

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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GREATER ISRAEL

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Cast of Characters

Dov Landau.....Israeli Prime Minister, 60-65 years old
 Rachel Landau.....Dov's wife, 50 to 55 years old
 Eva Landau.....Dov's daughter, 30 years old
 Yotom Landau.....Dov's son, 25 years old
 IDF Soldier.....25 years old
 BennyHead of Shin Bet, 50 to 55 years old
 Ephraim Zuroff.....Defence Minister, 50 to 55 years old
 Dan Kurtzner.....US Ambassador, 55 to 60 years old
 Khalid.....Head of Hamas, 40 to 45 years old
 Interviewer.....Female, 30 to 35 years old
 Reporters.....30 to 50 years old

TIME: Sometime in the near future

PLACE: Israel

SETTING: The two main areas of the play are the inner sanctum of the Prime Minister of Israel, and his apartment in Tel Aviv. Other locations include the secret meeting spot with KHALID. The scenes with YOTOM can be in an indeterminate space, denoting their relationship to DOV'S memories.

(MORE)

(CONT ' D)

PRODUCTION NOTES ON CASTING

The parts of the YOTOM and the IDF SOLDIER can be played by the same actor as can the role of EVA and the INTERVIEWER. The REPORTERS can be played by the available actors in the production. If required, the character of KHALID could be played by the same actor as KURTZNER. This would require a minor adjustment to Act Two Scene Ten.

The Author

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

LIGHTS. The IDF SOLDIER stands centre stage in combat fatigues with a weapon strapped across his back. He addresses the audience.

IDF SOLDIER

April 8th 1948. Israel Galili, the Haganah Chief of Staff states, "We are fighting and we shall fight for all the lands that were possessed by the Jewish settlements so far...the borders of our state will be defined by the limits of our force...the political borders will be those of the territories that we shall be able to liberate from the enemy; the borders will be the fruit of our conquests..."

LIGHTS. DOV stands behind a lectern. He addresses a crowd of thousands in Tel Aviv. LIGHTS constantly flash during the speech.

DOV

It is with great humility and great pride that I accept the mandate of the Israeli people. After so many years in the political wilderness, the Labour Party has finally returned to power. It is not a responsibility that this party, or I as its leader, will take lightly. We understand the hopes and fears of all Israelis, from those in the cities and towns to the settlers on our frontiers, from the secular to the religious communities of this great land. As your Prime Minister, I will do all that is humanely possible to guarantee the security and safety of every citizen. One of my first acts will be to depart from the usual divide and conquer approach of my predecessors, an approach which I believe has done nothing to further our interests in the region. And in the spirit of this approach, I announce to all of you on this historic occasion that hostilities with Iran will cease. I understand that the demands made by the previous administration have not been met but these are demands which can only escalate and prolong a war with Iran. These are not the demands of my government nor do I consider them the demands of a reasonable people. And while we recognise the reasons for Israel's military operations in Iran, we must also recognise that the scope of the attacks went beyond anything that previous governments have contemplated short of all out war. These attacks have led to civilian casualties amongst the Iranian people that has not, I repeat, not resulted in a direct military response against our people. Therefore efforts will be made to restore stability between our two countries. These have been trying times. While contending with external threats, Israelis have had to deal with economic stagnation, and a cost of living which is making daily life increasingly difficult for a larger number of Israelis from all walks of life.

(MORE)

DOV (CONT'D)

As a Labour government, a continuation of such conditions is untenable and must change. Our economic security is dependent upon deepening our ties with our neighbours. Political realities must be faced to ensure future prosperity. I promise you that my government will not shirk their responsibilities and will unblinkingly face these realities. Thank you.

DOV raises both arms to huge applause.

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

LIGHTS. On the large television screen in the background, we see the same image. DOV sits at his desk. He places his hands on top of it. He is deep in thought. He looks around the room. Reality is slowly sinking in. His wife RACHEL enters. DOV takes the remote which is sitting on his desk and switches the television off.

RACHEL

Alone at such a time?

DOV

I better get used to it.

RACHEL

Finally. A Labour PM of Israel. How long has it been? Twelve years..?

DOV

Seventeen. And you knew that already.

RACHEL

You could show more excitement. You pulled off an election coup.

DOV

And inherited the biggest mess the Middle East has seen since when? Suez? Yom Kippur? All the intifadas rolled into one?

RACHEL

This is what victory does for you?

DOV

I wonder if Likud and the rest of them really wanted this one.

RACHEL

In politics power is everything. Of course they wanted to win.

DOV

Our position in the Middle East has never been more precarious.

RACHEL

And you were elected to change that. You're in power and that's all that matters. Anyhow, things are unlikely to get worse.

DOV

No Jew believes that. Not even an American educated one like yourself.

RACHEL

Not "Israeli" enough for the new PM?

DOV

More like too Israeli for someone educated at Harvard.

RACHEL

It could have been anywhere in the world. Daughters of politicians...

DOV

Rachel we are alone. Your father was a was hero. A sabra with a few extra needles.

RACHEL

I never talk about it.

DOV

We don't have to. He is always here my love. In your eyes.

RACHEL

He was a defence minister. Never the PM my husband.

Pause. He slams both palms onto the desk.

DOV

I can't fucking believe it! The people heard our message!

RACHEL

That's more like it. Express yourself! You deserve to be in this position.

DOV

I don't think that matters.

RACHEL

You waited long enough. We all watched and waited as you steered Labour from the abyss.

DOV

Abyss? Please...

RACHEL

What then? The pit of hell? It was a dying party. You brought them back.

DOV

Let's be honest. We watched the far right mesmerise themselves into believing what the rest of the world thought didn't matter.

DOV checks his watch.

DOV (CONT'D)

Christ, I have a meeting with Benny scheduled...

RACHEL

You're keeping him?

DOV

Why not?

RACHEL

He worked for your predecessor.

DOV

Not successfully.

RACHEL

That's a recommendation?

DOV

He's not a crony. Benny is his own man. I need that.

RACHEL

You need loyalty and 100% commitment from those close to you.

DOV

He will give it.

RACHEL

You should have discussed it with me first.

DOV

I've only just won the election!

RACHEL

Beforehand. We talked about the future Dov. The kind of government we would-

DOV

Not who should be in it.

RACHEL

So now...

DOV

He is outside. We will meet. He will give me an update on the security situation.

RACHEL

Any Jew on the street can tell you that. We're surrounded by enemies who all want to kill us.

DOV

Yes but I want to know who exactly and when they plan to do it.

RACHEL

I could have given you a list.

DOV

Personal enemies cannot be included.

RACHEL

You still need my family connections.

DOV

But not today. The head of Shin Bet cannot be a political appointment. It's that simple.

RACHEL

We shall see. Your daughter will be coming for dinner next week.

DOV

She couldn't be bothered coming to her father's victory rally. My own daughter.

RACHEL

She had a very important meeting.

DOV

Of course.

RACHEL

You'll forgive her before I will.

DOV

(Shaking his head)

Real estate...

RACHEL

And? She's a director. You should be more proud of her.

DOV

Smarter than all of them. Tougher than the boys...

RACHEL

Yes and she proves it every day doing something she loves.

DOV

Bullshit.

RACHEL

Don't. Please Dov. No arguments. And don't offer her a cabinet appointment.

DOV

What for? She'd turn me down and then give an interview explaining all the reasons.

RACHEL

That happened once. She was eighteen.

DOV

When has eighteen ever been young in Israel? Especially these days...

The phone on his desk rings. DOV answers it.

DOV (CONT'D)

Give it two minutes.

DOV looks at RACHEL.

DOV (CONT'D)

Benny's outside.

RACHEL doesn't move.

DOV (CONT'D)

I want to talk with him alone.

RACHEL

I haven't seen Benny in years...

DOV

Best kept that way. There is an exit through that door.

RACHEL

I expect you will be late...

DOV doesn't answer. RACHEL goes over to DOV and gives him a kiss on the cheek. She leaves.

ACT ONE SCENE THREE

LIGHTS. BENNY is sitting across from DOV.

BENNY

I thought you'd still be celebrating.

DOV

While you suffer for all of Israel Benny? The sentinel who never leaves his office...

BENNY

You plan on competing?

DOV smiles affectionately.

BENNY (CONT'D)

There is no one home Dov. Here at least...

DOV

I heard. We would have come to the funeral but...

BENNY

You were in New York. I read the papers. Anyhow, you weren't expected...

DOV

We knew Ruth for...

BENNY

And hadn't talked for...

DOV

Twelve years. You can thank Rachel for that.

An uncomfortable moment between them which neither side is willing to discuss further.

BENNY

How women change us even as we swear that will never happen.

DOV

You should have retired then Benny. Spent more time with your grandchildren.

BENNY

I prefer the halo of Israel's guardian. Anyhow, every time I show up, we seem to have less in common. My son is actually thinking of moving to the US so his children won't have to serve. He thinks it's too dangerous.

They both laugh.

BENNY (CONT'D)

And I see you still haven't qualified as a grandfather.

DOV

What else have you found out about Eva that I should know about?

BENNY

She's not going to like her security detail. It could "cramp her style."

DOV

Make sure they're handsome. She might actually marry one of them.

BENNY

She also has extravagant tastes. In these times Dov a little austerity...

DOV

She makes a lot of money. One thing about Eva, she is fiercely independent.

Pause.

BENNY

Why are you keeping me Dov?

DOV

You make it seem as though you're an old dog I'm scared of putting down.

BENNY

That's intentional.

DOV

What do you think?

BENNY

Just tell me.

DOV

We go back a long way.

BENNY

And haven't spoken in years.

DOV

All the way back to military service.

BENNY

The Golani Brigade was a long time ago. Military relationships aren't enough anymore Dov.

DOV

I had no one else in mind.

BENNY

Sure...

DOV

No. I didn't. Recommendations were made within the party but I rejected all of them.

BENNY

You know what you'll get from me Dov. Nothing more. Nothing less. I will do whatever it takes to protect the people of Israel even those fucking Orthodox bastards who are screwing up the army with their religious bullshit. It doesn't matter. If I feel you aren't up to it Dov, I'll resign. Publicly.

DOV

One fucking documentary and suddenly all you guys are the conscience of the nation, the keeper of the seal.

BENNY

I see too much in a country which feels too much. Not enough clear analysis. Dispassionate. Rational. Secular.

DOV

What would you have me do Benny? The people have spoken.

BENNY

The people have expressed their disgust with your predecessors.

DOV

We have a majority in the Knesset.

BENNY

A very slim one. Don't waste it unnecessarily.

DOV

So...what is the way forward?

BENNY hands a dossier to DOV.

BENNY

I've prepared this. For your eyes only.

DOV

No other copy?

BENNY

Surprised you should ask.

DOV

Not even Zuroff?

BENNY

Especially Zuroff.

DOV

This I can read later. So what is the situation internally?

BENNY

Kidnappings are down...

DOV

Firebombings are up.

BENNY

Solomon wasn't so keen on arresting settlers.

DOV

You have my permission Benny.

BENNY

All right.

DOV

How about externally?

BENNY

Shouldn't you discuss that first with your new-

DOV

I want to hear what you have to say. Fuck your dispassionate views.

BENNY

Where shall I start?

DOV

How about some good news first...

BENNY

Fine. The Syrian border is stable thanks to the increased military presence.

DOV

Increased? Our very own Maginot Line on the Golan Heights.

BENNY

Nothing, no one gets in. That's what matters.

DOV

A defence budget blow out simply to guard a border...

BENNY

What would you prefer? Syria is not our mess.

DOV

What about the Sinai?

BENNY

As long as Egypt ignores our incursions to deal with Wilyat Sinaa, we won't have to escalate our presence.

DOV

Egypt isn't Syria.

BENNY

At least not yet.

DOV

So what is the bad news?

BENNY

Iran.

DOV

Of course...

BENNY

We think they may have a limited nuclear strike capability.

DOV

So Solomon's attack was a way of finding out..?

BENNY

I was against it.

DOV

Did you go along with the decision to oust Rouhani?

BENNY

He was going anyway. The militant factions inside Iran were preparing their own coup.

DOV

So we're back to the good old days of Amadinajad.

BENNY

Or his facsimile.

DOV

We've been bombing Iranian targets for three weeks now and still they haven't responded.

BENNY

Hezbollah does all their dirty work. I've been to the morgues, the schools where their missiles have it. It is a brave new world Dov. Casualties in the hundreds from a handful of rockets. Fifteen in a day care centre just last week.

DOV

What of Iran's casualties?

BENNY

I don't have them.

DOV

Don't fuck with me Benny. I know you do. How many?

BENNY

Three to four thousand. I'm sure there are a few dozen children in the mix.

DOV

Is this something that we don't want the Israeli public to see or know? Not one serious report in the news...

BENNY

We are prepared for a full military confrontation with Iran. The public know this.

DOV

We have put these bastards in such a tight corner. How many of their key figures have we assassinated?

BENNY

That's classified. Mossad won't even tell me.

DOV

But you know anyway.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

All right. They might have nukes. Will they use them?

BENNY

I hope not.

They both laugh.

DOV

Yes. Me too.

BENNY

Iran's forces are on high alert. As are ours. But if you will excuse the political advice, we need to say very little. Regret the loss of life on both sides.

