

CAIN'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

Dramatis Personæ:

CAIN — First son of Adam and Eve who killed his little brother Abel and left Eden to make a life for himself in this world.	SETH — Third son of Adam and Eve.
MASKILA — Cain's mother-in-law.	ELDER
RAKIA — Maskila's and Tzelem's younger daughter and Cain's wife.	FATHER — Father of Deshe and Esev. (nonspeaking)
RO'EH — Orphan boy who becomes Cain's first contact outside of Eden, Shomer's shepherd.	MOTHER — Mother of Deshe and Esev. (nonspeaking)
TZELEM — Maskila's husband and father of Shomer, A'far, Neshama, and Rakia. Cain's father-in-law.	VILLAGER 1
KOHAV — Cain's rival and slave master, Neshama's husband	VILLAGER 2
SHOMER — First son of Maskila and Tzelem.	VILLAGER 3
ADAM — Cain's father, Eve's mate.	VILLAGER 4
NESHAMA — Maskila's and Tzelem's older daughter, Koḥav's wife.	Other VILLAGERS — (nonspeaking)
PRINCE OF THE WILDERNESS ("PRINCE") — Wandering businessman and marriage broker.	KOHAV'S SHEPHERD 1
ABEL — Cain's brother, who Cain slew before the time of this story.	KOHAV'S SHEPHERDS — (nonspeaking)
ZERA — Koḥav's brother.	SHOMER'S SHEPHERDS — (nonspeaking)
A'FAR — Maskila's and Tzelem's younger son, brother-in-law of Cain.	WEAVER 1
ESEV — Deshe's twin. Shomer's wife.	WEAVER 2
DESHE — Esev's twin. A'far's wife.	WEAVER 3
EVE — Cain's mother, Adam's mate, Maskila's best friend forever.	Other WEAVERS — (nonspeaking)
MAVDIL — Koḥav's father.	ANGEL 1
	ANGEL 2
	Other ANGELS — (nonspeaking)
	BABY 1 (later TODDLER) — Daughter of Neshama. (nonspeaking)
	BABY 2 — Daughter of Adam and Eve. (nonspeaking)
	BABY 3 — Daughter of Cain and Rakia.

ACT I

COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH

(MASKILA and her FAMILY sit by the campfire.)

MASKILA

AFTER A HARD DAY ON THE MOUNTAIN,
AFTER A HARD DAY WEAVING CLOTH,
AFTER A HARD DAY DOIN' COUNTIN',
COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH.

COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH.
COME AND REST WITH FRIENDS AND KIN.
COME AND SIP A CUP OF BROTH.
A PEACEFUL LIFE AS EVER BEEN.

OH, TZELEM!

TZELEM

YES, DEAR.

MASKILA

YOU TELL 'EM . . .

TZELEM

YES, DEAR.

MASKILA

. . . A STORY, SINCE YOU ARE THE FATHER.
DEAR TZELEM I WOULDN'T REQUEST IT
IF I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE A BOTHER.
DEAR TZELEM.

TZELEM

(Waltz tempo now.)

MASKILA
I JUST MET A
GIRL NAMED MA-
SKILA

MASKILA

What're you saying, Tzelem? You didn't just meet me! I asked you to tell a nice story! How about a joke?

TZELEM

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SOUND I EVER HEARD:
MASKILA . . . MASKILA, MASKILA, MASKILA . . .

MASKILA

Tzelem!

TZELEM

Maskila! . . . (Pause.) . . . Would you care to dance?

(TZELEM holds out his hand to MASKILA. She takes it and they begin to dance.)

YOU PICK THE
DANCE, two, three.
I'LL LET YOU
LEAD, two, three.
JUST KEEP ME
OUT OF THE
FIRE.

(They stop dancing and the music stops. They move away from the fire.)

TZELEM

That's better. Now where were we?

(The music resumes.)

TZELEM

Oh, yeah.

(They begin to dance again.)

YOU ARE MY
QUEEN, two, three.
YOU STEAL THE
SCENE, two, three.
YOU ARE THE
GIRL OF MY
DREAMS, two, three.
One, two, three.

YOU MAKE ME
QUAKE, two, three.
MAKE MY BONES
ACHE, two, three

(The dancing gets off kilter and TZELEM hobbles away from MASKILA,
but continues singing without skipping a beat.)

I THINK THAT
I'VE HAD E-
NUFF, two, three
One, two, three.

(The music stops. TZELEM hobbles.)

TZELEM

One, two, three. One, two, three. One, two, three. One, two, three.

MASKILA

Tzelem!

TZELEM

Yes, Maskila.

MASKILA

You're still counting.

TZELEM

I know, dear, two, three.

MASKILA

Well, stop it! We're not dancing anymore!

TZELEM

I'm dancing in my head.

MASKILA

Go sit down.

He's a good man, my Tzelem. He has a bad back. But he gave me four fine children.

AFTER A HARD DAY ON THE MOUNTAIN,
AFTER A HARD DAY WEAVING CLOTH,
AFTER A HARD DAY DOIN' COUNTIN',
COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH.

COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH.
COME AND REST WITH FRIENDS AND KIN.
COME AND SIP A CUP OF BROTH.
A PEACEFUL LIFE AS EVER BEEN.

(MASKILA beckons SHOMER to join her.)

MY OLDEST SON IS SHOMER
HE'S THE WATCHMAN FOR OUR FLOCK.
HIS BROTHER AND HIS SISTERS,
HE'LL WATCH THEM LIKE A HAWK

SHOMER

(Whispering.)

Mom, you always embarrass me.

MASKILA

WHY EMBARRASSED, SHOMER?
I'D THINK THAT YOU'D BE PROUD.
THIS SHYNESS GETS YOU NOWHERE.
IT'S NO SIN TO SING OUT LOUD.

(MASKILA beckons A'FAR and RO'EH to join her.)

JUST ASK A'FAR YOUR BROTHER.

A'FAR LOOKS UP TO YOU.
I WOULDN'T WANT ANOTHER.
YOU'RE LOYAL AND YOU'RE TRUE.

JUST ASK THE ORPHAN BOY RO'EH.
YOU TOOK HIM UNDER YOUR WING.
HE'S LIKE A SON TO YOU, OH YEAH.
HE OWES YOU EVERYTHING.

SHOMER

Yes, mom. C'mon boys, we've got an early day tomorrow.

(SHOMER leads the boys A'FAR and RO'EH away from the fire.)

MASKILA

AFTER A HARD DAY ON THE MOUNTAIN,
AFTER A HARD DAY WEAVING CLOTH,
AFTER A HARD DAY DOIN' COUNTIN',
COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH.

COME NEAR THE FIRE LIKE A MOTH.
COME AND REST WITH FRIENDS AND KIN.
COME AND SIP A CUP OF BROTH.
A PEACEFUL LIFE AS EVER BEEN.

(MASKILA beckons NESHAMA and RAKIA to join her.)

MY ELDEST DAUGHTER IS NESHAMA.
SHE'S BEAUTY WITH A SOUL.

RAKIA

HER LOFTY SOUL CREATING DRAMA,

(NESHAMA silently warns RAKIA.)

RAKIA

I HOPE I GET TO PLAY A ROLE.

NESHAMA

MY LOVELY SISTER'S FINE IDEA,
I LOVE IT TO THE SKY.
I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT RAKIA.

I COULDN'T TELL YOU WHY.

MASKILA

Neshama! Rakia!

NESHAMA and RAKIA

(Together.)

Yes, mom?

MASKILA

Be nice.

NESHAMA and RAKIA

(Together.)

Yes, mom.

MASKILA

THOUGH SONS ARE NICE, MY GIRLS INSPIRE.
I LOVE TO WATCH THEM GROW.
ATTRACTING BOYS LIKE MOTHS TO FIRE . . .

(Music momentarily stops.)

MASKILA

That would be you, Koḥav.

(MASKILA beckons KOḤAV to join her, but he only stands.)

KOḤAV

Yes, ma'am.

MASKILA

(Aside to the audience.)

If you want to know the truth, I wouldn't give two skins for this kid. Koḥav's a rough one. And I don't like that. Shomer can't stand him. But he's had an eye on Neshama since they were babies. And I think she's sweet on him, too.

(To KOHAV.)

I just wanted everyone to see you, Koḥav. You can sit down, now.

KOHAV

Yes, ma'am.

(KOHAV sits. Music resumes.)

MASKILA

ATTRACTING BOYS LIKE MOTHS TO FIRE.
HMM HMM HMM HMM HMM HMM.

Did I miss anyone?

(NESHAMA and RAKIA silently indicate no.)

RO'EH

Yes, ma'am!

(RO'EH runs forward.)

MASKILA

I think I have them all, son.

RO'EH

No, ma'am. You don't.

MASKILA

Well, don't tell me! . . . Let me see.

THERE'S ME, MASKILA.

ALL

THERE'S YOU, MASKILA.

MASKILA

HUSBAND TZELEM.

ALL

FATHER TZELEM.

MASKILA

THERE'S SHOMER, A'FAR, AND RO'EH.

ALL

SHOMER, A'FAR, AND RO'EH.

MASKILA

NESHAMA, RAKIA, KOHAV.

ALL

NESHAMA, RAKIA, KOHAV.

MASKILA

THAT'S ALL THAT I KNOW.
I LEFT NOBODY OUT.

ALL

THAT'S ALL THAT WE KNOW.
SHE LEFT NOBODY OUT.

RO'EH

You left out my friend Cain!

(Music ends on a discordant note.)

MASKILA

Cain?

RO'EH

My friend Cain!

(MASKILA stands stunned while a murmur grows in the crowd.)

VILLAGER 1

I HEARD HE KILLED HIS BROTHER.

VILLAGER 2

OH, NO!

VILLAGER 3

I HEARD HE KILLED HIS BROTHER.

VILLAGER 4

OH, MY!

(VILLAGERS and FAMILY draw near to hear MASKILA's story.)

MASKILA

YES, HE DID KILL HIS BROTHER.

VILLAGERS

OH MY!

MASKILA

AND HE WANTED TO MARRY MY DAUGHTER.

KOḤAV

OH MY!

(Villagers dance.)

MASKILA

A MOTHER'S DREAD TO LOSE A CHILD
A BANE, A HEX, A JINX, A CURSE.
BY MURDER IT WOULD DRIVE ME WILD
BY BROTHER . . . INFINITELY WORSE.

YES, HE DID KILL HIS BROTHER.
IT HAPPENED. AND IT MAKES ME CRY.

(Music stops.)

MASKILA

Ro'eh, a boy who kills his brother . . . it's not a good thing to have in a family.

(Music resumes. Villagers dance.)

RO'EH

I found him. Remember?

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT SHEEP? (REV.)

(The scene shifts to the past.

Mythic lights up. The bleating of sheep is heard. CAIN enters followed by several "sheep." As CAIN approaches The Spring, the "sheep" approach the water, as well, to drink. CAIN drinks from the water, exhausted by the trek from Eden. He removes a pack from his back, sets it down with his walking stick, and begins to inspect his environment. It is new to him. It is a windy night with heat lightning and thunder.)

CAIN

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT SHEEP?
WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT WILDERNESS?
NOTHING TO SAY AS I WEEP.
NO ONE TO PITY MY BITTERNESS.

IT'S BAD THAT I MURDERED MY BROTHER.
I'LL NEVER RE-VISIT MY FATHER AND MOTHER.
ALONE IN THE WORLD WITH NO OTHER.
ALONE IN A WORLD WITH NO OTHER.

(RO'EH enters at a distance and becomes aware of CAIN as CAIN continues to sing.)

CAIN

I HAD A FAMILY ONCE IN EDEN. THEY WERE ALL I EVER KNEW.
IN A CANYON ON A RIVER WHERE FLOWERS, TREES, AND CATTAILS GREW.
FLOCKS OF SHEEP WOULD GRAZE THE GRASSES, BLEATING ECHOES COMING FROM AFAR,
FISHES JUMPING IN THE RAPIDS, IN THE BRIGHT SUN A LIVE AND SILVERY SPARK.

FATHER FISHING, MOM'S CARESS
BROTHERS PLAYING, MORE OR LESS.

(RO'EH draws closer. Lights up on ABEL in the mist above as CAIN sings to him of their adventures. RO'EH does not see ABEL. Throughout the show, only CAIN sees ABEL.)

I RECALL THOSE FOGGY MORNINGS WHEN YOU AND I WOULD WAKE AND SLIP AWAY.
WE WOULD CLIMB UP TO THE DESERT LOOKING BACK AT END OF DAY.
DOWN BELOW THE LAND WOULD SHIMMER IN THE FAILING LIGHT OF DUSK.
GREENS AND GOLDS ALONG THE RIVER, MAJESTIC SCENES, OUR VOICES HUSHED.

ALL AROUND WERE CLIFFS AND MOUNTAINS, BARREN ROCK OUT TO THE SKY.
NO ONE GOES AND NO ONE COMING, NO ONE ON THE OTHER SIDE.
BIRDS ALL FLY ABOVE THE CANYON, YELLOW HAZE THE DESERT SHROUD.
DOWN BELOW ALL KINDS OF CREATURES, FAR AWAY THERE'S NOT A CLOUD.

FATHER FISHING, MOM'S CARESS
BROTHERS PLAYING, MORE OR LESS.

(RO'EH draws closer.)

DAD CASTING FROM THE REEDS AT DAWNING, WADING IN THE STREAM UP TO HIS WAIST.
MOM WRAPS THE FISH IN LEAVES WITH SPICES AND WATCHES IT COOK UPON THE FIRE
ME AND ABEL IN THE FIRELIGHT, GAMES OF CHASE OR BEING CHASED
SCARY STORIES IN THE STARLIGHT, COZY BEDS WHEN WE GROW TIRED.

FATHER FISHING, MOM'S CARESS
BROTHERS PLAYING, MORE OR LESS.

(Lightning and thunder increase, as ABEL puts on a white beard to play the role of GOD.)

ABEL

(as GOD—in a raspy/whispery voice barely heard above the thunder)

Cain, where is Abel, thy brother?

(CAIN speaks to ABEL. RO'EH tries to see who CAIN is talking to, but sees no one.)

CAIN

I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?

ABEL

What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.

And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

(Lights down on ABEL. Lightning and thunder diminish as it never rains on this side of the mountain.)

CAIN

My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. And it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

(RO'EH draws closer. He lets loose a rock slide, which CAIN hears and grabs his walking stick as if it were a weapon. Ro'eh silently laughs. Cain relaxes. And Ro'eh lets loose another rock slide, to which CAIN jumps and looks around again waving his stick. Finding nothing, CAIN puts down his stick.)

CAIN

THERE WERE FOUR PEOPLE IN THE WORLD AND I KILLED ONE OF THEM.
NOW THERE'S THREE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD AND THE OTHER TWO HATE ME.
WERE WE THE ONLY ONES? AM I NOW ALL ALONE?
NO MOM, NO DAD, NO BROTHER. MY WORLD IS GONE? IS THERE ANOTHER?

THERE ARE THREE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD BUT THE OTHER TWO ARE GONE—SOMEWHERE.
EDEN'S GONE NOW AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY WENT—THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW ME.
I'D LIKE TO TAKE IT BACK. AND DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN.
JUST TO BE BACK WITH MY FAMILY. JUST TO BE BACK WITH MY FAMILY.

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT SHEEP?
WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT WILDERNESS?
NOTHING TO SAY AS I WEEP.
NO ONE TO PITY MY BITTERNESS.

I FIND HERE A TRICKLE OF WATER.
THE DESERT IS DRY AND A WIDE EXPANSE.
I WONDER IF ANYBODY'S OUT THERE.
MY LIFE IS A MATTER OF CHANCE.

(RO'EH steps behind a rock and as CAIN ends his song, the sound of a boy peeing on the ground is heard. Recognizing the sound, CAIN picks up his stick and prepares to attack whomever he finds.)

CAIN

(rushing at RO'EH swinging his stick)

Aayyii!!!

RO'EH
(crouching down with arms crossed to protect his head)

Don't hit me!

CAIN
(stopping the attack, lowering the stick)

How many are with you?

RO'EH

Many! I am just a boy!

CAIN
(raises the stick again)

Where?

(RO'EH silently points toward the mountain.)

CAIN

I've killed a man!

RO'EH
(in a low voice)

Wow!

CAIN
(lowering the stick)

He was my brother, so I wouldn't hesitate to kill . . . uh

RO'EH
(cringing)

Me?

CAIN

Another.

RO'EH
(an even lower voice this time)

Wow!

