

**Yaacobi and Leidental [Temporary title]**

A play with short songs

By Hanoch Levin

Translated from the Hebrew by Naaman Tammuz

## **Dramatis Personæ**

David Leidental

Itamar Yaacobi

Ruth Shekhash

## Act 1

### Scene 1

Street. Evening. Yaacobi.

**Yaacobi:** I, Itamar Yaacobi, forty years of age, do hereby declare that I have very suddenly come to the realisation that I was born to live. This very evening I'm going to go and end my friendship with my good friend Leidental. I won't drink any more tea at his place and I won't play dominos with him. I'll hurt him and stab him, I'll give his friendship the boot and leave him all alone so that he'll learn where he stands - and where I do. I'll hurt him and stab him. I'll stab him and hurt him. And with heartfelt wishes of success I kiss myself fondly - me, Itamar Yaacobi.

### Scene 2

[A balcony in the Leidental household. Evening. Yaacobi and Leidental.]

[*The Friendship Song*]

**Yaacobi:** Soft moonlight shines down upon the trees  
We ate salt herring and drank some tea.

**Yaacobi and Leidental:** Here, ladies and gentlemen, friendship fills the skies,  
Like the stars above, eternal and holy,  
The face of humanity would be hard to recognise  
Without Leidental and without Yaacobi.

**Leidental:** There's such a wonderful evening awaiting you and me,  
We'll play dominos and drink more tea.

**Yaacobi and Leidental:** Here, ladies and gentlemen, friendship fills the skies,  
Like the stars above, eternal and holy,  
The face of humanity would be hard to recognise  
Without Leidental and without Yaacobi.

**Leidental:** A beautiful evening. It's good to play dominos on an evening like this. I'm very excited, and as much as I know that it's not healthy for me to get excited, I can't help being excited. Yaacobi, I think we're deeply, deeply immersed in happiness. I'm going to make another cup of tea.

**Yaacobi:** Not for me.

**Leidental:** Won't you have another cup of tea with the game?

**Yaacobi:** I've had one.

**Leidental:** You always drink more.

**Yaacobi:** Not tonight.

**Leidental:** Are you tired?

**Yaacobi:** No.

**Leidental:** Are you upset?

**Yaacobi:** Tell me, has it ever crossed your mind that you and me are absolutely not the same type?

**Leidental:** What do you mean not the same type?

**Yaacobi:** Because can't you see I'm a busy person?! That I've got no time for nonsense?! How long do you think I'm going to keep on stinking here on the balcony with you?! How many more years are you going to keep pouring tea onto my tongue?! Eh?! Eh?! What am I even standing here for wasting my precious time?! I'm a busy person, I'm busy, busy.

**Leidental:** Yaacobi! Yaacobi, what happened?

**Yaacobi:** The entire beauty of it is that nothing's happened. Excuse me, life's calling me. Goodbye.

[Exits]

**Leidental:** Yaacobi

[Pause]

What does "not the same type" mean...?

### **Scene 3**

[Street. Evening. Yaacobi]

**Yaacobi:** I really offended him. He's suffering. He's suffering so much. There's something very sharp and attractive about life, no doubt about that. If I'd stayed there with him for another minute I'd have poked his eye out with my finger, that's how much I was enjoying myself. Because there's nothing more to it, I love life and that's that. I'm busy, I'm busy.

[Exits]

#### Scene 4

[Leidental's room. Evening. Leidental]

**Leidental:** Well, what do I do with myself now? I have no idea. The best thing would obviously be to go to sleep, you don't feel the time passing while you're asleep. Shame it's only seven o'clock. It's not very respectable to go to sleep at seven o'clock, especially since I'm not a child any more. If I were sick that would be a good justification for going to sleep, but I'm not sick. But maybe I am sick?

[Puts his hand on his forehead]

No temperature, I'm healthy today of all days. In Japan time, I could have already gotten into bed without any hesitation, in Japan it's probably around ten o'clock already. But I'm not in Japan. Shame. The Japanese are all going to sleep and I need to sit here deliberating. It never turns out the way I need it to. Not Japanese, and also not sick, and also not a child. I've got no luck. No luck.

[Pause]

I'll get into bed anyway, and if someone happens to show up, I'll tell them I was just resting a bit before going out for the night. But there's nothing to worry about, no one'll come.

[Lies down. Yaacobi approaches the window]

**Yaacobi:** So, going to sleep at seven o'clock, eh?

**Leidental:** [Gets up] I'm just having a little rest before I go out.

**Yaacobi:** Going out!

**Leidental:** I tell you I'm going out. You'll see me outside in a minute.

**Yaacobi:** Ptui, going to sleep at seven o'clock. How embarrassing, how embarrassing, if I were you I'd just connect your afternoon nap to the night's sleep, because why would you get up? Going out! I'm going out!

[Exits]

**Leidental:** Ten past seven. In terms of time I haven't gained anything.

#### Scene 5

[Street. Evening. Yaacobi walking behind Shekhash]

**Yaacobi:** Excuse me, are you the owner of this backside?

**Shekhash:** As it turns out.

**Yaacobi:** Charming, what's his name?

**Shekhash:** Friends call it Big Tuches.

**Yaacobi:** [To the backside] Hello, Big Tuches.

**Shekhash:** Everyone's so impressed by it, but what I always say is: Take it, what do I care? What do I need this spoiled party animal attached to my back for? Because I - perhaps you don't already know this - am a pianist.

**Yaacobi:** Oh wow!

**Shekhash:** Yes. A pianist. So that Big Tuches doesn't really fit my atmosphere. It's always pulling downwards, whereas I want upwards, with my music, if you know what I mean.

[Sings]

[*Wherever I Go*]

Down down, at the end of my back,  
A magnificent backside blooms,  
And on either side of its delicate crack,  
A pair of pink-coloured balloons.

Since the day I was born it's been in tow,  
In the folds of my dress it likes to hide;  
Wherever I turn, wherever I go,  
Big Tuches comes along for the ride.

I've waited to take flight for so long,  
Up, in the sublime windy air,  
But the only thing rising from the piano's my song,  
And I'm still seated in the chair.

Because down is where this backside wants to go,  
And it won't stop until I've died,  
Wherever I turn, wherever I go,  
Big Tuches comes along for the ride.

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] Marvellous woman. Why am I excited? Because on one hand there's plenty of flesh here, and on the other side there's art. A very spicy combination.

[To Shekhash]

May I invite the lady, including Big Tuches, to a café?

**Shekhash:** [To herself] I find his separation between me and my backside deeply impressive.

[To Yaacobi]

Look, I - my head's in music, but I'll go to a café with you just because I need to take Big Tuches out for a bit of fresh air.

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] This woman's turning me on more and more. Matter and spirit - just like in the fairytales.

**Shekhash:** [To herself] I think I'll also let him have a slap in the face. He won't understand why, and it'll add to my air of mystery.

[Slaps him across the cheek]

**Yaacobi:** Reason.

**Shekhash:** None.

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] Well, now I'm completely smitten. I've never seen anything like this in my life. Slapping someone across the face like that with no reason! And also a pianist and the backside!

**Shekhash:** My name's Ruth Shekhash.

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] And also Shekhash.

[To Shekhash]

My name's Itamar Yaacobi.