DOV

4000 Iranians do not matter?

BENNY

Yes they do. But we need to let their government know that 4000 will not compare to four million or forty million.

DOV

Escalation dominance? These are American games Benny that never worked for them.

BENNY

They were never seriously under threat by the Russians who never seriously considered a first strike despite all the rhetoric. Our enemies do. Their hate is genuine. We must be prepared to go up the ladder.

DOV

I've read the book. Iran will be dealt with.

BENNY

How? With that speech of yours?

DOV

We are prepared to talk.

BENNY

I didn't think you were serious.

DOV

We will step back from the brink.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

Next topic?

BENNY

Our tattered relationship with the US.

DOV

Is what the papers say true?

BENNY

They want him tried in a US court.

DOV

The crime was committed in Israel. This is where he will be judged.

BENNY

We don't have the death penalty.

DOV

So we hand him over? Is that what you're saying?

BENNY

The American people want blood. Jewish lobby be damned.

DOV

And how will it look if I give him over heh? This pathetic little Jew sitting on death row in some American prison.

BENNY

Maybe he wouldn't get the death penalty.

DOV

If they're smart he will. But I can't give them that opportunity.

BENNY

So we are in agreement then. We could always arrange...

DOV

No. I want this bastard tried in an Israeli court. No chance or release. I don't want Jews to put this away somewhere convenient in their psyche of horrors. If he had succeeded, all of us would have been damned in the process.

BENNY

He won you the election Dov. No right wing government had a chance once he pulled that trigger.

DOV

As you say, thank God for his bad eyesight.

Pause.

BENNY

The US ambassador is prepared to meet next week.

DOV

I thought he was being recalled?

BENNY

Last minute change of mind. Your election success has given them hope. The Americans can abandon us in principle but not in substance.

DOV

Kurtzner is a priority.

BENNY

Next...ISIS, Hamas...

DOV

That's enough for one day. Leave it with me.

BENNY

I am quite happy to go through each one along with my recommendations...

DOV

No need.

BENNY

Hezbollah have to be dealt with immediately. No matter what happens with Iran.

DOV

And they will.

BENNY gets up to leave.

BENNY

I know it's been a long time Dov but...

DOV

There is no need to discuss it. Nothing could be done.

BENNY is about to exit.

DOV (CONT'D)

And Benny, don't worry, I haven't forgotten our agreement.

BENNY says nothing. He exits.

ACT ONE SCENE FOUR

LIGHTS. DOV is alone on stage. LIGHTS on YOTOM is zipping up his backpack. He is in his late teens early twenties and is dressed in IDF combat fatigues. DOV moves with the vigour of someone a decade younger.

YOTOM

Ready.

DOV

I'm going to drive you there.

YOTOM

There's a bus Papa. You don't need...

DOV

I want to. It will be a long time before we see each other again.

YOTOM

We get leave Papa.

DOV

When you are doing military service its not the same.

YOTOM

I'll be in uniform like everybody else.

Pause.

DOV

I'm proud of you Yotom.

YOTOM

What for? I haven't done anything.

DOV

This is not wholly your choice.

YOTOM

Do any of us have a choice these days? Even the Haredin were forced into line.

DOV

To Israel's everlasting regret.

YOTOM

I'm like any other Jew. My time has come.

DOV

All right Yotom. I will say this once and you will never repeat it to your mother. Agreed?

YOTOM nods.

DOV (CONT'D)

I don't care whether you do military service or not.

YOTOM

I don't believe you.

DOV

This country has taken enough of our children.

YOTOM

Why? You served in the Golani?

DOV

Those were different times.

YOTOM

We are still in danger.

DOV

'67, 74, '82...have not been repeated.

YOTOM

Why didn't you encourage me to get out like some of the others, study in America?

DOV

You are not just like any other Jew Yotom. Your maternal grandfather is royalty in this country...former minister of defence, former paratrooper. Your uncle...

YOTOM

He's dead.

DOV

Your uncle was a hero.

YOTOM

I've heard you say otherwise.

DOV

(Evasive)

Your uncle was always brave, albeit a little reckless.

YOTOM

So I'm living up to the expectations on Mamma's side of the family. Then why is she not here to wave goodbye to her dutiful son?

DOV

Your mother was crying all night. Despite outward appearances, she is every bit the Jewish mamma who will die if anything happens to you so make sure nothing does!

YOTOM

She wants me to be like her brother.

DOV

Rachel knows you are not like him.

YOTOM

To her utter disappointment.

DOV

Her whole family basked in his glory for quite a long time. He was the one who was supposed to go onto a successful political career. So when Motti died, none of them truly recovered.

YOTOM

I've got a secret for you. When Uncle Motti died, I was glad.

DOV

How can you say that?

YOTOM

He looked down upon you. Never let Mother forget that you weren't on her level.

DOV

Yotom, I never felt inferior. And your mother has never commented.

YOTOM

She didn't have to.

DOV

Your mother chased me. She wanted a husband not a hero and to that end she has not been disappointed.

YOTOM

You have always understood me Papa.

DOV

It is a father's duty to know his son.

YOTOM

Then you should know, I don't want to be a hero. Yet I feel there is...

DOV

You don't have to prove anything Yotom. Just follow orders. Nothing else. Understand?

YOTOM nods. He hugs his father. DOV embraces his son with great love. Reluctantly, DOV separates them.

YOTOM

By the time I finish my service you may be head of the Labour Party...

DOV

And what is the good news?

YOTOM smiles at his father's self deprecating humour.

YOTOM

Please take me to the bus stop. I don't think...

DOV nods in agreement.

YOTOM (CONT'D)

Go on Papa. I will meet you outside. I want to take one last look at my room.

YOTOM exits.

ACT ONE SCENE FIVE

LIGHTS on DOV at his desk. EPHRAIM enters.

EPHRAIM

You meet with Shin Bet before your defence minister? I thought we made promises to the public?

DOV

I trust we made the same ones.

EPHRAIM

You strong armed me into this "partnership for peace" but maybe its time we talk "realpolitik."

Pause.

DOV

Benny hadn't left the building. It would have been impolite.

EPHRAIM

That's not what I'm talking about.

DOV

We go back a long way and realpolitik Ephraim? What the fuck are you trying to tell me? I rescued you from your own party which saw you as some kind of anachronism. Too soft for the extreme right, too hard for the left, doesn't even know a middle exists.

EPHRAIM

But it doesn't. Dov, to be perfectly frank, I thought there was no chance of Labour getting in power. So what the hell, in for a penny..

DOV

In for a pound. But we did get in.

EPHRAIM

Thanks to one of the greatest miscalculations any Israeli government has made in 70 years.

DOV

They started a war Ephraim. 4000 dead civilians later...

EPHRAIM

You've been listening to Benny...

DOV

You have other numbers?

Pause.

EPHRAIM

I supported the attack.

DOV

Not in public.

EPHRAIM

The wind was blowing in your direction very quickly and you took advantage of the moral high ground.

DOV

I came out against it immediately. Solomon was running out of luck and the public realised they had none left.

EPHRAIM

You promised me unfettered control of the military Dov. No interference in my decisions.

DOV

Of a strictly military nature.

EPHRAIM

That's not how I interpreted it. All military decisions have a political objective.

DOV

Then why did you agree to it?

EPHRAIM

You think I won't turn on you? Denounce your government, you, for deceiving your own defence minister into this partnership?

DOV

And look like the complete fool the opposition has already labelled you. My God Ephraim, you're not Rabin, some "heir apparent". I saved you from writing another polemic on the future of Middle East peace.

EPHRAIM

So you did read it.

DOV

I couldn't put it down. In between the fits of laughter.

EPHRAIM

Fuck you.

DOV

I won't say the feelings mutual Ephraim. I want us to work together.

EPHRAIM

While you were working intelligence in some back room I was-

DOV

Sayeret Maktal. I can't compete Ephraim. You are a genuine war hero. I even read your autobiography. No laughter. Only tears. But I will not defer to you as a consequence of our divergent histories. We all served where best needed.

EPHRAIM

As defence minister, Israel's military planning is in my domain.

DOV

Then I'll make your job a little simpler. There will be no more sorties against Iranian targets.

EPHRAIM

You should be careful what you say in your speeches...

DOV

I gave it a lot of thought.

EPHRAIM

Which you didn't share before the election.

DOV

Enough compromises were made to you Ephraim.

Pause.

EPHRAIM

When will all this happen?

DOV

Effective immediately.

EPHRAIM

Without consultation..?

DOV

If you wish to leave my cabinet, go right ahead.

EPHRAIM

You know I can't do that. Who would you replace me with?

DOV

I haven't given it serious consideration.

EPHRAIM

If the Iranians launch a massive strike...

DOV

But they haven't. Defying all expectations. Their air defence shot down two of our reconnaissance planes but no retaliatory response. Why do you think that is?

EPHRAIM

They expect a nuclear retaliation on our part. Solomon all but said it.

DOV

No he did say it. Numerous times.

EPHRAIM

Then you have your answer.

DOV

But we gave them every reason to launch conventional missiles against Israel. An action we would have expected. No firebreak would have been crossed.

EPHRAIM

They have nuclear capability.

DOV

We still do not know for sure-

EPHRAIM

Solomon believed it and was prepared for such an event. Even if they didn't strike first.

DOV

What?

EPHRAIM

Ah! You don't have all the answers. Sorry. But yes. We expected collateral damage, Jaffa, Haifa, the Tamar, but not the major cities, not yet.

DOV

How could he be so sure?

EPHRAIM

He used his professional judgement.

DOV

He was ready to gamble with the lives of hundreds of thousands...

EPHRAIM

The Iranians were informed in no uncertain terms that even conventional attacks on Israel would meet with a devastating response on all major civilian targets.

DOV

None of this leaked...

EPHRAIM

No one would dare. That's why Solomon was in power for years. He has the guts of a riverboat gambler.

DOV

Stop quoting Kissinger. In the end he didn't do Nixon much good.

EPHRAIM

Because he wouldn't listen!

DOV

Iran could have devastated us.

EPHRAIM

And been wiped off the map themselves.

DOV

What? Solomon made a direct threat to use nukes?

EPHRAIM

He went one step further.

DOV

We heard nothing. The Americans have-

EPHRAIM

The Americans. Please. You will only hear this once and then my memory will erase it immediately. A tactical nuke was used on one of their deep underground facilities.

DOV

Which one?

EPHRAIM

See? I've forgotten already.

DOV

You must be joking...the Iranians have said nothing-

EPHRAIM

Of course! Admit that, a similar response from them is inevitable followed by their complete annihilation.

DOV

What an unbelievably stupid...It could have started-

EPHRAIM

But it didn't. And now you want to make peace instead of striking a hammer blow against our eternal enemy?

DOV

Stop this rhetorical nonsense....

EPHRAIM

The middle *doesn't* exist. Any position of conviction is extreme.

DOV

I noticed the Republicans didn't invite you to speak to Congress on the "ever growing Iranian threat."

EPHRAIM

Those waters will never be the same again...

DOV

Bibi's everlasting gift to Likud.

EPHRAIM

Doesn't mean I didn't support what he did.

DOV

You want control of military operations? Speak to your generals. Hezbollah is massing its forces...thousands of rockets on the border. I want a hammer blow against those bastards. Air. Ground. Use a submarine if you have to. Just as we agreed in the event of "our" victory.

EPHRAIM

I don't believe in "show wars" Dov.

DOV

No. A decisive assault. Neutralise them. You can take all the credit.

EPHRAIM

And if we're beaten...

DOV

You won't let that happen. Only our best units.

EPHRAIM

What about Iran?

DOV

They will look on. Observe. Attempt to support Hezbollah. But if it means nothing will be done to Iran, they will make peace.

EPHRAIM

So those 4000 that plague your sensibilities did serve some purpose?

DOV

Of course they did. It showed we truly are the mad bastards most countries suspected us of being.

EPHRAIM

I can't guarantee no heavy casualties. Military or civilian.

DOV

Don't let your generals fuck you Ephraim. Replace those you don't trust. Keep a tight rein.

EPHRAIM

I want Gross.

DOV

He thinks he's General Patton.

EPHRAIM

Thank God somebody in the IDF still does.

DOV considers what he is about to say.

DOV

When he was battalion commander, Gross shot a twelve year old boy in the head for throwing a rock at his jeep.

EPHRAIM

Isn't that legal now?

DOV

Some laws aren't meant to last.

EPHRAIM

They all grow up Dov. Rocks become...

DOV

Rockets. Yes. That was also in your book.

EPHRAIM

We need him.

DOV

He's a warmonger.

EPHRAIM

A perfect fit for the beginning of a war.

DOV

All right. But if he oversteps his authority...

EPHRAIM

I'll fire him. In a press conference sitting right next to you.

Fair enough.

DOV

BENNY enters.

The journalist is here.

BENNY

Talking to the press already.

EPHRAIM

We are a different government. Less secrecy. More transparency.

BENNY

Including our plans for Hezbollah..?

EPHRAIM

They'll know soon enough.

DOV

Who is it?

EPHRAIM

Haaretz. Gideon.

BENNY

Haaretz? That's sending the wrong message.

