She drinks from it,
finishing it. She hands it back to
Tom.*

TOM

Why would he be lying to you?

AYELET

He's not she's just lying to me.

Tom nods.

AYELET

Now I wanna ask you something.

TOM

Okay.

AYELET

Why didn't you ask me to marry you?

TOM

...when?

AYELET

After Casey was born.

TOM

Oh.

AYELET

You knew he was yours.

TOM

I did.

AYELET

So why didn't you?

TOM

You're drunk.

AYELET

Come on.

TOM

I don't know if we should get into this.

AYELET

Please. Let's get into it. I wanna get into it—

TOM

I don't.

AYELET

You're mad.

TOM

I'm not mad!

He stands up, takes a deep breath.

TOM

It was a bad time.

AYELET

Why?

TOM

Because it was horrible!

AYELET

Can you be more specific—

TOM

No, Ayelet. I can't. Change the subject.

AYELET

I'm just wondering why you didn't—

TOM

You shouldn't be talking about this.

AYELET

Don't tell me what I can talk about and what I can't, you're not my—

TOM

You seem to be interested in something else telling you all that these days.

Pause.

TOM

I'm talking about the guy.

AYELET

Not the Jewish stuff.

TOM

No—

AYELET

I'm not a sheep, you know.
Sheep.

TOM

What about sheep.

AYELET

I don't know what I'm doing here. I shouldn't be here.

She walks away from him.

TOM

Where are you going?

AYELET

I'm going to the car.

TOM

We took a cab.

AYELET

Well call another cab.

TOM

Ayelet.

AYELET

You should have wanted to marry me. Then I'd never be like this.

TOM

Like what?

AYELET

Like this!

I can't be happy about anything that's happening to me, and it's your fault because you didn't just do what you were supposed to do!

TOM

Propose to you in a prison?

AYELET

Someone else had to come along and do it and now look at everything!

TOM

I thought you were happy.

AYELET

I am!

Pause.

AYELET

But why didn't you?

TOM

I didn't want to do that.

AYELET

Why?

TOM

Because I didn't.
I was angry at you.

AYELET

Because you got me pregnant.

TOM

I come home from school one day, I'm already a mess because you're in the fucking women's prison, and my parents tell me that you had a baby. And then I try to come to see you to talk, and you don't let me in.

I was never going to ask you to marry me back then. I was a kid. But I would have tried to stay in your life.

Pause.

AYELET

I was afraid they'd make me...

Ayelet begins to get emotional.

AYELET

I wanted him to keep him, I thought if I told-

TOM

Come here.

AYELET

No.

TOM

Come on.

AYELET

I don't want to touch you. I can't.

TOM

Which is it.

AYELET

Both.

TOM

You're crying, come here.

She fights him, but eventually Tom brings her into his arms. She sobs.

AYELET

What's going to happen now?

TOM

I don't know.

AYELET

What if something really bad happens? What if everything I've lined up...what if...

TOM

It's okay. It's all okay.

Ayelet looks up and kisses him.

Tom jumps away from her.

They look at each other.

AYELET

I'm-

TOM

It's fine.

AYELET

Let's go.

TOM

Okay.

AYELET

Can you call the-

TOM

Yeah.

AYELET

Let's leave. Right now.

TOM

Right now.

Neither of them move.

*Eventually, Tom takes a step
towards Ayelet.*

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

5 pm the next day

Sharon sits at the table with a glass of wine.

There's a knock at the door. She looks at the door for a while, unmoving.

Another knock. She finally gets up.

She opens it, Isaac is there holding a bottle of wine.

ISAAC

Shabbat Shalom.

SHARON

Hey.

Sharon turns to the side, Isaac comes in. He holds the wine up.

ISAAC

Shall I...

SHARON

Yeah.

She reaches her hand out to take it.

ISAAC

I can do it for us.

SHARON

I'll do it.

ISAAC

I—

SHARON

Hand it over.

He goes. She retrieves a wine opener and two glasses.

ISAAC

Is Ayelet—

SHARON

She's here.

ISAAC

Upstairs?

SHARON

She wasn't feeling well.

ISAAC

Oh.

SHARON

I would have thought you'd know that.

ISAAC

It's *Shabbos*. No phones.

SHARON

Right, yeah.

The wine cork makes a popping sound, she pours the wine.

ISAAC

Maybe I should go up there.

SHARON

Stay here.

Sharon turn around and hands the wine to Isaac.

ISAAC

L'chaim.

SHARON

To Ayelet.

ISAAC

To Ayelet.

*They drink.**Sharon sits.*

ISAAC

I need to explain something.

