

# The Visit

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*Translated by Erik Born*

## Characters

**Ada** wants to sell the property that she inherited in Berlin and buy a house in Israel with the money. Her son Eyal is going to get a studio.

**Eyal** knows how to take photographs, paint, and play the clarinet. But he doesn't know how to cut the cord with his mother.

**Ihsan** is a former guest worker. He's not a worker any more, but he's still very much a guest. He's always in a bad mood.

**Melike** hates her little hick town Kulmbach and dreams of a handsome man and her nail studio in Istanbul.

**Hunger & Pain** are twins. In the play, they transform into all the other characters.

## 1 – THE EARTH IS SACRED

*Eyal goes looking for the property she inherited and finds a tomato garden and souvenirs of Berlin.*

*Ihsan is working in his garden. Eyal stops by.*

EYAL: Nice garden.

IHSAN: You're stepping on the flowers!

EYAL: How big is the garden?

IHSAN: I'm not selling! Want some tomatoes?

EYAL: I never eat 'em!

IHSAN: You're a tourist!

EYAL: Sometimes.

IHSAN: American? Got some pieces of the wall!

EYAL: Not interested.

IHSAN: Then leave! Leave! LEAVE!

EYAL: How much is the cap?

IHSAN: How much would you pay?

EYAL: It's pretty warm at my place. I don't really need it.

IHSAN: You're not supposed to wear it. You're supposed to look at it and remember.

EYAL: Remember what?

IHSAN: The past. The wall ran along here. I'm in the east, you're in the west.

EYAL: I remember it differently!

IHSAN: Photos are corpses!

EYAL: Please, a little to the right and now: Cheese! Click.

IHSAN: Japanese television was here. They made a film about me. I got 100 Euros.

EYAL: I'm an artist.

IHSAN: You have money too.

EYAL: But I can't pay for every photo. I'll give you 20 Euros, old man. But only for the cap!

IHSAN: 25!

EYAL: You've got it good here! A house, tomatoes, souvenirs!

IHSAN: Who are you?

EYAL: Earth is sacred. 20 Euros!

IHSAN: Fine!

IHSAN: Russian. At least 25 years old! They were here for a while.

EYAL: Us too!

IHSAN: Got some pieces of the wall too.

EYAL: Not interested!

IHSAN: Then leave! Leave! LEAVE!

EYAL: *Eyal puts the cap on.* Warm.

IHSAN: What kind of art do you make?

EYAL: There's something magical here. War, suffering, migration. Can you see it?

IHSAN: I only see tomatoes! Do I know your father?

EYAL: No!

IHSAN: Maybe so.

EYAL: No! He's never been here.

IHSAN: Got some pieces of the wall too.

EYAL: Not interested.

IHSAN: Then leave! Leave! LEAVE!

EYAL: How big is the garden?

IHSAN: What do you want, boy?

EYAL: To look and to remember.

IHSAN: Get out of here, boy! I've got things to do.

H&P: Leave the restricted area at once!

IHSAN: Who are you?

H&P: You're in a danger zone.

IHSAN: I can't hear you. Speak loudly!

H&P: An old 500-kilo bomb in your garden! We have to evacuate the house. You'll be going to a gym and we'll be deactivating the bomb.

IHSAN: I'm staying in my garden.

## 2 – CARPOOL

*Melike wants to get to Berlin but doesn't have a cent on her.*

H&P: New rims, 150 horsepower, polished exhaust, side impact bars, adjustable side mirrors... Here, Haribo from the gas station!

MELIKE: Thanks! How much?

H: You can give it to me later.

MELIKE: Cool.

L: Kids and Turks love it so—the happy world of Haribo.

H: Sit in front, if you want.

MELIKE: That's okay.

H: You people always have such beautiful names, names that mean something.