[They exit]

## Scene 6

[Leidental's room. Evening. Leidental]

**Leidental:** How long am I going to keep pretending that I'm asleep and that I'm just dreaming about being awake? Let's admit the truth: I'm awake. And it's only half past seven. What's happened to the time today? I'll go for a little walk, and when I get back I very much hope it'll already be ten o'clock, and going to bed at ten o'clock isn't embarrassing any more. I'll take a suitcase so I look like a busy person who's in a rush to get somewhere.

## Scene 7

[Street. Evening. Yaacobi walking behind Shekhash, holding her buttocks with both hands and singing in rhythm with their footsteps]

**Yaacobi:**

*[Back and Forth]*

Jiggle around, jiggle around  
Left goes up, right goes down,  
Left goes down, right goes up,  
Head is dizzy, heart throws up.

[They stop]

**Shekhash:** Stars! What are stars?

**Yaacobi:** What are stars?

**Shekhash:** Music, everything is music!

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] Yes, yes, philosophise away. I'll squeeze your arse and you'll philosophise. That's a man's dream, feeling up a woman who's deep in thought. That way he's free to feel up without any interruptions from her.

[They continue walking and Yaacobi continues singing]

Zak-zik, zak-zik,  
Underwear made from thin silk  
The flesh is heavy and soft,  
Plift ploft, plift ploft.

**Yaacobi:** Here we are at the cafe. Please have a seat.

[They sit]

**Shekhash:** You know that there's precious time being wasted here which I could have used for piano practice. Do you know or don't you? No, it's just so that you know what I'm sacrificing.

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] My admiration for this woman is growing and growing, and soon it'll reach a level where I won't be able to control myself and I'll lay her right here under the table.

[To Shekhash]

A coffee?

**Shekhash:** Are you joking or what? Me drink coffee? Why would I drink coffee? I'm a musician. No, no, don't pressure me, I'm not available for coffee drinking. Why are you pressuring me so much?! What do you want from me, sir? Sir, what's the matter with you? What are you all pouncing on me for?! What's art done to you that you're trying to expropriate me from it?! No, clingy gentleman, this is art we're dealing with here, and art is art!

[Leidental enters, carrying a suitcase. To himself]

**Leidental:** Oh wow! He's already sitting there with some achievements. What a wizard, what a wizard, there are moments where I'm really sorry that I'm not Yaacobi.

**Yaacobi:** Who invited you?! What basis do you have for coming within range of our joyful radiance?!

**Leidental:** I'm totally not here for you. I happened to be passing by, I'm on my way somewhere. I mean you can see I'm busy.

[Turns to leave, stops]

And actually I'm running a bit early, I can sit with you for fifteen minutes.

**Yaacobi:** We wouldn't think of it.

**Leidental:** Let's ask the lady.

**Yaacobi:** Don't you dare speak to the lady! You're not even the same type!

**Leidental:** Introduce me to her.

**Yaacobi:** Me introduce you to her?! Me introduce you to the musical artist?! I'm shocked! I'm shocked by this person! Go home to your restless sleep and be grateful that you came out of this in one piece!

**Leidental:** I hope the lady can hear me even without a formal introduction.

**Shekhash:** Can't hear a single word. Just melodies, melodies.

**Yaacobi:** [To Shekhash] This man's a clog in the stream of life! The entirety of mankind's progress is being held up because of him! My heart's aching for every second that he's enjoying our company! Let's go for a walk!

**Shekhash:** We've already been for a walk.

**Yaacobi:** We'll go again. It's very healthy.

**Shekhash:** All right, fine, whatever you like.

**Yaacobi:** Look, all I wanted was to be alone with you.

**Shekhash:** I said all right, fine!

[They exit]

**Leidental:** I happen to be going in the same direction.

[Exits after them]

## **Scene 8**

[The river bank. Evening. Shekhash and Yaacobi enter]

**Yaacobi:** And here we are at the river.

**Shekhash:** And the river too, for example.

**Yaacobi:** The river what?

**Shekhash:** Also music.

[Leidental enters]

**Yaacobi:** He's here! We keep walking!

[Yaacobi and Shekhash exit]

**Leidental:** [To himself] The main thing is that in the meantime time's passing and I'm stealing more and more moments of social activity.

[Takes a step, stops]

I'm making a fool of myself. I don't care.

[Exits after them]

## **Scene 9**

[Cafe. Evening. Shekhash and Yaacobi enter]

**Yaacobi:** Here we are at the café again.

**Shekhash:** From the river to the café and from the café to the river, and from the river to the café. All right, fine, whatever.

**Yaacobi:** I hope you're enjoying yourself.

**Shekhash:** [To herself] Hope, hope.

[They sit. Leidental enters. Yaacobi jumps out of his chair]

**Yaacobi:** He's here! If it weren't for us, who would you be running after with your suitcase, eh?! I can't stand this guy. I can't stand the sight of him, his voice, the way he breathes and the way he wears his hat!

**Leidental:** How do you want me to breathe?

**Yaacobi:** Oh, squash him! Squash him! At least admit that you're miserable! Admit that you're miserable while I'm having fun!

**Leidental:** I don't understand why you think that a good life can't have enough room for both of us. And let's say I also want, let's say I also have ambitions - am I not allowed? What does not the same type mean?

**Yaacobi:** Listen, I want to tell you something and for you to take it with a lot of love. A man like you is only tolerable when he's very humble. More than humble. Sand. Dust. I'd even be able to like you a little just because you're miserable and suffering, but I'll never forgive you if you do well, remember that! That's why I suggest you don't resist your true nature, suffer openly for however long you've got left, get a bit of compassion from us and then die. Now admit that you're miserable.

[Leidental exits. Comes back]

**Leidental:** All right, if it makes you happy, I admit it. And the lady can hear it too. I'm miserable.

**Yaacobi:** Thank you very much.

**Leidental:** I admit that I'm miserable.

**Yaacobi:** Thank you.

**Leidental:** I'm miserable, I don't know what to do with my life. I'm miserable, I'm miserable and I'm miserable.

**Yaacobi:** All right, we heard you.

**Leidental:** I'm miserable, I'm troubled, I'm suffering, I'm sad, I'm full of grief, basically, I'm miserable.

**Yaacobi:** I said we heard you, now enough.

**Leidental:** I didn't know how to live, I missed everything, I'm miserable, I'm troubled, I'm suffering.

**Yaacobi:** Do me a favour - let me live my life!

**Leidental:** I don't want to. You wanted me to confess, so now I'll do the talking. I'm miserable, I'm having a hard time, I'm bitter.

**Yaacobi:** [To Shekhash] We'll continue our walk.

**Shekhash:** [To herself] I'm still walking around with him like a yoyo because we've just met and I want to give him the impression that I'm an easy-going and obedient woman, but the day will come - yes, the day will come - and I'll hand him the **full bill** for all these walks.

[Shekhash and Yaacobi exit]

**Leidental:** And I'm after them again. The shame is indeed getting worse but the desire not to be alone is stronger.

[Calls after them]

Yes, yes, I'm miserable, I'm bitter.