EPHRAIM

Only if you don't read newspapers.

DOV

Watch him. He thinks he's smarter than all of them.

EPHRAIM

Of course he is. That's why I chose him for the first "official" interview.

DOV

Look Dov. The press have to know their place. Freedom of Information be damned. You cannot trust them.

EPHRAIM

DOV

Ephraim, we have controlled the press in one form or another for decades.

EPHRAIM

The public don't want you to give interviews Dov. They want results. Guarantees. The knowledge their borders will be protected.

DOV

Cloaking our government in secrecy isn't going to work.

EPHRAIM

No? The most sought after label in Israeli politics is-

BENNY

Bar Mitachon.

EPHRAIM

That's right. Mr. Security.

Pause. EPHRAIM turns to BENNY.

EPHRAIM (CONT'D)

Something the public haven't felt for quite a while.

BENNY doesn't bite.

BENNY

That is true Ephraim. We've built walls, set up anti missile systems, blown up their leaders, arrested thousands on the slightest suspicion, destroyed their homes when necessary...but still they keep coming.

EPHRAIM realises he has not got the upper hand.

EPHRAIM

That fiasco with Bradley happened on your watch.

BENNY

The Americans wanted total control of security. We gave them unfettered access to our information and protocols.

EPHRAIM
Still...

BENNY
Solomon caved in.

EPHRAIM
It's not what most Israelis believe.

DOV
It's what I believe. Benny has my full support.

Pause.

EPHRAIM
Watch this Gideon. He hates Labour as much as the others. Father was an old school Socialist who felt betrayed by his own party. The son has never forgiven.

DOV
Thank you Dr. Freud.

EPHRAIM
(to BENNY)
I thought you would have given better advice on this matter.

BENNY
He hasn't listened to me on a number of recommendations.

BENNY smiles. DOV laughs. EPHRAIM nods his head, acknowledging that BENNY has won this round.

DOV
Speak to Gross. I want a report on your meeting.

EPHRAIM
He will say yes. To all conditions.

DOV
He has a choice?

EPHRAIM

Retirement is around the corner. He's been away from the spotlight for too long.

DOV

Put him back in it. Have him prepare a detailed action plan then give me your appraisal.

EPHRAIM considers questioning this last directive but remains silent. He exits.

BENNY

Gross?

DOV

None other.

EPHRAIM

I think I'll step up your personal security.

DOV

Nonsense.

BENNY

He hates you Dov. Everything you stand for. Having him conspire with Zuroff...

DOV

We're going into Lebanon.

BENNY

When?

DOV

By the end of the week.

BENNY

Are you sure..?

DOV

As you said, Hezbollah needs to be dealt with. Gross will be in charge. If he fucks it up...I'll ruin him.

BENNY

A mad or brilliant idea. Either way, if it keeps him out of Jerusalem, all the better. There are those that think he is the future. Dispense with the Knesset. One party rule.

DOV

He is aligned with extremists but is not really one of them. Either way, I want him watched. Anything he does that is not of a strictly military nature...

BENNY

And Hamas? They are not likely to keep quiet during all this.

DOV

Security around Gaza and the West Bank will be increased. If it means more detentions, arrests, disruption of any plans they might have, then temporarily at least, this is what has to be done.

ACT ONE SCENE SIX

The US Ambassador to Israel, DAN KURTZNER, addresses the audience.

KURTZNER

22nd of May 1989. James Baker, US Secretary of State addresses AIPAC: "Israel should lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel. Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow schools to re-open. Reach out to the Palestinian people as neighbours who deserve political rights."

LIGHTS. DOV is sitting at his desk. KURTZNER sits across from him.

DOV

This meeting could have waited...

KURTZNER

I represent the US government Dov.

DOV

Bradley already sent his congratulations.

KURTZNER

Of course you want to know what he really thinks.

DOV

Yes but...

KURTZNER

Even by Middle East standards, these are dangerous times.

DOV

But Dan, given what's happened...

KURTZNER

Personal circumstances must be put aside.

Pause.

DOV

So what does your Boss really think?

KURTZNER

Israel, at least in the eyes of Washington, has become a radicalised extreme right wing basket case.

DOV

That's a little harsh.

KURTZNER

He almost succeeded.

DOV

Warnings were given. What information we had was shared.

KURTZNER

This guy was not even on your files...

DOV

This was the first time he had tried to kill a president...

KURTZNER does his best to contain a smile.

KURTZNER

As far as the Secret Service was concerned, your guys couldn't be trusted.

DOV

And what do you think Dan?

KURTZNER

Too many far right sympathisers in your government. Not to mention the outright nutters. Enough for the US government to make decisions that were in the end... foolhardy.

DOV

Is he still nursing a grudge?

KURTZNER

No. But many influential Americans are incensed one of your countrymen tried to kill a white president when they spared a black one who was much less of a friend to Israel.

DOV

We're not handing him over.

KURTZNER

A right wing Jewish extremist tried to assassinate the US president. Would have succeeded if he had better eyesight. Two secret service personnel were wounded, one critically and who happens to be a Navy Cross recipient when he was in the Seals. A war hero. Apparently the best scenario for him is a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

DOV

I guarantee his assailant will never leave his jail cell.

KURTZNER

With any luck he'll do the job himself.

DOV

Shulman is delusional. Thought by killing the US president, whoever replaced him would take a more aggressive stance towards Iran.

KURTZNER

Of course now we are at the heart of the matter. How many Dov?

DOV

Your estimates are as good as ours.

KURTZNER

Revised figures are now closer to 6000 Iranian dead. Mostly civilian.

DOV

Washington was noticeably quiet in the lead up to the bombing.

KURTZNER

Iran is our enemy too.

DOV

Then why didn't you bomb them?

KURTZNER

Israel is in a better position...

DOV

Oh please Dan. If the world knew how little the world's greatest superpower did to broker peace in the most volatile region of the world...

KURTZNER

Peace isn't always to our advantage Dov. Which doesn't mean we'll completely stand in its way.

DOV

Solomon risked a nuclear war with Iran. America stood by. Israelis felt abandoned. Some took it to illogical extremes.

KURTZNER

Are we talking about the government or your lunatic fringe?

DOV

What are you saying?

KURTZNER leans in to DOV.

KURTZNER

We know just how "illogical" some of those extremes were. We also expect it will never happen again without consultation.

DOV

You mean permission...

KURTZNER

I mean if you intend to cross the firebreak once again...

KURTZNER shakes his head in disbelief at the knowledge that Israel set of a nuclear device inside Iran.

DOV

Maybe a less ambiguous stance from the US would have acted as a “deterrent.”

KURTZNER

America stood firm in its own position.

DOV

You are reading from Bradley’s playbook, not your own convictions.

KURTZNER

The Ayatollahs have been forced to take a back seat. The generals run the show and Armageddon isn’t such a high priority.

DOV

So is Bradley prepared to take a back seat if this war reignites?

KURTZNER

That’s where you’re heading? As the new Prime Minister?

Pause.

DOV

No. I’ve made it clear. Israel will agree to a ceasefire.

KURTZNER

For how long?

DOV

As long as necessary. Till they break it or I can no longer enforce it.

KURTZNER

Everybody loves a high stakes gambler till it becomes clear they'd risk the house, the car, the kids just to prove they can handle anything. Washington...Bradley does not want his administration tarnished by Israeli politics.

DOV

Then he should stop courting so many rich American Jews.

KURTZNER

He has.

DOV

No one closes those doors.

KURTZNER

Edelstein, Levy., their successors..he's not taking their calls.

DOV

Freezing them out...

KURTZNER

For the time being. Nothing will be said publicly or privately but AIPAC is regrouping. And off the record, they see your election as an unmitigated disaster.

DOV

What about Bradley?

KURTZNER

You're the first socialist he was ever glad won an election.

DOV

But he'll never admit that publicly.

KURTZNER

Not even to himself.

DOV

Why did Solomon step down as leader?

KURTZNER

I thought he retired from politics...

DOV

Seventy billion dollars of military loans to Israel. No leverage there?

KURTZNER

You shouldn't ask me that Dov.

DOV

I just did.

KURTZNER

If we want to tighten the screws, you'll feel it long before we have to say anything directly.

DOV

That's reassuring.

KURTZNER

Which brings us to Zuroff.

DOV

No Labour Party can govern without a Zuroff in their ranks. You know that.

KURTZNER

He's not just for show is he?

DOV

Ephraim is too painful for such a limited role.

KURTZNER

What then? What are you planning...

Pause.

KURTZNER (CONT'D)

Dov, there are only so many times the US government will allow the Israelis to embarrass them on the world stage. Netanyahu set a precedent that future prime ministers may quickly regret.

DOV

That sounds like a threat.

KURTZNER

It possibly is.

DOV

We're going into Lebanon. Strictly Hezbollah strongholds. No mistakes. Not like last time.

KURTZNER

You can't guarantee that.

DOV

Zuroff and Gross will be in charge.

KURTZNER

So you plan on reducing the Lebanese population by a third.

DOV

Hezbollah is planning more attacks with bigger weapons. Casualties in the north are no longer discountable. They have reached the hundreds and this is unacceptable. If they are not stopped, Hamas will do the same.

KURTZNER

Strictly Hezbollah strongholds...you've just finished bombing Iran. Israel is on high nuclear alert. Iran may have nuclear weapons and if so, we hope aren't stupid enough to use them, and you want to rip Hezbollah a new one.

DOV

Iran is financing them, supplying the latest weapons.

KURTZNER

Hence your attack on Iran.

DOV

No. Solomon's.

KURTZNER

So why another war?

DOV

I don't think we have a choice. Lebanon will explode with or without our action. We either act now or react with even greater force to a situation we have less control over.

KURTZNER

Gotta love Israeli logic. End a war one week, start another a week later.

DOV

It's the logic of the Middle East. We've just adapted to it better than the competition.

KURTZNER

Just stay of the Sinai. Washington will not take sides in another conflict with Egypt.

DOV

As long as Wilyat Sinaa-

KURTZNER

You're not listening Dov. Let Egypt handle it.

Pause.

KURTZNER (CONT'D)

OK. So you're not going to bring it up?

DOV

(With a flourish)

A perfect opportunity for you to do so.

KURTZNER

Solomon wanted to break the Palestinian people. '35 all over again.

DOV

That's not my intention.

KURTZNER

All right.

DOV

Neither am I going to waste everyone's time discussing some non-existent peace initiative.

KURTZNER

There's been talk of greater cooperation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.

DOV

Hamas will have to wait.

KURTZNER

This Khalid is not like Mishal. Less intransigent.

DOV

He was named after him.

KURTZNER

So no settlement freeze huh?

DOV

You won't hear any talk of annexing the West Bank from my administration. Make sure Bradley understands this.

KURTZNER

That might not be enough.

DOV

How long do you want me to last in office Dan?

KURTZNER

It's not going to go away.

DOV

Fine. Now that you've told me what your government wants, how about you give me something?

Pause.

KURTZNER

Before I came here, received a call from a buddy of mine on the Middle East desk.

DOV

Your CIA friends still talk to you...

KURTZNER

There's been a lot of chatter to do with an "unprecedented" threat against Israel. His words. In the light of recent events...

DOV

Iran?

KURTZNER

They'd have more than enough justification but there's no direct link.

DOV

Why are you telling me this?

KURTZNER

Maybe the bigger question is why your own security services haven't.

KURTZNER prepares to exit.

DOV

Please give my condolences to your family. I understand your wife has not returned?

KURTZNER

And neither is she likely.

Pause.

KURTZNER (CONT'D)

He was a real bright kid. Top of his class but felt he wasn't doing enough for his country. I never encouraged him to serve but there was no stopping him either.

DOV

You should be proud of him.

KURTZNER

He died in a war we have no intention of resolving.

DOV

He died a hero.

KURTZNER

It makes no difference Dov. Initially I thought it did, but I was wrong.

KURTZNER exits.

ACT ONE SCENE SEVEN

LIGHTS. DOV, EPHRAIM and BENNY sit facing the audience. On a screen behind them, images of tanks, planes soldiers crossing into Lebanon, in the course of the scene, these images are intercut with scenes of destruction, refugees, casualties.

GROSS VOICEOVER

All unit commanders are ready.

EPHRAIM

Then what are you waiting for?

GROSS VOICEOVER

Commandos have secured key points outside the target areas. Air force units have hit significant targets inside Beirut...

DOV

Why Beirut?

EPHRAIM

It is a Hezbollah stronghold. Give them something else to think about.

DOV

Civilian casualties?

EPHRAIM

Expected to be high.

DOV

Which units are going in?

EPHRAIM

The 7th Armored Brigade are leading the way for the infantry. The Nahal Brigade.

DOV

To surround two villages?

EPHRAIM

Adaissah and Kfar Kila are the suspected locations for their rockets. We neutralise these areas, the northern borders of Israel will be secure once again.

BENNY

Don't flatter yourself. They have never been secure.

GROSS VOICEOVER

Tank units encountering resistance on outskirts of village...

DOV

What kind?

GROSS VOICEOVER

Significant RPG fire from several locations. Units moving in to engage.

EPHRAIM

We gave the civilian population warnings to get out...

DOV

I don't want a massacre based on your assumptions that these are the locations...