SHARON

Okay.

ISAAC

I obviously didn't know who you were. I was just unloading to a stranger.

SHARON

Yes, well.

ISAAC

I am not a person who values lying. It's something I've tried to avoid my entire life.

SHARON

Except for now, at the end.

Pause.

SHARON

I'm assuming Abby doesn't know.

ISAAC

Ayelet?

SHARON

That's what I said.

ISAAC

You said Abby.

SHARON

Oh.

Well I didn't mean it.

ISAAC

She doesn't know.

Isaac pauses.

SHARON

Well???

ISAAC

(in a lowered voice)

When I found out about what would happen to me, I knew I had to do something to make a difference.

SHARON

Ayelet isn't some charity case who needs you.

ISAAC

I know.

SHARON

She would have been fine without you and she's got enough on her plate without dealing with your imminent death.

ISAAC

I know that.

SHARON

Then who are you helping here?

ISAAC

Me.

I'm the one who needs her.

SHARON

Oh.

Sharon realizes.

ISAAC

Do you understand what I'm saying.

SHARON

You're using her.

ISAAC

We can do all the things we've both wanted.

SHARON

When are you going to tell her.

ISAAC

After the wedding.

SHARON

Yeah. That'll go well.

ISAAC

I'm going to make sure she and Casey are taken care of and then I'll—

SHARON

You need to tell her tonight.

ISAAC

I can't.

SHARON

You're fine just playing with people's lives?

ISAAC

That's not what I'm doing.

SHARON

It's exactly what you're doing.

ISAAC

Like you're any better, keeping her son for yourself.

SHARON

Don't change the subject.

ISAAC

I'm not, I'm—

SHARON

If you don't tell her, I will.
Her father left, then she was taken away.
You can't leave her too.

ISAAC

What about what you're doing?

SHARON

What about what I'm—

ISAAC

You're trying to take her son.

SHARON

That's none of your business.
You have no idea what it's like around here right now.

ISAAC

You're right, but I have my opinions.

SHARON

Keep them to yourself.
I feel for you, Isaac. I really do. But if you don't tell
her, I will. And I think she'd rather hear it from you.

Footsteps upstairs.

SHARON

The choice is yours.

*Ayelet enters. She looks worse for
wear.*

Isaac stands.

ISAAC

Sit, sit.

AYELET

I'm fine.

ISAAC

Do you need water?

AYELET

No thanks.

ISAAC

Is it food poisoning?

Ayelet looks at Sharon.

AYELET

It's food poisoning.

ISAAC

Maybe you should get back in bed.

AYELET

I'm fine, really.

ISAAC

What could you have gotten sick from?

SHARON

Isaac.

Would you go upstairs into the bathroom on the second floor and get some pepto?

ISAAC

Bathroom on the second floor.

*Isaac squeezes Ayelet's shoulder
and exits hastily.*

Sharon looks pointedly at Ayelet.

SHARON

You going to tell me where you were last night?

AYELET

Not now, Judge Judy.

SHARON

You're hungover.

AYELET

It's nothing.

SHARON

You were late for curfew.

AYELET

I know.

SHARON

Do you want to go back to prison?

AYELET

It won't happen again.

Pause. Ayelet looks upset.

SHARON

Just tell me what happened.

AYELET

I drank too much, that's all.

Sharon nods.

AYELET

Point one for Sharon.

SHARON

What's that supposed to mean?

AYELET

It's just great news for you, that's all. Works in your favor.

SHARON

I'm not keeping score.

Pause.

SHARON

We can't keep this up.

AYELET

I know.

SHARON

Talk to me. It's me.

Pause.

AYELET

Something happened.

*Tom enters through the front door.
Ayelet turns away.*

TOM

Sorry. I'll come back.

SHARON

What do you need, Tom?

TOM

I forgot my, uh...

He looks around.

TOM

I came to finish the sink.

SHARON

On Saturday?

TOM

I want to get it over with.

SHARON

Whatever you need.

Tom goes to the sink.

He tinkers away at it.

AYELET

Be quick.

TOM

Relax.

Neither of them answer.

AYELET

Isaac must be lost or something, I'm just going to...

Ayelet exits. Sharon looks at Tom skeptically.

TOM

We—

SHARON

No.

TOM

We didn't mean to.

SHARON

I've heard that from you before.

TOM

It's nothing like the last time. We were drunk...

He trails off.

TOM

Actually, it's almost exactly like the last time.

SHARON

This...

TOM

Is very bad. I know.

Sharon pauses.

SHARON

No. Tom. This is great.

She stands up.

SHARON

She still loves you.