[Exits]

## Scene 10

[The river bank. Evening. Yaacobi and Shekhash enter]

**Yaacobi:** And here we are at the river again.

[Leidental enters]

**Leidental:** I admit that I'm miserable, being lonely is nothing to be ashamed of.

**Yaacobi:** [To Shekhash] Let the lonely guy drag himself around behind us in the streets with his suitcase, so the whole city can see him trudging along with his loneliness behind a happy couple. We'll see who gets fed up first. We're continuing our walk!

**Shekhash:** [To herself] That's the only solution he has - a walk. He hasn't heard **about** taxis. Doesn't matter, let him keep dragging us around on foot. Everything's getting noted down.

[Shekhash and Yaacobi exit]

**Leidental:** And I'm after them.

[Looks at the suitcase]

Aren't I fed up? Aren't I fed up? And this suitcase! I even filled it with things so that it looks natural.

[Starts walking, stops]

What am I running after? Home.

[Exits]

## **Scene 11**

[Café. Evening. Shekhash and Yaacobi enter]

**Yaacobi:** And we're at the café again.

[They sit. To himself]

I'm just scared that I'm starting to bore her with all my running from here to there and back again. She might end up thinking I'm not an interesting person, and that mustn't happen. What should I say to her?

[Pause]

And in Salzburg...Austrians, eh?

[Pause]

**Shekhash:** Austrian men *and* Austrian women.

**Yaacobi:** She's getting bored. That's clear to me.

[Pause. Taps his finger on Shekhash's chin. Pause, taps again. Shekhash knocks his hat off his head]

Of course.

[Picks up the hat]

I wish that that Leidental would come in again so I'd have something to occupy myself with.

[Leidental enters]

He's here again!

**Leidental:** I'm dizzy and my chest is tight, take me to hospital.

[Pause]

To hospital.

[Pause]

I'm really sick.

[He falls to the ground. Pause. Gets up]

Well, I can see that I really do have friends. There are people in the world, there's humanity.

[To himself]

I think I've exhausted all the options for being with them. Or maybe there's something left? No.

[Exits]

**Shekhash:** [To herself]

How many generations and anniversaries are going to pass before I get a cup of coffee and a slice of cake out of this man! I was foolish for passing up on it earlier, now I can't take it back any more.

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] What do I say to her, what do I say to her?

## Scene 12

[Leidental's room. Evening. Leidental with one finger bandaged up]

**Leidental:** [To himself] At quarter past eight I felt that I couldn't stand myself any more. I had the following: my usual boredom, my sadness about my boredom, the pain about the sadness, the humiliation of having humiliated myself in front of them, the humiliation that I'll humiliate myself in front of them again, the shame over all the humiliations, and on top of all those the hatred for myself for being built so gently and sensitively. All those things built up within me until at quarter past eight I felt that I had to direct my agony somewhere else, or else I'd go mad. I got into the bath and cut my finger, not a deep cut. Contrary to what I thought that solution didn't help, just as I thought, because now in addition to all those other things I've got the pain from the cut, and also the shame of not having the guts to cut myself more seriously.

[Pause]

I'll go and ask them if they have any iodine. I'll throw the iodine I have at home away so that I don't feel like a liar when I ask them. At least the cut will be of some use then.

### **Scene 13**

[Café. Evening. Shekhash and Yaacobi]

**Shekhash:** [To herself] Now I'll beat myself up for three months over the cake I could have ordered but which I missed out on! Maybe I should order a cake after all? But what kind of impression will that make on him? That I'm someone who gorges themselves on cake?! And also that I flip flop?! Och, och, everything's turning out not how I want it to. I'd bend the world, but anyway it already is...

[Gets up. To Yaacobi]

I'm going home.

**Yaacobi:** Maybe a coffee and some cake after all?

**Shekhash:** [To herself] Oh, the temptation, the temptation!

[To Yaacobi]

Home, I said!

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] I knew I was boring. Maybe I should have joked around more.

[They both stand up. Leidental enters with his suitcase and bandaged finger]

**Leidental:** Excuse me, do you happen to have some iodine?

**Shekhash:** [To herself] Can someone explain to me what I've walked into here?! And on an empty stomach?

[Knocks Yaacobi's hat to the ground and steps on it]

**Yaacobi:** What have I done now?

**Leidental:** Yes, yes, Yaacobi. Life is full of variety.

**Yaacobi:** [To Shekhash]. Please, don't embarrass me in front of him. Thanks.

[Bends down to pick up the hat but Shekhash stays standing on it]

Not in front of him, please, thanks.

[Same thing happens again]

Listen, I don't mind you embarrassing me occasionally, I'm quite used to it, but please, not in front of him. Thanks.

[Same thing happens again]

You embarrassed me.

[They sing]

*[Don't Embarrass Me]*

**Yaacobi:** Don't embarrass me, don't humiliate me,  
Don't stomp me into the dirt,  
Even if my honour's a flexible thing -  
Having no honour at all would really hurt.

**Shekhash and Leidental:** Don't embarrass him, don't humiliate him,  
Give the miserable man meaning to his quest;  
Because the burden of his manliness sits heavy on his chest.

**Yaacobi:** Don't embarrass me, don't humiliate me,  
A caress, the soft gaze that I adore,  
A single word of human affection,  
Throw me a bone and I am yours.

**Shekhash and Leidental:** Don't embarrass him, don't humiliate him,  
Give the miserable man meaning to his quest;  
Because the burden of his manliness sits heavy on his chest.

[Shekhash picks up the hat and hands it to Yaacobi, starts walking. A glove drops from her hand. Leidental rushes to pick it up and hand it back to her]

**Leidental:** There's no shame in meeting a lady through small gentlemanly gestures. My name's David Leidental, and yours?

**Shekhash:** [To herself] I've thrust them both into tension, struggle and insecurity. That way my own value goes up.

[Exits]

**Yaacobi:** [To himself] She doesn't want me - who knows. Again struggle, struggle, struggle - when will I finally be able to rest with something safely in my hand? When will I finally know that I have a solid foundation in life and stop living in permanent anxiety? I pray to God, give me something solid, I've had enough, my nerves are shattered. Other people are smiling out of their family photos and I'm running and running with no purpose. And how am I going to iron my hat?

[To Leidental]

You, hands off the ladies!

[Exits]

**Leidental:** I think she liked me. At first sight it seems simple, but if you think about it, why on earth would someone like me? What's in me to like? *Is there anything in me to like?* There's nothing. Am I tall? Strong? I'm not tall and strong. Maybe I'm a bit tall? No, I'm definitely short. Am I rich? I'm not rich. Am I well off? I'm not well off. Maybe she thinks I'm well off? No she doesn't, why would she think so? Because of my suitcase? So maybe, if I'm not well off, then I'm young? Come on, really, so I'm young?! And maybe I'm clever? No, I'm not clever, you can see that on my face. So maybe, if I don't have any of those things, then maybe I have some kind of personal charm which has captivated her heart? Maybe I'm a bit of a character? I'm not a character, and I don't have any charm, what can I say, I don't, I've got a dry stare and a dry smile, I'm dry. But maybe, as an educated woman with good taste, she's accidentally found some quality in me which captivates her? Couldn't that be the case? No. Definitely not. Nothing? Not even something, something small, tiny, a speck, some shadow, a something of a something which would hint at some faint sort of charm? Not even that? No, nothing. Well, it can't be that there's nothing. Could it be?! Well, fact. So how come she nevertheless let me pick up the glove? How would I know? She just did. Don't people let people pick up gloves?! They do!