EPHRAIM

These villages must be taken. Obliterated if necessary.

BENNY

He is right Dov. It is their means of fighting us that we must eradicate. Weapons caches are always located in heavily populated areas.

GROSS VOICEOVER

Infantry and special forces have moved in. Encountering fierce small weapons fire from Hezbollah fighters...air support called in.

SOUND of massive explosions. Images of screaming jets overhead. The screen is replete with images of destroyed buildings, bodies lying amidst the rubble.

GROSS VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

Resistance in Adaissah retreating. Apaches taking care of stragglers. Tank units cordoned off all exit points.

EPHRAIM

Excellent work Gross. Move onto next target.

DOV

I don't want our forces inside Lebanon a minute longer than necessary.

EPHRAIM

We've made our point. Anytime they attack our villages, we will destroy theirs. This is how we always waged war.

LIGHTS. DOV is alone on stage with BENNY.

DOV

I want to know the casualty figures right away. Theirs as well as ours.

BENNY

Just watch Al Jazeera.

DOV

I'm serious Benny.

BENNY

Let Zuroff take care-

DOV

No. Use your spies. I want an accurate assessment.

BENNY

For what purpose?

DOV

So I don't act like my predecessors.

BENNY

There isn't an incursion into Lebanon that has brought an Israeli prime minister satisfaction. Why should you be any different...

LIGHTS. EPHRAIM addresses the audience.

EPHRAIM

2006. In response to Hezbollah hit and run attacks on Israel's northern border, Prime Minister Olmert orders the bombing of Lebanon, sparking the Second Lebanon War. In 34 days a million Lebanese become refugees, more than a 1000 civilians are killed and 4000 more are wounded. Defence Minister Halutz orders the airforce to flatten ten multi story buildings in Beirut for every Hezbollah rocket fired into Israel. By the end of the war, Israeli airforce and artillery have destroyed 16,000 homes, commercial structures, major roads and bridges, schools, ports and two hospitals.

ACT ONE SCENE EIGHT

LIGHTS. The living room of a penthouse in Tel Aviv. RACHEL is putting the finishing touches to dinner preparation.

DOV

Candles? We use those for blackouts.

RACHEL

It's a special evening Dov. Our first together since before election.

DOV

Since last year Rachel. Our daughter...

RACHEL

Our daughter helped us get this apartment.

DOV

She brokered a deal where we paid above market price and you wouldn't let me say anything.

RACHEL

Business was slow for her. It's what parents are supposed to do.

DOV

She should find another profession. Preferably one that doesn't profit off...

RACHEL

Off what? You can't enjoy a penthouse overlooking the Mediterranean? Is that why you're going to that dilapidated cottage of yours in Haifa?

DOV

I feel at home there Rachel.

RACHEL

Of course you do. You were born in it.

DOV

My parents died in it as well.

RACHEL

So maybe its time to turn it into a mausoleum and be among the living.

DOV

Up here? With all these neighbours who wish the Labour Party would gas itself?

RACHEL

Don't be so crude.

DOV

You know its true. Billionaires, gangsters, celebrities...rich American Jews who are never here and Russian Jews who never leave. I've got to consider the company I keep.

RACHEL

You don't talk to anyone. In eight months you haven't let me organise one dinner party.

DOV

I prefer to eat out.

RACHEL

These are people of influence Dov.

DOV

I am now a person of influence.

Pause.

RACHEL

Prime ministers need friends. A Labour prime minister even more so.

DOV

Friends who can make him forget his own party, what it stands, or stood for? Disown my past to inherit a future no one believes in?

RACHEL

Our continued existence Dov. That's what all Israelis believe in. The fact that even after eighty bloody years of conflict that is still a question for the Jewish state. Will we continue to exist? How far are our enemies willing to go to wipe Israel off the map?

DOV

And who will we wipe out in the process? Or will we be the avenging angels meeting death and destruction on friend and foe alike? We're becoming...no, we have become a pariah state Rachel. This business with the US...a fucking Jew attempts to shoot the president. I sat there talking to Kurtzner today like it was a routine event.

RACHEL

He was caught in time.

DOV

God Almighty, what if he had succeeded? What then?

RACHEL

The Americans would have a new president and Israel's jail cells would be full of ultranationalists.

DOV

I don't think it would be so cut and dry. The EU may have gotten their economic boycott. Bradley was the only impediment. Threatened an economic embargo on Europe. So to show our gratitude...

RACHEL

That's why no newspaper has bothered to contemplate that scenario. We all just want to forget it.

DOV

I don't have that privilege. No Israeli government in future will be able to do so. Other foreign leaders will treat Israel like Afghanistan.

RACHEL

When they bother to visit.

DOV

Can you blame them?

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

I met with Zuroff.

RACHEL

And?

DOV

He assures me the targets have been neutralised. All weapons caches destroyed or captured.

RACHEL

Thus securing our northern borders.

DOV

For how long? We also created another refugee crisis.

RACHEL

Just let Zuroff do his job. He's a warrior at heart.

DOV

He's also a ruthless politician cross bred with a prima donna.

RACHEL

You need him and he knows it. Israel still loves war heroes, possibly even more so.

DOV

Solomon was prepared for a nuclear exchange with Iran.

RACHEL

Ephraim told you this?

DOV

Among other things.

RACHEL

He was probably just trying to impress you.

DOV

Zuroff was there. At least till he resigned. In truth, I think Solomon's plans had something to do with his departure.

RACHEL

So you believe him.

DOV

Yes I do.

RACHEL has finished her preparations.

RACHEL

What kind of wine do you want?

DOV

I tell you the Israeli government for the past decade was prepared to lose Haifa, Jaffa, wherever else in some insane gamble that would have led to the total destruction of Iran and this is all you have to say?

RACHEL

Red.

DOV

Gas or bomb. That would have been genocide Rachel. Jews committing genocide. I can hear that evil bastard clinking glasses with the Devil...

RACHEL

Iran has nuclear weapons.

DOV

We don't know that for sure.

RACHEL

They want to kill us all. They don't believe in our right to exist. At least that's what their government tells the world. We don't believe in their right to have the power to do something about it! Rouhani was one voice of moderation. Now he's gone. We are not Nazis Dov. Extremism runs through Jewish blood like any other but we are not those fucking animals.

DOV

Kurtzner asked about the Palestinians...

RACHEL

The Americans don't seriously expect you to-

DOV

I don't think so. But with Solomon gone...

RACHEL

Bradley's testing the waters. Tell him it's too cold.

DOV

Just ignore the issue..?

RACHEL

Hamas will screw things up just when we need them to.

DOV

And if they don't..?

RACHEL

You say they have. Constantly.

Pause.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Dov...

DOV

What?

RACHEL

You are the PM. Not the conscience of the nation.

DOV

A Prime Minister cannot have a conscience?

RACHEL

Dov my husband. You must promise me these reservations of yours do not go beyond this room. I am your wife, it is my duty-

DOV

Duty?

RACHEL goes to DOV and kisses him on the forehead.

RACHEL

Our marriage has endured much.

DOV

I've waited long enough to be in this position.

RACHEL

You cannot be perceived as weaker than your predecessors.

DOV

Who is weak to last as long as I have...

RACHEL

Endurance is not enough. Take for instance the question of casualties in Lebanon...

DOV

We've never discussed-

RACHEL

No. But you should leave it. No one wants to know. Operations like these, high casualties are inevitable.

Pause.

DOV

You are right.

RACHEL

It's good we talk about these things.

SOUND of a siren in the distance. Both listen.

DOV

Where is our daughter?

RACHEL

Still at work I imagine.

DOV

Dinner with family not high enough on the agenda.

RACHEL

They are a different generation.

The SOUND of more sirens getting closer and closer.

DOV

More than normal for...

RACHEL

Call her office.

The phone rings in their apartment. DOV takes it.

DOV

There was an explosion. A suicide bomber...

We didn't hear it... RACHEL

Dozens killed. DOV

Where? RACHEL

Downtown. Near Allenby St. DOV

Her offices are there... RACHEL

Extra security is arriving. DOV

RACHEL beseeches the heavens.

Where is our daughter?! RACHEL

LIGHTS.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

DOV stands at the window of the apartment. EVA enters. She looks every bit the corporate businesswoman.

EVA

So what do you think?

DOV

Are you always late for prospective buyers?

EVA

C'mon Papa. I couldn't get away from the office.

DOV

And of course your father isn't going to snub his own daughter over a little rudeness.

EVA

OK. I'm sorry.

DOV

Apology accepted.

EVA

Mother's already seen it.

DOV

Of course she has.

EVA

Is that a problem?

DOV

You've always gone through her to get to me. Never the direct approach.

EVA

You never wanted to be bothered.

DOV

My children don't bother me Eva. Least of all you.

EVA

And Yotom?

DOV

That's another story.

EVA

Have you heard from him recently?

DOV

You know how expensive it is to call from a military base these days?

EVA

Sarcasm does not become you Papa.

DOV

You're my only daughter and first born. I took you everywhere when you were children.

EVA

I remember. In between the wars, national emergencies and routine family crises.

DOV

That time you got sick. Your mother was beside herself.

EVA

Mom says it was you on the verge of collapse.

DOV

For a moment or two I became religious.

EVA

Heaven forbid.

DOV

The doctors weren't optimistic.

EVA

I had leukemia.

DOV

Supposedly curable. But in your case...

EVA

I saw more of you then.

DOV

Well I'm here now.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

If we take this place do we see more of you?

EVA

I'll visit whenever I can Papa. Work is crazy at the moment. Apartments are selling as if there's no safer place than Tel Aviv to invest.

DOV

And the price..?

EVA

It's the best deal for something like this.

DOV

Your mother and I lived in a two bedroom apartment for....

EVA

We've moved on Papa. All of us. Israel is part of the modern world.

DOV

Tel Aviv maybe. Don't confuse this place with Israel.

EVA

You love it here. Otherwise...

DOV

What? I'd be somewhere else? Your mother is most comfortable here Eva.

EVA

You both deserve this. And I know you can afford it.

DOV

Your mother can afford it. What about your inheritance? Not scared we'll spend it all?

EVA

I'm financially independent. Always have been.

DOV

What about when you were...

EVA

At least since I turned 30.

DOV

Come here...

EVA

You know I can't Papa.

DOV

Your mother thinks I shouldn't run. What do you think?

EVA

What would you do? Retire permanently?

DOV

I'm 65 as your she keeps pointing out.

EVA

If you win, sell this place. I'll understand. But in the meantime, enjoy it. Have you seen the study?

DOV

Very nice.

EVA

All your books will fit in there.

DOV

Most are in storage. The rest just might.

EVA

From up here you can escape everything. Leave the world with all its troubles down there where they belong.

DOV

Did you see the demonstration last week? They're getting bigger by the month.

EVA

More votes for you. All good little socialists wanting their piece of the pie.

DOV

They have a point Eva. Food, housing, cost of living has become unaffordable for many Israelis. Have been for years.

EVA

Not my problem.

DOV

It was once. You would have been in that demonstration screaming your lungs out.

EVA lights a cigarette.

EVA

And now that I'm a businesswoman...

DOV

You sell real estate.

EVA

Within a few years I'll have my own office. Employees.

DOV

You had the makings of-

EVA

Of what? Always back to that Papa? Politics is no place for women in this country and please do not mention Livni one more time. She changed nothing. Anyhow, you have a son...

DOV

Yotom didn't have the nerves, the steel, but you...

EVA

Enough. Please. And you wonder why I stay away.

DOV

Nimrod was your boyfriend...

EVA

We planned on getting married. Don't you remember? The night it happened we were going to tell you and mother...

DOV

Protective Edge killed sixty soldiers Eva, among the several thousand Palestinians...500 children...

EVA

I don't care about any of them! You could have pulled strings, got him out of the mission...

DOV

It's not what he wanted...

EVA

How do you know? He looked as scared as a new recruit. Any intervention would have been welcome...

DOV

My influence is not what you think Eva...

EVA

He was the man I loved.

DOV

You were 25.

EVA

And that makes it less of a tragedy?

DOV

The tragedy is how you have chosen to live since then. No relationships...

EVA

How do you know? Maybe I choose to keep my private life private...

DOV

I worked in Army Intelligence. Please, if there are things I need to know...

EVA

So you've been spying on me?

DOV

If I am voted in your life will change too.

EVA

How?

DOV

More security.

EVA

Then I hope you lose.

DOV

No need. It would be quite a leap of faith to believe we could win.

EVA

Our political system is fucked.

DOV

Eva...

EVA

You know its true.

DOV

It's all we have. Labour has to step forward.

EVA

I do not wish for you to lose. But if there is extra security you will lose two children.

Pause. She prepares to leave.

DOV

Where are you going?

EVA

I am late for my next appointment.

DOV

I probably won't see you till after the election...

EVA

No Papa. You will never see me again.

DOV

Why..?

EVA

I was standing next to the suicide bomber. The bomb almost cut me in half. My face is...unrecognisable...

DOV is frozen. He looks as if he could break into a thousand pieces. LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE TWO

LIGHTS. DOV'S office. The television screen shows the aftermath of the bombing; the carnage along with dazed survivors being treated by MEDICAL PERSONNEL as POLICE and MILITARY secure the area. There is no SOUND. DOV is sitting at his desk. BENNY stands on the other side.