MELIKE: And what's yours?  
H&P: People call me br...bro...bro...bro...br...br...  
MELIKE: Bro?  
H&P: Actually, I'm named Maik.  
MELIKE: Mike? MIKE-Mike?  
H&P: No! MAIK-Maik.  
MELIKE: And what's your name mean?  
H&P: Nothing...only Maik, that's all.  
MELIKE: And where are you from, Maik?  
H&P: Berlin. Actually, from the Spreewald. You can smoke, if you want.  
MELIKE: I don't smoke.  
P: Go to Berlin much?  
MELIKE: First time. I'm a queen. I'm going to find my kingdom.  
H: I see...  
P: Kulmbach is really small.  
MELIKE: What do you do here, Bro?  
P: I drink alcohol, a lot of it...  
H: Sometimes I worry that I'm an alcoholic. But when it comes to drinking, you die slowly.  
MELIKE: You want to die right away? Why not drive into the guardrail?  
H: I thought that too.  
P: But then my father would be really sad.  
MELIKE: Does he love you that much?  
H&P: No. Sad about the car!  
MELIKE: Oh, I see!  
H: I've tried to kill myself a few times.  
MELIKE: Really?!  
H: Hard to believe, but it's actually not easy to take your own life.  
MELIKE: Should I help you?  
P: Go ahead!  
MELIKE: *Melike keeps her eyes shut.* What's it like, Maik? Watch out! A curve! Here comes a truck! Careful! Watch it! Watch it, Maik!  
P: Are you crazy!? You almost killed me! Man! Hey!  
H: Melike, man! You can't do that! On the highway! You could've died!  
MELIKE: You're a coward, Bro! Killing yourself is like writing a love poem...with a razor blade. *She shows her arms.* You don't look for particular words, you just write whole sentences in a rush!  
P: Wow! Then what's written there?  
MELIKE: *looks at her arm for a long time.* I hate!  
P: But who do you hate?  
MELIKE: I don't know! I just hate.  
H: Then why write it on your forearm?  
MELIKE: Just because...  
L: The Turks are really sick, huh!  
H: I see...  
MELIKE: Good for you! I'm not!  
H: You're a real...I like you! Let's have a beer when we're in Berlin.  
MELIKE: I like drivers who keep their mouths shut!

### 3 – THE PHOTOS FROM THE LIVING ROOM CABINET

*Ihsan doesn't know that Melike is his niece but Melike does.*

*Melike comes to Ihsan's place.*

MELIKE: Herr Toprak?

IHSAN: Who are you, little girl?

MELIKE: When I was heading to Berlin, I didn't know if I'd find you. I didn't even know if you were still alive.

IHSAN: Now you know, I'm alive. Leave! Leave! Leave!

MELIKE: You look exactly the same as in the photo. It was in the living room cabinet. Black and white. You as a young Turkish soldier in front of your olive grove. You look so childlike, innocent. For a long time I believed that kids had to enter the army. Even though grandma hated you, we weren't allowed to touch the photo. She never talked about you, and when she did, she only had bad things to say about you. But the photo was always there. I think that deep down she loved you. But her hatred was bigger than everything else. When I was a kid, you looked at me every day in that room.

IHSAN: Looked at, but never saw! I don't want to see you or anyone else from this damned family.

MELIKE: But I'm not like the others. I always had a good feeling for you. Whenever anyone talked about you, I always felt sympathetic. I always imagined how lonely you must be.

IHSAN: Sympathy is the last thing I need! If you've got a little money for your grandpa, then we could be friends.

MELIKE: But we're already friends! Whenever things were going bad, I had to think of you. I always thought you felt the same.

IHSAN: Love doesn't fill your belly! But if you want tomatoes, here, serve yourself. And then leave me in peace!

MELIKE: I imagined this differently! This is so terrible!

IHSAN: Life's done worse to me. But look, I'm still alive. What's so bad about your grandpa not loving you.

MELIKE: I knitted gloves for you!

*IHSAN looks at the gloves.*

IHSAN: But it's so warm. What am I supposed to do with them?

MELIKE: Wait! And when it gets cold, put them on!

IHSAN: Thanks!

MELIKE: You're welcome.

IHSAN: Whose are you? Ayse's or Emine's?

MELIKE: I'm Ayse's daughter.

IHSAN: That's what I thought. Ayse was prettier than Emine. Emine was so ugly. You're like your mother. Beautiful.

MELIKE: Thanks.

IHSAN: What's your name, little girl?

MELIKE: MELIKE.

IHSAN: Look on the back of the photo, little girl. There's a poem I wrote. Read it! Melike...Your sweater's on wrong...

## 4 – VISIONS OF GERMANY

### *Ada finds her son in the gym for evacuees.*

ADA: What are you doing here?

EYAL: *Here.*

ADA: What's that?

EYAL: The art of the 21st century in a gym. A man is skinning an onion. Maybe he was fasting. Light is shining through the onion and what's really beautiful is that it is casting colorful shadows on the wall. How the man's holding his knife, in his hand, creates a tension with the onion, on the table. A girl is reading the Bible near the high bars. The golden cross is shining light on us. You just have to find the right corner here. People are sitting in the background...but in the dark. You really can retouch everything. Anything goes. It's no problem really. A gypsy grandma is lying on her stomach and a gypsy grandpa is massaging her. The grandma keeps making strange noises. You can take a shot there, where the gypsy grandpa's hand is working the gypsy grandma's love handles. Then it's a little...you know. Ten men watching, ten pairs of eyes...

ADA: My shoes keep pinching, I've been sweating, my bra's sticking...

EYAL: While you were in the mosque...I could smell it, feel it, the image comes to mind like little puzzle pieces. Everything I see points to it. Time here has stopped.

ADA: Where? The heat in this country's beaten you to death. Just take that thing off! Come on!

EYAL: Warm. You're not supposed to put it on. You're supposed to look at it and remember.

ADA: Leave it alone, Eyal! It's gross!