CAIN
(waves his stick again)

I have a mark. You see?

(CAIN points to his forehead. RO'EH looks but sees nothing but CAIN's forehead.)

CAIN

It's a sign . . .

RO'EH
(puzzled)

What?

CAIN
(flustered)

. . . that you shouldn't kill me.

RO'EH

Wow!

(CAIN becomes agitated, raises his stick, and begins to look around for others.)

CAIN

It's a sign that you shouldn't kill me!

RO'EH

I won't kill you.

CAIN

And the others?

RO'EH

No one will kill you.

CAIN

Then tell me . . . where are they?

RO'EH

Will you put down your stick?

CAIN

If you tell me.

RO'EH
(points to the mountain)

They are at the top of the mountain.

CAIN

And you are here alone?

RO'EH

You said you would put down your stick.

(CAIN puts down his stick.)

RO'EH

Yes, I'm here alone. Are you here alone?

CAIN

There *is* no one else.

RO'EH

Who were you talking to?

CAIN

It was my brother.

RO'EH

I thought you killed your brother.

CAIN

I did. My brother made fun of me. He always did that. And I hit him. I always did that, too, and nothing ever happened before. But this time, he fell down and never got up. I am afraid that “others” will do the same to me. Abel always hit me, too.

RO’EH
(brightly)

My parents are dead.

CAIN

Did you kill them?

RO’EH

No. No one killed them.

CAIN

Then how did they get, uh, dead?

RO’EH

They just got sick and died.

CAIN

Wow!

RO’EH

It happens. You know?

CAIN
(puts his hands over his ears)

I don’t want to hear about it.

(CAIN walks away from Ro’eh toward the spring. RO’EH follows. CAIN is weeping. RO’EH is silent as he follows behind. It is pre-dawn. CAIN sits on a rock beside the spring with his feet in the water. RO’EH sits down, too. RO’EH splashes the water with his feet.)

CAIN

Would you stop that?

(RO'EH splashes the water again.)

CAIN

Stop that!

(RO'EH splashes the water again, this time as hard as he can, drenching CAIN and himself. CAIN lunges at RO'EH but RO'EH slips into the water and a splash fight begins.)

RO'EH
(taunting)

I'm so afraid, you-who-has-killed-a-man.

(CAIN catches RO'EH. RO'EH struggles to get free.)

CAIN

I'm going to kill you, you little . . .

RO'EH

Please don't. I have a mark.

(CAIN suddenly lets RO'EH go, swims back to the bank, and gets out and lies down on the bank. RO'EH follows him.)

RO'EH

Do you have a name?

CAIN

Yeah.

RO'EH

Mine's Ro'eh. Means "shepherd." Because I herd sheep. What's yours?

CAIN

My name is Cain.

RO'EH

Hello, Cain. Would you be my friend?

CAIN

What's that?

RO'EH

I said, would you be my friend?

CAIN

I heard you. What is a "friend"?

RO'EH
(puzzled)

You know! Two people who like each other and help each other.

CAIN

You mean a brother?

RO'EH

It's like that, I guess. I don't have a brother.

CAIN

Neither do I.

RO'EH

I'm sorry, Cain. I don't think we can be brothers. (Thinks for a moment.) We can be friends.

CAIN

Yes. (Thinks for a moment.) I promise I won't kill you.

RO'EH

Why don't you come with me to my village? There's some nice people there who took me in after my parents died. (Suddenly realizes.) Oh, I'm going to be late. Shomer will be looking for me. Today's the shearing festival. C'mon! Let's go!

(Lights out.)

AT THE END OF A LONG COLD SEASON

(Dim lights of dawn up on NESHAMA and RAKIA downstage. The sound of a ram's horn pierces the dawn silence. A small phalanx of SHEPHERDS enter.)

ALL SHEPHERDS

AT THE END OF A LONG COLD SEASON,
WHEN WE'VE EARNED OUR KEEP IN FULL,
COMES THE SPRING AND NO MORE FREEZIN'
AND OUR SHEEP ARE HEAVY WITH WOOL.

(WEAVERS enter. SHEPHERDS separate into SHOMER'S SHEPHERDS and KOHAV'S SHEPHERDS. The WEAVERS watch the SHEPHERD's boasts.)

SHOMER'S SHEPHERDS

GIVE ME A SHARP, SHARP SHEARING KNIFE
FOR THE HONOR OF MY FAMILY
SHEARING MORE WOOL THAN YOU'VE SEEN IN YOUR LIFE
FROM EVERY RAM AND EWE AND LAMB-Y.

KOHAV'S SHEPHERDS

WE'D LIKE TO SEE YOUR PILE OF FLEECE
'CAUSE WHATEVER YOU SHEAR, WE'LL TOP IT.
SO WORRY NOT, WE'LL LEAVE YOU AT PEACE.
'CAUSE THERE'S SIMPLY NO WAY TO STOP IT.

WEAVERS

YOU SILLY BOYS, YOU THINK THAT LIFE REVOLVES AROUND YOUR CONTEST.
WHEN DAY IS DONE, YOUR WORK IS THROUGH, THAT'S WHEN OURS BEGIN.
WE CLEAN YOUR WOOL AND SPIN THE YARN AND WEAVE AND GET YOU DRESSED.
AND IN BETWEEN WE FEED YOU ALL AND, IF THERE'S TIME, WE SIN.

(ALL laugh. WEAVERS and SHEPHERDS dance upstage as the lights dim.
Downstage, lights up on RO'EH and CAIN as they enter, coming home
from the Spring.)

RO'EH

. . . And every year, each family picks the weakest or youngest from the other family to shear the tenth sheep. They say that this year it could be me.

CAIN

I don't understand. Why would they do that?

(RO'EH sees SHOMER with his shepherds.)

RO'EH

(To CAIN) There's Shomer. (Calls out to SHOMER) Shomer!

(CAIN is the rube in the "big city." He is dazzled by all the activity.)

CAIN

(To himself.) So many people.

(SHOMER sees RO'EH and walks toward him as preparation for the Shearing Festival continues in the background. RO'EH grabs CAIN by the hand and pulls him toward SHOMER. CAIN is still absorbed by all the people and all the activity.)

SHOMER

Where have you been? You have work to do.

RO'EH

This is the man from the Spring I've been telling you about. (To CAIN) There's nothing to be afraid of. Shake his hand.

(CAIN awkwardly reaches for SHOMER's arm and shakes it, not as a greeting ritual, but in literal compliance with RO'EH's request—shaking it like a pom-pom from the elbow. SHOMER steps back from CAIN, also awkwardly, and stands away from him.)

SHOMER

I told you last night we'd be getting an early start.

RO'EH

His name is Cain. I was hoping he could stay with us.

(A'FAR enters and pulls SHOMER upstage to resolve some issue with his SHEPHERDS.)

SHOMER
(turning toward CAIN)

Welcome Cain. Make sure your friend here gets to work.

(SHOMER and A'FAR go upstage to direct the activity there.)

CAIN

Who was that? Your father?

RO'EH

I told you my father is dead. That's Shomer. He took me in after my parents died.

CAIN

Then he is your friend?

RO'EH

Never thought of it that way. Yes! I guess he is. Let's get to work.

(WEAVERS stopped their work when they saw CAIN. They now come together and walk around CAIN, checking him out. They giggle and whisper with each other. CAIN notices the attention and checks himself out, worried that they are noticing something wrong about him.)

CAIN
(To RO'EH, alarmed)

What is happening, Ro'eh?

RO'EH

Don't be afraid.

CAIN

They look different.

(CAIN motions, putting his hands in front of his chest to show where he lacks breasts.)

RO'EH

The girls?

CAIN

The what?

RO'EH

The girls?

CAIN

We did not have such lovely creatures in Eden.

(WEAVERS giggle.)

RO'EH

I thought you said you lived with your mom.

CAIN

She is not like this.

RO'EH

She was when she was young. Girls grow up to be moms. They are different in other ways, too.

(RO'EH grabs his crotch. CAIN doesn't understand.)

CAIN

And they are called girls? Not friends?

RO'EH

They are girls. They could also be friends.

MY SISTER/BROTHER DOESN'T KNOW SHE'S/HE'S IN LOVE

(Lights dim on CAIN and RO'EH. Lights up on the group of girls, including NESHAMA and RAKIA. RAKIA steps out of the group. The rest pantomime to the song, pointing at NESHAMA and CAIN. KOHAV visibly notices the commotion.)

RAKIA

MY SISTER DOESN'T KNOW SHE'S IN LOVE.
HE'S THE NEW BOY, THAT'S THE TRUTH, WELL SORT OF.
SHE'S HAD ONE NASTY BOY, AND NOW HERE'S ANOTHER.
THAT KIND OF LUCK I NEVER HEARD OF.

MY SISTER DOESN'T KNOW SHE'S IN LOVE.
IF I WERE HER, AND I'M NOT, I'D GIVE THE OLD ONE A SHOVE.
YOU BETTER NOT TELL THIS TO HER BOYFRIEND.
YOU BETTER NOT TELL THIS TO HER.

I MAY BE TOO YOUNG TO APPRECIATE
THE WAY THAT MY SISTER WILL HESITATE.
BUT I KNOW THE FEELING SHE IS FEELING.
I'M NOT TOO YOUNG TO COMMISERATE.

MY SISTER DOESN'T KNOW SHE'S IN LOVE.

ADA

Girl, it's not just your sister.

RAKIA

What are you talking about?

(ABEL enters in a cloud of mist. Action stops except for him and CAIN. As
ABEL sings, CAIN circles RAKIA and NESHAMMA, looking them up and
down.)

ABEL

MY BROTHER DOESN'T KNOW HE'S IN LOVE.
HE'S THE NEW BOY, THAT'S THE TRUTH, WELL SORT OF.
HE'S NEVER SEEN A GIRL EXCEPT HIS MOTHER.
THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF LOVE I SPEAK OF.

MY BROTHER DOESN'T KNOW HE'S IN LOVE.
IF I WERE STILL ALIVE, I WOULD GIVE HIM A SHOVE.
LOVE, OR HATE—THOSE ARE THE WORLDLY EMOTIONS.
WE DIDN'T FEEL THEM IN EDEN.

I MAY BE THE LUCKY ONE. I CAN JUST OBSERVE
THE WAYS MY BROTHER LACKS THE NERVE.
IT'S NOTHING NEW. I'VE SEEN IT.
AN ACCIDENT THAT IS UNDESERVED.

MY BROTHER DOESN'T KNOW HE'S IN LOVE.

CAIN

NO, I'M NOT.
WHAT'S IT MEAN?
COULD IT BE?
NO!
FOR IF I WERE IN LOVE,
BACK IN EDEN I'D BE.

(ABEL disappears into the mist. Activity on stage resumes. KOHAV
comes downstage to talk to the girls.)

KOHAV

Neshama? Rakia? (Then, to RO'EH.) And you, lamb-fleece, who's your new friend?

RO'EH

What does he matter to you?

KOHAV

I saw him looking at my girl. (To NESHAMA.) You are my girl?

NESHAMA
(coyly)

If you're nice to me.

KOHAV
(To CAIN.)

I'm always nice to her. I have work to do if we're going to have a festival today.

(KOHAV turns and returns to direct the work of his SHEPHERDS.)

NESHAMA
(To RAKIA and the other WEAVERS.)

We have work to do, too. Let's go.

(NESHAMA, RAKIA, and the other WEAVERS exit.)

CAIN

Who was that?

RO'EH

That's Kohav. He likes Neshama. He's the head of the other family. Like Shomer is for our family.

CAIN

Oh! He's a friend!

RO'EH

No. I'd say he's your enemy.

CAIN

What's an enemy?

RO'EH

It's the opposite of a friend. An enemy hates you and will hurt you if they can.

CAIN

Oh! Like a brother.

SHOMER
(From a distance.)

Ro'eh! You have work to do.

RO'EH

I better go

SHOMER

And bring your friend.

FESTIVAL DAYS

RAKIA

OH, HOW I RELISH THESE FESTIVAL DAYS!
BRIGHT COLORS, GOOD FOOD, AND DRINKS THAT AMAZE ME.
OH, HOW RELISH THESE FESTIVAL DAYS!
A YOUNG MAN, A SWEET GIRL, THAT'S YOU IN A HAZE.

NESHAMA

BUT NO TIME FOR HAZE OR THINKING OF BOYS.
THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE, FOOD AND DRINK TO BE MADE.
THE MEN WILL COME SOON WITH THE FLOCK, WHAT A NOISE!
I HEAR IT NOW. HERE COMES THE PARADE.

TALE OF A EWE

(The sound of a ram's horn. SHEPHERDS bring in SHEEP to two shearing areas. WEAVERS enter to cheer for the two families. As MASKILA sings, SHOMER and KOHAV shear their SHEEP creating two piles of wool.)

MASKILA

SINCE MY YOUTH, I'VE HEARD A TALE,
AN OLD TALE, YES, BUT TRUE,
I HEARD IT FROM MY GRAND-MAMMA,
SHE HEARD IT FROM A EWE.

HER MATE WAS A STRONG AND BATTLING RAM,
HER MATE WAS NOT OUTDONE.
A FRIEND OF MAN, THEY WALKED AS ONE,
AS BROTHERS THEY WOULD RUN.

ON HILLSIDES AND ON MOUNTAIN TOPS
THIS FEARSOME PAIR DID PROWL.
'TIL STORM CLOUDS GREW AND SNOWFLAKES FLEW,
WHILE ICY GALES DID HOWL.

NO FIRE, NO FOOD, NO PASSAGE HOME,
JUST HUNGER AND THE COLD.
THE RAM WAS DONE, NO FLEECE LIKE NOW,
NO BLANKET TO UNFOLD.

SO MAN SAID TO RAM, "PLEASE TAKE MY CLOAK."
WE'LL SHARE IT AND STAY WARM.
IN GRATITUDE,
I'LL SHARE MY COAT,
I'LL ALWAYS KEEP YOU WARM.

YOU ARE MY FRIEND
FOREVER MORE,
MY FRIEND FOREVER MORE.

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT GIRLS

CAIN

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT GIRLS?
WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT JEALOUSY?
HERE THERE ARE SO MANY,
IN EDEN ONLY ONE.
SHE WAS MY MOM.

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT GIRLS?
WHY WOULD THEY MAKE KOHAV JEALOUS?
HERE THEY WEAVE THE WOOL.
WE HAD NO WOOL IN EDEN,
MY MOTHER WASN'T WEAVIN',
WE HARDLY WORE A STITCH OF CLOTHES.

(RO'EH enters running.)

RO'EH
(To CAIN.)

Shomer's shears are getting dull.

CAIN

What?

RO'EH

Shomer's shears are getting dull. We can't find any others. Come help us find some shears!

(RO'EH runs into the crowd. CAIN follows. We see them running back and forth searching.)

(CAIN runs from the crowd and holding a sharp shearing blade aloft.)

CAIN

I found one! I found one!

(Crowd cheers. Festive music plays.)

(Lights up on SHOMER and KOHAV standing next to their respective piles of wool. SHOMER's is visibly larger.)

ELDER

And the winners are . . . SHOMER! (cheers) . . . and KOḤAV! (cheers) . . . It's now time to pick the shearers of the tenth sheep! (cheers) Koḥav, you may choose from Shomer's clan!

RO'EH
(to CAIN)

This is it!

KOḤAV

I choose the new boy Cain! (cheers and laughter)

CAIN
(To Ro'eh)

I thought you were going to be the one.

RO'EH

He can't pick you. You're not part of the family.

(SHOMER walks to CAIN and hands him the shearing blade.)

RO'EH

I guess you are now.

ELDER

Shomer, you may choose from Koḥav's clan!

SHOMER

I choose the boy Ayd! (cheers and laughter)

(ABEL (dressed as Ayd) steps forward. KOḤAV hands his shearing blade to ABEL. Two sheep are brought in from the pens. The crowd gathers round.)

RO'EH
(to CAIN laughing)

Look at him! You're going to win this!

CAIN

I don't know! He reminds me of my brother! How do I start?

RO'EH

You're asking me? Weren't you watching Shomer? Shomer!

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT SHEEP (REPRISE)

CAIN

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT SHEEP?
SHEPHERDING LAMBIES WAS ABEL'S JOB?
WHAT DO I DO NOW?
I WASN'T WATCHING.
WHAT DO I DO NOW?
THIS GUY LOOKS JUST LIKE MY BROTHER.

RO'EH

BELIEVE ME. HE ISN'T YOUR BROTHER.