BENNY

You don't have to be here only days after...

DOV

Why not? What do you think the country is thinking heh? Will our new and untested Prime Minister get swallowed up in mourning, consumed with grief, or will he lead...

BENNY

This is a country of mourners. People will understand.

DOV

Bullshit.

BENNY

Good. Let's not beat around the bush.

DOV

Let's not.

BENNY

There has to be a response. These attacks are escalating. In the last 24 hours a family was murdered in the Old City. All four stabbed to death. Another couple shot with their kids in the backseat. Both parents not expected to survive.

DOV

And revenge attacks..?

BENNY

A Palestinian boy was kidnapped and set alight outside of Dimona. He's not expected to live either.

DOV

The perpetrators...?

BENNY

What about them? Outside of Israel, there's been three attacks on our embassies in the space of a week.

DOV

How is Eitan?

BENNY

In a stable condition. My French counterpart assures me everything is being done to apprehend those responsible.

DOV

And you're not convinced...

BENNY

At the present time, chasing Jew killers is not their highest priority.

DOV

What do you propose I do? Invade Gaza?

BENNY

From all reports Hezbollah is in disarray. Hamas need to be taught a similar lesson.

DOV

We are the ones being taught a lesson.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

Where's my wife?

BENNY

Flew back to New York.

DOV

Fair enough.

BENNY

What's fair about it? Your family has deserted you.

DOV

There is too much to do Benny. I am of no use to her or she to me..

BENNY

Jews like to see a family united in times like these.

DOV

I don't want her back here. Not till...

BENNY

Nothing's going to change unless..

DOV

What? We are in a state of siege. Yes I have read the papers, including Ephraim's interview with the Post.

BENNY

You cannot trust him.

DOV

And you?

BENNY looks at DOV for a moment but chooses to ignore this comment.

BENNY

Hamas' fingerprints are all over it.

DOV

But they haven't claimed responsibility. No rocket attacks either...

BENNY

Because they know what would happen if they tried that again. Solomon made a few right moves while in office.

DOV

We haven't broken them Benny. Though God knows...

BENNY

Maybe they weren't expecting to kill the Prime Minister's daughter.

DOV

She was one of many. It was random.

BENNY

You know how we should respond...anything less would be seen as a sign of weakness...

DOV puts his head in his hands.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I am head of security. This is my failure. If you want me to tend my resignation...

DOV

Your failure has proven what most Israelis know deep down. No security measures can prevent all attacks and if the perpetrators are determined enough we are also at *their* mercy.

BENNY

There is a list, the most senior members of Hamas. We have been tracking their movements for months. We can take them out almost immediately.

DOV

How?

BENNY

Drone strikes, assassination teams...

DOV

Keep Mossad out of this. I'm not sanctioning hit teams outside of Israel.

BENNY

Which leaves option A.

DOV

No. I do not want the blood of their children on my hands.

BENNY

Then maybe you are not suited to this job. Red is every Prime Minister's colour. Get used to it.

DOV

Enough. There is not going to be a retaliatory response to this latest terrorist attack. Do you hear me?

BENNY

All of Israel will hear you. You must avenge the dead, especially..

DOV

Don't even say it.

BENNY

Hamas will not stop their attacks because we choose not to respond.

DOV

But when we kill their people by the dozen for every Israeli fatality, they really get the picture don't they? Sobers them up.

BENNY

Hamas have to be put on the backfoot. The heel must be placed back on their throat. It is either that or...

DOV

What?

BENNY

We cannot negotiate with these people.

DOV

Benny, we compromise whenever it suits us. Mishaal, Amir, any captured Israeli soldier, but the real hostage is the country itself. Israel is the fucking hostage.

BENNY

Hamas have gone too far. Six attacks in the last month alone. Unprecedented.

DOV

Triggered by our attacks or Iran, our invasion of Lebanon our now almost total control of the West Bank. Israel is losing real friends. Countries stick by us because of the leverage we possess not the loyalty we inspire. Europe wants an economic boycott and the only thing that stopped it from becoming reality was the president we tried to assassinate! Solomon made Netanyahu look like a peacenik rabbi. It's over Benny. We are just another state special only to ourselves and a diaspora who are often too scared or confused to say what they really think. If the Arabs ever get their act together in peace or war, God help us. And the truth is we have not wanted peace, not one which doesn't leave us holding all the cards and our enemies with their pants around their knees. We are denounced as racist and God forgive us Benny but the strain is there. We tolerate those voices that condemn Arabs, Palestinians, Eritreans, Ethiopian Jews...

BENNY

We can't undo what has been done. The stains are there on *both* sides. But this is your moment of truth. For all Israelis, *you must hit back*.

Pause.

DOV

What do you suggest?

BENNY

One target. Go straight to the top.

DOV

Khalid?

BENNY

The whole leadership structure. Cripple them for a generation.

Pause.

DOV

I want no other casualties. This will not be “outsourced.” Understand?

BENNY

Of course. We can even pretend this conversation never took place.

ACT TWO SCENE THREE

LIGHT on YOTOM, isolated and alone. He is seated, in uniform, his head buried in his hands. On another part of the stage are DOV and RACHEL.

DOV

What happened?

RACHEL

Look at him...what do you think happened?

DOV.

He's been discharged from his unit. Why?

RACHEL

Christ Dov, Yotom had a breakdown. He refused to fight.

DOV is silent as he looks compassionately at his son.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

No response? Your son has shamed this family.

DOV

Don't Rachel. I don't want your fucking family...the ghost of your brother brought into this matter.

RACHEL

If he was alive to see...

DOV

Shut up! Do you hear me. Yotom is also my son. Your brother had no bearing on his upbringing other than some figure from an adventure story.

RACHEL

He was a hero.

DOV

And Yotom isn't.

RACHEL

I never expected him to be like Motti but a coward? That is something I can't-

DOV

He is not a coward! Don't you have eyes in that head of yours that can see beyond your family's legacy or expectations? Yotom was never cut out for front line duty.

RACHEL

Rubbish. He has my blood.

DOV

But not your heart. It beats differently. Always has.

RACHEL

His sister has the bit in her mouth, ready to beat all and sundry...

DOV

Have you talked to him?

RACHEL

What do I say? That I understand? This is a secret we both need to cover up. If it ever got out...

DOV

Do you think we are the first political family in Israel whose son isn't Moshe Dayan?

RACHEL

You were never tough enough on him. A father needs to show his son how to be a man.

DOV

You're right. I should have made him slit an Arab's throat the night before his Bar Mitzvah, drained the blood and make him drink it.

RACHEL

I am serious. The understanding father..."just let him be" you said and now look at him.

DOV

Yotom didn't endanger the welfare of his men. It's not like they were in a real firefight.

RACHEL

He endangered the welfare of his family. How the hell-

DOV

If he refuses to fight that's one thing-

RACHEL

They found him simpering like a little child after a rocket attack. From there he told his CO that he couldn't face it...

DOV

He panicked. It was the first time..

RACHEL

The Medical Officer thinks he's psychologically unfit for combat.

DOV

He's put that in writing?

RACHEL

I've spoken to my father. He's made some calls. Yotom's commanding officer won't breath a word of what happened. His report will list it as a medical discharge. Unfit for duty.

DOV

All right.

RACHEL

What do you intend to do.

DOV

I don't know. But he's still our son.

RACHEL

For once I am glad my brother is not here to witness this...

DOV

Your brother was a man who got others killed.

RACHEL

That's not true.

DOV

I saw the intelligence reports, the recommendations. He took risks, not just with his own life but with those of his men.

RACHEL

How dare you...

DOV

It was one of the IDF's best or worst kept secrets. Your dead brother was a glory hound. And worse. In 2007 a whole village was demolished because of sniper activity. He orders air strikes. Most of the villagers killed. The sniper is still alive. He was never in the village in the first place. He volunteered his team for missions that had little to no chance of success and the dividends never justified them.

RACHEL

Why am I hearing this for the first time..?

DOV

That's what love will do Rachel.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

Go to him. He needs your assurances.

RACHEL

Of what?

DOV

What do you think...

RACHEL shakes her head.

RACHEL

How I'm feeling...you're a better actor Dov.

DOV

I don't have to act. Nothing has changed for me. He is medically unfit. That is all.

ACT TWO SCENE FOUR

LIGHTS. DOV addresses the audience.

DOV

1955. Following a vengeance raid by Har Zion, Prime Minister Sharett writes in his diary: "I wonder about the nature and fate of this nation, which is capable of so much gentleness, of such a deep love of all people, and of such craving for beauty and the profound, and at the same time of such brutality? Which of these two souls, which run through the pages of the Bible, will predominate in this nation?"

LIGHTS. DOV is seated in an television studio.
LIGHTS on the INTERVIEWER.

INTERVIEWER

Welcome to our program Mr. Prime Minister.

DOV

Glad to be here.

INTERVIEWER

You have taken over the leadership position of our country at a time of unprecedented threat.

DOV

By whom?

Pause.

INTERVIEWER

Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIL, not to mention countries that have no love for Israel.

DOV

You shouldn't forget to mention the wave of condemnation from the US and Europe.

INTERVIEWER

I am sure that is something we will also be discussing in this interview.

DOV

Israel is facing a difficult time...yes. But I would put it to you that so are all those countries, organisations who are dealing with threats of their own.

INTERVIEWER

You are implying that Israel is the threat?

DOV

Don't these countries have reason to fear us?

INTERVIEWER

We are not threatening Iran with nuclear destruction.

DOV

We don't have to. That's what makes our power so real. Everyone knows what we are capable of, the extent to which we will go to protect our interests.

INTERVIEWER

You say interests. What to you, as the new Prime Minister are our interests?

DOV

You want to know my policy towards the Arabs and Palestinians after having a government which made a point of not adopting any fixed policy?

INTERVIEWER

In your run up to the election, you promised a new direction while guaranteeing our security. How is that possible.

DOV

Maybe it isn't.

INTERVIEWER

In which case...

DOV

In which case a new direction or our security will have to be abandoned. Which do you choose?

INTERVIEWER

More to the point, which do you choose Prime Minister. What is your highest priority?

DOV

If I don't say security, millions of Israelis will choke on their hummus. But who would not wish for a new direction? Who out there of sane mind and beliefs doesn't think that Israel has truly overreacted, has not managed recent crises...and consequently thousands of civilians are dead. Yes Iranians but dead nonetheless and revenge is kept at bay with the promise of thousands more.

INTERVIEWER

Your predecessor Uri Solomon gave very clear warnings to the Iranian regime which they chose to ignore.

DOV

We didn't stop their nuclear program after destabilising their moderate leaders, then provoking their hardliners to break the 2015 Treaty. And they haven't amassed a huge arsenal assuming they even have that capability. Solomon publicly chose to punish Iran for its support of Hezbollah...

INTERVIEWER

Who pose a direct threat to our northern borders, killing hundreds of civilians.

DOV

Please do not lecture me on civilian deaths. Hezbollah has recently had an eye removed using the claw end of a hammer. If necessary I will blind them permanently, but Iran's support will not wane because we punish soft targets with air raids. It is an article of faith that Iran will support Hezbollah. Nothing we can do will change that. Destroy Hezbollah but not Iran. They are our neighbours whether we like it or not.

INTERVIEWER

Neighbours don't point their missiles at Jerusalem.

DOV

We have many more aimed at Tehran. Our air force could annihilate their defences with little effort.

INTERVIEWER

But they choose to remain belligerent.

DOV

Iran has made no retaliatory strikes against Israel, no declaration of war. I don't believe it is because they are simply afraid of us and what we will do to them.

INTERVIEWER

You have spoken to their president...

DOV

Discussions are occurring through intermediaries.

INTERVIEWER

The United States...

DOV

Whichever friends we have left.

INTERVIEWER

Both militaries are on high alert...

DOV

The threat felt by both countries has not been alleviated. Yet.

INTERVIEWER

And what if they attack?

DOV

I will consider my response.

INTERVIEWER

Surely no military response would be political suicide. Solomon and the far right would-

DOV

A military response could be national suicide. Tell me which cities are expendable in the event of any nuclear exchange? Let us assume we play war games and attack minor cities...leave Tehran out of the picture and retaliation occurs? Which cities are expendable? Tel Aviv or Jerusalem? Neither? Haifa or Jaffa? Where does it stop?

INTERVIEWER

Solomon guaranteed the safety of every town and city in Israel.

DOV

Solomon should never have made that promise because such a guarantee is impossible. Do you understand? And Solomon knows it. Israel, for all its military might, is vulnerable and no amount of flexing or pledges is going to change that fact.

INTERVIEWER

The people of Israel need some sort of-

DOV

Of what? How about a reality check? Israel, this gloriously imperfect democracy is losing...no, it has lost its moral right to impose its will on others. Whether we ever had it, I am no longer sure but no amount of chest beating, no amount of wailing over our unique past, the terrible legacy of the Shoah can mitigate this one unassailable fact.

INTERVIEWER

You have just insulted...