EYAL: I don't want to have sand in my mouth and dumb friends on the beach any more. I don't want to ride the bus and be afraid. I don't want to work hard and whine any more. I don't want any more.

ADA: I bought you a suit. Germans are slow to learn how to dress respectably. Tomorrow your cousin is celebrating her wedding. She would love it if you were there... In New York it didn't work out either ... You'll still come back ... *Eyal plays the clarinet* ... Who do you really think you are?! My whole life I've slaved away for you, you bum ... Get that thing out of your mouth and speak properly with your mother. Do you think I'd put up with everything from you after I've sacrificed my life for you, gone without everything, cared for you day and night... We're going to be happy! Soon you're going to get your own studio. You won't have to go to Haifa every day any more. And I'll buy a St. Bernhard or a Dalmatian. I don't care what breed! They just have to be cute and there have to be a lot of them. I'll have flowers in the garden. Your father loved chrysanthemums. After his concerts he always gave me a bouquet of yellow chrysanthemums. We'll have a garden full of yellow chrysanthemums and cute dogs! And I won't let you ruin that for me!

EYAL: I was at the garden property today but I don't really know for sure whether or not I'll sign ... I still feel a little insecure there.

ADA: What? Have you lost your mind? Don't talk nonsense!

EYAL: I can't really imagine a mosque there, you know!?

ADA: Then build yourself a synagogue! With your own hands!

EYAL: The decision is just too much for me, I can never decide. ... should you, shouldn't you?

ADA: You could never decide! You idiot!

EYAL: I've cancelled my plane ticket. And maybe you'll buy me something respectable to wear for the wedding. Have a good flight!

ADA: A fox might run wherever he wants. But eventually he'll end up in a store for fur coats. He'll come back!

## 5 – “MY ONLY LOVE SPRUNG FROM MY ONLY HATE!”

*Melike is crying on the roof.*

MELIKE: Hey?

EYAL: Come down here!

MELIKE: Why?

EYAL: Photos of sad women are more interesting than photos of women who aren't sad.

MELIKE: They sell better, I assume.

EYAL: Five minutes.

MELIKE: Go back inside. There are enough sad people to photograph.

EYAL: Your father must be a thief.

MELIKE: What?

EYAL: He stole the stars from the sky and put them in your eyes.

MELIKE: Oh God!

EYAL: Tell me, don't we know each other from somewhere?

MELIKE: Yeah, five minutes ago you chatted me up near the basketball hoop.

EYAL: You're Miss Berlin, right?

MELIKE: Yeah.

EYAL: I saw you in the newspaper.

MELIKE: And who are you?

EYAL: I'm from the desert—on a camel. Then I saw you, it started raining, a delicate plant grew from the sand and the desert became...pink.

MELIKE: Really awful.

EYAL: Oh, come down!

MELIKE: You don't get a girl like that in this country. Where are you from?

EYAL: Do you mean where I was born? Where I grew up? Where my parents come from or where I was yesterday?

MELIKE: Um, all four!

EYAL: Eyal. I'm circumcised.

MELIKE: Melike.

EYAL: Pleased to meet you.

MELIKE: Not so pleased.

EYAL: Melike, Hebrew! Malakh means angel.

MELIKE: Turkish! Malka. Melike means queen.

EYAL: Malka. Hebrew too! Do you have a boyfriend, queen?

MELIKE: If my grandpa sees you here, he'll kill you.

EYAL: Your grandpa likes me.

MELIKE: My grandpa doesn't like anyone. What kind of photos do you take?

EYAL: “Temptation of communication in the middle of migration celebration...Art.”

MELIKE: And what's that?

EYAL: Portraits of migrants.

MELIKE: Total bullshit, huh?  
EYAL: Do you have a boyfriend?  
MELIKE: A?  
EYAL: What?  
EYAL: German?  
MELIKE: That too.  
EYAL: Okay?  
MELIKE: Um, I don't care!  
*They kiss.*  
EYAL: What did you eat today?  
MELIKE: Gummy bears.  
EYAL: Stay with me.  
MELIKE: No.  
EYAL: Do you love Kulmbach?  
MELIKE: No.  
EYAL: Do you want to go back to Kulmbach?  
MELIKE: I don't care about Kulmbach!  
EYAL: And your family?  
MELIKE: Them too.  
EYAL: Stay with me.  
MELIKE: No.  
EYAL: How many kids do you want to have?  
MELIKE: Two, but no twins.  
EYAL: Why no twins?  
MELIKE: Twins are shit.  
EYAL: Oh. My cousins are twins, they're nice.  
MELIKE: Nice is shit too.  
EYAL: Stay with me in Berlin.  
MELIKE: No!  
EYAL: What are you planning to do in Istanbul?  
MELIKE: Meet a good-looking Turkish man who loves me. Open a professional nail studio...  
EYAL: Exciting.  
MELIKE: What are you going to paint?  
EYAL: People in Berlin. Japanese people, Turkish people, Chinese people, Spanish people... Foreigners. A huge project! My painting is going to be about 10 meters long, like the Last Supper. Every disciple stands for a nation, in oil, combined with enlarged photos. Then I'll exhibit the painting "open air" on my garden property, and whoever passes by can look at it and buy it—and with the money I'll treat you to dinner...Stay with me?  
MELIKE: No.  
EYAL: You don't have any money, you can't speak Turkish right, and you'll end up cleaning floors in some other professional nail polish studio. That's your dream of Istanbul!  
MELIKE: Nobody will buy your stupid paintings! Nobody's interested in your art! A foreigner always remains a foreigner here.  
EYAL: Stay with me.