[Pause]

Where is she? Maybe she has some iodine.

[Exits]

## Scene 14

[Street. Outside the door of Shekhash's house. Night. Yaacobi and Shekhash]

**Shekhash:** So good night.

**Yaacobi:** And when will we see each other again?

[Pause]

Just so you know, I'm not one of those wham bam thank you ma'am people. I'm also not a child any more. I've got nothing but serious intentions.

[Pause]

What else can I say about myself? I'm also not especially sickly. Did you hear what I said?

**Shekhash:** Yes.

**Yaacobi:** So why are you smiling? What's your answer?

**Shekhash:** I'm not saying "yes" and I'm not saying "no".

**Yaacobi:** What, then?

**Shekhash:** Then I'm staying silent.

**Yaacobi:** And when will you know?

**Shekhash:** I'm not saying "tomorrow" and I'm not saying "in a year".

**Yaacobi:** You're always telling me what you're not saying.

**Shekhash:** I know what I'm saying and what I'm not saying and what I am saying.

[To herself]

The doubts are torturing him.

[Pause. They fall into each other's arms]

Yes, hold me, smell the dish you're hungry for, get aroused. I need to be careful not to stretch my rope too much and not forget what my limits are. Of course tomorrow I'll accept his marriage proposal. Why not? He smells like a steady income to me and he'll also do everything I tell him to.

[To Yaacobi]

Now go to sleep because if I accept your proposal I'm going to need a healthy husband for at least the first five years.

**Yaacobi:** And I'm healthy, I'm healthy, healthy. And my heart's beating. Great, beat, carry on, beat.

[Pause]

I'm wanted, I'm wanted. Someone needs me, I count, I belong. Someone cares that I exist. Someone wants me. There's someone who'll cry over my coffin. There's crying, ladies and gentlemen. I don't have the patience to wait, I hope I die an hour after the wedding.

[Exits]

## **Scene 15**

[Street, outside Shekhash's window. Night. Leidental]

**Leidental:** Large lady! Large lady!

**Shekhash:** [From inside] Who's that enlarging me outside my window in the middle of the night?

[At the window]

**Leidental:** It's me, David Leidental.

**Shekhash:** The small gentlemanly gestures man?

**Leidental:** Yes, perhaps madam has some iodine? I cut my finger.

[Sings]

[*The Girl of My Dreams*]

Will you rest your hand on my brow  
To feel my feverish head?  
Will you look into my open mouth  
To check if my throat is red?

Will you worry for me? Will you want me to live?  
Is my being there something you'll crave,  
Oh, girl of my dreams,  
Lost dreams which I cannot save.

Will you call a doctor at night,  
When I lay at your side in a daze?  
Will you be the one that I see  
With my final, fading gaze?

Will you remember me? Will you want me back?  
Will you sometimes cry at my grave?  
Oh, girl of my dreams,  
Lost dreams which I cannot save.

**Shekhash:** You're entertaining. Come inside, little entertainer.

[Leidental enters her house]

## **Scene 16**

[Yaacobi's room. Night. Yaacobi]

**Yaacobi:** No, no, there's no doubt about it, I got myself a great woman, and I don't think I'll find it hard to convince myself that I'm in love with her. Yes, a small effort and I'll convince myself that this is the woman I've always dreamed of. It's true it would have been best if I'd fallen in love with her without having to make an effort, meaning, just falling in love. But, on the other hand, so what if I need to make a bit of an effort? That's not out of the ordinary for me, and that's also what makes me into a real man. Now I'll just lie here quietly and make a bit of an effort to fall in love with her, and in an hour or two I'll be head over heels for her.

## **Scene 17**

[Street, outside Shekhash's window. Night. Leidental enters with the suitcase, Shekhash appears in the window]

**Leidental:** But still, when can I come and talk to you again?

**Shekhash:** You're very funny and entertaining.

**Leidental:** Thanks, but I was thinking: your cheerfulness together with my gentleness...you and me...

**Shekhash:** Of course I'd like to see you as a friend.

**Leidental:** A friend?

**Shekhash:** You know, like an escorting friend, who listens to my problems and makes me a cup of coffee in the meantime, runs some errands, irons my dress, fries me an egg, bit of housecleaning, a kind of friend who escorts a bit and helps a bit, you know. I really liked how quickly you picked up the glove for me.

**Leidental:** It's true I'm quite quick with ladies, but...

**Shekhash:** You see. And I like having things done for me and served to me, and when you see someone like you it makes you want to take advantage of them straight away. You're useful, you understand?

**Leidental:** And do I look to you like someone who lets themselves be taken advantage of?

**Shekhash:** Yes.

**Leidental:** You're right.

[To himself]

David Leidental, a kind of escorting friend, helps a bit, a man of small gentlemanly gestures. She figured out who I am so quickly. Maybe that's what I look like? I

should have turned off the light, and then, in the dark, when she couldn't see me, maybe she would have suddenly said. - "David'le"... and not...just, "David'le".

**Shekhash:** Are you done with your sadness for the night, small gentlemanly gestures man?

[Lifts her breasts]

Now can I finally go to sleep with these cuties rising and falling with my breath in the moonlight?

**Leidental:** [To himself] She can take advantage of me all she wants. And just let me drop dead.

[Exits]

**Shekhash:** [To herself] Maybe I took it too far with my shenanigans. They might think I'm heartless, but actually am I worse than anyone else? The problem is that these two schlubs are making more of me than I am, and I'm being dragged into it. I'm so soft when it comes to me, and I allow myself and let myself. I see myself as a piece of candy. Even though that'll come back to bite me. But I'd be stupid not to take advantage of that, wouldn't I? Why shouldn't I take advantage of what I can? Enough, I shouldn't think too much because I end up disgusting myself. I'll go and cover my face with cream because, whether I've taken it too far or not, I'll be treated according to my flesh.

[Turns skyward]

Lord, I have a man and I need a smooth face. Don't let my face wrinkle and don't let my breasts sag. It's my turn Lord, maybe think about me for once?

## Scene 18

[Yaacobi's room. Evening. Yaacobi is getting dressed]

**Yaacobi:** I've changed my underwear, and I'm ready for the wedding. Feel great. Why not? Not hot and not cold. Not light and not heavy. Not wet and not dry. I just hope that my heart holds up now that I've done so well, because apart from my health I'm not bringing much to this couple. All right, so I'm going to get married. Get married. Goodbye home, goodbye bed. I've sunk a lot of tiredness and sorrow into you. Now I'm going to look for some rest on another bed. Don't be upset. Maybe we'll see each other again, who knows?

## Scene 19

[Wedding venue. Evening. Shekhash appears in a wedding dress]

**Shekhash:** [Checking her watch] Where is he?

[Pause]

Where is he?

[Pause]

Everything'll get added to the bill!

[Yaacobi enters]

**Yaacobi:** I need the toilet.

[Shekhash grabs him by the collar]

**Shekhash:** Wedding first.

**Yaacobi:** But I need the toilet.

**Shekhash:** Wedding first, then toilet.

[Straightens his hat. Yaacobi bends his hat]

What's the matter Itamar?