CAIN

And I can win?

RO'EH

YOU CAN WIN.

CAIN

I CAN WIN.

KOHAV

Does the family of Shomer forfeit the contest?

(ABEL (as Ayd) holds his shearing blade in the air and laughs.)

SHOMER

(To KOHAV.) Cain is ready. (To CAIN.) Pull the blade toward you. Get the belly wool before you work on the sides and back. It keeps the ewe calmer.

CAIN

What about . . .

ABLE (as AYD)

You? It will keep you calmer, too.

KOHAV

Enough with the chatter.

ELDER

If the boys are ready . . .

(CAIN and ABEL (as Ayd) hold up their blades.)

Begin!

(ABEL (as Ayd) rushes at his sheep. The sheep steps away and ABEL falls.
Crowd laughs. CAIN bends to look under his sheep.)

A WEAVER

You have to touch the sheep!

(The crowd roars. CAIN reaches out to hesitantly touch the sheep. The crowd roars again.)

ABEL (as AYD)

Watch me!

SHOMER

That's the way!

(The process continues. CAIN and ABEL clumsily shear their respective sheep with encouragement and derision from the crowd. CAIN's pile of wool grows faster than ABEL's, but he begins to slow down.)

RO'EH

Maybe it's the blade!

CAIN

I think it's getting dull.

SHOMER

Throw it down! We'll give you a sharp one.

(CAIN throws down the blade and RO'EH takes a new blade from SHOMER and hands it to CAIN. KOHAV walks over and picks up the rejected blade, striding toward SHOMER to return it. But he stops to examine the blade. He motions for his father to come examine it and they talk together. The boys continue shearing the sheep.)

(CAIN steps back from his sheep.)

CAIN

I think . . . I'm done!

(Crowd cheers, gathers around CAIN, and lifts him into the air. The Elder holds the shepherd's crook in the air. SHOMER takes the crook.)

RO'EH

I knew you could do it!

WEAVER

What do you think about Cain now, Kohav? (crowd laughs)

KOHAV

You want to know what I think? (crowd becomes silent) I think that Cain sheared his sheep with a stolen blade. This is it! (holds blade in the air) This is my blade, made by my father.

RO'EH

What does it matter?

SHOMER

I gave him that blade. Come here son.

(The crowd lowers CAIN to the ground. SHOMER hands the shepherd's crook to CAIN.)

SHOMER

Everyone saw. I gave the blade I used to finish the ninth sheep to Cain. That is the blade he used.

KOḤAV

That may be. But that only makes you the thief, Shomer, rather than Cain. I mean you no ill will, Shomer, but Cain wouldn't have won this contest without that blade. My blade.

(CAIN runs from KOḤAV. SHOMER starts to pursue him. KOḤAV stands in his way. The crowd reacts with anger toward KOḤAV. SHOMER catches up to CAIN.)

SHOMER

Easy son. You're not in trouble. My family will still take care of you. We are your family now.

CAIN

Are you in trouble? On account of the shearing blade?

SHOMER

Yes, Cain. But it will be over before you know it.

KOḤAV

It is the law and custom of our people.

CAIN

What are you talking about?

KOḤAV

Shomer must serve me as my slave as punishment for six years.

CAIN

On account of the shearing blade that I was using!

SHOMER

It is I who should have taken care to use my own blades. I gained an unfair advantage.

CAIN

You have welcomed me as a brother, as you have done for Ro'eh. I, who killed my own brother, must pay in your place.

CROWD

He killed his brother?

MASKILA

He killed his brother?
A MOTHER'S DREAD TO LOSE A CHILD
A BANE, A HEX, A JINX, A CURSE.
BY MURDER IT WOULD DRIVE ME WILD
BY BROTHER . . . INFINITELY WORSE.

KOḤAV

I have no cause to enslave you because of your brother.

CAIN

But it was I who took the blade and gave it to Shomer in the first place.

KOḤAV

Very well, then.

SHOMER

You have no cause to do this.

CAIN

You would have paid for this action in my place, though you must know that you never took the blade from anyone but me.

KOḤAV

Come with me, then.

(NESHAMA emerges from the crowd.)

CAIN

WHAT DID I KNOW ABOUT SHEEP?
WHAT DID I KNOW ABOUT ANYTHING?
SOMEHOW I'VE BROKEN THEIR LAWS.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO TAKE YOUR BLADE.

BUT I'M HERE TO TAKE THE BLAME.
JUST BECAUSE.

NESHAMA

He didn't know, Koḥav!

KOḤAV
(to NESHAMA)

You have been my companion since you were a child. You know that this is how it must be.

(to CAIN)

Come!

(CAIN follows KOḤAV as he exits.)

RO'EH

You will still be my friend, Cain!

ENSLAVEMENT

(KOḤAV enters with CAIN. RO'EH follows and remains at a distance.)

KOḤAV

I want you to bring me your flock, for what you own is now mine.

CAIN

Yes.

KOḤAV

Yes, what?

CAIN

Yes is all that I can think of to say.

KOḤAV

Do you not know how a slave addresses its master?

CAIN

I do not. I do not know what a slave does, though I think it must not be pleasant if being a slave is punishment for a crime.

KOḤAV

When you are a slave, you speak to your master thusly: “yes, sir” and “no, sir.”

(CAIN sits on a rock.)

KOḤAV

And you stand in my presence unless I say you may sit.

(CAIN stands.)

KOḤAV

Do you understand?

CAIN

Yes, sir.

KOḤAV

Good. Now when I say you must say “yes, sir” and “no, sir,” you must understand that when I give you a command, you must always say “yes, sir” and never “no, sir.”

CAIN

No, sir.

KOḤAV

What did I just say?

CAIN

Yes, sir. I meant “no, sir, I will never say ‘no, sir’” . . . I mean . . .

KOḤAV

Make sure you never. And always obey my command and do what I say when I command you.

CAIN

Yes, sir. You are like my father, then?

KOḤAV

No, not like your father, for you are not my son. I am your master. And you have no other master. You say that being a slave must be unpleasant if it is a punishment. But punishments are meant to repay a debt of guilt. When the debt is paid, you will be free again. If you obey my commands, you may find that I am not so unpleasant as Shomer.

CAIN

But . . .

KOḤAV

Just say “no, sir.”

CAIN

Yes, sir. I mean, no, sir, master.

KOḤAV

And one more thing. You will not look at Shomer’s sister.

CAIN

Which sister?

KOḤAV

You know who I mean. You will not look at, nor will you speak to Neshama.

CAIN

No, sir.

KOḤAV

You will not.

CAIN

Yes, sir.

KOḤAV

And you will not appear to be sad around her.

CAIN

Yes, sir. May I look at the other sister?

KOḤAV

That is not my concern.

CAIN

Or appear to be sad?

(MAVDIL enters carrying a large knife and a torch.)

KOḤAV

No. you will not appear to be sad around the sister either.

CAIN

Yes, sir.

KOḤAV

We must now mark you as my slave. Come.

CAIN

Yes, sir.

(KOḤAV silently leads CAIN to a stump and directs him to sit and grasp it. MAVDIL hands his torch to KOḤAV to shed light on CAIN's face.)

MAVDIL

I'll try not to hurt you, son.

(MAVDIL cuts three slits in CAIN'S cheek representing the tears of slavery. RO'EH emerges from hiding and runs offstage crying.)

RO'EH

Shomer!

LIFE IN SHADOW

(Years later. CAIN, now with the mark of slavery on his cheek and showing both the wear and strength of servitude, returns to his hovel and pauses outside.)

CAIN

I SERVE MY MASTER VERY WELL
FROM BREAK OF DAWN TO TWILIGHT.
AND WHEN HE SLEEPS, I SLEEP A SPELL,
THEN LIVE MY PRIVATE LIFE AT NIGHT.

SOME CALL THEM DREAMS, I CALL SOME FRIEND.
A FLEETING TOUCH IS ALL I HAVE, NO
REST, FOR REST IS NOT AN END.
I HAVE TO LIVE MY LIFE IN SHADOW.

(CAIN enters hovel and lies down to sleep. RO'EH and RAKIA enter.)

RAKIA

Shh!

RO'EH

(Whispering.) Follow me.

(RO'EH furtively enters hovel, RAKIA follows. They feel their way toward CAIN in the dark. RO'EH reaches for RAKIA's hand to lead her.)

RAKIA

I'll be fine.

(RO'EH finds CAIN asleep. RO'EH shakes him.)

RO'EH

(Whisper's urgently.) Cain!

(CAIN rolls over.)

CAIN

Abel?

(RAKIA is lost in the dark.)

RAKIA

Where are you?

RO'EH

I'm over here.

(RAKIA gropes to find RO'EH and CAIN.)

RO'EH

(To CAIN.) Cain, wake up we brought you something.

CAIN

(Groggily.) Abel? . . . Oh . . .

(CAIN realizes that he is being awakened but is still out of it. He tries to get up.)

CAIN

Yes, sir! I'm coming sir!

(RO'EH puts his hand over CAIN's mouth to quiet him. CAIN starts coughing. RAKIA also puts her hand over CAIN's mouth. CAIN bites her.)

RAKIA

Ow!

RO'EH

Quiet!

(KOHAV enters with a torch.)

KOHAV

Who's in here?

(RO'EH grabs RAKIA's hand.)

RO'EH

Let's go.

CAIN

Where?

RO'EH

(To CAIN.) No. You stay here. (To RAKIA.) We'll go out the back way.

(RO'EH and RAKIA exit. KOHAV comes closer.)

KOHAV

Who is here?

CAIN

(Standing.)

(Sleepily.) It is I, sir.

KOHAV

I heard voices.

CAIN

I was asleep. I was having a dream about my brother.

(Scuffling is heard. RO'EH and RAKIA are pushed back into the hovel by KOHAV's SHEPHERD 1, who is carrying a torch.)

KOHAV

Here is your dream.

RO'EH

He didn't know we were coming.

RAKIA

He was asleep.

KOḤAV

You two, keep quiet!

RO'EH

You have no control over me. I am not your slave.

KOḤAV

Your friend is.

RAKIA

You will need my brother's friendship when you ask my father for my sister's hand in marriage.

KOḤAV

You have no cause to worry about how I will treat your friend. If one of my sheep suffers from flies, do I not brush them away? (To KOḤAV's SHEPHERD 1.) Go let Shomer know that they came in the middle of the night. He will understand.

(KOḤAV's SHEPHERD 1 exits.)

KOḤAV

I am concerned about your sister. Did she send you?

RAKIA

No.

KOḤAV

I have heard you talk to your friends about Neshama's feelings about this slave.

RAKIA

Yes, but . . .

KOḤAV

A free woman may not be wed to a slave.

RO'EH

She could wait until the slave is free.

RAKIA

She is not waiting for Cain.

KOḤAV

But you have said so.

RAKIA

I have talked like all girls talk about their sisters to their girlfriends. This talk is meant to tease. It is not meant for boys.

KOḤAV

Then why have you come?

RAKIA

For ourselves alone. Cain is our friend.

RO'EH

I found him.

RAKIA

Neshama knows nothing of this.

KOḤAV

Why should I believe you?

RO'EH

Because it is true.

KOḤAV

The little one says it, so I should believe it. I like that.

RAKIA

A man, who is no longer a boy, would ask the woman who he says he wants to marry. Not her sister.

KOḤAV

I will know before I speak to your brother and your father. Now, leave here. Cain needs to rise and prepare the weapons for our patrol.

(ALL leave CAIN alone.)

CAIN

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT SHAPE, THE SEA WITHOUT LIGHT.
THEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD SAID LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF OUR FIRST DAY.

NESHAMA, IF I ASK YOU TO MARRY

(KOHAV enters. CAIN slaves in the background and is visible throughout the following.)

KOHAV

I know those kids don't like me. But I'm not a bad sort to work for. I wouldn't do anything to hurt their friend. Even if their family didn't hold the key to my happiness.

THEY THINK THAT I'M A MONSTER
WHO SCRAPES AND GETS IN FIGHTS,
BUT I'M JUST A GUY WHO WANTS HER,
WHO DREAMS OF HER AT NIGHT.

NESHAMA, IF I ASK YOU TO MARRY,
WILL YOU THINK OF NO ONE ELSE BUT ME?
NO SLAVE, NESHAMA, WHO BOWS TO MY DECREE,
CAN COME BETWEEN ME AND THEE.

(Lights up on NESHAMA. KOHAV goes to talk to TZELEM in the background. As they talk, MASKILA, SHOMER, RAKIA, RO'EH and others enter.)

NESHAMA

I DON'T LISTEN TO GOSSIP.
FOR TRUTH IT IS A TOSS UP.
WILL HE ASK OR WILL HE NOT?

I CAN'T SAY THAT I DON'T LOVE HIM.
I AM ALWAYS THINKING OF HIM.
WILL HE ASK OR WILL HE NOT?

AND IF HE ASKS, I THINK THAT I MIGHT.
THOUGH I'M SCARED EACH TIME HE GETS IN A FIGHT.
WILL HE ASK OR WILL HE NOT?

WILL I WAIT EACH TIME HE GOES OFF TO WAR?
WILL I SHAKE EACH TIME I GET A KNOCK ON THE DOOR?
WILL HE ASK OR WILL HE NOT?

(MESSENGER is sent from TZELEM to NESHAMA. She returns with the messenger to TZELEM.)

TZELEM

Neshama, my first daughter, “Koḥav, the son of my friend Mavdil has asked my permission that you become his wife.

NESHAMA
(quietly)

Yes, father.

TZELEM

He has given us gifts, which I will accept only if this is what will make you happy.

NESHAMA
(quieter still)

Yes, father.

TZELEM

As you know, Neshama, in this village, I am a wealthy man. So these gifts are of no importance to me if I thought you would not be happy with this man.

(NESHAMA cries quietly.)

TZELEM

So I have inquired of Koḥav to ascertain what he has done to be sure that you would be happy with him and what he has said satisfies me about his beliefs. But I must make inquiry of you before I would agree to your betrothal. So, Neshama, I must speak frankly to you on this matter.

NESHAMA

Yes, father.

TZELEM

You and your sister—and your mother, too, may not think so, but I am aware of things that go on around here. And I have heard talk that you have an eye for Koḥav’s slave boy. I could not agree to this marriage if that is true.

NESHAMA

Father, the girls tease me about him. I have told this to Koḥav. Does he not believe me? I never said that I wanted Cain. To anyone.

TZELEM

But do you want Kohav?

NESHAMA
(coyly)

Yes, father.

TZELEM

And none other.

NESHAMA

And no other, father.

TZELEM

And so it will be done.

(RO'EH, upset, runs out as a wedding party enters.)

STILL A SLAVE

(Scene opens with the revelry of a wedding in the background. CAIN sits in his hovel.)

CAIN

I SERVE MY MASTER VERY WELL
FROM BREAK OF DAWN TO TWILIGHT.
AND WHEN HE SLEEPS, I SLEEP A SPELL,
THEN LIVE MY PRIVATE LIFE AT NIGHT.

SOME CALL THEM DREAMS, I CALL SOME FRIEND.
A FLEETING TOUCH IS ALL I HAD, NO
REST, FOR REST IS NOT AN END.
I HAVE TO LIVE MY LIFE IN SHADOW.

TODAY IT WAS HIS WEDDING DAY.
MY LOVE FOR HER HE FIRST DID TEST.
I'M NOT A RIVAL IN THE WAY.
AND SO IT WAS A DAY OF REST.

BUT NOW THE RESPITE OF THE DAY
IS ENDING AS THE GUESTS DEPART.
INTO MY HUT, FRESH STRAW I LAY
WHERE VISIONS COME INTO MY HEART.

(CAIN enters his hovel. A rustling of straw is heard as he lies down to sleep. RAKIA, appearing as a shadow enters and goes to CAIN.)

RAKIA

Shh.

(RAKIA lays next to CAIN and puts her arms around him. In the dark, RAKIA touches the place on his cheek where the marks of slavery had been cut.)

RAKIA

Are you crying?

CAIN
(His voice breaks.)

No.

(RAKIA kisses CAIN. CAIN kisses RAKIA. Music of the EVENING & MORNING song plays.)

(More rustling is heard in the dark. RO'EH enters. Music abruptly stops.)

RO'EH
(Whispering)

Cain? (Pause.) Cain?

(CAIN kisses RAKIA. CAIN rubs his eyes to dry them.)

CAIN

We're here.

RO'EH

Is someone with you?

RAKIA

I told you I would be coming. You didn't have to come.