DOV

I haven't insulted anyone yet. But give me time. Policies unchecked since '67 have brought us to this point, a body politic that doesn't recognise itself, the apathetic and the overzealous. A generation of young Israelis who do not understand that killing, wanting to kill is a sin against God, against Man. But we have turned Arabs into godless animals. Agreements have not been honoured, leaders not respected, our own leaders without vision or humility, puffed up with their own vanity and narcissism while wiping their filthy hands on the national flag. I don't give a damn for any policy towards to Arabs or Palestinians since it has always been a game of charades. Lies prettified as hopes for change, a peaceful compromise when we have no intention of compromising.

INTERVIEWER

But what about their lies, their lack of compromise...

DOV

The truth? We have always held the cards that matter most. All the aces, kings queens. It is a stacked deck and we keep wanting to play poker because there is no other game that will give us everything. So they cheat by trying to hurt us or kill us and then we kill more of them for not liking our game.

INTERVIEWER

Hamas is a terrorist organisation.

DOV

Hamas have the overwhelming support of the people of Gaza and the West Bank. And so it should be. Under Rabin we did everything and anything to marginalise Arafat and the PLO, including our support for the spread of Islamism within the Palestinian communities who then outwitted us as we allowed them to become a military and political force. Then when it's too late we told Arafat to crack down on the Islamists because they are the far bigger danger to Israel than the secular Fatah. Hamas wins elections so we refuse to recognise them. The voice of the Palestinian people marginalised, ignored.

INTERVIEWER

They want to destroy Israel.

DOV

Yes good luck with that. I'll tell you a little secret. They will not succeed whether we kill all of them or not, whether we take out every leader, every bodyguard, every councilman or simply let them rot in the ghettos we have helped create.

(MORE)

DOV (CONT'D)

Frankly I am not concerned about what our immediate neighbours "feel" towards Israel but what the larger world thinks. Their hate is manageable but the apathy of the world is our most dangerous enemy, an apathy underpinned by a belief that any catastrophe we suffer we brought upon ourselves.

INTERVIEWER

But this is just typical anti-Semitism.

DOV

Maybe but if so, it is the worst kind, one which will not destroy itself in the inferno of war but pick at our flesh till we are too weak to do anything about it.

INTERVIEWER

You refer to the attempts by the EU to boycott Israel which many commentators inside Israel have labelled anti-Semitic.

DOV

And many commentators outside Israel have labelled long overdue.

INTERVIEWER

Prime Minister, I did not want to bring this up given your recent loss, losing your daughter to a terrorist attack, how can you not want to avenge her death?

DOV

And if I did, and this made the situation much worse, then what kind of Prime Minister would I be, putting my personal interests above that of the nation, the Israeli people? What right do I have to kill others because of my own personal loss?

INTERVIEWER

And the other victims?

DOV

Revenge is not a policy. If you want to know whether I would kill the man responsible for ordering the attack, kill them with my bare hands so that there are no innocent victims of my wrath, then the answer is yes. But this is an impossibility.

INTERVIEWER

If you cannot countenance innocent victims resulting from your actions, then possibly you should not be leading this country.

DOV

Maybe not the country that you wish it to be. I have a different view of Israel. It is time for a change, irrespective of whether we believe our enemies want it or not. Maybe it is time for us to make them want it, for reasons they can see will not only benefit us.

ACT TWO SCENE FIVE

LIGHTS on RACHEL. She addresses the audience.

RACHEL

1996. Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to open the Hasmonean tunnel triggers violent protests. Dozens of Palestinians are killed. In response, Israel comes under attack from a wave of suicide bombings. The mother of one victim declares: "Israel is raising terrorists. My daughter's death is the direct result of the humiliation inflicted on Palestinians. We invented the suicide bombers. They are sacrificing themselves because we have made their lives valueless in their own eyes..."

LIGHTS on DOV in the apartment. He is seated, holding a drink in his hand. RACHEL enters.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Fine speech.

DOV

Why have you returned?

RACHEL

I am still your wife.

Pause.

DOV

We should sell this place. Immediately.

RACHEL

No. Not until...

DOV

What?

RACHEL

We see how long this government of yours will last.

DOV

It will last as long as necessary.

RACHEL

How do you think Zuroff and the rest of your party will respond to your-

DOV

As I expect them to. He will threaten to resign.

RACHEL

He just might. What will you do?

DOV

Find another defence minister.

RACHEL

The country is waiting for your response and thus far you have told them that everything is their fault.

DOV

I didn't expect to win the election. If the people want more of the same they shouldn't have brought us back into power.

RACHEL

You were the safe option.

DOV

There is no such thing! A safe option? Continue on the current course which has isolated us more than at any time in our brief history or try something else. I chose the latter.

RACHEL

There can be no peace with these animals.

DOV

Your father fought in the Irgun, he was at Deir Yessin and for seventy years refused to say what happened!

RACHEL

It was a military operation.

DOV

Enough. This is not '67. The historical gaps have been filled. Amnesia is no longer a legitimate excuse. We murdered civilians.

RACHEL

It was wartime.

DOV

We are at war and they use whatever methods they have available to them.

RACHEL

They killed our daughter!

DOV

They'll kill us all if we give them half a chance.

RACHEL

So wipe them out! No mercy Dov. Make them pay for what they've done to us! Kill their children and make their mothers suffer like ours...

DOV

Old testament wrath? There is nothing we can teach the Palestinians about suffering. Maybe once, but not now...

RACHEL

Blind them then. Take *both* eyes out...

DOV

I cannot respond like a grieving, vengeful father. No matter how righteous the cause. I cannot, will not show myself to be everything that my enemies hope that I am.

RACHEL

You have every right to slaughter them Dov! There is no Israeli or Jew who will not understand ...It is your obligation to this family!

DOV

I have no right to seek the death of others.

RACHEL

May her memory haunt you...

DOV

You know how much I loved her...will always love her.

Pause.

RACHEL

I want a divorce.

DOV

You will only stand by me if I seek vengeance..?

RACHEL

I cannot watch you stain the memory of my family. Your enemies surround you Dov. If you will not fight...

DOV

You will have your divorce.

RACHEL

That's it? After everything I've done...

DOV

Fight? No one in your family has the stomach for what is about to come. Not even you.

ACT TWO SCENE SIX

LIGHTS. BENNY addresses the audience.

BENNY

2001. Chief of Staff of the IDF, Shaul Mofaz, under instructions from Prime Minister Sharon, orders his regional officers to kill ten Palestinians a day - a quota that would require seventy killings across command regions. Major General Yitzak Eitan, head of the army, demands this order in writing. Mofaz refuses. Eitan tells his officers to ignore the order.

LIGHTS on DOV and BENNY inside his office.

DOV

You said you had information on the movements of all the senior Hamas people.

BENNY

It's in my initial report.

DOV

What about Khalid...

BENNY

He's at the top.

DOV

Can you get a message to him.

BENNY

I don't like where this-

DOV

At this point Benny I don't give a fuck what you like! I saved your bloody career, could have hung you out to dry like Yotom was but no, here you are...

BENNY

Say the word.

DOV

You will remain at your post .

BENNY

What message do you want passed onto Khalid? He has only a few days to live..?

DOV

I want a meeting. Between the two of us.

BENNY

No.

DOV

I'm not asking Benny.

BENNY

And I'm telling you no. We agreed to remove him.

Pause.

DOV

That conversation never happened.

BENNY

If anything were to-

DOV

Bring him into Israel.

BENNY

He will not come. Unless of course we kidnap him. You can have your talk and then we kill him.

DOV

He will not be kidnapped and this government, you, will not sanction his murder.

BENNY

Murder?

DOV

Khalid will come if he knows its not a trick.

BENNY

How could you prove that to him?

DOV

A gesture of good will.

BENNY

Have you lost your senses! There is no "good will" amongst their kind. The only thing stopping them joining those bastards in the Sinai is fear of our reprisals. They will take...

DOV

He has a brother in Ramlah...

BENNY

Serving ten years. A bomb maker Dov. You want to let him loose?

DOV

They are close.

BENNY

They grew up together during the Intifada.

DOV

Mother was killed by an Israeli sniper.

Pause.

BENNY

Correct.

DOV

Offer the brother to Khalid if he meets with me.

BENNY

He won't believe us. What am I talking about he won't believe you! You cannot even consider such a move. If anyone inside Israel finds out about this your life will be in greater danger. I cannot protect you, its beyond reckless... a meeting with Khalid will be a betrayal of your country, your role, your position-

DOV

Don't you dare lecture me. I remember how you used to call me a jobnik behind my back while you strutted around like some peacock...

BENNY

C'mon Dov, that was a long time ago.

DOV

Yes it was. But you still think you can tell me what to do.

BENNY

I was once your commanding officer.

DOV

And now I'm yours.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

I want to meet with Khalid. Use our contacts in Jordan. The meeting can be arranged near the Jordanian border if they will agree to it.

BENNY

We don't have to tell them.

DOV

'97 is a recent memory. That betrayal was bad enough. I will not add to it.

BENNY

Assuming he will ever consider the possibility of a meeting, Khalid will want to know what its about, why such a meeting should even be taking place. He's not going to put his life in danger to hear the same bullshit he can find on Al Jazeera.

DOV

Tell him...an offer will be put on the table.

BENNY

What offer? We don't recognise Hamas.

DOV

That's about to change. Tell him I want to discuss their formal recognition by the Israeli government.

BENNY

To what end?

DOV

A cessation of hostilities. Then a peace settlement.

BENNY

You're talking about them as a legitimate enemy...

DOV

They always have been a legitimate enemy. No matter what Orwellian announcements we make to the contrary.

BENNY

What can you seriously offer them?

DOV

A formal recognition of their control of Gaza. Economic and political support.

BENNY

We'll be the laughing stock of the Middle East!

DOV

That's assuming it catches its breath.

BENNY

This is a dangerous game you do not know how to play.

DOV

By your rules maybe not. But it's the only game we have and none of us are experts. They will be as ill prepared for such a shift.

BENNY

You're as good as admitting the failure of Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza for the last forty years...

DOV

Anyone in government who believes otherwise isn't fit to hold office.

BENNY

When the public finds out...

DOV

No. Not yet.

BENNY

A story like this will leak.

DOV

If you are to betray me say it now and go public. Resignation on the way out. Khalid and I must meet. I need to know if he is bent on killing Jews no matter what, or is he first and foremost committed to the Palestinian cause.

BENNY

They are one and the same thing.

DOV

If so, his time on this earth will be limited. At that point I am willing to sanction every possible military and covert option to eliminating Hamas as a viable organisation.

BENNY

This is something I hoped we would never have to discuss but if you intend to follow this path...

DOV

Do not pretend to have any scruples when it came to your actions. It was your decision that my son would have to leave Israel or...

BENNY

I couldn't protect you more than once.

DOV

What about protecting him?

BENNY

That was your job.

DOV

Rachel still thinks its because of me.

BENNY

All things considered Dov, that was a smart move.

DOV

You're a bastard.

BENNY

Your son made his choices.

DOV

He was a good boy.

BENNY

Who liked to fuck Arabs. Making him a state security risk...his father a high ranking intelligence officer with political ambitions, his mother part of political dynasty in her own right. Your son forfeited whatever privileges that came with such illustrious pedigree.

DOV

The friend was not Hezbollah, Hamas...

BENNY

No but you were prone to blackmail or extortion. If his "boyfriend" had been found out by them first, what do you think those Islamic ballbreakers would have done to him heh? At least with us he got a straight deal.

DOV

Risk your life spying for Shin Bet or face certain death once we expose you to your Muslim brothers.

BENNY

A higher cause wouldn't you say?

DOV

Yotom was shattered. He felt he had betrayed him.

BENNY

Well of course he had. Your son always had a soft landing no matter how often he slept with Palestinian boys. His movements were watched by virtue of who he was so he ensnares some misbegotten Arab into his complicated little sex life. If anyone deserves sympathy it's him wouldn't you say?

DOV

So this is what you are threatening me with now Benny? Expose my son?

BENNY

Expose you. For putting your family before your country. Yotom should have been arrested...

DOV

Instead he was killed. Forbidden from returning to his homeland.

BENNY

You blame me for that?

DOV

Who else?

BENNY

I saved your career or what was left of it at the time.

DOV

Yotom didn't deserve to die like that.

BENNY

You didn't stand in the way.

DOV

What choice did I have?

BENNY

Your career or your son.

DOV

I hold you responsible.

BENNY

Listen carefully Dov. Your son was not sent into danger.

DOV

What are you talking about..?

BENNY

He killed himself.

DOV

No, that's not...

BENNY

I swear it. Two agents found him back in that village. He wasn't supposed to be there. Yotom's friend was recruited. Your son reported to our agents then without our knowing returned. There was no question.

DOV

How?

BENNY

That's not important.

DOV

I said how.

BENNY

A pistol.

DOV

They could have... Hamas...

BENNY

There was no sign. We got his body out so he could be buried with his family.

DOV

I'm supposed to thank you for that? The lies you used to fool me...

BENNY

Fool the Israeli people too. If the truth was to come out now...

DOV sits down.

BENNY (CONT'D)

You cannot continue to pursue this direction. What you plan on doing will jeopardise the security of Israel... US peacekeeping troops in the West Bank?
No Dov.