**Yaacobi:** Nothing.

**Shekhash:** Itamar, I'll make your life miserable and then bury you, remember me!

**Yaacobi:** I don't know what it is, I'm so attracted to her backside when she talks like that. It wakes up an old desire of mine to get buried by a fat artistic woman.

**Shekhash:** [To herself] That's the bill for his walks, and in general, and at home he'll also keep paying me right to the end. He'll get to know me. He'll get to know his place very quickly. On the other hand, he'll throw it all back in my face whenever he can. I can already smell disappointment and failure.

[Leidental enters carrying his suitcase, with a pink ribbon wrapped around his head like a gift]

**Leidental:** Congratulations to the happy couple! I've brought you myself as a wedding gift.

**Yaacobi:** What?!

**Leidental:** The lady said - a kind of friend and that I'm useful...and I anyway don't need myself, I don't have anything to do with myself, so you can have me as a present.

**Shekhash:** The gift is accepted.

**Yaacobi:** Out of the question! He...

**Shekhash:** The gift has already been accepted.

**Yaacobi:** You've embarrassed me and you keep embarrassing me all the time. I'm yours!

**Leidental:** [Reading from a card tied to the ribbon] "Dear Ruth and Itamar, please accept this modest David Leidental as a gift on your wedding day. Use and take advantage of him in health and happiness for as long as he proves useful and then throw him in the bin. From me, the gift giver and the gift itself - David Wedding-Present Leidental."

[To Yaacobi]

I've been accepted.

**Yaacobi:** Let's make one thing clear - who's the help and who's the groom! Who's the groom?

[Pause]

Who's the groom?

[Pause]

Who's the groom?

[Pause]

I'm the groom! Me! I'm the groom! Me!

[Shekhash rests one hand on the front of Yaacobi's trousers and with the other hand grabs Leidental by the ear]

**Yaacobi:** I'm enjoying this.

**Leidental:** And I'm suffering.

**Shekhash:** I'm the cause of this, and of this. Photographer!

[They sing]

[*The Natural Right to Wear a Bra*]

**Shekhash:** Above my stomach, on my chest,

I have a breast.

**Leidental:** She has a breast.

**Shekhash:** And next to the breast, also on my chest,  
There's another breast.

**Leidental:** There's another breast.

**Shekhash:** Two beloved, faithful breasts thanks to who,  
I'll get a house, a car and a little servant too.  
Because it's a natural right to wear a bra,  
And a right to flood a man's face with blood,  
And a right to step on your hat,  
And a right to rip off your tie,  
And to laugh and cry, fart at funerals, go to weddings and piss in my tights,  
I've got a pair of breasts - and I'm a woman with rights!

**Shekhash:** A man will show up, and with a laugh and no qualm  
He'll reach out his palm.

**Leidental:** He'll reach out his palm.

**Shekhash:** And next to the palm, still with no qualm  
He'll put another palm.

**Leidental:** He'll put another palm.

**Shekhash:** Two beloved, faithful palms thanks to who,  
I'll get a house, a car and a small servant too.  
Because it's a natural right...

## **End of Act 1**

## **Act 2**

### **Scene 20**

[Yaacobi and Shekhash's house. Night. Yaacobi sings]

**Yaacobi:**

*[When I Was Young]*

A long time ago, when I was young and fair,  
At night I'd go downstairs and out to the square,  
Whistling songs and wandering past  
Downtrodden whores and men with bitter hearts,

And I'd walk around free and alone,  
Farting out loud like a trombone,  
Happy farts without a care,  
Like beauty spots into the cold crisp air.

The years have passed, and it's not clear what for,  
My youth, the nights and the square are no more  
My solitary walks have been lost to time,  
And a woman's got her arm entwined with mine,  
And I don't whistle and I'm not alone  
And not free to fart like a trombone,  
Happy farts without a care,  
Like beauty spots into the cold crisp air.

## Scene 21

[Yaacobi and Shekhash's house. Early evening. Shekhash with a cushion]

**Shekhash:** Comfort, comfort. How do I extract absolute comfort from this cushion, I don't know. The more comfortable I am the more I feel I could be even more comfortable. Is comfort infinite? Who knows.

[Tries to find a comfortable position on the cushion]

Come on. What about my comfort? And the cushion, son of a bitch, isn't helping at all.

[To the cushion]

Hey, why aren't you making me as comfortable as I'd like? What are you a cushion for, eh? What are you here for? You must think that I exist for your benefit and not that you exist for mine, eh? He thinks I exist for him, did you hear that? This feathered idiot thinks that I exist for him. Who exists for who?! Who exists for who, who, who, who!

[Pause]

So if you know the answer then why aren't you making me comfortable enough? Comfortable! Comfortable!

[Pinches the cushion, stabs it with a knitting needle]

Mm! Mm! Mm? Mm! I'll show you! I'll teach you! I... ? I... ? I... ?

[Collapses into the chair]

I'm tired. I need to sleep.

[Shuts her eyes. Leidental enters on tiptoes]

**Leidental:** In the meantime, while her body's resting and gathering strength for eating and seeking out comfort, I'll surreptitiously spread a few little caresses on her chest. It's nice to pick up small caresses like nuts dropping absentmindedly off the chest of a sleeping woman. Although I'm enjoying it less than I'd hoped.

[Pokes a finger into her breast]

Ay, flesh, I stroke you and yearn for you and you lie there peacefully and indifferently, indifferent towards my desire for love. Stupid Yaacobi, he doesn't even realise what a treasure he's holding in his hands. If she were mine...

[Yaacobi enters]

**Yaacobi:** It's time to ask: If you're a pianist, where's the piano?

**Shekhash:** Pianist?! Me?! Really! If I happened to say once that I was a pianist, does that make me a pianist?! I had an interest in art like every other girl, that's natural, but...a pianist! I really am a corrupt kitten eh?

[Sings]

[*The Piano Song*]

Once, when I was 18, I went to a ball,  
I drank wine and felt cheerful and gay,  
In the corner of the room I saw a piano  
And the wine awoke my hidden ambition.  
At four in the morning my friends requested  
That I play them something on the piano,  
I happily agreed right away  
And everyone around me shouted hooray.

**Leidental:** Tell us more before we perish  
And don't have any more of this story to cherish.

**Shekhash:** I jumped up and sat at the piano,  
Hitched up my dress, took off my underwear,  
And played for them (and showed them too)  
Yes, I played them something on the piano.  
I carefully tore each string out one by one  
I crushed the pedals with my shoes.  
Someone helped me destroy them completely  
Because I can't break a piano all by myself.

**Leidental:** Tell us more before we perish  
And don't have any more of this story to cherish.

**Shekhash:** Ludwig van Beethoven should have been glad  
That on the piano was his statue and not him,  
Because if it were him, the deaf guy himself,  
I wouldn't have wanted to be there in his place.  
Because I want what I want,  
And I won't accept a piano or composer in my way,  
Because even with all my culture, at the end of the day  
I won't accept a piano or composer in my way.