*Sharon looks at him eagerly,
knowingly.*

TOM

I don't think so.

SHARON

She wouldn't have done that if she didn't, she wouldn't have jeopardized everything she thinks she wants unless she did.

TOM

I don't know.

SHARON

I think this is the time, Tom.

TOM

Don't talk like that.

SHARON

You could be the answer to all of this.

TOM

She doesn't want me to be.

SHARON

So?

TOM

I don't know if I should.

SHARON

You could put an end to all this and nothing in your life has to change! Don't you want that?

TOM

Yes.

SHARON

So let's get that ball rolling.

TOM

Sharon—

SHARON

He's your son too. This backseat approach—

TOM

Is what you told me to do.

SHARON

Was a mistake. It was. I know that now. But let's make it right. Okay?

Ayelet re-enters.

AYELET

I think he's in the bathroom now, not really sure.

SHARON

(to Tom)

Tom's staying for dinner.

AYELET
Isaac?

ISAAC
I got it.

He looks up at Tom.

ISAAC
I'm Isaac.

TOM
Tom.

AYELET
He's not staying.

Tom looks at Isaac, then at Ayelet.

TOM
I could stay.

SHARON
Oh good.

TOM
I'll just fix this and then I'll join you.

SHARON
I'll put the food in the oven.

AYELET
You didn't put the food in the oven?

SHARON
Not yet, I haven't.

AYELET
You can't. It's *Shabbos*.

SHARON
What do you mean...

AYELET
You can't put the food in, or turn on the oven, or do anything. It all had to be done last night. I told you.

SHARON

Well just turn around then, what you don't see won't hurt you.

AYELET

Mom—

SHARON

Or leave the room. It's my house.

AYELET

Everyone just sit down.

TOM

I'm just gonna...

Tom exits.

AYELET

EVERYONE SIT DOWN.

Sharon and Isaac sit down at the table.

Quiet. Nobody knows what to say.

AYELET

Are we all okay now?

Tom leaves the room abruptly.

AYELET

Good.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE

Upstairs.

Casey puts together legos in his room.

Tom walks upstairs and passes the open door. He peaks his head in.

TOM

You doing legos?

CASEY

Yeah.

Tom steps in the room.

TOM

Cool, sport car.

CASEY

It's a 1961 Corvette.

TOM

Cool.

CASEY

You can help if you want.

Tom sits down with him.

TOM

I was never good at these things.

CASEY

I'm really good at them. I did all those.

He points to a wall with shelves filled with lego cars.

TOM

You're smarter than me, then.

CASEY

I don't know.

TOM

You're definitely smarter than me. At your age all I wanted to do was do wheelies on my bike.

CASEY

You're still really good at those.

TOM

Thanks, I know.

Casey laughs. Tom picks up a piece of lego and looks at it.

CASEY

Who's that guy?

TOM

That's Isaac.

CASEY

Why is he here?

TOM

He's your sister's fiancé.

CASEY

Fiancé?

TOM

They're getting married.

CASEY

Oh.

TOM

You didn't know?

CASEY

Nobody told me.

Everyone's been fighting and calling each other names. I'm not allowed to call people names but they are.

Casey pauses, Tom looks at him.

TOM

What do you think about that? The whole wedding thing?

CASEY

I don't know.

TOM

Weddings are fun. There's good snacks, and dancing.

CASEY

He's weird.

TOM

He's not...that weird.

CASEY

That other guy was just walking around the house, looking for the bathroom for like, 10 minutes. Even though it's right there. He went into her room, then looked in here. Finally he just went in and stayed there.

TOM

Maybe he got lost.

CASEY

He was breathing like...

Casey makes a wheezing sound.

CASEY

I thought he was crying.

TOM

Huh.

CASEY

He's weird.

TOM

He's not weird, you just don't know him.

CASEY

You don't think he's weird?

TOM

...maybe a little.

CASEY

I knew it.

Casey pauses.

CASEY

I have an idea.

TOM

What's that?

CASEY

Maybe my sister and you could get married instead.

TOM

I...yeah, that's not really how that works.

CASEY

But you're already here all the time, and she lives here now. So you could just get married.

TOM

We're not getting married, Casey.

CASEY

Do you like her?

TOM

I like her.

CASEY

And she's your friend.

TOM

Yeah.

CASEY

If you were married, you could live here.

TOM

Casey, we're not—

CASEY

It would be so cool if you lived here. Then you'd never have to leave to go get another part for the sink. You could be like my dad.

Casey waits for Tom's response but he doesn't give one.

CASEY

Obviously you're not really my dad. But you could be like having a dad.

Casey continues to place legos in the right spots.