RO'EH

Then the three of us can be together! Can you hear Kohav and Neshama from here?

RAKIA

We're not listening. She's my sister.

RO'EH

Some of the boys are listening from behind their tent.

RAKIA

That's terrible! Tell them to go home!

RO'EH

I couldn't do that. It's just too funny.

CAIN

Why don't the three of us take a walk? I can stay only for a little while. I have to get some sleep. I have work to do in the morning. Tomorrow I will still be a slave.

(CAIN and RO'EH and RAKIA walked across the village and out toward the pastures to the music of the EVENING & MORNING song. In the distance, fires burned where shepherds were spending the night with the sheep. A gibbous moon was rising over the valley. Groups of wedding guests pass, talking, laughing. RAKIA and CAIN stay in the shadows so that no one will recognize them or come over to talk.)

I SEE YOU HAVE BECOME A GREAT MAN

(Eight months have passed. CAIN waits upon KOHAV in his tent. The drapes at the door part. ZERA enters and bows to his brother KOHAV.)

ZERA

I see you have become a great man.

KOHAV

I am your father's son.

ZERA

It seems that we both now command armies. Our father would be proud.

KOHAV

Our father is proud. You look strong.

ZERA

And so do you. Who is this man with you?

KOHAV

This is my servant. He works for our father maintaining the forge, among other things.

ZERA

How is my father? Is he well?

CAIN

Yes, sir.

ZERA

Does he know that my brother's actions on the hillside are exciting my troops for war?

KOĦAV

I think you best ask me, not my servant, or even our father, if he were here.

ZERA

I am sorry, KoĦav. Can you send your servant to bring our father here?

KOĦAV

I have sent for him already. Cain, will you bring him in?

CAIN

Yes, sir.

(CAIN steps through the door and immediately SENTRIES draw the door open and CAIN returns with MAVDIL.)

ZERA

Peace, father.

MAVDIL

Peace, my boy. Peace to you, KoĦav. Peace, my boys.

KOĦAV

You trained us well, father.

ZERA

That was my hope. And now you are both commanders.

KOĦAV

But not on the same side.

ZERA

I don't see that we are on different sides, as you say.

KOḤAV

I have asked you to join with us and you have refused.

ZERA

I have told you that I am bound by an oath. And I have told you that the Emek has no interest in guarding a wilderness.

KOḤAV
(Angry)

Which is why you have marched your army into our territory?

ZERA

We have crossed only to answer your message to us. And our answer is only this: We have a joint interest in protecting the freedom of the trading route.

KOḤAV
(In a rage)

That's where the danger is. You see us as still joined with the Emek. You stayed with them, but your people are here.

MAVDIL

Boys, boys! It was just a question of age, Koḥav. Zera was gone already when it came time for us to leave the Emek.

KOḤAV

No, father, he says he is bound by an oath. I am bound by blood.

MAVDIL

Please, Koḥav, put your sword away and hear what Zera has to say.

KOḤAV

He speaks, father, through his men who have crossed into our land with military force.

(ZERA partially draws his sword.)

ZERA

This is not necessary.

(KOHAV raises his sword.)

ZERA
(hastily)

I will place my sword on the ground before you as a gesture of good will.

(ZERA finishes drawing his sword and places it on the ground.)

KOHAV

Stand back.

(KOHAV steps forward, bending at the knees to pick up ZERA's sword.)

KOHAV

I will not disarm you . . .

(KOHAV bends to pick up the sword and tosses it back to Zera.)

KOHAV

. . . but I will fight you.

CAIN

He's your brother!

KOHAV

What does a slave know about brothers? Stay out of this!

CAIN
(to ZERA)

Speak to him, sir!

(to MAVDIL)

Speak to him as a father!

MAVDIL

Be reasonable, my son!

KOḤAV

You stay out of this.

CAIN

(Underscored by music from the Yes, Sir song.)

Yes, sir.

(Chastened, CAIN steps back.)

ZERA

He just wants to best me.

(ZERA lowers his sword. KOḤAV thrusts his sword at ZERA, falling short.)

MAVDIL

What are you doing, Koḥav?

KOḤAV

What does it look like I am doing, father?

(ZERA takes a step back. KOḤAV thrusts again.)

MAVDIL

I command you to stop!

KOḤAV

You are not the commander here.

MAVDIL
(frantic)

I am your father.

(ZERA takes another step back. KOḤAV thrusts a third time. ZERA parries the sword away.)

ZERA

Please, Koḥav. I only came here to ask that we remain friends.

KOḤAV

I cannot be friends with a traitor.

(KOḤAV thrusts a fourth time. ZERA can retreat no further and so he raises his sword and the blade cut KOḤAV'S side. KOḤAV draws back his sword.)

KOḤAV

You are not to be trusted!

(KOḤAV blindly thrusts again, missing ZERA while ZERA's blade finds its mark again, piercing Koḥav's chest. Koḥav stumbles and falls.)

CAIN

No! . . . (suddenly subdued) Sir.

(CAIN falls on KOḤAV's body and he presses his hand to the wound to stop the bleeding.)

CAIN

(to KOḤAV's SHEPHERD 1 by the entrance, crying)

Go fetch Maskila! She will know what to do for him.

(KOḤAV's SHEPHERD 1 turns to leave.)

CAIN

And please get Neshama!

(CAIN attends to KOḤAV's wounds. In a moment, the SENTRY returns with NESHAMA visibly pregnant.

PROPOSAL

(CAIN and RAKIA walk together for a brief time. CAIN suddenly stops.
RAKIA turns to him.)

RAKIA

Aren't we going to your shed?

CAIN

No.

RAKIA

Is it something I said?

CAIN

No

RAKIA

My sister?

CAIN

No. . . . No.

RAKIA

Well, let's go.

CAIN

I just want to settle something, first.

RAKIA

We can settle it at your place.

CAIN

No.

RAKIA

Well, what is it?

CAIN

I just want to know. . . . Would you marry me if I were free?

RAKIA

You know I would.

CAIN

Will you marry me?

RAKIA

I don't understand.

CAIN

I'm not asking what you'd do someday when I am free. I'm asking if you will marry me regardless. Forget about this.

(CAIN points to the mark on his cheek.)

CAIN

Forget about Neshama and my new master. This is just you and me. Will you be my wife? Now?

RAKIA

Oh, Cain!

CAIN

I need to know.

RAKIA

You need to know? Forget about Neshama? Nice try, Cain, but she's been living in your master's house for almost a year.

CAIN

What do you think happened, Rakia?

DON'T FORGET THAT I WAS A SLAVE.
ONE FALSE MOVE AND I'D BE IN THE GRAVE.
DID I GIVE YOUR SISTER A LOOK?
NO! I DID IT ALL BY THE BOOK.

RAKIA

What's a book?

CAIN

GIRL, I LOVE YOU DEARLY!
CAN'T YOU SEE NOW RATHER CLEARLY?
I'M NOT A GUY WHO KNOWS HOW TO ACT
I'M TROUBLE, I'M CLUMSY, AS A MATTER OF FACT.

BUT GIRL, I LOVE YOU DEARLY!

RAKIA

SO YOU TOLD ME . . . RATHER CLEARLY.
THE PROBLEM HERE IS MY SISTER.
SHE TOLD ME THAT YOU KISSED HER.

(Music stops.)

CAIN

She said what?

(Music resumes.)

RAKIA

SHE TOLD ME THAT YOU KISSED HER.

(Music stops.)

CAIN

I never kissed your sister!

(Music starts.)

O THROUGH THE SAVAGE YEARS OF SLAVERY
ONLY ONE PERSON HAD THE BRAVERY
AT TIME OF TOIL, ANGUISH, AND DESPAIR.

ONE PERSON DARED TO SHOW SHE CARED.

(Music stops.)

CAIN

It wasn't her.

(Music starts.)

CAIN

ON THE DAY THAT HE ASKED HER
IT WAS SHE WHO CHOSE MY MASTER.
SHE NEVER EVEN LOOKED AT ME
NOR I HER, CAN'T YOU SEE.

GIRL, I LOVE YOU DEARLY!

RAKIA

I CAN SEE NOW RATHER CLEARLY.
YOU'RE NOT THE ONE, MY PROBLEM'S WITH MY SISTER.
WHAT'S THE ANSWER, I CAN'T QUIT HER?

(Music stops.)

CAIN

I had a brother once.

RAKIA

That's it, Cain!

CAIN

What's it, Rakia?

RAKIA

What you did to your brother. Don't tell anyone!

CAIN

But . . . No . . . I was only . . .

RAKIA

BOY, I LOVE YOU DEARLY!
I CAN SEE NOW RATHER CLEARLY!

(RAKIA grabs CAIN, gives him a quick but hard kiss, then turns and runs off stage. CAIN follows after her for a few steps.)

CAIN

Wait! No! Rakia! I didn't mean that! It was a joke.

(CAIN stops.)

CAIN

No, not a joke. It's not a joke. Not again. What have I done?

(Lights out on CAIN. Spot on MASKILA.)

PROPOSAL PART TWO

(Lights up outside her family's tent where RAKIA enters carrying a dagger. CAIN enters following her.)

CAIN

You can't do this, Rakia!

RAKIA
(Stage whisper.)

Quiet! They'll hear.

CAIN
(Stage whisper.)

Good! If I can't stop you, they will stop you.

RAKIA

You're going to stop me? You're killing me. You've done this yourself!

CAIN

It wasn't like this.

RAKIA

Your brother is dead.

CAIN

I didn't set out to kill him. No! That's not even the point! I love you, Rakia. Don't do this. Look what killing my brother did to my life. Do you want that?

RAKIA

Neshama does not want to marry Zera.

CAIN

So far, he's been a better master than Kohav.

RAKIA

He killed her husband!

CAIN

That was an accident.

RAKIA

He killed her husband and she does not want to be with him. She wants you.

CAIN

Zera doesn't want her, Rakia. He just wants to go away. I want you. You want me. You don't have to do this. We could talk to your father.

RAKIA

You are still a slave. This will be faster.

(RAKIA holds up her dagger. CAIN grabs her hand.)

CAIN

(Loud and commanding.)

Put that down!

RAKIA

Shhh!

(A voice comes from within the tent.)

MASKILA

Is someone out there?

RAKIA
(Stage whisper.)

Now, you've done it.

CAIN
(Stage whisper.)

Let's just talk to them.

(CAIN knocks on the doorpost.)

RAKIA
(meekly)

Mom, Dad . . .

(MASKILA comes to the doorway, parts the curtain, doesn't see CAIN.)

MASKILA

Your dad's asleep, dvash. What is it?

CAIN

Could you wake him?

(MASKILA is surprised to see CAIN.)

MASKILA

What do you want?

RAKIA
(whispers to CAIN)

It can wait.

MASKILA

Is something wrong?

RAKIA
(meekly)

No.

CAIN

No one's sick or hurt, but something is wrong.

MASKILA

Okay. I'll wake him.

(CAIN and RAKIA stand outside.)

RAKIA
(Stage whisper.)

What are you going to say to him?

CAIN
(Stage whisper.)

I'm just going to tell him that I love you and want to marry you.

RAKIA

And this?

(RAKIA holds up the dagger.)

CAIN

Put that away and never talk of it again.

(RAKIA puts the dagger into her tunic. Inside MASKILA wakes TZELEM.)

TZELEM
(thickly)

What is it?

MASKILA

Rakia and the slave are here to talk to you. I don't know what *he's* doing here. He says no one's hurt, but they want to talk to you now.

TZELEM

I could hear. We don't have doors. Remind me to invent doors. . . .

(TZELEM gets up.)

TZELEM

I'll be right there.

(TZELEM shuffles to the doorway. MASKILA follows.)

TZELEM

Come in. My wife said you had something urgent to tell me.

CAIN

Thank you, sir.

(CAIN and RAKIA enter the tent.)

TZELEM

What can I do for you, my son?

RAKIA

Daddy, please do not be angry.

TZELEM

Why would I be angry?

CAIN

Sir, I am still new to this village, even after several years, as you know.

TZELEM

Yes.

CAIN

I have not learned all the ways of your people. So I told Rakia that I must be direct with you.

TZELEM

That is always best. What is it?

CAIN

We would like to be married.

TZELEM
(chuckles)

I am not surprised.

MASKILA

Tzelem! Never!

RAKIA

Father?

(TZELEM takes his wife's hand and turns to RAKIA.)

TZELEM

My daughter, I don't see everything that you and mother see, but I am not blind. And tonight, if you are coming to me in such urgency and no one is hurt, what else could it be?

(RAKIA pats her tunic where she put the dagger.)

RAKIA

And you are not angry? Oh, father I am so . . .

TZELEM
(sternly)

Rakia! (then softly) I'm not saying that I am angry, nor am I saying that I am not angry. Your mother is another story, it seems. I wish to listen to what you and this young man have to say. Then I will let you know if I am angry or not.

RAKIA

Yes, father.

MASKILA
(in anger)

Tzelem! You are angry! There is nothing to listen to!

TZELEM

My dear, this young man at least knows that coming to me in the middle of the night is an unusual way of asking to marry my daughter, even though he is a stranger to this village and ignorant of our ways—as he says. I will at least listen. Go on, Cain, and tell me why I should be pleased with your proposal.

(MASKILA huffs.)

CAIN

Sir, I believe it is customary for the man to give a gift to the father of the woman.

TZELEM

Yes.

CAIN

I came to this village with a small flock of sheep, which has been under my care as the slave of your son-in-law Koḥav, and now his brother Zera. I give this flock to you. Do you accept this gift?

TZELEM

I cannot yet say. For the moment, it is not even yours to give. Please, go on.

CAIN

Sir, I know that when my master Koḥav, may God bless his soul, asked for your daughter Neshama's hand, you asked her about her love for me.

TZELEM

I did. When a man and woman marry, they should not love another.

CAIN

Did she say that she loved me?

TZELEM

If she did, I would not have allowed her to marry your master. She said that she did not and I believed her.

CAIN

The full truth is that the daughter who loved me was your daughter Rakia, not Neshama.

MASKILA

That is enough!

TZELEM

No, dear, it is definitely not enough. I'm sure you will agree.

(TZELEM looks and MASKILA and she backs down.)

TZELEM

Is this true, my daughter? Were you the one?

RAKIA
(meekly)

Yes, father.

TZELEM
(to CAIN)

Did you love her?

CAIN

Sir, If you had asked me then, I would have said no. If you had asked me if I loved your daughter Neshama, I would have also said no. Koḥav asked me this and that is what I said to him. But I have come to know my heart in the time since then . . . and I now believe that, even then, the spark of my love for your daughter Rakia had already been lit. The flame has only grown since that time.

(RAKIA takes CAIN's hand and squeezes it.)

MASKILA

Oh, my! Tzelem, do you hear that?

TZELEM

Yes, dear. The boy is talking to me. And I am listening.

CAIN

Thank you, sir.

MASKILA

But do you understand what he is asking? Tzelem, what do we know about his background? He came from the wilderness where he says he murdered his brother.

RAKIA

Mom! You know he . . .

(RAKIA squeezes CAIN's hand until he begins to struggle from the pain.)

MASKILA

Quiet, Rakia! It's the middle of the night and you want your father to give his permission to marry! Tzelem, you talk to her.

TZELEM

I was talking, my dear. The boy just told me he loved our daughter and I was going to . . .

MASKILA

What? The boy is a slave and a murderer. So what's the hurry?

RAKIA

Mom, I'm sorry. Cain, maybe we'll talk about this in the morning.

CAIN

No.

(CAIN frees his hand from RAKIA's grip.)

CAIN

We need to know now, Rakia.

MASKILA
(shouting)

Then the answer is no!

RAKIA

Why, Mom?

(TZELEM takes RAKIA into his arms as she begins to sob. Maskila comes next to them and strokes RAKIA's hair.)

MASKILA

It'll be alright.

TZELEM

Maybe this wasn't a good time to ask, dvash. But it's not a good time to tell you no, either. It's never going to be a good time. We need to talk about it.

(CAIN wiggles his fingers to restore life to his hand.)

MASKILA

What are you saying?

TZELEM

I'm saying that we need to calm down and talk about things.

MASKILA

I am calm!

TZELEM

No, dear. You are a loving mother, you are concerned about your daughter, but you are not calm. The boy here is calm, but you are not.

(TZELEM turns to CAIN.)

TZELEM

You are calm, son, aren't you?

CAIN

No, sir.

(CAIN wrings his hand and wiggles his fingers to relieve the pain.)

TZELEM

Well, you show your agitation well. (TZELEM laughs.)