DOV

Then resign now. Expose my son's death for what it was, do your best to humiliate or discredit me but it will be done as the former head of Shin Bet. No matter how you paint it, your actions will look like revenge against a PM who had every right to find someone else in the first place. All your protestations about being the gatekeeper of the people of Israel will sound like whiney self importance.

Pause.

BENNY

All right. I will contact him. But if anything goes wrong, it's on your head and if necessary, I will drive a nail through it.

DOV

He is not to know why Benny. He agrees to meet, his brother goes free.

ACT TWO SCENE SEVEN

LIGHTS. A jail cell. YOTOM is seated. DOV enters.
YOTOM rushes to him.

YOTOM

Thank God you are here...they are not letting him go.

DOV

Who?

YOTOM

My friend. He's done nothing wrong.

DOV

And you?

YOTOM

They treat me like a criminal because I happened to be in a Palestinian village.

DOV

Have you lost your mind Yotom?

YOTOM

Why are you talking to me like this..?

DOV

I got a call in the middle of the night from the head of Shin Bet, informing me that my son has been arrested in the company of a Palestinian man in his own village.

YOTOM

We were doing nothing.

DOV

You could go to jail Yotom.

YOTOM

They wouldn't dare.

DOV

Why? Because I am in politics?

YOTOM

You...you are an important man.

DOV

I am a humiliated father, calling on the favour of a friend to keep his son out of jail.

YOTOM

Go then. Leave me here. I don't need your help.

DOV

You want to face an Israeli jail Yotom, with those that truly deserve to be there? A criminal record hanging over your life that even your mother's family will not be able to make disappear.

YOTOM

Does mother know?

DOV

Thankfully she is in Haifa visiting her father. I got the call. If this was to come out...

YOTOM

He's an old friend.

DOV

Stop the lies for God's sake! Old friend? He is an acquaintance or shall I be more blunt?

YOTOM

No.

DOV

Yotom, we shall never speak of this again. Do you understand?

YOTOM

You can't tell me how to live my life, who I associate with...

DOV

You have just made your new associate a pawn of the Israeli security services.

YOTOM

What will they do to him?

DOV

Whatever they like I should imagine.

YOTOM

I won't keep quiet...this is disgraceful.

DOV grabs YOTOM'S face with both hands.

DOV

You will say absolutely nothing. Your actions have almost destroyed this family.

YOTOM struggles free, for the first time witnessing the depth of his father's anguish and humiliation.

YOTOM

Only its reputation. There was nothing else.

DOV

If you want to sleep with men, at least do it with your own kind...

YOTOM

Jewish homosexuals are more acceptable..?

DOV

Less vulnerable. Your partner is an asset. He will be used, his life put in danger because if the Palestinians ever found out what he actually is and who he has been consorting with, they will kill him.

YOTOM

That was a risk he was willing to take.

DOV

Did you tell your friend you could protect him Yotom? That you knew people with influence?

YOTOM does not answer.

DOV (CONT'D)

I always knew you were different, but this...

YOTOM

I'm expected to recruit him for Shin Bet...

DOV

In a nutshell.

YOTOM

What if he won't...

DOV

Yotom. If your friend wishes to live, he will cooperate. There is no other choice but death.

YOTOM

He could get away.

DOV

Shin Bet will not let him go. If they don't kill him, they will make sure Hamas finishes him off.

YOTOM

When this is all done, I'm no longer going to support this lie...

DOV

Where do you think you live Yotom? Who do you think you are..?

YOTOM

You've always told me to be true-

DOV

That does not mean you tell the world.

YOTOM

I don't care. If I'm to betray my-

DOV

This will destroy your mother. Not to mention...

YOTOM

What?

DOV

I promise this. Reveal what you are, then you will be alone. Your fate will truly be yours to decide.

YOTOM breaks down in tears. DOV wants to comfort him but does not know how to. He leaves.

ACT TWO SCENE EIGHT

LIGHTS on KHALID. He addresses the audience.

KHALID

1992. In response to the Israeli assassination of the Secretary General of Hezbollah, Abbas al - Mussawai and his family, the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires is attacked by a truck bomb. The embassy, a Catholic church and a nearby school building are destroyed with over 250 casualties, many of them children. The Islamic Jihad Organisation claim responsibility. Two years later a Jewish Community Centre in Argentina is bombed with a similar number of casualties.

LIGHTS. Somewhere on the Israeli - Jordanian border. BENNY and KHALID stand across the stage from each other. They move towards the a centre.

BENNY

You look better in the photos.

KHALID

What do you want?

BENNY

No sign of curiosity? The head of Shin Bet arranges a secret meeting with the leader of Hamas and you've got somewhere else to go?

KHALID

All my advisors, security guards urged me not to attend this meeting, saying it was obviously a trap.

BENNY

But you came.

KHALID

They may still be right.

BENNY

If I wanted to kill you, this meeting would be completely unnecessary.

KHALID

Your last attempt nearly got you fired. Almost as inept as the Jordanian fiasco against Mishal.

BENNY

The ripples are still being felt. But you remain a high priority.

KHALID

How many Israelis do you think are worth my life?

BENNY

Those calculations are never made.

KHALID

We Palestinians make them all the time. Your reprisals are never a shock to us, the numbers of dead Palestinians required to shake off the yoke of Jewish oppression is infinite.

BENNY

There. A chance for meaningful dialogue and you forget who you are talking to.

KHALID

If I do not return from this meeting, a bomb will go off in Tel Aviv and Haifa. The bombers are already there. All that will stop the inevitable destruction is a phone call from one of my trusted advisors. If there is no call by a certain time...

BENNY

Which is?

KHALID

That is something you must calculate.

BENNY

I never thought of you as the nervous type.

KHALID

One is at a bus stop. The other an emergency ward.

BENNY

No Bar Mitzvah or wedding you could get too?

KHALID

On such short notice...

BENNY

The Prime Minister wants to speak with you.

Pause.

KHALID

You come all this way, put your life at risk and those of many other Jews to tell me these lies?

BENNY

It is true. No matter how hard I advised him against it. The Prime Minister of Israel wishes to meet...the head of Hamas.

Pause.

BENNY (CONT'D)

You can refuse now. Your position would be untenable. You would be branded a traitor to your own people, make untold enemies-

KHALID

Agreed.

BENNY

You don't want to know the purpose of such a meeting?

KHALID

If I am to risk so much, and if it is to be conducted in secrecy, then clearly this is not business as usual.

BENNY

No one will know inside of Israel. Rumours, accusations will be denied. Our press will be dealt with harshly for even thinking such a story exists. I suggest you ensure the same conditions with your people. A breach of trust on your part will guarantee immediate reprisals.

KHALID

I require a gesture of goodwill.

BENNY

Like your suicide bombers..?

KHALID

You understand how this works.

BENNY

The Prime Minister will see what can be done about your brother.

KHALID

Nothing less than his freedom.

BENNY

Your brother killed over a dozen-

KHALID

Of the enemy.

BENNY

Innocent civilians. Women, children...

KHALID

Would you like to do a head count of the innocent Palestinian women and children who have been killed by your efforts towards peace and reconciliation?

BENNY

The Prime Minister cannot just...

KHALID

You speak for him? I cannot believe his offer would not be "all encompassing." He frees my brother, I will meet with him.

ACT TWO SCENE NINE

LIGHTS. EPHRAIM storms into DOV'S office.

EPHRAIM

What you intend to do is treason. Nothing less.

DOV

You dare tell me that in this office...

EPHRAIM

It's a prime minister's office which you are renting for what looks like an *extraordinarily* short period of time.

DOV

Are you going to remove me all by yourself Ephraim ?

EPHRAIM

Once your cabinet finds out, you will have a mutiny on your hands. They will not stand for it.

DOV

Israelis want peace Ephraim.

EPHRAIM

Which ones? Those westernised Jews who don't give a damn what happens outside Tel Aviv until the bombs start exploding?

DOV

It's a start. The right...

EPHRAIM

The right will crucify you before they really get down to business.

DOV

Any PM starts this job nailed to a cross by every Jew's longing for what cannot be delivered without paying an intolerable price.

EPHRAIM

My God you've just got into power and you want to throw it away!

DOV

What did you think Ephraim? That I just wanted to be PM as some end game?

EPHRAIM

You've coveted this your whole life even as you basked in the mediocrity of a crippled party.

DOV

We are not going to war with Hamas.

EPHRAIM

That is not wholly your decision.

DOV

And you will not usurp my authority. Do you understand?

EPHRAIM

This is not a time for an Ashkol or a Sharett. Even when it was their time the forces against them were too strong.

DOV

Who? Meir? Dayan? Or Peres? Sorry, I forgot the whole IDF!

EPHRAIM

You will have units refusing to obey orders. The country will be vulnerable.

DOV

Because of a meeting with one man...

EPHRAIM

And what that man represents! Some meetings should never take place. He is a terrorist with the blood of your daughter on his hands!

DOV

Don't you dare mention her name.

DOV lunges at EPHRAIM who for a moment looks visibly scared and just manages to step back in time. DOV collects himself.

EPHRAIM

It is true. Hamas-

DOV

Hamas are interested in peace. The political and military wings are not at odds with each other. They are ready to work with Fatah.

EPHRAIM

We are protecting a state. They merely seek the blood of Jews.

DOV

That letter issued to Bibi in '98, 1500 officers, 82 retired generals calling on him to abandon settlements...

EPHRAIM

What of it?

DOV

Your name was on the letter.

EPHRAIM

Please. A trip down memory lane is the last thing-

DOV

"A government that prefers 'Greater Israel' to peace with good neighbourliness will be difficult for us to accept..."

EPHRAIM

Enough.

DOV

You still don't believe in settlements!

EPHRAIM

That doesn't mean it will ever be politically viable. Go talk to all those officers and retired generals. See how many will agree with me.

DOV

We've stopped believing our own lies but aren't courageous enough to admit it. You're right, most would probably deny they ever signed it.

EPHRAIM

OK. That can be our secret.

DOV

And how many secrets have we kept from the Israeli public? In '54 our agents in Cairo committing terrorist acts before they were caught, thanks to one accidentally setting himself alight coming out of a movie theatre full of civilians!

EPHRAIM

The Lavon Affair is ancient history. Those agents acted on their own-

DOV

Rubbish! Orders were given to kill British and American expats so their deaths could be blamed on the Egyptians and without the knowledge of our own PM! But they became Israeli victims because the truth painted a very different picture. So they were tried and hung. And of course their real crime in the government's eyes was simply getting caught. In '53 our answer to any border infiltration was Qibya with seventy plus civilians dead or other massacres of a similar nature, or our attack on the Egyptian garrison in Gaza for supposedly killing an Israeli soldier even though no one is exactly sure who *did* kill him. Deir Yassin was soon becoming a footnote to what was to follow. Or when we forced a Syrian airliner to land in Israel so we could use the passengers as hostages in exchange for five Israeli soldiers caught in Syria where they shouldn't have been in the first place! The plans to form an alliance with Maronite Christians in Lebanon and further enrage the Arab world. 3000 sorties against Egypt in '70 one of which killed seventy children in an elementary school even as we portrayed Egypt as the aggressor against a peace loving Israel. Sharett wanted peace and Ben Gurion war. Both for the same end - a secure Israel, one by trust the other through fear.

EPHRAIM

Dov, the kind of truths you want the nation to digest, it is impossible. The consequences will be dire.

DOV

I have made my covenant. My fate is inconsequential.

EPHRAIM

And that of your wife?

DOV

Rachel will denounce me. Our family died before...

EPHRAIM

And what of Benny?

DOV

Whether he agrees with my decisions or not, he will carry them out.

EPHRAIM

You are a fool.

DOV

You intend to lead a coup against me Ephraim?

EPHRAIM

My opposition will be voiced within cabinet but there will be no rallying cry. You've made so many enemies I almost feel sorry for you.

EPHRAIM is about the exit.

DOV

Ephraim, when were you planning on telling me?

EPHRAIM

About?

DOV

A dirty bomb. Inside of Israel.

EPHRAIM

I have heard nothing.

DOV

Mossad dismisses it. Shin Bet is convinced such a threat is highly improbable, despite the wave of recent attacks. The US on the other hand...

EPHRAIM

Then you must decide for yourself. Something you can discuss with your new friends.

ACT TWO SCENE TEN

LIGHTS. A different space. A table and two chairs in the centre of the stage. DOV and KHALID face each other on opposite sides of the stage.

DOV

You came.

KHALID

I was surprised also.

DOV

Your English is...

KHALID

It will suffice for this meeting.

DOV

You wish to sit.

KHALID

If it is right for us to be any closer, then it will be time to sit.

DOV

Klein told me of your safety measures. Do you think an offer from the Prime Minister would be part of a Shin Bet sting?

KHALID

Take this as you will, but with the Jews, we have learnt that anything is possible.

DOV

Why shouldn't I kill you, regardless of what you have prepared in retaliation?

KHALID

If you did, all of Gaza and possibly the West Bank would be at peace knowing their suspicions have been validated.

DOV

Do you really believe that stepping up your bombing campaign will do any good?

KHALID

How do you know it is Hamas?

DOV

You have not denied it.