He hands a piece out to Tom, who takes it. They build the car together.

CASEY

I think I might be going away.

TOM

Where?

CASEY

Somewhere with my sister.

Tom is silent.

CASEY

I don't want to go.

TOM

It will all work out.

CASEY

I'd miss you and my mom.

Casey keeps building. Tom looks at the car, then Casey.

TOM

It might not happen.

CASEY

What if it does?

I don't want to move.

Casey gets emotional.

CASEY

I want to stay home.

He begins to cry.

Tom doesn't know what to do. He looks to the door.

TOM

I'll go get your mom.

Casey hugs Tom around the waist.

CASEY

Where am I going?

He cries harder.

Tom places a hand on his back, then hugs him in return.

He comforts Casey.

TOM

You're not going anywhere.

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

All four adults are sitting at the dinner table. There's no food. Everybody has a glass of wine in front of them.

ISAAC

How about a prayer?

Nobody says anything.

Isaac stands up.

ISAAC

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafin.

AYELET

Amen.

Pause.

AYELET

Someone should call Casey down.

TOM

He's not coming down.

Everyone looks at Tom.

TOM

He told me he didn't want to.

AYELET

He's coming down.

TOM

I told him he doesn't have to.

AYELET

And you have the right to do that how?

TOM

I—

He stops himself.

SHARON

These two revert back to childhood tendencies when they're together.

ISAAC

You've known each other since childhood?

SHARON

These two go way back. Lots connecting them.

ISAAC

Connections are good.

AYELET

Not really.

Pause.

AYELET

I'm going to get him.

TOM

No.

SHARON

No.

Ayelet pours herself some wine.

TOM

Hair of the dog?

AYELET

Shut up Tom.

SHARON

Hey, let's all be nice. It's Shabbat. Isaac was gracious enough to abandon his family tonight.

ISAAC

I always do *Shabbos* with them.

SHARON

True, but you never know how many you've got left.

AYELET

Um, depressing much.

SHARON

Just stating facts.

AYELET

We've got plenty more left. A lifetime.

Ayelet takes his hand.

SHARON

Well, how sweet are you?

Sharon leans forward.

SHARON

Was it love at first sight?

ISAAC

Yes, it was. For me.

AYELET

For me too.

SHARON

And you just clicked, right?

ISAAC

Neither of us expected it, of course.

SHARON

I wonder what kind of person would do such a thing?

AYELET

Mom.

SHARON

You must need a really good reason if you're going to do something like that.

ISAAC

I think love is reason enough.

SHARON

I don't.

AYELET

Mom.

SHARON
Just stating facts.

ISAAC
Maybe let's change the subject.

SHARON
Why?

AYELET
Because it's making everybody uncomfortable.

SHARON
I'm uncomfortable.

AYELET
You're nuts.

SHARON
(to Isaac)
Am I?

ISAAC
Let's eat.

AYELET
We haven't done the *brucha*.

ISAAC
I'll do it.

SHARON
Very quick to change the subject.

ISAAC
Because you're being IMPOSSIBLE.

AYELET
Let's just all be quiet.

Pause.

Sharon sits back.

ISAAC
(to Ayelet)
I'd really like to meet Casey.

AYELET
He'll be down.

ISAAC
When?

AYELET
Soon, I hope.

TOM
Kind of weird.

AYELET
Excuse me.

TOM
It's weird.

AYELET
Say more.

TOM
No.

AYELET
Then don't say anything.
(to Isaac)
He'll be down any minute.

TOM
I told him he didn't have to join us.

AYELET
Why exactly?

TOM
Because he wants to stay where he is.

SHARON
If he doesn't want to, he doesn't want to.

AYELET
He has no choice.

SHARON
Yes he does.

AYELET
Oh my *God*.

Pause.

ISAAC
I was hoping to meet him.

SHARON
SHUT UP ISAAC.

TOM
OH MY GOD WOULD YOU SHUT THE
FUCK UP.

*Ayelet stands up and slams her
hands on the table.*

TOM
None of this is Casey's business.

AYELET
Who are you to make that kind of decision?

TOM
Does he know?

Ayelet looks at Isaac. Tom gets up.

AYELET
Stop it, Tom.

TOM
Does he know?

AYELET
Know what?

TOM
You tell me.

SHARON
Okay, everyone. Let's just—

TOM

No. No "let's just." Let's talk about this. I'm tired of not talking about this.

SHARON

Tom—

TOM

You want me to be his father? You want me to take charge? Fine. You don't get to just take him away from us. You don't.

AYELET

He's my son!

TOM

He's my son too.

A very long pause.