CAIN

Yes, sir. (CAIN laughs weakly.)

TZELEM

So, Cain, you were saying that the flame of your love for my daughter has grown. That was good, but I'd like to know what you mean by that. Have you acted on that love?

MASKILA

Yes! Have you acted? I knew I should have kept closer watch!

TZELEM

Dear, we need to hear what the boy has to say. Cain?

CAIN

I would dishonor your daughter, sir by answering that question in any way other than to say that I am acting on that love tonight by asking your permission to marry her.

(RAKIA and MASKILA react, understanding what CAIN is saying, TZELEM does not get it.)

TZELEM

If you have waited all this time to ask, why was it so urgent for you to come and interrupt my sleep?

CAIN

It is because of your daughter Neshama.

MASKILA

Neshama?

TZELEM

In what way?

RAKIA

Oh, father! My sister is so distressed, after the birth of your granddaughter, that she will be compelled to marry her brother-in-law Zera. She said that she would prefer to marry Cain, that she should have married Cain in the first place. She said that she would seek to marry Cain rather than marry Zera.

MASKILA

Husband, is this a choice for your daughter? This one who murdered his brother or Zera who also murdered his brother, your son-in-law? I won't have it. Not for Neshama. Not for Rakia.

TZELEM
(to CAIN)

Zera is your master now. Do you know if he wishes to marry my daughter Neshama?

CAIN

He has spoken to me, as the two of us share a great guilt over the deaths of our brothers. He is greatly distressed over this tradition. He does not wish to marry Neshama, but feels compelled to do so because of his brother.

TZELEM

I will speak to my daughter Neshama.

RAKIA
(to CAIN)

I told you we should not have come. (To MASKILA) Mom! Neshama has had her chance!

(RAKIA reaches into her tunic.)

MASKILA

Yes, Rakia. And look what happened! There are nice boys in this village, and elsewhere if need be. Haven't we had enough of the killing? Tzelem! You tell her!

(RAKIA looks at CAIN with tears in her eyes.)

TZELEM

Come here, Rakia.

(TZELEM takes RAKIA in his arms and she begins again sobbing.)

TZELEM

Your mother has a point.

EVENING & MORNING

(RAKIA rushes from her parents' tent crying closely followed by CAIN. MASKILA rises to follow but TZELEM holds her back. CAIN catches up with RAKIA.)

RAKIA

I knew we shouldn't have talked to them.

CAIN

They didn't say no.

RAKIA

Didn't you listen to them?

CAIN

Didn't you listen to me?

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT SHAPE, THE SEA WITHOUT LIGHT.
THEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD SAID LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF OUR FIRST DAY.

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
LIFE WAS BARE, FULL OF GLOOM AND STORMY WEATHER.
THEN GOD MADE BLUE SKY, AND LET ME WALK IN THE LIGHT
ON THE EVENING AND THE MORNING OF THE SECOND DAY.

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
THERE WAS NOTHING IN THIS WORLD THAT I COULD STAND ON.
THEN GOD MADE THE LAND AND PLANTED A GARDEN, AND IT WAS GOOD
ON THE EVENING AND THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY.

(MASKILA and TZELEM draw closer, still in their tent. RAKIA hears a noise from the tent.)

RAKIA

Shh! Let's just run away. We can be together.

CAIN

It won't solve anything, Rakia. I won't take you away from your family.

RAKIA

They don't care about us.

CAIN

Shh!

(CAIN takes RAKIA in his arms as she cries softly. After a beat, CAIN resumes singing.)

CAIN

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
MY YEARNING HAD NO BEGINNING, MY LONGING NO END.
THEN GOD MADE THE SUN AND MOON; FOR NIGHT AND DAY YOU ARE THE ONE
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE FOURTH DAY.

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER, A BIRD WITH NO WINGS.
THEN GOD SENT ME TO SCHOOL AND TAUGHT ME TO FLY
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE FIFTH DAY.

(MASKILA bursts out of the tent. TZELEM follows.)

MASKILA

Stop!

TZELEM

Maskila, dear, come back in the tent.

MASKILA

But that song!

TZELEM

It's a nice song.

MASKILA

But where did he hear it? (To CAIN.) Where did you hear that song?

RAKIA

Mom! What does it matter?

MASKILA

It matters. (To CAIN.) Where did you hear that song, boy?

CAIN

It was my father's song. He sang it to my mother.

MASKILA

BEFORE WE CAME HERE TO THESE MOUNTAINS,
I HAD A DEAR FRIEND NAMED HAVA.
SHE HAD A LOVER ONCE LIKE RAKIA HAS.
AND THEIR PARENTS WOULD NOT ALLOW IT.

CAIN

Sounds familiar.

MASKILA

THEY HAD A PLAN TO FAKE THEIR DEATHS
I WAS IN ON THEIR SECRET. NEVER TOLD A SOUL.
EVERYONE THOUGHT THEY HAD DIED, BUT NO.
THEY RAN AWAY INTO THE WILDERNESS.
I NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN.

CAIN

And you point is?

MASKILA

There is more. My friend's lover had a song. His name was . . .

CAIN

Adam.

MASKILA

How did you know?

CAIN

The song I was singing was Adam's song.

MASKILA

I know.

CAIN

Adam is my father.

MASKILA

You father?

CAIN

And my mother is Hava—though my father called her Eve.

MASKILA

From the evening and morning song.

CAIN

Yes.

MASKILA

They were a regular Romeo and Juliet.

CAIN

Who?

MASKILA

Don't you know Shakespeare?

CAIN

I'm from Eden.

MASKILA

I FORGOT.
YOU ARE FROM EDEN SO YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
NOT KNOWING OF SHAKESPEARE'S THE LEAST OF YOUR TROUBLES.
YOU MURDER YOUR BROTHER, YOU STEAL A KNIFE,
YOU END UP A SLAVE 'CAUSE THIS WORLD IS A PUZZLE TO YOU.

CAIN

And yet . . .

MASKILA

YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN MY DAUGHTER FROM ME.

And you didn't. So here's my deal with you, Cain: I will let you marry my daughter if . . . you bring your parents to the wedding.

CAIN

YOU KNOW THAT I FLED FROM MY PARENTS
THEY'RE GONE AWAY FOR EDEN IS NO MORE.
AND SO, I MUST ASK YOUR FORBEARANCE.
THE TASK YOU BID LEAVES ME FORLORN.

RAKIA

Mom!

AND WHAT IF HE LOCATES HIS PARENTS?
AND THEY SAY NO, THEIR SON IS A BUM?
AND SO, I MUST ASK YOUR FORBEARANCE.
IN CASE THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO COME?

(NESHAMA enters with a crying baby.)

RAKIA

What are you doing here?

NESHAMA

You're singing is waking the baby! (To TZELEM.) Dad, what's going on here? It's the middle of the night! (To the BABY.) Hush, dvash. Shh. Shh.

(ZERA enters looking for CAIN.)

ZERA
(To TZELEM.)

Have you seen my . . . Oh, there he is. (To CAIN.) What's going on here? It's the middle of the night!

NESHAMA
(To TZELEM.)

What's he doing here? (Referring to ZERA.)

RAKIA

Daddy?! Now Neshama's here.

TZELEM

I see that, Rakia.

RAKIA

Mom?

MASKILA

That's the deal, dvash. If the slave loves you as he sings, he knows what to do.

CAIN

I'll do it. (Glances at ZERA.) Somehow I'll do it for you Rakia.

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I WAS HELPLESS AS A LAMB, A SINGER WITH NO SONG.
THEN GOD GAVE ME YOU-AND-ME, GAVE ME YOU-AND-ME
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE SIXTH DAY.

(Lights up on ABEL. CAIN notices him, but sings on.)

CAIN

THUS THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WERE FINISHED.
AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORK.
WITH YOU-AND-ME MY WORLD WAS COMPLETE,
ON THE DAY I MET YOU,

ON THE DAY I MET YOU.

(Characters on stage form tableau as curtain comes down.)

ACT II

NOTHING EVER HAPPENS AT MIDNIGHT

(Curtain up with characters in tableau as at the end of Act I. They exhibit different degrees of stiffness from “spending intermission in frozen positions.” TZELEM is the stiffest and MASKILA, NESHAMA, and RAKIA go to help him. RO’EH enters running, but evidently just woke up.)

RO’EH

What’s going on? What did I miss?

MASKILA

Go back to sleep, son.

TZELEM

Can I go back to sleep?

NESHAMA

Cain just asked daddy to marry Rakia . . . And. Woke. Everyone. Up.

(SHOMER and A’FAR enter wondering about the commotion.)

RO’EH
(Excited.)

Wow! Is that true? What did he say?

CAIN

The wedding’s on. But only if I bring my parents.

RO’EH

That’s great!

CAIN

I don’t know where my parents are. You know that.

(RO’EH runs to SHOMER and pulls him toward CAIN.)

RO'EH

But Shomer has been asking every caravan that comes through.

TZELEM

It's late boys. Let's do this in the morning. (He starts shooing everybody away.) Let's all get some sleep.

RAKIA

But Daddy. Mom said . . .

TZELEM

I know what your mother said. It can wait until the morning. Now go.

(The women start to leave, but SHOMER goes to TZELEM.)

SHOMER

Dad, I talked to a man. Some kind of prince. He may know where Cain's parents are.

(RAKIA and MASKILA stop in their tracks to listen.)

TZELEM

Go on. It's late.

RO'EH
(To CAIN.)

Did you hear that?

CAIN

Yeah, buddy. But I'm still a slave. I can't . . .

(TZELEM walks to CAIN and puts his hand on his shoulder.)

TZELEM

It's late, son. Get some rest.

IT'S TIME TO SLEEP AND CALL IT A DAY.
DECISIONS ARE BEST WHEN MADE BY DAYLIGHT.
THOUGH CARES ARE GREAT AND WORRIES WEIGH,

NOTHING EVER HAPPENS AT MIDNIGHT.

(TZELEM resumes shooing his family toward the tents.)

Let's go, Maskila. Neshama, there's nothing to see here.

RAKIA

But, Daddy, Shomer's talked to a man. Cain needs to know.

TZELEM

THERE'S NOTHING SO IMPORTANT THAT CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THE MORN.
MY STOMACH'S CHURNED, MY HEAD'S NOT CLEAR.
MY BACK'S IN KNOTS, MY HEART'S CARE-WORN.
BUT AFTER I SLEEP, I WILL ACT WITHOUT FEAR.

CAIN

And sir, may I remind you that I will be unable to search for my parents without the permission of my master.

NESHAMA

And Daddy, may I remind you that I am still pledged in marriage to his master, Zera.

TZELEM

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT OF ME? I THINK I'VE DONE ENOUGH.
I'M YAWNING. SEE? MY EYES ARE CLOSED.
MY BREATH IS SLOW. HUFF. PUFF.
LET'S GET SOME SLEEP. I REALLY AM OPPOSED . . .

RAKIA

Daddy, please.

TZELEM

Oh, alright. (Yawn.) Zera, you have said that you do not want to marry, Neshama. Is that correct?

ZERA

I don't mean to offend, sir. But you know the circumstances.

TZELEM

It's late. A yes or no will do.

ZERA

Then, yes, you are correct.

TZELEM

And you have travelled the world, I hear?

ZERA

That is correct, sir.

TZELEM

Then, why don't you take your slave here out into the world to find his parents?

ZERA

Sir?

TZELEM

And I'll release you from your obligation to my daughter. (Turns to speak in confidence to SHOMER.) I was going to do that anyway, but this will kill two birds with one stone . . . uh, so to speak.

ZERA

I will gladly do that sir.

TZELEM

And take my boys with you and find them some wives.

SHOMER

Dad!

TZELEM

It's time.

ZERA

It's a deal.

(TZELEM and ZERA shake hands.)

TZELEM

IT COULD HAVE WAITED UNTIL MORNING.
SLEEP'S THE THING UNDER THE MOONLIGHT.
I REALLY SHOULD BE SNORING.
NOTHING EVER HAPPENS AT MIDNIGHT.

DANCE OF THE ANGELS

(CAIN, ZERA, SHOMER, A'FAR, and RO'EH are on the road. The caravan they joined is stopped for the night and they sit silently around the campfire. Enter dancing ANGELS. Some of the ANGELS bear the reclining PRINCE OF THE WILDERNESS. The dance is lazy and sleepy, but elegant—except for those bearing the PRINCE who struggle with his weight. The PRINCE acts as though he is on a flying magic carpet. All are dressed in opulent, but somewhat worn, costume. The ANGELS set the PRINCE down in one place, but he waves and they move him—once, twice, three times. Once he is satisfied, the ANGELS make him comfortable and recede. ANGELS attend the PRINCE throughout.)

SHOMER
(To his camp.)

There he is.

ZERA

Yes. I have met him.

SHOMER

Then you will approach him?

ZERA

No. No. No.

SHOMER

Then we will approach him together.

(SHOMER rises and pulls ZERA to his feet. The two approach the PRINCE as supplicants.)

SHOMER

(To the PRINCE. Clears throat to get PRINCE's attention.)

Your Excellency.

PRINCE

Oh (surprised) . . . Hello! What did you say?

SHOMER

(Louder, but questioning.)

O, Most High, Illustrious Prince?

PRINCE

(Laughs.) I know you. Who's that you have with you?

(ZERA moves to where the PRINCE can see him.)

ZERA

I am Zera son of Mavdil from Emek.

PRINCE

I know you, too! (Laughs.) You are a commander of an army, are you not?

ZERA

I am, sir.

PRINCE

Then where are your soldiers.

ZERA

I am on a personal mission for my family.

PRINCE

I see that you are surprised to see me. I travel much with the traders.

SHOMER

And these boys?

PRINCE

My boys? Some are my sons. But I can't tell you which ones. (Laughs.) Who's the boy with you?
Come on over here, son. (To SHOMER.) Is he for sale?

(PRINCE waves to RO'EH. RO'EH reluctantly approaches, followed by
CAIN and A'FAR.)

SHOMER
(Shaking his head.)

No.

PRINCE

Well, no matter. People call these boys my "angels." . . . And maybe they are right.

WANDERING THROUGH
DESERT AND WASTELAND.

ANGELS

TROUBLES ACCRUE.
YOU'LL NEED A RIGHT HAND!

PRINCE

THAT'S WHEN A TRAV'LER
WILL TURN HIS EYES UP TO THE SKY.
"TANGLE UNRAV'LER,
PLEASE GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO GET BY."

ANGELS

THAT'S WHEN A TRAV'LER
WILL TURN HIS EYES UP TO THE SKY.
"TANGLE UNRAV'LER,
PLEASE GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO GET BY."

PRINCE
(To A'FAR.)

You boy. What did you say *your* name was?

A'FAR

I didn't say.

PRINCE

Could you say it now?

A'FAR

Oh, yes sir.

PRINCE

Well?

A'FAR

I'm sorry, sir. My name is A'far.

PRINCE

(Laughs.) Ha ha. What a lovely name. It means dust, does it not? What a name! I like it! (To Shomer.) Are you brothers?

SHOMER

We are, sir. We are looking . . .

PRINCE

(Laughs.) Ha ha! I knew it. I can tell these things.

DON'T BE ASHAMED
OF LOOKING FOR FAVORS.

ANGELS

YOU WON'T BE BLAMED
YOUR WELFARE WE SAVOR.

PRINCE

YOU WON'T REGRET IT
SO TELL ME YOUR STORY MY FRIENDS.

ANGELS

YOU WON'T REGRET IT
SO TELL US YOUR STORY MY FRIENDS.

PRINCE

You! Mr. Dust. What are you and your brother looking for?

A'FAR

Wives, sir.

PRINCE

Ah, yes. I can see it in your faces. Your wish is my command. (Then to CAIN.) And you sir, fellow traveler . . .

(CAIN approaches uncertainly.)

PRINCE

Yes, you. What is it that you are looking for?

CAIN

My parents, sir.

PRINCE
(To SHOMER)

This is the one we have spoken about?

SHOMER

Yes.

PRINCE

He is a slave, I see.

ZERA

He is mine. But only for a short while longer.

PRINCE

No matter! (To CAIN.) Son, I believe I know a couple answering to the description your friend gave me. They live in the city of Naharot, to which we will arrive in a matter of days. I will gladly introduce you—if you do not see them first.

PRINCE

WHAT YOU NEED.

ANGELS

WHAT YOU NEED.

PRINCE

THAT'S WHAT I PROVIDE YOU.
YOU TELL ME THAT YOU'RE LOST.
YOU ASK ME PLEASE TO GUIDE YOU.