## 6 – THE EARTH SPITS SHARDS OF GLASS

*Ihsan finds Ada in the gym.*

*Ihsan approaches Ada cautiously.*

IHSAN: “It’s hot as a Greek broad’s pussy,” my grandmother always loved to say whenever it was this hot. A bottle of Jägermeister for every Christmas in Berlin! 39 in all! 39 damned years! And I’ll empty them all tonight! I was a GUEST WORKER in Germany! I’m not a worker any more, but I’m still a guest. I wished for another life! Too late!!! You know, I was 28 years young when I came to Germany. My father tried to persuade me for a long time: “Boy, go rob a bank instead. I’ll keep the money and you’ll go to prison for 20 years. And if you come out, you’ll have a pile of money. Going to Germany is like going to prison. And after 20 years you’ll have a pile of shit.” It’s pretty bitter, but...my father was right. Wife gone, kids gone, house gone, tomatoes gone. Only these bottles have remained faithful to me. And they’ll leave me tonight too.

ADA: I met hundreds of devout Turks in the mosque today. I had to watch 3D animations of the new mosque in the mid-day heat in a room without air conditioning next to ten religious men who stunk of sweat. What’s more, someone gave me a mosque made out of marzipan. With minarets and, you know. I’ve taken all I can for today as far as Turks are concerned!

IHSAN: Now don’t think I’m in love with your crooked back. I just wanted to talk business. Look, Madame! Look at these people here! Do you think that everyone here is happy that a new mosque is being formed? I, for one, am not. It’s why I’m losing everything I have. I don’t care about the mosque. I only want my garden.

ADA: You’re the tomato guy!

IHSAN: Yup. That’s me.

ADA: People curse you in the mosque.

IHSAN: They’ve been doing that for 10 years!

ADA: My father left my son that garden and we’re selling it.

IHSAN: Madame! I’m like a fossil. I already have one foot in the grave. All I have left to learn is how to die respectably. Wait a few years before selling it! Madame, my grandfather died as an Ottoman soldier in your country...and you’re a Jew. You know very well what it’s like to be thrown out of your own country. Don’t do that to me! I work a lot. I sell tomatoes in the summer, soldiers’ caps, clocks, historical stuff. I’ll give you everything I earn. I just want my garden. I have a 700 Euro pension too. All in all I have a thousand Euros per month. Leave me my house.

ADA: I do personal coaching for losers so they don’t get wet hands when they speak with their bosses. Do you think I’d rather do this job than get 500,000 Euros, you buffoon!?

IHSAN: YES!

ADA: What an uproar! So much noise about a cursed little piece of land.

IHSAN: If you take my garden away from me, I’ll kill you with this bottle.

ADA: Where’d you get the bottle?

IHSAN: The earth spits shards of glass. You give the earth tomato seeds, water, love, and the sun.

ADA: It gives you back shards...I have a photo of my father in the living room cabinet. He fled at the last minute, his mother stayed in Theresienstadt and died of typhus. He planned never to go back to Germany and live there, but he always said—the damned Germans, everything they do, they do better than others. He only flew

with Lufthansa, shaved himself with a Braun razor. He spent his vacation in Baden Baden, not in the hot springs of the Dead Sea. But didn't drink German wine any more. He was a wine salesman. Right there, where the mosque's library is going to be built soon. The earth spits shards of glass, right there, where you now have the tomato garden...My suffering is greater than your suffering. Forty!

## 7 – “LOVE IS NOT A VICTORY MARCH IN KARAOKEBAR”

*Melike and Eyal are singing in a karaoke bar.*

MELIKE: There's no such thing as happy love. Love is not a victory march.

EYAL: Love is a victory march. Love conquers every mountain. We can be happy.

P: “Baby I have been here before, I know this room, I've walked this floor.”

EYAL: I'll wake you up every day with a cup of coffee. In love, I'll make your coffee with love. I'll kiss you everywhere. Your cheeks'll become warm, the coffee cup cold.

MELIKE: It'll taste like cardamom. It'll be foreign to me, your coffee. We can't be happy.

EYAL: Of course, we can!

MELIKE: Can not.

EYAL: The coffee at home is called Turki Katan. The little Turk! You're little too. It won't be foreign. I'll laugh.