**Shekhash:** I really am a corrupt kitten.

[Yaacobi exits. To Leidental]

I overdid it, as usual. I can see that, at least in this life, I'm not going to be creating melodies, only from my body. And it seems like it was just yesterday that I was a kid and promising my father I'd be a great pianist. He worked hard in order to buy me a piano, had a stroke and died. And I just got fat. And my mother said, it doesn't matter, at least you're eating well and you'll be healthy. And now I'm very healthy. OK, I'm not going to waste any more sadness over lost dreams. It's time to get out of the armchair. I'll focus on building a home and a family and I'll laugh at the art world. To the kitchen!

## Scene 22

[Shekhash and Yaacobi's house. Early evening. Yaacobi]

**Yaacobi:** I'm uneasy, I don't know if it's because I've got it too good or because I've got it too bad. If I at least had some benchmark in order to be able to tell...but I don't. It's true that, if Leidental's the benchmark, then I'm happy, but not everyone's a Leidental, so I really don't know. In any case, good or bad, I definitely am uneasy.

## Scene 23

[The kitchen in Yaacobi and Shekhash's house. Night. Shekhash in a night gown and Leidental]

**Shekhash:** This is a nighttime inspection. I'll be carrying them out frequently. I often wake up suddenly in the middle of the night, go over to the fridge and take a look at how everything's standing there in its place, at my service, waiting for me, just me, like a little army.

**Leidental:** We've reached the fridge.

**Shekhash:** Open it. Open my fridge for me!

**Leidental:** There. And there they all are, bottles of milk and juice, cheese, butter, fruit and vegetables. The frozen meat and fish at the top. All of them arranged on the shelf awaiting your instructions.

**Shekhash:** Let them wait.

**Leidental:** Let them wait, she says! A great woman, a leader, ruling over milk and meat and eggs! What a sight, standing up straight in the middle of the night, full of strength, facing the food that's freezing for her and waiting like a golem solely for her command. Let them wait, she says! Look at her, in a minute she'll start conducting the fridge! See how the despicable food surrenders to her, it'll go in through her mouth and out of her arse - and she'll remain unmoved! And us, the men, we're so small and worthless, squealing and flailing around, and at the end of the day - dust! Let them wait, she says! I'd better start cleaning something before I spill over!

[Starts scrubbing the floor vigorously with a brush]

**Shekhash:** He's not wrong. Scrub the floor and roll around in your worthlessness, you cretins. I've got a target on the horizon. I'm building a home of my own, with perseverance, with stubbornness, through your sweat and blood I keep building. Because I know what the world's made of and what passes through it like dust. The wind will sweep away your art, the moth will eat your books and the worm your pianos. At my place - a huge, full, fully functioning electric fridge. And soon there'll be a baby crying here, and after him another baby, do you hear me, you stinkers?! There'll be healthy babies crying here!

[Yaacobi enters]

**Yaacobi:** What are you doing?

**Shekhash:** Now out both of you! You can see that the fridge needs to work in peace. Out on your tiptoes, quick!

[Leidental rolls out]

And you, didn't you hear what I said?!

**Yaacobi:** I asked what you were doing here! What's with all these rituals night and day. And what are you doing checking the fridge every half hour, and what's with all these chickens and fish and jars and watermelons, until there's nowhere left to move! And what's all this talk I'm hearing about crying babies?! What babies?

**Shekhash:** Ours.

## Scene 24

[Yaacobi and Shekhash's house. Night. Yaacobi and Shekhash sing]

[*Promise Me*]

**Yaacobi:** Promise me you're wonderful through and through,

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you.

**Yaacobi:** That I'm a man worthy of envy too,

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you.

**Yaacobi:** Promise me that we, you and me,  
Are the most right and logical thing that could ever be.

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you,  
What more do you want?

**Yaacobi:** What do I want? I have no clue,  
My heart isn't letting me get any rest.

**Shekhash:** My colours have faded, the magic has too.  
And I'm getting shorter, more compressed.

**Both:** This is the setting of the sun, when the darkness stays a while,  
And on the stinking mouth there still hangs kind of a half smile.

**Yaacobi:** Promise me that I can trust your promises are true.

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you.

**Yaacobi:** Am I being a pain?

**Shekhash:** No.

**Yaacobi:** No what?

**Shekhash:** You're not being a pain.

**Yaacobi:** Promise me I'm not being a pain. That I'm a normal person with a natural curiosity.

**Shekhash:** I promise you you're not being a pain and that you're a normal person with a natural curiosity.

[They sing]

**Yaacobi:** Promise me I'm a happy man.

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you.

**Yaacobi:** That I've achieved everything anybody can.

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you.

**Yaacobi:** Promise me that I'm in my prime.  
And that I shouldn't expect more to come with time.

**Shekhash:** I promise you, I promise you,  
What more do you want?

**Yaacobi:** What do I want? I have no clue,  
My heart isn't letting me get any rest.

**Shekhash:** My colours have faded, the magic has too.  
And I'm getting shorter, more compressed.

**Both:** This is the setting of the sun, when the darkness stays a while,  
And on the stinking mouth there still hangs kind of a half smile.

**Yaacobi:** Give me some peace already. Give it to me, come on, give it to me already.  
Give it to me already, give it, give it already.

[Exits]

**Shekhash:** [To herself] What was my mistake? Pouncing on him with everything all at once. I overdid it, as usual. You need to give him a bit of freedom in the beginning, so he can breathe a bit, and mostly, I need to stand out less and make him feel that he's the important one, he's the important one, he's the important one, he's the important one. Of course he's not the important one - he's as important as my shoes. But it's important to know how to tie him up, slowly and intelligently, gradually and without him noticing. Until one morning he won't be able to get up, won't be able to walk and won't be able to do anything, only with me. Yes, just like that. And all the patience and restraint and diminished stature that I need to display towards him now, he's going to pay me back for all of it with interest. And when the day comes when I'm standing out on top again, I'll shove a big long bill right down his throat.

## Scene 25

[Shekhash and Yaacobi's house. Evening. Yaacobi and Leidental]

**Leidental:** Look, Yaacobi, I'm not complaining, but if the two of you aren't happy, then why did I give myself to you as a gift? And what am I still doing here after all my sacrificing? I've got enough misery of my own.

**Yaacobi:** Leidental, I regret everything I've put you through.

**Leidental:** Are you crazy?! After everything that's happened you're going to start regretting things? Don't you dare!

**Yaacobi:** Yes, yes, help me Leidental.

**Leidental:** What are you talking about, Yaacobi?

**Yaacobi:** Leidental, it's me, your friend Yaacobi, who was born to sit with you drinking tea and yawning on the balcony.

**Leidental:** What?! After all my agreeing about happiness being yours and not mine, after everything I did to dirty and humiliate myself, after all that you're going to start regretting things and asking me for forgiveness?! And telling me that you're like me?! I'm not a ball, Yaacobi, you can't turn my life upside down every second. I won't let you talk like that, you're happy and that's that.

**Yaacobi:** No, I'm a sad man, I'm miserable.

**Leidental:** You're great! You're awesome!

**Yaacobi:** I'm nothing...

**Leidental:** You're huge! No one like you has ever lived! An ideal!

**Yaacobi:** I'm a loser...a total loser...

**Leidental:** What are you talking about, look at yourself! What a look! What poise! What an impression you leave on ladies, and in general! The eyes! And the ears! What hearing! I dream of being like you during my long sleepless nights! I won't let you be nice to me and I won't let you apologise! I'm suffering so that you enjoy yourselves - and you will enjoy yourselves!