WHAT YOU NEED.

ANGELS

WHAT YOU NEED.

PRINCE

IT MAY SEEM LIKE A DREAM.
BUT I'VE SEEN ENOUGH OF DREAMS
TO KNOW IT'S NOT WHAT IT SEEMS.

I'VE JOURNEYED THROUGHOUT THIS WORLD.
AND I'VE SEEN ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE.
I'VE SEEN PEOPLE WHO SUFFER AND TOIL.
I'VE SEEN PEOPLE WHO TAKE FLIGHT AND STRUGGLE.
AND EVERY SINGLE TIME I MEET
SOMEONE WHO SAYS "I CAN'T SIR."
I KNOW RIGHT AWAY THAT
THAT'S NOT THE ANSWER.

WHAT YOU NEED.

ANGELS

WHAT YOU NEED.

PRINCE

IT'S REALLY NOT SO TRAGIC.
ALL YOU NEED IS A PUSH FROM ME
AND YOU'LL WORK ALL THE MAGIC.

WHAT YOU NEED.

(ANGELS, dancing, converge on PRINCE, lift him above their heads and dance him off stage singing.)

ANGELS

WHAT YOU NEED.

PRINCE

WHAT YOU NEED.

ANGELS

WHAT YOU NEED.

PRINCE

WHAT YOU NEED.

(Exit ANGELS and PRINCE.)

SHOMER
(To CAIN.)

See. What'd I tell you?

CAIN

Uh. Yeah. . . . And he's gonna find wives for you?

I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT MY BROTHER CAIN

(It is early morning in the smoky marketplace of Naharot. As villagers set up their wares and prepare the morning meals, EVE enters with the young boy SETH. She appears nervous, searching. He is excited.)

(Across the market, CAIN enters with SHOMER and A'FAR.)

SHOMER

The Prince said that we might find them here.

A'FAR

It smells wonderful here. I can see why.

(CAIN sees EVE. There is a moment of recognition.)

CAIN
(pointing toward EVE)

Could that be her already?

(EVE points and speaks to SETH. He breaks free of her in excitement and makes his way toward CAIN. In the dim light, EVE leaves.)

A'FAR

Where?

CAIN

I don't see her anymore.

(SETH approaches CAIN, SHOMER, and A'FAR.)

SETH

Which one of you is my brother?

SHOMER

And who are you?

SETH

I am my mother's son.

(They all laugh.)

SHOMER
(crouches to speak to the boy)

We are all our mothers' sons.

CAIN

He is my brother.

A'FAR

How do you know that?

CAIN

I just saw him with my mother.

SHOMER

Your mother is here, then?

CAIN

Well, she was. I saw her with this boy.

CAIN

You don't see her anymore?

CAIN

No.

CAIN
(to SETH)

YOU ARE MY BROTHER
OR ARE YOU NOT?
WAS THAT MY MOTHER?
I MISS HER A LOT.

SHOMER

But I thought your brother was . . .

SETH

YOU ARE MY BROTHER,
THAT'S WHAT SHE TELLS ME.
I KNOW THERE WAS ANOTHER.
THAT'S WHAT HE TELLS ME.

CAIN

You mean our father?

SETH

OUR FATHER TELLS ABOUT OUR BROTHER ABEL
DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT AFRAID
OUR MOTHER CRIES WHEN SHE HEARS ABEL
IF YOU ASK DAD, YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED.

CAIN

You're not afraid?

SETH

NOT MOM NOR DAD BELIEVE YOU'D KILL AGAIN
THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT MY BROTHER CAIN
I'VE COME TO TAKE YOU HOME WITH ME.

Come . . . the three of you. It's not far.

SORRY DOESN'T PAY THE PRICE

(CAIN follows SETH to his house. SHOMER and A'FAR follow.)

SETH
(enters the house)

Dad!

(CAIN, SHOMER, and A'FAR enter the house. ADAM enters from the other side. ADAM recognizes CAIN.)

CAIN

Dad?

(CAIN stands away from ADAM.)

ADAM

Can ye give yer old man a hug, boy?

CAIN

After what I did?

ADAM

Nothin' will bring Abel back, son. I lost two sons that day. But 'ere, one of 'em is back!

(CAIN hugs ADAM.)

CAIN

I'm sorry, Dad.

ADAM

SORRY DOESN'T PAY THE PRICE, SON.
REALLY, NOTHIN' WILL, TO BE PRECISE.
IT'S NOT LIKE BEIN' LATE FOR DINNER.
IT CHANGED THINGS WITHIN ME AND WITHIN HER.

YE SHOULDN'A A RUN AWAY
'T WAS AN AWFUL DEED BUT DONE
BUT HERE WE'VE ANOTHER DAY
YOU'VE GOT ME, BUT THERE'S ANOTHER ONE.

CAIN

You mean Mom.

ADAM

You were her favorite, so . . .

CAIN

No, Dad.

ADAM

I know we're not supposed to have favorites, but you were hers . . .

CAIN

. . . until the thing with Abel.

ADAM

The "thing" was that you killed him. You may have been her favorite, but she loved your brother, too.

CAIN

And so, she saw me in the market today and ran away.

SETH

She said she would be right back.

ADAM

She's not running away, son. She just needs some time. She came home before you got here.
(Shouts.) Eve!

(EVE peeks into the room through a curtain.)

ADAM

It's okay, if you want to come in, dear. We have guests.

(EVE enters. Everyone stands very stiff and formal for a beat until ADAM attempts some introductions.)

ADAM

Of course, dear, you know our son CAIN.

(CAIN nods. EVE does not. ADAM motions for CAIN to hug EVE. CAIN approaches her and she turns away.)

ADAM

I'm sure you are glad to see him after all these years.

EVE

And who are these men?

ADAM

I was just getting to that. They are . . . Cain?

SHOMER

If I may, sir?

ADAM

Please. We haven't been introduced yet.

SHOMER

I am Shomer and this is my brother A'Far. We are friends of Cain's and we came to Naharot seeking wives. You may know our mother. She is called Maskila.

ADAM
(to EVE)

Could that be your friend?

SHOMER

She says that you left our village when you were young and went to a place called Eden. She wants you to know that she has kept your secret all these years.

EVE

Until you found my son.

SHOMER

Until Cain made it impossible to conceal any longer. But no one outside the family knows.

EVE

I HAD A FAMILY ONCE IN EDEN, AWAY FROM THE WORLD, IT'S WHERE WE FLEW.
IN A CANYON ON A RIVER WHERE FLOWERS, TREES, AND CATTAILS GREW.
FLOCKS OF SHEEP WOULD GRAZE THE GRASSES, BLEATING ECHOES COMING FROM AFAR,
FISHES JUMPING IN THE RAPIDS, IN THE BRIGHT SUN A LIVE AND SILVERY SPARK.

ADAM FISHING, MY CARESS
BROTHERS PLAYING, MORE OR LESS.

I RECALL THOSE FOGGY MORNINGS WHEN THE BOYS WOULD WAKE AND SLIP AWAY.
THEY WOULD CLIMB UP TO THE DESERT LOOKING BACK AT END OF DAY.
DOWN BELOW THE LAND WOULD SHIMMER IN THE FAILING LIGHT OF DUST.
GREENS AND GOLDS ALONG THE RIVER, MAJESTIC SCENES, THEIR VOICES HUSHED.
THEN ONE DAY IT ALL WAS OVER, BROTHER'S RAGE BROUGHT BROTHER'S END.
ABEL GONE AND CAIN WAS FLEEING . . .

(EVE stops and tries to compose herself.)

ABEL GONE AND CAIN WAS FLEEING . . .

(EVE stops and runs out.)

CAIN

Mom!

(CAIN starts to follow her. ADAM holds him back.)

ADAM

Let her go, son. She be needin' some time.

THERE IS JUST ONE THING

(Later in the day in the Naharot market. Women are haggling with other women as one unfolds a bolt of woven cloth and drapes it on her body to "try it on." Enter ADAM followed by SHOMER then A'FAR. A'FAR pauses to look at the women.)

ADAM
(Hurriedly.)

These beauties are na' for you. They are all spoken for. Let's keep goin'.

(A'FAR stops at a booth to buy a piece of fruit. SHOMER tugs at him to follow ADAM. ADAM ducks into a tent unseen by A'FAR and SHOMER).

SHOMER

You'll get all messy with that, A'far. We need to be presentable. C'mon. (Turns to look for ADAM.) Where did he go?

A'FAR

I don't know. I was following you.

SHOMER

He probably turned somewhere.

A'FAR

Good guess. Why don't we turn somewhere?

SHOMER

You're so smart. I wouldn't have lost him, if you would've kept up.

(SHOMER slowly turns, looking for ADAM. He stumbles and pulls A'FAR with him. A boy—one of the ANGELS—comes running from nowhere to help him.)

A'FAR

You're . . .

ANGEL #1

The Prince's son.

A'FAR

From the caravan.

ANGEL #1

Yes. You seem lost.

(The other ANGELS chatter among themselves.)

SHOMER

We were following our friend.

ANGEL #1

We know many people here.

ANGEL #2

Is your friend the man you came to Naharot to meet?

A'FAR

He is the father of our friend, Cain.

ANGEL #1

We know where he is. Come with us.

(ANGELS pull SHOMER and A'FAR to follow them offstage.)

SHOMER
(Points the opposite direction.)

He was going that-a-way.

(Lights down on the market. Lights up on the interior of the PRINCE's tent where a lavish setting of food has been laid out. PRINCE is seated. ADAM stands in front of him.)

PRINCE

Eat! And sit down. You are making me nervous! Sit!

(The PRINCE breaks off a piece of his own bread and offers it to ADAM. ADAM takes it and sits.)

PRINCE

Can someone bring this man something to eat?

(Curtains part and one of the ANGELS runs in with a platter of food. ADAM eats hungrily.)

PRINCE

You say you are looking for a wife?

(ADAM's mouth is full. He holds up two fingers.)

PRINCE

I thought you had a wife. And now you want two more? Are you a man of such means? (ADAM shakes his head vigorously—still can't speak.) And you are not such a young man. I am surprised.

ADAM
(Swallows hard.)

I am na' lookin' for wives for myself.

PRINCE

Well, who are they for? I believe I know of your little son. He is quite young. Maybe I could interest you in one wife as a start. And you have another child. A baby. Is it also another son? One wife for each? At such a tender age.

ADAM

The baby be a girl. No wives for my son.

PRINCE

Then who? If you wish to conceal the identity of the husbands, I must ask if you, too, are in the business of arranging marriages. And, if so, I must know what commission you ask.

ADAM

No commission. The 'usbands are friends o' my wife who 'ave come from a great distance. Their father is ill and weak and was'na able to make the trek. They came wi' me to the mark but we were parted.

PRINCE

Did they come yesterday with the caravan? (ADAM nodded.) Then I believe I know the boys and I believe I know what they can offer in the way of a dowry. I traveled with that caravan and grew close to those boys during our travels, so I will do my best to provide them girls of the greatest character and beauty. Indeed, I have two in mind already. There is just one thing. . . .

ADAM

One thing?

PRINCE

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MATCH IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD
THAT DIDN'T TAKE A BIT OF COURAGE!
THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MATCH IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD
THAT DIDN'T HAVE AT LEAST . . . ONE QUESTION!

ADAM

One thing?

PRINCE

Yes.

ADAM

Only one?

PRINCE

One at a time.

ADAM

BUT YOU SAID “ONE THING” IN FUNNY SORTA WAY
AS IF YOU ‘HAD SOMETHIN’ IN MIND.

PRINCE

Maybe I did.

BUT WHO IS TO SAY
THAT WHAT I HAD IN MIND
IS WHAT YOU’D HAVE IN MIND
IF YOU KNEW THESE GIRLS—BUT NEVER MIND.

ADAM

No. ‘Tis somethin’ we ought to speak about.

YOU SAY THA’ THE LADIES THA’ YOU HA’ IN MIND
ARE PERFECT, NA’ FOR ONE THING.

What is that?

PRINCE

IT’S JUST A PHILOSOPHY OF MINE.

ADAM

A philosophy?

PRINCE

YES, MY SON.
IT’S JUST THAT NO MATTER
HOW ATTRACTIVE A WIFE MAY BE,
THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ONE THING THAT IS—
LET US SAY—TROUBLESOME.

YOU AND I MAY NOT AGREE ABOUT THE TROUBLE.
THAT IS WHAT MAKES LIFE—INTERESTING.

ADAM

Na'. You are just preparing me. Softenin' me up to where the boys wo' accept a match that is less tha' perfect.

PRINCE

NO! NO! MY SON.
IT IS NOTHING LIKE THAT.
YOUR BOYS WILL BE HAPPY, I ASSURE YOU.
IT'S SIMPLY THAT
WHEN YOU ACQUIRE A MATE FOR LIFE
YOU ARE ACQUIRING THE FUTURE.
NO ONE KNOWS THE FUTURE IN ADVANCE.
IN OUR MINDS, WE PICTURE WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT BE LIKE . . .

But I see my talk is making you nervous. Have something to eat.

BORN IN A WORLD OF REGRET

(CAIN enters his parents' home and finds EVE there alone.)

CAIN

Can't we talk?

(EVE looks at CAIN with tears in her eyes but does not respond.)

CAIN

I have been a slave. You see? They cut me. I have paid a price.

(EVE does not respond.)

CAIN

What do you want from me?

EVE
(quietly)

Please go.

CAIN
(not hearing)

What's that? Mom, talk to me.

EVE
(less quietly)

Please go. I don't want to talk to you.

CAIN

There is not a day that I don't think of him.

(EVE rises and starts to exit.)

CAIN
(following her)

Your friend Maskila won't let me marry her daughter unless you come home with me to be at my wedding!

EVE

Maskila?

CAIN

Yes.

EVE

YOU ARE BORN IN A WORLD OF REGRET.
YOU SEEK LOVE, BUT THE END'S ALWAYS TRAGIC.
YOU SEARCH FOR A WAY TO FORGET.
YOU LEARN, IN THE END, THERE IS NO MAGIC.

CAIN

Whoa! Mom!

I'm only asking you to come home with me to be at my wedding. It's not like . . .

EVE

You killed my son?

CAIN

I guess it is like that.

EVE

And you want me to be at your wedding? Joy from the boy who killed his brother, I should have?

CAIN

I didn't mean to kill him.

EVE

YOU DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL YOUR BROTHER.
MY FAMILY DIDN'T MEAN TO DRIVE ME AWAY.
BUT THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO HATE ANOTHER.
YOU MEAN THE BEST BUT HATE LEADS YOU ASTRAY.

WE HAD A FAMILY ONCE IN EDEN, AWAY FROM THE WORLD, IT'S WHERE WE FLEW,
FAR AWAY FROM HATEFUL PEOPLE TO MAKE A LIFE WHERE BONDS OF LOVE ARE TRUE.
LIFE IN PARADISE WE MEANT TO FOSTER, HAPPY CHILDREN IN THEIR PARENTS' HOME.
...

It didn't matter what you meant to be, Cain. Eden's gone. It's not our home.

CAIN

Mom, I loved my little brother.

EVE

I know. You loved him to death.

WE HAVE BIRTHMARKS ON OUR SHOULDERS

(Outside the PRINCE's tent we hear sounds of dickering and laughter.
Identical twins ESEV and DESHE wait outside to be admitted.)

ESEV

Shall we play the old switch game?

DESHE

You know the answer—though it doesn't really matter if we do, does it?

ESEV

They never can tell us apart. Why are we always looking for brothers to marry? Don't answer that. I know the answer. But it does scare them away.

DESHE

And yet, you are so beautiful. What man wouldn't want you?

ESEV

Speak for yourself!

(ESEV and DESHE laugh. The PRINCE emerges from the tent.)

PRINCE

I have told them the truth. I prepared them to understand that there's always something. They are unsure, but unsure is better than sure at this stage.

ESEV

I have never understood the problem with the truth. I never have any trouble telling myself apart from my sister.

DESHE

Me neither.

(ESEV and DESHE laugh together.)

ESEV

I have a birthmark on my left shoulder.

DESHE

I have a birthmark on my right shoulder.

ESEV and DESHE
(Laughing.)

What could be more obvious?

PRINCE

I'm sure this comedy is hysterical to you. And it may be hysterical to your husbands someday. But not today. We are not here today to make fun of these people. They are good people and wish to learn if you are good people yourselves.

Shall we go in? They are waiting to meet you.