MELIKE: I won't laugh. Your little Turk will remain foreign to me. We don't like cardamom...I'll still sleep with you. The taste of cardamom in my mouth and your pubic hair. You laugh cute.

H: Is that not happiness, Melike? Love hoists the sun up high into the sky, Berlin dances with you two for a hot, long summer.

EYAL: We can be happy. I'll introduce my friends to her. She'll introduce her friends to me.

MELIKE: I don't have any friends here! Will your friends understand my language?

EYAL: Love needs no language. You'll cut my hair, my friends will have their nails done. That way we'll all be good friends!

MELIKE: But will your friends understand my language?

H: Oh, Melike! How on earth did you do that!? It looks so beautiful! But come on now! What does Islam say about nail polish?

MELIKE: I don't know!

P: Here in Berlin many girls have to tie up their sexuality with headscarves. But they're searching for anal freedom. Was that your freedom? Thanks for the haircut!

MELIKE: We can't be happy. Istanbul is calling me!

EYAL: We can. My canvas is the map of my desire. Your eyes are the continents. I'll paint your eyes, my art will finally see.

H: You didn't wake her up today, Eyal, you didn't make coffee for her.

P: You haven't touched her eyes for weeks, Eyal.

EYAL: My map desires new canvases. Desire is the fastest wind on earth. But...we can be happy. I'll cook you gefilte fish. My friends will come visit.

H&P: Your fish stinks, Eyal. You only have enough money for fish with white eyes.

MELIKE: I can give you my eyes, Eyal. I can polish nails, cut hair. Your fish will be able to see.

EYAL: My gefilte fish stinks and my map desires new canvases. Desire is the fastest wind on earth. *Melike kisses Eyal.* Your tongue tastes foreign.

H: Melike's German dictionary doesn't have "gefilte fisch." Her tongue touches her own language now.

P: You haven't touched her eyes for weeks, Eyal. Turkish is what she speaks now.

EYAL: Tomorrow I'm flying back to Israel, meanwhile we won't be living together any more.

MELIKE: Yesterday you picked up your books from my place. We didn't have the nerve to speak. Instead we slept with each other.

EYAL: We're running to the concert arena hand in hand. The summer hasn't yet left the city.

MELIKE: We were naked, then we put on our goodbyes. You had one T-shirt fewer. I cried the whole night. Your T-shirt dried my cheeks.

EYAL: We'll drink wine out of plastic cups and smoke on the balcony. An old Canadian comes on stage. He's named Leonard.

MELIKE: Leonard comes on stage and pulls an airplane out of his hat. Tomorrow you're flying to Israel, you don't know when you'll come back. Maybe in four weeks, maybe not at all.

EYAL: I woke up with his songs. For you, he won't sing anything from his childhood. For me, all the desert years in the kibbutz. His songs are Jewish children, they all run barefoot on the desert sand. As always, you understand me, hold my hand.

MELIKE: You're sleeping with your head on my shoulder. My face is adorned with a Star of David made of hearts.

EYAL: Your face is adorned with a Star of David made of hearts. A couple from Tel Aviv sits next to us for a weekend. Flight plus Leonard, 500 Euros. Love doesn't cost extra. Leonard sings. After every kiss Leonard greets us with his hat. Kibbutz children come back from the desert. I'm sleeping with my tears on your right shoulder.

MELIKE: I go forward, you stay still. I see Leonard close-up. He's an old, wise man, he doesn't lie. Love is not a victory march...

EYAL: Leonard's a magician and pulls our goodbyes out of his hat. We're naked and don't have a hat any more to put our goodbyes in.

MELIKE: We lose each other after the concert. The Berlin night is cold and dark. I don't see any stars. I keep polishing nails, cutting hair. I never see you again.

EYAL: Saying goodbye is the best way to get burned. Saying goodbye is our desert sun. Love is not a victory march.

## 8 – GUILT AND ATONEMENT

*The night in the gym is hot, sticky, and long. The nightmares too.*

H&P: QUIET!!!

ADA: I remember when I drink.

IHSAN: I want only to forget.

ADA: "Your skin smells like chrysanthemums," you always said.

P: And in the morning I sang my songs into your belly button.

ADA: What a handsome man you were! With the voice of an angel. From your melody, I gave you a son.

H&P: Chorus, chorus, chorus.

ADA: You're the most beautiful scent, the most beautiful flowers in my Garden! I loved you. You: your songs.

P: My song's a stab in the flesh. Cold, bloody, and soft.

ADA: You've lost weight, your teeth are rotten, and your cheeks are pale. "Your skin smells like chrysanthemums," you always said.

H&P: QUIET!!!

ADA: I remember when I drink!

IHSAN: I want only to forget. What a beautiful women you were. With the face of an angel. You gave me two daughters. But no son!

H: I loved you. You: the man in yourself. Your pistol is as blinding as a golden belt in the sun.