**Yaacobi:** I'm not made to enjoy myself, Leidental.

**Leidental:** You will enjoy yourself! You will enjoy yourself, you hear me?! I'll force you to enjoy yourself! You're not going to throw everything I've invested back in my face - and I've invested everything! Everything!! I've got nothing left!!! You're going to be happy, right?

**Yaacobi:** Impossible. It's just not for me.

**Leidental:** [To himself] Until now I could at least pity myself a little bit, and now even that's been taken from me.

[Pause]

I've got nothing left to do here. Common sense dictates that I get up and leave. They don't need me and I don't need them. But I'm still not going to leave. I'm going

to stay here and wait with infuriating patience. They'll get angry and I'll get angry with a slight, nosy, long-lived satisfaction.

## Scene 26

[Shekhash and Yaacobi's bedroom. Evening. Shekhash in a night gown and Yaacobi]

**Shekhash:** Itamar, maybe you'd like to go to the cinema? You could go by yourself if you like, because I need to stay at home anyway and finish off a sleeve for you. You want to, Itamar, yes?

**Yaacobi:** [Sings]

*[How Small Your Eyes]*

How small and piggy are your eyes,  
Your crude gaze is a butcher's knife,  
But your breasts are big and I'm still turned on -  
So we still remain husband and wife.

Your stupid soul doesn't concern me,  
And you'll never understand my own strife,  
But your breasts are big and I'm still turned on -  
So we still remain husband and wife.

You hate me as much as I do you,  
Neither of us hoping for more out of life  
But your breasts are big and I'm still turned on -  
So we still remain husband and wife.

**Shekhash:** But what was my mistake this time?!

[Yaacobi exits]

I'm so humiliated, I'm so humiliated! Me with all my little games all the time. What an idiot!

[Pause]

Never mind, I tell myself: Ruthy, a bit more self-restraint, the day of reckoning will come. He'll sing for you yet! And in the meantime, have your wits about you. My fundamental mistake, I now see, was letting that wedding-present Leidental into our home against Itamar's will. There's a wedding present walking around between everyone's feet and no one knows who for, what for or why for. When Itamar and I want to go to bed - he just happens to be whacking the mattresses.

When we want to have a bath - he's soaking the laundry. When we want to have some coffee he's fixing the hotplate, and when we don't want any coffee - he's drinking all the coffee himself. There's no place where he isn't at and no moment when he's out of sight! Leidental passes by and the tears come out. He's the source of all the troubles and the disasters, he violates the family harmony, he's been gnawing away at our married life from the very first moment, just him!

## Scene 27

[Yaacobi and Shekhash's house. Night. Leidental]

**Leidental:** Well, as usual I'm waiting for something bad.

[Shekhash enters, waving around a fly swatter]

Am I about to get swatted away like a fly?

**Shekhash:** Naturally.

**Leidental:** You're miserable - so you're getting rid of me. Obviously. You've taken advantage of me with no scruples and now you're throwing me away. Throw, throw. Did you know that my stay here has significantly reduced my chances of finding a bride?

**Shekhash:** Can you believe just how little that interests us?

**Leidental:** Of course I can.

**Shekhash:** So without another word - out. As though you never existed. And don't imagine that we're going to waste any happiness or sadness over it - nothing. We can't be bothered with either of those. We're discarding you with the same neutrality as someone taking off their shoes.

**Leidental:** Absolutely. And I'd like you to know that there's also nothing from my side. My heart's empty. I haven't even suffered properly. This isn't how I imagined my end. I'm leaving disappointed and unsatisfied.

**Shekhash:** I've spoken to you enough, I should be saving my words for my husband instead. Out!

**Leidental:** Yes. Where's the suitcase. There it is. Come, suitcase. Let's go out to give people the impression we're busy. You want to? You're tired, I know. When I rest, you'll rest as well.

[Picks up the suitcase]

Goodbye, Yaacobi, I know you're peaking from behind the door out of embarrassment. Only I know how miserable you really are and unfortunately it doesn't give me any pleasure any more.

**Shekhash:** Out!

**Leidental:** Yes. Good night. So I'm going, even though I could just as easily have stayed. Just like if I'd stayed I could just as easily have left.

[Continues standing in place]

**Shekhash:** What are you waiting for?

**Leidental:** I'm sorry, I don't have any urge to move.

**Shekhash:** Do you need to get dragged out by your collar?

**Leidental:** Very much so.

[Shekhash grabs him by the collar. He pulls away forcefully]

My brothers in humanity, my brothers in suffering,  
From childhood we've been mesmerised by breasts,  
Women with the title mother pushed  
Those two white lumps into our faces  
For us to drink milk,  
We weren't given the right to object.  
Yes, we were mesmerised, it was satisfying milk,  
It was soft, and swinging and so soothing,  
In short: The breast is opium for the children!  
As we grew up we didn't see the breasts any more,  
The women covered them up with bras,  
(less so today)  
And have raised the cost of the privilege  
Of touching them, seeing and kissing them.  
That way, stupefied by our mothers' milk,  
And with free access to a breast withheld,  
We've made the issue into a big deal,  
A purpose and a goal, the embodiment of beauty.  
My brothers in humanity, my brothers in suffering,  
The time has come to objectively decide:  
The breast is nothing more than a sack of fat,  
An unstyled bump, a pale swelling,  
A doughy under-baked soufflé,  
A vaguely advertised product with an American sweetness,  
A front-facing hump without a spine,  
A meaningless growth capped with  
A protruding bud the colour of mud.  
Brothers, admit it, the breast is crooked, crooked,

It's wrong, unjust, doesn't lead anywhere,  
Free yourself from the spell of the breast!  
Join the paratroopers!

[Walks over despondently to Shekhash who grabs him by the collar]

Yes, like that! With force! With force! I don't know any other language! Yes, great, like that!

[She throws him out]

**Shekhash:** So rude. I almost used up some anger on him.

[Yaacobi enters]

Finally we're alone. Satisfied?

**Yaacobi:** No.

## Scene 28

[Yaacobi and Shekhash's house. Evening. Yaacobi and Shekhash]

**Shekhash:** Enough, Itamar, let's forget everything that happened. Let's start a new life.

[Embraces him. Yaacobi tries to get aroused]

**Yaacobi:** There isn't even desire any more. Nothing's getting aroused. And my body feels cold and uncomfortable. Why am I like this? Why do I need to make an effort to feel a bit of desire? Why can't anything come out naturally for me? To fall in love I need to make an effort, and to get aroused I need to make an effort, and in order to have some fun I have to force myself, why?

[Pause]

Desire! Desire! Look I'm not going to keep standing here and calling you like an idiot for you to come and fill me up. You're either coming or you're not coming. You're not coming? Fine, I'm just going to stop wanting you.