(The PRINCE reenters his tent escorting ESEV and DESHE. Inside are ADAM, SHOMER, and A'FAR flanked by several ANGELS and the MOTHER and FATHER of ESEV and DESHE.)

PRINCE
(To his guests.)

These are the girls. I think you'll see that I was not speaking too highly of them.

(To ESEV and DESHE.)

Girls, please introduce yourselves.

DESHE

My name is Deshe, named for the herbs of the field.

ESEV

And I am Esev, named for the grass of the pasture.

DESHE

Which one of you is the older son?

(SHOMER holds up his hand.)

DESHE

Then I belong with you. I am also the older.

(DESHE goes to stand next to SHOMER and ESEV when to stand next to A'FAR.)

A'FAR

I thought you were twins.

DESHE

Still, I was born first. Ask my mother. . . . Would you like me as your wife and not Esev?

(DESHE comes to stand by A'FAR.)

DESHE
(To ESEV.)

Go stand by the other one. I like this one. But it's hard to choose.

(ESEV goes to stand by SHOMER.)

ESEV

They seem so alike. How will we ever tell them apart?

PRINCE

Girls! We talked about this.

ESEV

We're sorry.

A'FAR

YOU ARE FUNNY AND YOU'RE SMART.
AND NO DOUBT YOU'RE A BEAUTIFUL GIRL.
BUT HOW WILL WE TELL YOU APART?
ANSWER THAT AND I'LL GIVE IT A WHIRL.

SHOMER

AS BROTHERS WE WERE TAUGHT HOW TO SHARE
OUR TOYS, OUR JOYS, OUR LIVELIHOOD.
WHAT YOU ASK MAY BE TOO MUCH TO BEAR.
FOR US TO HOLD ONTO OUR BROTHERHOOD.

SO LET ME ASK
WHAT IF WE MARRY . . .

I'm sorry, what is your name?

ESEV

I am Esev.

SHOMER

HOW WILL I KNOW IT IS YOU
AND NOT YOUR SISTER?

PRINCE

The family knows. It just takes time.

SHOMER

BUT HOW DO THEY KNOW THAT THEY ARE RIGHT?
WHAT IF I BEGET MY BROTHER'S CHILDREN?

A'FAR

Or I his! . . . Me, mine. . . . Oh, I'm getting confused.

PRINCE

THERE IS ONE SURE WAY TO KNOW.

DESHE

HE IS RIGHT!

A'FAR

EVEN SO!

PRINCE

THE SURE WAY TO KNOW IS TO HAVE TRUST.

ESEV
(Laughing.)

I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA SING ABOUT OUR BIRTHMARKS.

PRINCE

IT'S NOT A SONG ABOUT BIRTHMARKS.
IT'S A SONG ABOUT TRUST.

ANGELS

IT'S NOT A SONG ABOUT BIRTHMARKS.
IT'S A SONG ABOUT TRUST.

ESEV

YES, OF COURSE! BUT DIDN'T SOME GREAT MAN ONCE SAY:
"TRUST BUT VERIFY"?

ANGELS

TRUST BUT VERIFY.
TRUST BUT VERIFY.

(PRINCE shakes his head.)

DESHE

She's right, Prince.

(To A'FAR.) YOU CAN TRUST US, THERE'S NO DOUBT.
BUT IF YOUR HEART EVER HAS QUESTIONS.

ANGELS

IF YOUR HEART EVER HAS QUESTIONS.

DESHE

WE HAVE BIRTHMARKS ON OUR SHOULDERS.

ANGELS

IF YOUR HEART EVER HAS QUESTIONS.
IF YOUR HEART EVER HAS QUESTIONS.

ESEV

WE HAVE BIRTHMARKS ON OUR SHOULDERS.

ANGELS

THEY HAVE BIRTHMARKS ON THEIR SHOULDERS.
THEY HAVE BIRTHMARKS ON THEIR SHOULDERS.

DESHE

They are small birthmarks, so as not to interfere with our beauty. (To A'FAR.) Mine is on my right shoulder.

ANGELS

RIGHT SHOULDER.
RIGHT SHOULDER.

ESEV
(To SHOMER.)

And mine is on my left.

ANGELS

LEFT SHOULDER.
LEFT SHOULDER.

ESEV

Would you like to see?

(DESHE and ESEV start to show their shoulder to their prospective grooms.)

PRINCE

Now is not the time for the brothers to see.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR TRUST.

ANGELS

TRUST BUT VERIFY.
TRUST BUT VERIFY.
TRUST BUT VERIFY.
TRUST BUT VERIFY.

(SHOMER and A'FAR hold their hands out to their prospective brides.
Lights out.)

I MEAN NO IMPERTINENCE

(Early evening in the marketplace as most stands have closed or are closing for the night.)

ZERA

You still owe service to me. It is forbidden and impertinent for you to come to me this way.

CAIN

I have come to you in private, master.

ZERA

Speak your peace, but know that the matter is decided. You will accompany me to the home of the army officer.

CAIN

I mean no impertinence. My service is for a wrong committed against your brother. You have acknowledged that my punishment is unjust. Yet I accepted the punishment to atone for my other guilt. I may be your slave, but we two are also brothers in guilt. For we have both known the guilt of murdering our own brothers. I have become your slave, not because of a wrong that I did you, but because of a wrong that you did to your own brother. Do you profit from murdering your own brother?

ZERA

I have said that I will release you. You can marry anytime. But you and I have a chance to go off and negotiate a pact of peace for our people that will last for our lifetimes.

CAIN

If I choose to go.

ZERA

If I say you will go.

CAIN

Then I am bound to remind you of another pact that you negotiated.

ZERA

Are you threatening me? Was this how it was with your brother?

CAIN

I have learned to control myself through years of service to your brother. He was right to question your ambitions. You say you took an oath to the Emek and could not come to serve your own people. Yet you make other promises and then cast them away.

ZERA

I have heard enough.

CAIN

You are bound by the murder of your brother to provide him a male heir. It was only through your promise to free me that my future father-in-law agreed to release you from that obligation.

ZERA

I wouldn't be calling him your future father-in-law just yet. Not with his wife against you.

CAIN

She has agreed. Provided that you uphold your end of the bargain. If not, you owe your brother an obligation.

ZERA

I have heard enough.

(ZERA draws his sword from its scabbard.)

CAIN

An obligation that will survive . . . even if you kill me.

(ZERA raises his sword as CAIN stands his ground. ZERA draws the blade across CAIN's cheek, across CAIN's mark of slavery, and blood began to flow. But CAIN does not fall.)

CAIN

(Surprised.)

You did not kill me, master.

ZERA

Your own mother will not speak to you.

(ZERA shoves CAIN away. CAIN stumbles.)

ZERA

Go! And don't come back!

YOU TOOK US AWAY FROM STRIFE AND HATRED

(Lights up on ESEV and DESHE outside of ADAM's and EVE's home. A commotion is heard offstage. CAIN runs in bleeding. ESEV and DESHE cry out and run to help CAIN.)

DESHE

What has happened to you?

ESEV

Who did this to you?

(EVE draws the curtain to look out from her home see what is happening. When she sees CAIN bleeding, she gathers up some clean rags and goes out to offer to clean him up.)

CAIN

No! It needs ash from the fire. That is what was done the last time.

(DESHE runs to the fire, gathers the ashes, and comes to apply them to the wound as CAIN sits down on a bench. EVE comes with her rags to clean him up.)

CAIN

Thanks, Mom.

EVE

(Looks away in sudden embarrassment.)

I wasn't thinking.

CAIN

I know you didn't mean to help.

(DESHE and ESEV back away as EVE walks around the courtyard.)

EVE

THIS IS WHAT A MOTHER DOES.
GIRLS, YOU'LL KNOW THIS ONE DAY.

THERE'S NO REASON, JUST BECAUSE.
YOU LOVE THEM IN EVERY WAY.

THIS IS JUST A MOTHER'S LOVE.
YOU SOOTHE THEM WHEN THEY'RE HURT.
YOU HELP THEM FIRST, THEN ASK "WHEREOF."
YOU CHEER THEM WHEN THEY FLIRT.

THIS IS WHAT A MOTHER DOES.
GIRLS, YOU'LL KNOW THIS ONE DAY.
THERE'S NO REASON, JUST BECAUSE.
YOU LOVE THEM IN EVERY WAY.

What a mother doesn't do. . . is allow one son to murder his brother.

CAIN

Mom!

EVE

Who did this to you?

CAIN

It was Zera.

EVE

Did you try to kill him?

CAIN

I did not.

EVE

Then why did he do this to you?

CAIN

I reminded him of his promise to free me.

EVE

Go on.

CAIN

And so he drew his sword to cancel the mark of slavery that was on my face.

EVE

And does that make you feel absolved of all guilt?

CAIN

Not all guilt.

(EVE begins to cry and runs into her house.)

CAIN

Mom!"

(No answer.)

CAIN

Mom!" Will you be coming with us to the hills? I need to know.

(No answer.)

CAIN

Mom! I challenged Zera because I have a girl waiting for me . . . no, waiting for you to return so that we can be married.

(No answer.)

CAIN

Mom! I know you can hear me. "Mom!

(CAIN knocks on the doorpost.)

CAIN

May I come in?

(No answer.)

CAIN

Well, I doubt I have a right to complain.

(CAIN sits on the bench, looks down at his tunic and brushes the spots where his blood has fallen.)

DESHE

Are you alright?

(CAIN waves his hand as if to say that he was fine. He speaks again to EVE.)

CAIN

I doubt I have a right to complain. But you act as if you had no part in what happened.

EVE

(From inside the house.)

Now don't you go trying to blame me.

CAIN

No. I take full blame. But what were you and Dad thinking, trying to raise two boys in a narrow crevice in the earth?

(EVE emerges from her house.)

EVE

It wasn't a crevice. It was paradise! . . . It was paradise!

CAIN

Not for me it wasn't.

WE HAD A LOVELY LIFE IN EDEN, AWAY FROM THE WORLD, ALL THAT IS TRUE.
YOU TOOK US AWAY FROM STRIFE AND HATRED. ALL THAT WE HAD THEN WAS YOU.
WE HAD NO FAMILY. WE HAD NO FRIENDS. YOU KEPT ALL THAT FROM US.
YOU CANNOT FLEE THE WORLD WITHOUT TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES.

Mom, he's not coming back.

(EVE nods to him sadly.)

CAIN

I have a girl who is waiting for me to come home. . . . And her mother is waiting for you. . . . I can't undo what I did.

HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING FOR ME

(Caravan scene at night. CAIN is alone. SHOMER escorts NESHAMA in.
Her daughter DAVKA follows.)

NESHAMA

Why have you sent for me?

CAIN

Is your sister still waiting for me?

NESHAMA

She is.

CAIN

Have you been waiting for me? I need to know. I don't want to cause strife between you two.

NESHAMA

She is the only one (referring to DAVKA). I am happy with my daughter. I seek no other. . . . I see you are free.

CAIN

Zera has no more claim on you.

NESHAMA

That is all I wanted.

CAIN

And your mother? I am still the murderer of my brother. I have not been born again.

SHOMER

You have done what she asked.

NESHAMA

If you are going to be our brother, you will have to know this about your mother-in-law. You never know what to expect from her.

AN UNINVITED FELLOW TRAVELER

(RAKIA knocks and enters CAIN's tent. She goes to hug him. He pulls away.)

RAKIA

I WAS SO WORRIED
WHILE YOU WERE FAR AWAY.
I WANTED YOU TO COME HOME.
I WATCHED FOR YOU EACH DAY.

CAIN

They're here.

RAKIA

Your parents?

CAIN

My parents.

RAKIA

Your parents. Then . . .

THIS IS THE DAY I GET TO MEET YOUR FAMILY.
WHO THOUGHT THIS DAY WOULD EVER COME.
THIS IS THE DAY I GET TO MEET YOUR FAMILY.
I'M SHAKING. MY HANDS ARE GETTING NUMB.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL CALL THEM
MR. AND MRS. . . . DO YOU HAVE A LAST NAME?
MAYBE ADAM, EVE, OR HAVA?
SHOULD I CALL THEM MOM AND DAD?

THIS IS THE DAY I GET TO MEET YOUR FAMILY.

WHO THOUGHT THIS DAY WOULD EVER COME.
THIS IS THE DAY I GET TO MEET YOUR FAMILY.
I'M SHAKING. MY HANDS ARE GETTING NUMB.

CAIN

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'LL CALL MY FAMILY
NOW THAT THIS DAY HAS FINALLY COME.
WE DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS BACK IN EDEN.
I'M SHAKING. MY HANDS ARE GETTING NUMB.

RAKIA

I thought we were talking about my hands.

CAIN

So we were.

RAKIA

Of course! You're nervous, too.

CAIN

Yes.

RAKIA

You're very pale.

CAIN

Am I?

RAKIA

What's wrong, Cain? Is something wrong?

CAIN

ALL ALONG MY DESERT JOURNEY,
AS I WENT TO FETCH MY MOM AND DAD,
I HAD AN UNINVITED FELLOW TRAVELER,
WHO KEPT MY MIND AND HEART ENGAGED.

IN THE NIGHT I SAW MY BROTHER ABEL,

LIKE WE HAD NEVER BEEN APART,
HE TAUNTED ME AS ONLY HE WAS ABLE.
HIS TAUNTING WORDS TORE AT MY HEART.

(ABEL enters. CAIN can see and hear him. RAKIA cannot.)

CAIN

Abel!

RAKIA

Is someone here?

ABEL

Is this your girl? (No answer.)

She must be your girl. (Turns to RAKIA.) Has he told you what really happened that day?

CAIN

Leave her out of it!

RAKIA

Leave who?

ABEL

(Laughs.) You have a girl! You told me you had a girl, but I didn't really believe it. But here she is.

RAKIA

What is going on? What about your family?

ABEL

I don't have a girl.

WEREN'T YOU HAPPY BACK IN EDEN?
YOU AND I WERE SUCH GOOD PALS.
NO GIRLS TO MAKE A BOY BE JEALOUS.
SUCH HAPPY FELLAS, YOU AND I.

I WAS HAPPY BACK IN EDEN
WATCHING THE FLOCK AND CATCHING FISH

WHO KNEW YOU'D LASH OUT AND I'D BE BLEEDIN'
I DIDN'T KNOW YOUR DARKEST WISH.

RAKIA

Cain! Talk to me!

CAIN

LOOK! HERE'S MY BROTHER ACTING INNOCENTLY.
OH, YOU CAN'T SEE HIM AT ALL.

ABEL

Didn't he tell you . . . ?

CAIN

AND YOU CAN'T HEAR HIM.

RAKIA

Is it your brother?

ABEL

AND SHE CAN HEAR ME.

RAKIA O CAIN, O CAIN, TELL ME WHAT IS HE SAYIN'.		
RAKIA O CAIN, O CAIN, TELL ME WHAT IS HE SAYIN'.	ABEL O CAIN, O CAIN, YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY. YOU GOT THE GIRL AND I GOT TO LIVE IN YOUR DREAMS.	
RAKIA O CAIN, O CAIN, WHAT CAN I DO FOR THE PAIN?		CAIN OKAY, OKAY, LEAVE THE GIRL OUT OF THIS. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

		SO GET OUT OF MY HEAD. PLEASE STOP.
	ABEL	
	DOESN'T SHE KNOW THE TRUE STORY? YOU DIDN'T STOP. AND IT WAS GORY. I PLEADED WITH YOU. I ASKED YOU TO STOP. YOU ASK ME TO STOP. DID YOU?	
		CAIN
		OKAY, OKAY, LEAVE THE GIRL OUT OF THIS.
RAKIA		
O CAIN, O CAIN, TELL ME WHAT IS HE SAYIN'. IT WASN'T HIS FAULT. YOUR BROTHER IS SUCH A GOOD MAN.		
	ABEL	
	DID HE TELL YOU I ASKED HIM TO STOP? DID HE TELL YOU I ASKED HIM TO HELP ME UP?	
		CAIN
		WILL YOU STOP?
RAKIA		
WILL YOU STOP?		
	ABEL	
	WILL I STOP? DID YOU STOP? DID I TELL YOU THAT I	

	REACHED OUT MY HAND TO CAIN?	
RAKIA O CAIN, O CAIN!		CAIN WILL YOU STOP?
	ABEL I DID AS I LAY UPON THE GROUND. BLOOD WAS COMING FROM MY HEAD. AND HE SLAPPED MY HAND AWAY.	
		CAIN YOU NEVER STOPPED!
	ABEL I WAS ON THE GROUND.	
RAKIA WILL YOU STOP? O CAIN, O CAIN.		
		CAIN IT NEVER HAPPENED THAT WAY. IT WAS I WHO ALWAYS DID THE BEGGING. YOU NEVER STOPPED.
RAKIA YOU NEVER STOPPED!		
	ABEL WHAT DOES SHE KNOW?	