IHSAN: I dance Zeybek at the wedding. Honor accompanies me. A man with honor is a man. My pistol is my belt.

H: You're drunk, you're dancing with your head, somebody sings a song from your homeland, longing a shot in the sky at a Turkish wedding. Your right index finger's quicker to the draw. Longing shoots the unborn sons in your balls.

(Ihsan grabs his balls in pain. They're bleeding.)

H: I loved you. I gave you two daughters.

IHSAN: Who did this to me? Was it me? No, it can't be. Blood washes away my pride. A man without a son is no man.

H&P: QUIET!!!

ADA: Blood washes away your love. I loved you. You: your songs.

P: Your love dances through my blood. The baby cries in the dry night. Your head is on the windowsill, your eyes in the desert.

ADA: I've got the world on my shoulders! I'm so young and so weak. He's a good man, dad. You'll see. Love conquers every fortress!

H: Leave the Yemenite. He's a junkie. He only sings songs of death.

ADA: Look, dad, I gave him a son from his melodies. Love conquered every fortress.

H: No Yekke's daughter will ever marry a Yemenite. Leave the Yemenite. He's a junkie. Leave the Yemenite.

ADA: QUIET!!! I've got the world on my shoulders! I'm so young and so weak.

H&P: Chorus, chorus, chorus.

ADA: You're the most beautiful scent, the most beautiful flower in my garden!

P: The kid's little crocheted socks are on the kitchen table, the door is open and your smell is gone. Saying goodbye is the best way to get burned.

ADA: You sang your songs to my belly button in the morning. I'll remember you fondly. Happiness is the face of a child and the waves on a beach in Tel Aviv.

P: Love dances through my blood, love washes away my life, and love conquers every sand castle! Saying goodbye is getting burned by love.

H: QUIET!!!

IHSAN: The man inside me isn't there any more. I can't give you a child any more. Blood washes my pride away.

H&P: Ihsan's not a man. He's a sheep. He won't have any more kids. Ihsan's a sheep.

H: I gave you two daughters, but no son. My brother-in-law died in the war. My sister gave birth to four sons for him. My sister's poor. She baked sweets, her tears flow inwards and her tablecloth is crocheted. She'll send us a child. Ismail is ours now. You have a son, Ihsan.

IHSAN: I have no son. I'll ride to my homeland like a wild horse. Bavarian mountains greet my mane, the Balkans wash away my longing. I want to forget.

H&P: Ihsan's not a man. He's a sheep. He can't have children any more. Ihsan's a sheep.

H: Remember, Ihsan. You can't run, you're no horse. You're a sheep. Your daughters and your son Ismail are calling you. It's the Festival of Sacrifice [*Eid al-Adha*].

IHSAN: A prisoner is what I am now. People's words are like bars. Their glances cut my honor to shreds. I don't want to be a sheep, but a horse. My pride carries me off to foreign lands.

H&P: Ihan's not a man. He's a sheep. He can't have children any more. Ihan's a sheep.

H: Why are you grinning like that, Ihsan? Hug your son. Hug Ismail, Ihsan. Today's the Festival of Sacrifice.

H&P: Ihsan's not a man. He's a sheep. He can't have children any more. Ihsan's a sheep.

IHSAN: QUIET! Today's the Festival of Sacrifice. The knives split the sheep in two. A head, a body. Blood flows like a stream into the sea. Over there on the shore a young boy is playing alone. Ismail. My son who was a gift. Ismail, you'll fall in the water.

H: Aren't you the father who'll hold my hand? Aren't you the father who'll save my life?

IHSAN: The misery is yours, Ismail, and the revenge is mine. I'll ride to my homeland like a wild horse.

H: The knives split the sheep in two. A head, a body. Blood flows like a stream into the sea. Blood streams with water into my lungs. My short life will end here in this sea. I was the son who was given to you, Ihsan. I was five years old. Today is the Festival of Sacrifice and I'm your sacrifice. The misery is yours, Ihsan, and the revenge is mine. the revenge is mine. the revenge is mine. the revenge is mine. the revenge is mine.

H&P: Ihsan isn't a sheep. Ihsan isn't a horse. Ihsan isn't a man. Only a man who can love is a man. A man who can be merciful. Ihsan, we don't give a damn about you.

IHSAN: I'm a human being. I'm a human being. I'm a human being!

## 9 – OLIVE TREES LIVE A LONG TIME

### *Melike wakes the sleeping Ihsan.*

*Melike brings Ihsan a glass of water. He drinks.*

IHSAN: Melike!

MELIKE: Water.

IHSAN: Your sweater is still on wrong.

MELIKE: I know.

IHSAN: What's tomorrow, Melike?

MELIKE: Not what but where! That's the right question.

IHSAN: And where's tomorrow?