**Shekhash:** Itamar, Itamar, look Itamar, what do we have here? What does auntie have here, eh? A breast. A breasty-breast, Breast Breastovitski, Oh, look at how it's jiggling. Itamar, look, you see? Nice? Hop-hop-diggidiggidim, hop-hop-diggidiggidim, nice? And here's another breast. A breast and another breast, Mr Breastovitski and Mr Breastomovich, and both of them are jiggling, naughty rascals, hop-hop-diggidiggidim, hop-hop-diggidiggidim, nice, Itamar? And what do we have here? Ah, Big Tuches, we totally forgot about Big Tuches, he's at the back so that's why we forgot about him. Oh, he's jiggling as well, bounce, bounce,

everyone's jiggling today, what is it, the 4th of July? Tut-tut-tut, rascals. Oh, and here are hips, and here are thighs, and here's a tummy, and at the bottom of the tummy there's a secret cave, especially for Itamar's games. And here, lips and two hands and shoulders, oh, there's so much, so much, and whose is all of it? Itamar's, cute Itamar's, Itamar the flower, Itamar-malade. Itamar wants to play with you, right? Right, Itamar? Little Itamar going to sit down now and play with all his toys. Come, Itamar, come and play with Ruthy's toys, come.

**Yaacobi:** Stop making a fool of yourself, I'm feeling embarrassed for you!

**Shekhash:** I'm not embarrassed, Itamar, in order to hold on to you I'm ready to embarrass myself very much.

**Yaacobi:** You won't hold on to me! You won't!

[Turns to leave]

**Shekhash:** Where to, Itamar?

**Yaacobi:** I'm going.

**Shekhash:** No! No, Itamar, don't go! Remember how much I charmed you, Itamar.

[Winds herself around his leg]

Itamar, my Itamar, let me charm you again now, let me. I'm not embarrassed, I don't care, see what you're doing to me, but I don't care, Itamar, love me, have pity on me, Itamar, I'm not ashamed to beg, see what you're doing to me, I hate you, your gravestone's ready, no-no, I'm yours, don't go, give me a chance, you've humiliated me, you've ruined me, I'll kill you, Itamar I love you, come to me, you don't know where you're going, you don't have anything better than me, if you leave me you'll lie alone in the dark until you die, don't go, maybe I was too tough and spoiled in the beginning, but I love you, I'll be soft, I won't have any more whims, I'll be whatever you want me to be, I'll do what you tell me to, I'm yours, here.

[Kisses his shoes]

**Yaacobi:** You're wetting my shoes, you bitch! Wetting my suede shoes!

[Pulls away from her]

**Shekhash:** OK, I won't wet them, I'll dry them...the shoes will be dry...I love you...I can't take it any more, I'll die, I'll die...I won't be able to take it, starting over again...everything from the beginning...Itamar...Itamar...I'll be good...good...

[Sobs quietly]

**Yaacobi:** Don't blame yourself and don't torture yourself, because I would have left anyway.

**Shekhash:** But why?...Why?...

**Yaacobi:** Because. Goodbye.

**Shekhash:** Who do you even think you are that you're allowing yourself to leave me! A wrinkled man with a wrinkled hat!

[Yaacobi exits]

It's crumbled in my hands. All the moves have been scrambled. I got all my considerations wrong. Stupid. Stupid wretch! You wanted to cash in on your bills with interest. You heavy fool with lots of meat, so much meat! Smart, eh? Smart, and your meat's swinging around, swinging around, a big hullabaloo. Like that's something special! Are you happy, fatso?! Good for you!!

[Pause]

Lonely and embarrassed. Enough. I've had enough.

[Sings]

*[I've Lost Him]*

I already know, I've lost him,  
I've lost him, nothing's going to help,  
A man walks up to me and then passes me by,  
I turn my head back, and slowly see my plans,  
Everything slipping away, like sand grains from my hands.

Night will fall on me, I'll sit at my window,  
And again it's time to get up, go down into the street  
Heavy with jewellery and frozen smiles,  
And again the same story, which always ends the only way it can,  
Everything slipping away, like sand grains from my hands.

## **Scene 29**

[The street outside Leidental's balcony. Leidental on the balcony. Yaacobi enters the street]

**Yaacobi:** Hello.

**Leidental:** Hello.

**Yaacobi:** I left her.

**Leidental:** You left? Completely?

**Yaacobi:** Yes.

**Leidental:** Final?

**Yaacobi:** Yes. We can go back to sitting on the balcony and playing dominos again.

**Leidental:** Sure, sure.

[Disappears from the balcony]

**Yaacobi:** Leidental! Leidental!

[Leidental appears in the street with a suitcase]

Where to?

**Leidental:** I'm just...nothing really...busy, busy...

**Yaacobi:** Back to the balcony right now!

**Leidental:** I've always been attracted to her and held back. No more holding back!

**Yaacobi:** In that case, I haven't left her. I'm going back to her.

[Pause]

A little game of dominos. Look, maybe I hurt you, maybe I trampled you a bit, but not more than generally acceptable. Overall we're friends, aren't we? Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

**Leidental:** As long as I have the urge to move, if you're not going to her, I'm going.

**Yaacobi:** I'm going.

[Shekhash enters]

**Leidental:** Oh, she's here.

[Yaacobi goes over to her. Pauses]

**Yaacobi:** Actually, you can go. She'll definitely agree. After all, her demands go down by two or three notches after every breakup.

**Shekhash:** I can't hear a single word. Just melodies, melodies.

**Leidental:** [Approaches Shekhash]

Everything's there like it was. Nothing's been lost. And it's all for me...

[Pause]

I...should I try? How do I even...?

[Pause]

Anyway, if I wanted to - I could. Remember all of you: if I wanted to - I could.

### Scene 30

[Street. Yaacobi, Leidental and Shekhash, each to themselves]

**Shekhash:** And maybe I should actually try and marry David Wedding-Present Leidental?

**Yaacobi:** And maybe I should go back to her now that I've shown her who here's in charge?

**Leidental:** And maybe I should move to Australia, which is a developing country and gives opportunities to miserable people?

**Shekhash:** Maybe I give up once and for all on men, become a nun and start studying music properly.

**Yaacobi:** And maybe I look for a woman again after all, and this time with a small backside and no artistic tendencies?

**Leidental:** And maybe to Canada? But it's cold there.

**Yaacobi:** And maybe I check into hospital in critical condition and just finally die?

**Shekhash:** And maybe I embark on a political career and take revenge on men for all the things they've done to me.

**Yaacobi:** Ah, who knows, who knows what's worth our while and what isn't?

**Leidental:** And if someone knows, maybe they're wrong?

[Pause]

And that's how the time passes, Spring and Summer, and Autumn and Winter, the blossoms and the fall. And each season is so well-suited for living in. As though someone had prepared a wonderful background painting for your happiness, and now just get up and be happy. But you stand there fossilised, not doing anything, immersed in your sadness, postponing everything to tomorrow, and in the

meantime time's passing and you know you're missing out. And with this bitter feeling of waste and regret you stand and look and look and look and do nothing.

[They sing]

[*Tomorrow I'll Buy a Piano*]

**Shekhash:** Tomorrow I'll buy a piano  
Oh, my loves,  
Tomorrow I'll buy a piano,  
I'll wear my white dress,  
And when dusk comes, with the setting sun's light in my hair,  
I'll sit and play for you, oh, my loves,  
Tomorrow I'll buy a piano...

**Yaacobi and Leidental:** You won't buy a piano  
Oh, love of mine.  
You won't buy a piano,  
You'll wear the same dress forever,  
And when dusk falls, as the final rays leave you  
You'll smile a sad smile  
Oh, my love,  
You won't buy a piano.

**[End]**