	<p>I WAS ON THE GROUND BLEEDING. ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER. JUST LIKE THIS PLACE. BEGGING YOU TO LET ME LIVE.</p>	
		<p>CAIN</p> <p>I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THIS. I SAID THIS IS YOUR STORY. NOT MINE.</p>
	<p>ABEL</p> <p>AND YOUR GIRL'S GOING TO HEAR THIS.</p>	
<p>RAKIA</p> <p>WILL YOU STOP? O CAIN, O CAIN. TELL ME WHAT IS HE SAYIN'.</p>		
	<p>ABEL</p> <p>ABOUT HOW, WHEN I WAS LYING BLEEDING, YOU PICKED UP A ROCK</p>	
		<p>CAIN</p> <p>IT WAS A STICK!</p>
	<p>ABEL</p> <p>IT WAS A ROCK. YOU HIT WHEN I WAS DOWN. AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN. EVEN WHEN I WAS DEAD YOU KEPT ON POUNDING AWAY.</p>	
<p>RAKIA</p> <p>O CAIN, O CAIN.</p>		
		<p>CAIN</p>

RAKIA
O CAIN.

RAKIA
WILL YOU STOP?

I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF.

CAIN
I WANTED YOU DEAD FOR SO
LONG.

CAIN
I WANT YOU DEAD NOW.
WILL YOU STOP?

I WASN'T BORN AGAIN (EVENING & MORNING REPRISE)

(CAIN enters alone. It is dark)

CAIN

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER, A BIRD WITH NO WINGS.
THEN GOD SENT ME TO SCHOOL AND TAUGHT ME TO FLY
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE FIFTH DAY.

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I WAS HELPLESS AS A LAMB, A SINGER WITH NO SONG.
THEN GOD GAVE ME YOU-AND-ME, GAVE ME YOU-AND-ME
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE SIXTH DAY.

Oh, Rakia, I thought I finally accomplished something. I brought my mom and dad home to be at our wedding.

THUS THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WERE FINISHED.
AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORK.
WITH YOU-AND-ME MY WORLD WAS COMPLETE . . .

But I couldn't leave him behind. I couldn't leave the memory behind.

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I THOUGHT THAT I WAS BORN ANEW INTO A NEW WORLD.
BUT MAYBE THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, MAYBE IT WAS A LIE.
MAYBE THERE'S NO ME AND YOU SO LONG AS THERE WAS HIM.

(Lights dim on CAIN. Lights up on MASKILA sitting up in bed.)

MASKILA

Not another night without sleep. Tzelem? Are you awake. Keep me company. Wake up.

(She turns to shake TZELEM awake, but finds he is not there.)

MASKILA

Tzelem! Tzelem! Where are you?

(TZELEM enters sleepily and walks to the bed.)

TZELEM

I'm right here, dear.

MASKILA

Are you unwell?

TZELEM

At my age . . .

MASKILA

Yes?

TZELEM

I had to go. You always say I wake you.

MASKILA

I wasn't asleep. But I didn't see you go.

TZELEM

Thinking about receiving our new son?

MASKILA

What are you talking about?

TZELEM

Cain. He's brought back his mom and dad. Like you said.

(MASKILA jumps out of the bed.)

MASKILA

I never agreed to anything!

(MASKILA begins to leave.)

TZELEM

You can't just walk away! Where are you going?

MASKILA

Nowhere you should be following!

(MASKILA leaves. TZELEM follows her but stops at the doorway.)

TZELEM

I will be here when you return. I do not approve of your plan. Think about that in the place where you are going!

(Lights dim on TZELEM. Lights up on CAIN. RAKIA enters looking for CAIN.)

RAKIA

There you are! (Pause.) Your brother. Do you see him often like that?

CAIN

Yes.

RAKIA

It scares me.

CAIN

I'm sorry.

RAKIA
(speaking over CAIN)

I mean, I just got done singing a trio with you and . . .

CAIN

My brother . . .

RAKIA

. . . a guy who wasn't there, a guy who is dead.

CAIN

It was so nice of you to keep time while a guy you didn't see or hear sang his lines.

(RAKIA does a double take.)

I wouldn't blame you if you wanted to call the whole thing off.

RAKIA

Did you really want him dead?

CAIN

Yes. (Pause.) And no! It could have been either of us. That's what it was like. One day friends. One day at each other's throats. Sometimes it was both at the same time. (Pause.) The rough stuff ended that day. With me on top. But it could have been him. I could have been bleeding on the ground. (Pause.)

I love you. But I can't say that he won't come again.

(RAKIA looks at CAIN takes his hand. CAIN pulls her close and kisses her.)

CAIN

Let's go and see my parents.

(Lights up on ADAM and EVE. CAIN sees them and goes to them, pulling RAKIA by the hand.)

RAKIA

This is so weird.

(CAIN and RAKIA walk over to ADAM's and EVE's space.)

ADAM

Greetings son. Be this your intended?

(EVE looks down and away.)

CAIN
(sheepishly)

I think so.

ADAM

Well, be she or be she not?

RAKIA

I be. I mean, I am.

CAIN

Her name is Rakia.

ADAM

Pleased to make your acquaintance, Rakia.

(ADAM and RAKIA shake hands awkwardly. EVE remains side-eye-ing the situation.)

ADAM

Say 'ello t' yer new daughter, Eve.

CAIN

Her mother is Maskila, as I've told you.

(Unable to look away any longer, EVE turns toward CAIN and RAKIA. RAKIA takes a step toward EVE and puts out her hand. EVE moves toward RAKIA. They shake hands awkwardly, then step apart.)

RAKIA

My mother has spoken to me about your friendship.

I WON'T CONSENT TO THIS WEDDING

(CAIN stands alone. He looks around and sees no one. Then he waves his hand to beckon NESHAMAMA who is off stage.)

CAIN

She was threatening to kill you.

NESHAMA

She told me.

CAIN

She told you?

NESHAMA

Yeah! She told me. (Laughs.) You didn't really think she was serious, did you.

CAIN

She had a knife. She was really hot.

NESHAMA

Well, she cools off quickly. She thought you'd understand considering that you . . . You're not worried, are you?

CAIN

Me? No. But you?

NESHAMA

Cain. You're a cute guy. But after what happened to me? I have a baby to take care of. That's all I need. You?

CAIN

Nothing. You know, I used to blame everything on being the new guy. That I didn't know the rules. . . . It'll be nice having you as a sister.

NESHAMA

It'll be nice having you as a brother. . . . But don't kill me. . . . Cain! . . . I'm sorry, I was just kidding, okay?

(Lights up on MASKILA and TZELEM. MASKILA is walking purposefully toward ADAM, EVE, CAIN, and RAKIA. TZELEM limps slowly behind.)

TZELEM

Wait up, dear. I can't keep up.

(MASKILA turns and motions for TZELEM to hurry.)

MASKILA

We don't have all day. Hurry.

TZELEM
(not hurrying)

I'm hurrying.

(MASKILA goes to TZELEM and gently helps him walk. As the following scene unfolds, the women arrange themselves so they are separate from the men and so that CAIN is visibly confronted by the three women. But first MAKILA and TZELEM enter that space. MASKILA appears angry. ABEL appears in the wings following MASKILA and TZELEM.)

RAKIA
(alarmed)

Mom!

EVE

Maskila!

(EVE runs to MASKILA and they embrace.)

MASKILA

I never thought I would see you again.

EVE

Nor did I.

MASKILA

I SENT YOUR SON ON A FOOL'S ERRAND.
I THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD NOT SUCCEED.

RAKIA

Mom!

MASKILA

BUT HE BROUGHT BACK TO ME MY OLD FRIEND.
AND NOW WANTS FOR ME TO CONCEDE.

(As MASKILA continues ABEL creeps closer to the scene. Only CAIN sees him, but RAKIA sees CAIN react and knows that ABEL has returned. ABEL

is silent but reacts to MASKILA and EVE as if he is there to stop the marriage.)

MASKILA

I CAN'T GIVE MY GIRL TO A KILLER.
MY HUSBAND, YOU MAY NOT CONCUR.
TO A MOM THERE IS NOT A SCINTILLA
OF DOUBT, I AM CLEAR, THERE'S NO BLUR.

YOU MUST KNOW HOW MUCH I WAS DREADING
A SUITOR BESMIRCHED WITH THIS SCAR.
I WON'T GIVE CONSENT TO THIS WEDDING.
I'M SORRY TO BRING YOU SO FAR.

(At the moment that ABEL appears to be winning the mind game with
CAIN, CAIN turns away.)

CAIN

WHO ARE YOU? YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF MY MOTHER.
YOUR DAUGHTER, TOO. DON'T KEEP US APART.
IT'S NOT YOUR PLACE TO AVENGE MY BROTHER.
I'VE PAID THE PRICE. YOU'RE BREAKING MY HEART.

MASKILA

I CAN'T GIVE MY GIRL TO A KILLER.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, IT WON'T BE ENOUGH.
TO A MOM THERE IS NOT A SCINTILLA
OF DOUBT, I AM CLEAR, THERE'S NO BLUFF.

EVE

WHO ARE YOU? YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF HIS MOTHER.
I'M THE AGRIEVED, BUT WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
IT'S MY DESPAIR. IT'S MINE. YOU'RE ANOTHER.
KEEP THEM APART AND OUR FRIENDSHIP IS THROUGH.

(ABEL, defeated, exits.)

THE REAL STORY

(MASKILA and her FAMILY sit by the campfire.)

MASKILA

So I said, yes. And they were married. We all give in to our kids. Am I right? What can I say?

(EVE gives MASKILA a hug and the two remain arm in arm.)

EVE

And it came to pass that Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare a son. And his name was Chanokh.

MASKILA

And the grandmothers saw that Cain's son was good.

EVE

Rakia's son.

MASKILA

Cain and Rakia's son.

BABY

Waaa!

(CAIN appears holding a BABY awkwardly. He hands the BABY to RAKIA.
The BABY immediately quiets down.)

EVE

You are just like your father.

(CAIN and ADAM look at each other and laugh.)

CAIN

Mom?

EVE

Yes, son?

CAIN

Dad and I were just talking about how you two got together.

EVE

The real story?

ADAM

Of course, 'tis the real story.

EVE

That's what you always said.

CAIN

Don't worry, Mom. That old rib story doesn't cut it with me anymore. My mother-in-law here killed that story when she told me that she was friends with you when you were a girl.

MASKILA

What rib story?

ADAM

You tell 'er.

EVE

Ach! I need something to drink first.

(Someone offers EVE a drink. She takes a long drink from it.)

EVE

Okay, Maskila. Adam liked to tell the boys that he was all alone in the world and that the gods came down and made me out of one of his scrawny ribs. It was a particularly compelling story when he told it at dinner as he pulled a bone out of a roast.

ADAM

'Tis pretty funny, do'na you think, Maskila?

MASKILA

I think it's really a sweet story.

EVE
(rolls her eyes)

Yeah? Well get this. The idea was that we were one flesh and belonged together. (Laughs.) In a way, it was true, with or without the visual aids—which sometimes were pretty messy.

ADAM
(laughs)

'specially when I tried puttin' the bone back into the roast to show 'ow Eve and I would come back t'gether.

CAIN
(embarrassed)

Dad!

ADAM
(laughs)

We be all grownups here. You be a father. Rakia be a mother.

CAIN

Hey, Rakia! Do you hear this story my father is telling?

(RAKIA comes back toward the fire.)

RAKIA

Did you really believe his story? I mean, didn't you ever watch the animals do it?

CAIN

No! Remember, there were no girls in Eden.

EVE

Hey! What am I? Chopped liver?

CAIN

I'm sorry, Mom, said Cain. I didn't mean . . .

EVE

It's okay, my son. Boys never want to think of their mothers that way. We mothers are just too pure.

RAKIA

I know I am.

CAIN

Right.

RAKIA

Oh, I will be pure, if you tell a crazy story like this to Chanokh.

CAIN

Don't worry. I'll let you tell him. Besides, we don't live in the middle of the wilderness. So, Dad, how did you get mom, you know, to come with you to live out in the wilderness.

ADAM

'Twas your mom's idea.

EVE

It was not. You always had this thing about 'getting away.' You remember, Maskila. He would always take his flock and go off separate from the other shepherds.

ADAM

I came to this ridge long before anyone lived 'ere. 'Twas wild then. All this building of yours—'tis nice, son, but it eats me up when I think about 'ow beautiful this place was before people moved up 'ere.

EVE

And once he started coming here, it was just a matter of time before he went over the ridge.

ADAM

First it was just to the spring.

RO'EH
(from the dark)

Our spring?

CAIN

Is that you, Ro'eh? Come by the fire and listen to this.

(RO'EH comes near the fire and sits next to CAIN.)

RO'EH

I thought we were the first.

ADAM

You were, Ro'eh. You found it yourself, right?

(RO'EH nods.)

ADAM

Nobody showed you? Nobody was occupying the place?

(RO'EH nods.)

ADAM

Same with me. No one showed me the spring. 'Tis over the ridge, in the wilderness. No one goes into the wilderness if they are in their right mind.

EVE

You can say that again.

ADAM
(hurt)

You never would 'ave lived in Eden.

EVE

I was out of my mind, too.

MASKILA

I thought they were both out of their minds and said so. Not only was the wilderness thing crazy, but your scheme to fake your deaths . . .

ADAM

The wilderness thing, as you call it, was not crazy. You never saw Eden. 'Twas a beautiful place. Animals were not afraid to cross the wilderness to get there. Sure there were 'ardships in the wilderness, but the path there was actually quite easy to follow. You did it, boys. Am I right?

(CAIN and RO'EH nod.)

ADAM

If I'm not mistaken, it's a dry river bed—or what looks like one. A couple days out and it joins a real flowing river and that's the way to Eden. Or was, before the rockslide.

EVE

We didn't just run out into the middle of nowhere. Adam had visited Eden before we went.

CAIN

And your plan?

EVE

Our parents hated each other. You know that. We were hill people. They were from the valley. I was a disgrace to my people. Your dad was a disgrace to his.

ADAM

Your grandparents were not gentle people you know.

MASKILA

And your father was a kind of hippie.

ADAM

We thou' we could make the world go away. (Pause.) But it didna' go.

(Lights out. Lights up again on the whole ENSEMBLE.)

A'FAR

(To DESHE.)

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT SHAPE, THE SEA WITHOUT LIGHT.
THEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD SAID LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF OUR FIRST DAY.

SHOMER

(To ESEV.)

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
LIFE WAS BARE, FULL OF GLOOM AND STORMY WEATHER.
THEN GOD MADE BLUE SKY, AND LET ME WALK IN THE LIGHT
ON THE EVENING AND THE MORNING OF THE SECOND DAY.

NESHAMA
(To her daughter DAVKA.)

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
THERE WAS NOTHING IN THIS WORLD THAT I COULD STAND ON.
THEN GOD MADE THE LAND AND PLANTED A GARDEN, AND IT WAS GOOD
ON THE EVENING AND THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY.

ADAM
(To EVE.)

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
MY YEARNING HAD NO BEGINNING, MY LONGING NO END.
THEN GOD MADE THE SUN AND MOON; FOR NIGHT AND DAY YOU ARE THE ONE
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE FOURTH DAY.

MASKILA
(To TZELEM.)

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER, A BIRD WITH NO WINGS.
THEN GOD SENT ME TO SCHOOL AND TAUGHT ME TO FLY
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE FIFTH DAY.

CAIN
(To RAKIA and their baby.)

ON THE DAY I MET YOU,
I WAS HELPLESS AS A LAMB, A SINGER WITH NO SONG.
THEN GOD GAVE ME YOU-AND-ME, GAVE ME YOU-AND-ME
ON THE EVENING AND MORNING OF THE SIXTH DAY.

ENSEMBLE

THUS THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WERE FINISHED.
AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORK.
WITH YOU-AND-ME MY WORLD WAS COMPLETE,
ON THE DAY I MET YOU,

(Lights flicker and go dim. ABEL appears. ENSEMBLE freezes. MASKILA shakes her finger at CAIN in warning. CAIN shakes his head no. ABEL disappears into the mist. CAIN hugs RAKIA. CURTAIN.)