MELIKE: Tomorrow is a place. A "Sunday when the stores are open," for example. People from Kulmbach and guests from out of town will stream downtown in multitudes. On many streets, stores will not only be open, but there will even be a vibrant program of events. In the Fritz shopping center, you'll be able to see the upper Frankish district photo show. At the main park, they'll celebrate a topping out ceremony for 24 new senior apartments. In the Rathaus meeting room,

Kulmbach's aide for Nepal is inviting people to an evening of lectures starting at 7pm. In the avenues between Melkendorf and Galgenberg, the *Oberbürgermeister* is planting new fruit trees with helpers. In the Rathaus, there'll be an auction for found goods. Some grandma will come too, in the hopes of finding a lost cane... We Turks won't have lost any cane, won't plant any fruit trees, won't help Kulmbach's aide for Nepal. We'll think that the new senior homes are owner-occupied flats and dream of one day owning such a new, chic apartment... that's why my parents will be working the nightshift. We children will wake up, father will come home and go directly to bed. We will be very quiet until the afternoon. Eat quietly, watch TV quietly, talk quietly, and run quietly. Later on, father will read his Turkish newspaper, mother will fill green peppers with rice, and we will be silent in the corner. It'll be deathly silent in the apartment. Tomorrow is a place like that, grandpa.

IHSAN: I don't like this "tomorrow."

MELIKE: I love it.

IHSAN: Olive grove! We're both going back to Urla and finding my olive grove.

Olive trees don't die, they live a long time, hundreds, thousands, millions of years.

MELIKE: Grandpa, you can't go.

IHSAN: Look, I have money in this bottle... I'm sorry, my child. I made your mother, she made you. We made this tomorrow for you. I always waited for you.

Otherwise, I already wouldn't be here any more... I knew that this country would swallow us. But we're still in its throat. At some point it'll cough and we'll get out.

MELIKE: Grandpa.

IHSAN: Melike.

MELIKE: Grandpa, you're pretty old, huh. Really weak and all that. You can hardly stand, run. Just like a fossil! Your garden is beautiful, and the tomatoes too, very beautiful... would you... the garden... for me, if you... it could be... it happens to old people... sometimes, occasionally, definitely.... would you, if you... one day?

IHSAN: What "one day"?

MELIKE: I mean go to sleep and not wake up...and you know.

IHSAN: What do you want?

MELIKE: MONEY! I need money too! I need money to open up my professional nail polish studio in Istanbul!

IHSAN: I knew it! You're just like the others. From your sweater alone, I could tell that something's wrong with you. Give me the bottle!

MELIKE: Give me the garden!

IHSAN: The bottle!

MELIKE: I gave you a glass of water on the worst day of your life. Is a garden too much in return? If you don't leave me your garden, I'll hurt you badly.

IHSAN: Someone beat me up in the middle of a Turkish bazaar because I stole a piece of flatbread. I made it through that. You think you can hurt me with your words. Christamightyturksagain!

MELIKE: I'm warning you, grandpa.

IHSAN: About what?

MELIKE: Your pieces of the wall that you sell to tourists...

IHSAN: Yeah?

MELIKE: ...you steal them from the construction site.

IHSAN: I know. The customer's happy. Salesman too.

MELIKE: I slept with a man in your garden!

IHSAN: Yeah, and?

MELIKE: Just that.

IHSAN: Me too. Kidding!

MELIKE: We smashed a whole bunch of tomatoes!

IHSAN: What?

MELIKE: Will you leave me your garden?

IHSAN: No.

MELIKE: In your bottle you've only got rotted deutschmark bills. Worth zilch!

*Ihsan is ashamed and hides the bottle.*

MELIKE: Give me your garden, otherwise I'll keep going! GRANDPA!

IHSAN: I don't have a garden.

MELIKE: What?

IHSAN: They're selling the garden! I got put out on the street like garbage.

MELIKE: You really don't have a garden any more?

IHSAN: No.

*Melike reads him the poem on the back of the photo.*

MELIKE: "You beautiful country, distant country, you unknown country. I came to you neither of my own will nor on a noble horse. What brought me, this young man, to you was the fever of youth and the frenzy of wine."

IHSAN: That's how it is, my child. We're visitors! We always dream of the place where we never were.

MELIKE: I've checked, grandpa, you didn't write the poem. It's by a Russian: Pushkin... And, you know what, grandpa, your olive grove in Turkey no longer exists. They cut down all the olive trees a long time ago. One by one! Now there's a big factory for tomato paste there.

## 10 – COVER YOURSELF UP

*Ada leave behind a letter for Eyal.*

ADA: Your grandfather would be very sad. But I accept your decision... Don't rent an apartment where a lot of Arabs live, it's dangerous...I'll send you 500 dollars a month...a bad personal coach can't do more...go to synagogue, you'll find Jewish friends there, women and men sit together here, maybe a beautiful woman too...don't let yourself go, I'll visit you now and then...open the window when you paint, that stuff attacks your lungs...but cover yourself up, Winter is deadly here, not like at home! And call your mother.