KHALID

There is no *one* movement opposing you. Iran, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Wilyat Sinaa, ISIS, Al Qaeda, others still thinking of what they should call themselves...all have different goals.

DOV

But united in their hatred of Israel.

KHALID

(Dryly)

A supreme council has not been organised for such a thing.

DOV

So we will never know.

KHALID

Did your bombing of Iranian civilians do any good?

DOV

That was my predecessor.

KHALID

You would have done the same.

DOV

How can you know that?

KHALID

Force, no, brute force is the Israeli way. We Palestinians are experts on its unfettered application upon a subjugated people.

DOV

If you didn't engage in the murder of innocent civilians...

KHALID

You would happily ignore our plight. And there are no innocents in this conflict. Our children are on the front line no matter where we hide our weapons.

DOV

Make no mistake. If we walk from this meeting as empty as we walked in...

KHALID

We will absorb whatever you throw at us just as we always have.

Pause.

DOV

You are right.

KHALID

You want to offer me something other than a list of Israeli demands?

DOV

Whatever we decide here will seal our fates for good or ill. You know that?

KHALID

Clearly there are no hidden cameras. This is not how you sound on television.

DOV

Why did you accept this meeting?

KHALID

Your interview.

DOV

Ah.

KHALID

I expected you would have been removed by now. A heretic among the chosen people. Why did you do it?

DOV

Her manner was irritating. As if all that was expected of me was to thump the table and demand justice.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

Do you wish to kill all the Jews?

KHALID

When I'm feeling optimistic.

DOV

And when you're not?

KHALID

I imagine the daily suffocation finally achieving its purpose. Our people no longer able to survive.

DOV

We have no real future without you. The world will not tolerate a Jewish state that triumphs once and for all over a dispossessed people. Our destinies are intertwined. If we push you into the sea, it is all of us who will drown.

KHALID

I suspect there are many Jews who would be willing to see how well they can swim.

DOV

A way forward must be found. The US...

KHALID

Will accept whatever their Jewish masters tell them.

DOV

You really think the Jews control what the Americans do?

KHALID

Prove to me any different.

DOV

Things haven't been this cool since '93.

KHALID

Your first black president could not stand Netanyahu, or Israeli foreign policy but nothing changed.

DOV

Bradley has no special warmth towards Israel.

KHALID

He will get over it.

DOV

If there ever was a time for your organisation to watch and wait, this is it. History, possibly for the first time, is on your side.

KHALID

History has *never* been on our side. The truth is another matter. And the West has always seen one as more important than the other.

DOV

You talk as if it all started in '48...

KHALID

Watching and waiting? We see what you are doing, have done for over 70 years. And even when we act, however violently, there is the waiting.

DOV

The US wants a Palestinian state and is willing to put as much money and manpower as required to make it happen.

Pause.

KHALID

Hamas must be recognised as a legitimate partner of the Palestinian Authority.

DOV

This will be done.

KHALID

If we acknowledge Israel as a legitimate state.

Pause.

DOV

Israel will make the first move.

KHALID

No. You will. What Israel does after that is anyone's guess.

DOV

I represent the country whether they like it or not. All Israelis. Even those I don't like.

KHALID

There is no reason to trust you. Humiliating us is a favourite pastime of many Israeli governments.

DOV

Our military will always have the capability of inflicting great hardship even while the country is being torn to pieces.

KHALID

Then maybe we should let you destroy yourselves.

DOV

Our failure as a nation will only be a disaster for Palestinians. Those who take pleasure in their hatred will always survive.

KHALID

What about the settlements?

DOV

The '67 borders are not possible.

KHALID

Then what is?

DOV

Some settlements will be negotiable. Other land will be made available.

KHALID

Etzion, Maale Adumin and Ariel must be returned. We *must* have contiguous terrain in order to be a viable country.

KHALID waits for DOV'S response, knowing he has thrown down the biggest gauntlet thus far.

DOV

What else?

KHALID

Israeli troops cannot remain in the Jordan Valley. It is the eastern border of a Palestinian state.

DOV

We cannot compromise our security.

KHALID

Will your president allow US troops? Will your government?

DOV

US troops in the Jordan Valley...

KHALID

Protecting a newborn Palestinian state.

DOV

Is this enough to bring to your council?

DOV and KHALID have moved closer to the table.

KHALID

The question of Jerusalem.

DOV

Let God decide.

KHALID

Then we will be waiting for eternity.

DOV

As it should be. Neither side will agree that the other should have exclusive national sovereignty over the city or one side have more sovereignty than the other...

KHALID

You are not serious.

DOV

It has been proposed before. King Hussein...

KHALID

That was over a decade ago.

DOV

It could have worked at Camp David but Arafat was too scared.

KHALID

Of course. Israelis have been such advocates of peace but we Palestinians just run away in fear.

DOV

Most Israelis know you will never walk away from Palestinian claims on Jerusalem. We cannot give it back. That is something most Palestinians know. There is only a third option.

Pause.

DOV (CONT'D)

Who will deny sovereignty to God?

KHALID

You are playing a game.

DOV

No. I am facing a truth that exists and is no different for both of us. No matter how we position ourselves politically, this truth will remain unalterable.

KHALID

Jerusalem does not belong to the world.

DOV

That is the point! It will be denationalised. In the Old City, flags, crests, political icons would be gone. Outside, Jerusalem would still remain Israel's capital and with a Palestinian state its capital could be in East Jerusalem.

KHALID

But no government of any kind in the Old City.

DOV

In perpetuity. A genuine city of peace.

KHALID

What if Mohammad, mounted on Buraq, were to descend upon the city crossing the Western Wall during the Day of Judgement?

DOV

If Jesus returns to the city skipping from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to declare the Kingdom of God, that would be an even greater surprise for all of us.

KHALID

And if an earthquake destroys al Aqsa, will the Jews build a third temple?

DOV

You see my point. God will decide.

KHALID moves closer and sits down.

KHALID

And what if God decides that you are crazy and must be replaced?

DOV sits down also.

DOV

While we seem to agree on something, you sit on the one fact that can ruin it all.

KHALID

What is that?

DOV

Our mutual destruction.

KHALID

I don't...

DOV

I am not talking metaphors. We know what our real enemies are trying to do. And at this moment, however briefly it may be, I do not count you as one of them.

Pause.

KHALID

You will never find it.

DOV

We are talking about a nuclear device. We have to find it.

KHALID

You ask me to betray-

DOV

We must become your new partners.

KHALID

It is insurance. There is no decision to actually use it.

DOV

Israel cannot have a nuclear device of an enemy organisation within its borders. If you know its whereabouts, we have to-

KHALID

Hamas has played no part in this operation.

DOV

This I believe. But our enemies never counted on such a meeting.

KHALID

I cannot tell you. Our lives will be put in danger...

DOV

You expect to survive what we are about to do..?

Pause.

KHALID

There is a ship. It will enter Israeli waters.

DOV

A date?

KHALID

Soon. A day, a week from now.

DOV

It's name.

KHALID

We do not know that. But it will be leaving from Malta before arriving in Israeli waters.

DOV

You cannot believe this kind of extortion will work.

KHALID

We were not supposed to know. But there it is.

DOV

Who is behind it? Iran? ISIS?

KHALID

For something as audacious as this, there are no fingerprints.

DOV

There are always fingerprints.

KHALID

And if you find out whose they are, what will you do?

Pause.

DOV

I came here looking for peace.

KHALID

How do I know you will not forget all that we have discussed?

DOV

I have brought my own scribe.

KURTZNER emerges from the shadows.

DOV (CONT'D)

This man is our witness. He will convey all that has been agreed to our government, and of course to that of the United States.

KHALID

All these words. Nothing tangible.

KURTZNER unfolds a document.

KURTZNER

A memorandum of understanding between Israel and Hamas.

KHALID

Your government, your people will not accept it!

DOV

Maybe so. But if there is irrefutable proof of Hamas' intention or desire for a peace agreement with Israel, the political pressure to recognise a Palestinian state will be enormous.

KURTZNER

Call it a tipping point. Nothing can stay the same forever. Even this conflict.

KURTZNER hands KHALID a pen. He signs the document.

ACT TWO SCENE ELEVEN

LIGHTS. A flurry of activity. EPHRAIM is about to give a press conference. BENNY stands in the shadows. REPORTERS gather around.

REPORTER ONE

Has any more information come to light?

EPHRAIM

If there is anything that can be revealed to the Israeli public on this occasion, we would have said so already.

REPORTER TWO

There is talk that Prime Minister Landau met with the head of Hamas...

EPHRAIM

That is not possible.

REPORTER ONE

It is more than talk. Sources from within your own government have all been-

EPHRAIM

Then you should check your sources.

REPORTER THREE

What else could explain why this would have happened...

EPHRAIM

Dov Landau was the Prime Minister of Israel. No matter what his political leanings, an agreement with Hamas of any kind would be a threat to the safety and security of Israel.

REPORTER TWO

The US ambassador has not denied this when posed the same question.

EPHRAIM

Then maybe you should be interviewing him.

REPORTER ONE

He is holding a press conference this afternoon.

REPORTER TWO

Any idea what he will be announcing?

EPHRAIM

Not another visit by the President I can tell you that.

Some laughter.

REPORTER ONE

The ambassador has hailed Prime Minister Landau as a champion of peace. We haven't heard this sort of language from a senior US politician in-

EPHRAIM

What do you want me to say? The Prime Minister was acting very strangely these past weeks. Frankly, many of us were worried about his well being, particularly given the recent loss of his daughter.

REPORTER ONE

No one can doubt the Prime Minister was a changed man but he gave clear indications that he was not about to repeat the same mistakes of previous governments...

EPHRAIM

And what mistakes might they be?

REPORTER THREE

His interview after the attack, Israelis could talk of nothing else...

EPHRAIM

And behind the scenes he alienated his own cabinet.

REPORTER ONE

He ended the war with Iran...

EPHRAIM

And ordered an invasion of Lebanon against the advice of his senior cabinet ministers!

REPORTER ONE

Did that include yourself?

EPHRAIM

You know I cannot answer that. But I can assure you, Dov Landau was not the pacifist you make him out to be.

REPORTER TWO

What will you do if he has recognised Hamas?

EPHRAIM

Posthumously?

REPORTER ONE

If he has secured an agreement with the United States and Hamas does recognise Israel, what steps will this government take to implement it?

Pause.

EPHRAIM does not know what to say. He appears lost for words.

EPHRAIM

There is no such agreement. No matter what the United States does, it cannot force us into a peace we do not believe in.

REPORTER ONE

Over half a million Israelis marched in solidarity when they heard the news.

EPHRAIM

The Prime Minister died of a heart attack. He was not assassinated.

REPORTER TWO

What about Rachel Landau? She has been quite vocal in the defence of her husband.

EPHRAIM

If only she had been so when he was alive. It was no secret that they were estranged. For her to come out now in his defence seems preposterous at best.

REPORTER ONE

The US ambassador alluded to a unparalleled threat to Israeli security which was narrowly avoided...do you have any comment to make on this?

LIGHTS on DOV "addressing" his SUPPORTERS. He is seated by his desk. The flashes of cameras go off. A manned camera stands off to the side. STUDIO PERSONNEL hover in the shadows.

DOV

Some of you have gathered here this evening in a spirit of hope and others out of despair. Both have claim to the soul of Israel, this land which aches for peace even if its inhabitants have long forgotten its possibility. When I was elected Prime Minister, I believed Israel had been through its darkest period and come as close to a biblical reckoning as any other time in our country's short history. Naively, I thought, believed a different course could be steered because the people demanded it. Clearly I have been monumentally wrong. I allowed the conflicts within our society to fester.

(MORE)

DOV (CONT'D)

Personal tragedy followed for my family and hundreds of others. Tonight I announce to you a change that will divide this country before anything else but it is a change that must happen. Steps...steps have been taken to seek an agreement with Hamas, to end our occupation, and to recognise a legitimate Palestinian state on our borders. Compromises will be made by both sides and they will be painful to both sides, as they must for them to have any meaning. Our domination of another people has wreaked havoc in the ways that we can no longer ignore. Their violence will stop. Ours must also. Israel will go through many convulsions before the body politic will accept what must happen. Divisions will deepen. But maybe this is the only way. From this crucible, a new Israel must be born. I ask all Israelis, all Jews, all citizens of this country to reserve their judgement. I do not expect to see the fruits of these changes, of any new direction. My generation has not earned that right. Our wars have not provided security, have left no enduring legacy....

LIGHTS. DOV is alone in the office. He turns off a tape recorder. On the television screen, DOV'S body is being buried with an Israeli flag draped over the coffin. RACHEL, BENNY and EPHRAIM stand in solemn attention. DOV switches off the television. Inside the office there are no cameras, no studio lights. He opens the tape recorder and takes out the tape. He places it in an envelope sitting on his desk. He seals it.

DOV (CONT'D)

August 2nd 2015. President Rivin, in the wake of a Jewish attacks against Palestinians and fellow Jews, writes, "Flames of violence, flames of hatred, flames of false, distorted and twisted beliefs spread across this nation. Flames which permit bloodshed in the name of the Torah, in the name of the law, in the name of morality, in the name of a love for the land of Israel."

LIGHTS fade.

The End