Isaac looks at Ayelet with shock.

Tom looks the same. He can't believe he just said that. He sits down.

AYELET

(to Isaac)

Can we go somewhere?

Isaac nods.

They exit.

SHARON

Well that went well.

He puts his head on the table.

TOM

It's too late.
It's all too late.

SHARON

Tom...

TOM

I'm ready, and now it's too late.

Sharon puts her hand on Tom's back.

TOM

It's too late.

Blackout.

SCENE FIVE

Ayelet and Isaac stand in the hallway.

ISAAC

So Tom is...

AYELET

Casey's father.

ISAAC

And the two of you, you're—

AYELET

We were together last night. We...

It was nothing and I swear on my life it will never happen again. He's nothing to me.

ISAAC

Ayelet.

AYELET

I don't. I hate him.

ISAAC

Ayelet.

She looks at him.

ISAAC

It's okay. I forgive you.

AYELET

Why?

ISAAC

Because I decided I do.

AYELET

That was...so easy.

ISAAC

I love you.

AYELET

I...

That was so so easy.

You should be furious. You should want to punch him.

ISAAC

Why?

AYELET

Because you love me. Why don't you want to kill him? Why don't you want to kill me?

ISAAC

Because you're my last hope, Ayelet.

Pause.

AYELET

Gee, how flattering.

ISAAC

It's not like that.

AYELET

What's it like, then?

ISAAC

I was going to tell you about me, about what's going on.

AYELET

What is going on?

ISAAC

I...

Isaac's voice wobbles.

He sits down, Ayelet sits down with him.

ISAAC

I thought my life would be longer.

I did everything I thought I should, I prayed, I went to *shul*, I became a professional, I worked hard.

But I wonder now, had I not done any of that, would this have happened to me?

Would I be here with you now?
 I thought I was making these good decisions for a good life,
 I thought marriage and children could wait.
 But the truth is that it can't wait, nothing can wait for me
 anymore.
 I have cancer, and nothing waits for that.
 I have cancer.
 I haven't said that out loud to anyone except my parents.
 I was going to tell you, I swear I was going to tell you.

Ayelet takes his hands.

ISAAC

I'm going to take care of you and Casey, even when I'm gone.
 Everything I have will go to you. You'll never have to worry
 ever again.

AYELET

Isaac.

She looks at him deeply.

AYELET

I can't take anything from you.
 Not now.

*Isaac pauses for a moment, then
 nods.*

AYELET

But you've made me feel whole again. You kept me going when
 nobody else did. Your visits gave me home.

Isaac laughs.

AYELET

You deserve better than last moments with someone who has
 what I have.

ISAAC

You've got so much here.

AYELET

I do love you.

ISAAC

I know.

*Isaac kisses her hands. They get up
and share a hug.*

AYELET

Take care of yourself.

*Isaac takes one last look, then
exits.*

*Ayelet crumbles to the ground in
tears.*

Blackout.

SCENE SIX

Sharon and Tom sit in silence, the remnants of an abandoned meal.

Isaac walks through the door

Ayelet enters shakily. She looks at Sharon and Tom. Her hands are fists. She pauses where she is.

Her words shake, she begins to cry.

AYELET

What am I going to do now?

They share each other's gazes for a few moments.

AYELET

I had all these ideas.
 All these thoughts of who I would be.
 There were going to be a lot of changes, I told myself that.
 I told you that.
 But I'm the same.
 The same child who went to prison eight years ago for pushing
 a girl out a window?
 The same girl who gave birth on a cold metal table?
 The same girl who wrote stupid poems about stupid outcomes
 that could never happen because too much had already gone
 wrong.
 And then hope happened. Hope came to me.
 But he's gone now.
 I thought I believed in something higher, some sort of plan
 that the Torah told me was coming if I just held on.
 I love myself.
 I do.
 I stopped hating myself for things that happened out of
 control a long time ago.
 But I can't be who I am here.
 You don't want me to do that. You want me to stay the same.
 But I can't stay the same.
 I have to move on.
 I have to go. I have to...

Ayelet loses her words.

Sharon walks towards Ayelet. She places a hand on her shoulder. Ayelet falls into Sharon's arms and sobs some more.

SHARON

It's okay.

AYELET

I never meant to...

SHARON

Shhhh. It's okay.

AYELET

I love you.

SHARON

It's okay, I'm here. I love you, Ayelet.

Tom walks up to them, Sharon pulls him into the hug.

Ayelet continues to cry and Sharon continues to hold her.

Casey appears in the doorway.

Sharon holds out a hand for him. He takes it.

The four of them stand together in the middle of the room.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.