## 11 – AIRPORT

*Melike and Ada are sitting on a bench and waiting for the planes.*

ADA: It's almost light out. But the clouds are still there! It'll definitely rain soon.

MELIKE: It often rains here! It only rains here!

ADA: Yup. It's that kind of country. There's something beautiful about it though. It never rains at home in Tel Aviv! At night you're greeted by the wind from the desert.

MELIKE: It's hot at home too. At home in Istanbul!

ADA: I don't know where Eyal's passport is hiding.

MELIKE: If I'm lucky, some grandma will come up to me right away and ask if I can take her suitcase with me. Passengers are only allowed to take 20 kilos with them, but the Turks put all of Germany in their suitcases.

ADA: It's almost light out. But the clouds are still there! It's definitely rain soon. Whenever I'm in Tel Aviv, I go to the beach and run. Then I go to sleep. For a long time! I'm going to forget everything.

MELIKE: It often rains here! It only rains here!

ADA: Our house in Tel Aviv smelled of Europe. Books, clocks, silverware, furniture, mirrors, even the curtains. High-class German workmanship. My parents were able to speak 11 languages. And none of them were allowed to be spoken. Europe was forbidden. Sealed up in books and in history... My apartment in Tel Aviv looks different. Apart from my son's crocheted socks, there is no history! Ah, there he is!

H: Where's your son, Ada?

ADA: He's coming soon. He just wanted to buy a suit. In a foreign country. He'll definitely be here soon.

H: Where's your son, Ada?

ADA: He'll be here soon. He just wanted to buy new furniture.

H: Where's your son, Ada?

ADA: He wanted to buy a new house.

H: Where's your son, Ada?

ADA: He wanted new books, a new language, and a new past. In a foreign country.

H: Your son is in Germany. When he ran through the streets and thought of his friends who were already fighting in Lebanon, he saw a *Schultüte*, then he froze suddenly—the first photo of his grandfather from 1914 showed him holding his own black and white *Schultüte*. It was overwhelming for him to see how closely his own life and memories lay next to the life and memories of Germans. Your son is in Germany.

MELIKE: My son won't stay in Germany.

P: Where's your plane ticket, Melike?

MELIKE: My parents have my plane ticket. They're coming soon. They just wanted to buy new garden furniture...for our new garden house in Kulmbach.

P: Where's your hair stylist certificate, Melike?

MELIKE: My parents have my hair stylist certificate. They're coming soon. They just wanted to buy Christmas trees.

P: What are you doing here in front of the travel agency, Melike? What are you looking at?

MELIKE: I'm waiting for my parents. They're coming soon.

P: Why are you here every week, Melike? Your parents are here in the Fritz Shopping Center every Saturday morning. Once there was a spinning mill here. Now Fritz! In front of this travel agency you're buying yourself new life. You'll fly sometime to the Maldives and mix cocktails. Then to Corsica, Malta, and Funchal. You'll fly for a week with somebody else for 899 Euros per person, all inclusive. You're rummaging around in your purse, 95 Cents dancing here and there, a bus ticket to the train station. You're dreaming. When we dream big, the flight is always included.

ADA: It's almost light out. But the clouds are still there! It'll definitely rain soon.

MELIKE: It often rains here! It only rains here!

## 12 – WHERE IS SHE?

*Dawn in the tomato garden. Bro is looking for Melike but finds Eyal.*

*Eyal is in the tomato garden. Bro comes on.*

H: Chrome exhaust, get-under motor, lacquered roof, Dolby, four speakers...You people always have such beautiful names..., names that mean something. What's your name?

EYAL: Eyal.

P: *Ist mir Eyal.* Where is she. I saw you two together a little while ago.

EYAL: How much is the trip from Kulmbach to Berlin?

H: 20 Euros.

EYAL: I'll give you 20 Euros.

H: When we were getting gas, I bought her Haribo, at the station, she didn't pay for that either.

EYAL: I'll pay for that too.

P: But I have to find this bitch, she stepped on my car door.

H: *Bro squeezes Eyal's balls together.* Sing us the German National Anthem.

P: Now backwards.

*Eyal hits Bro in the face with a stone. Bro dies.*

H & P: Once I had a face, a long time ago. Now I don't have a face, I don't remember any more. A cloth on my face, my mouth smells of gummy bears. First my nose was broken, then my teeth, then my cheekbones...my skull, my nasal cavity were full of stone, flesh, my brain. With each blow of the cold stone to my face, I lost my memory. Later my head was a lump, like sludge, made of blood and flesh. My teeth were in my throat. I couldn't breath any more. Everything blood, red and warm, I died. I don't know how my face looked. I don't remember any more.

## 13 – THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY

*Ihsan looks at the broken tomatoes in his garden.*

EYAL: (to Ihsan) Nice garden!