

# ***O my God!***

**A play by Anat Gov**

**The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv**

**Translated from the Hebrew by Anthony Berris and Margalit Rodgers**

## **The Characters**

**Ella**, a 42-year-old psychologist and single mother of:

**Lior**, a 16-year-old autistic boy

**God**

## **The Setting**

The office in Ella's home. The room is surrounded by a small, well-kept garden with a colorful array of flowers. In the office there is an art and crafts corner with additional games. Hanging on the wall are paintings by her son and a black and white photograph of Marlon Brando in a long coat and wearing a hat, in his role as "The Godfather".

**Cello playing is heard in the darkness. The lighting comes up on Ella's office. Lior is sitting playing the cello with great concentration. His eyes are closed. Ella enters from the garden carrying a watering can.**

Ella: Wow, it's hot! The globe has gone out of its mind. The middle of January and still not a drop of rain. If it goes on like this we'll have to give up the garden. Especially those thirsty roses of yours.

**Lior continues playing.**

Ella: No, don't worry about the roses, it was just talk. You know I don't give up that quickly, don't you? All we need is some rain, that's all. **(To the sky)** A little rain, that's all we're asking for. What's this stinginess? Hello! Wake up! **(She strokes Lior's hand)** Liori, listen sweetie, just this once I've got another patient today. Just one. You know I never see patients when you're at home, but he sounded really desperate... He begged me to see him today or something terrible would happen... There was something in his voice... I couldn't say no... I've got a feeling that he's someone very... like, senior. When I asked him his name he told me, kind of pompously: "Call me G". G is either the Mossad or the Security Services, no? Just imagine the head of the Security Services coming to me for therapy. It's a bit worrying, isn't it? I mean from a national standpoint... Anyway, it's only an hour and Miriam's coming to be with you...

**Lior starts jumping and grunting with joy.**

Ella: You like Miriam, don't you? She's lovely.

**Lior starts growling and jumping all over the room. As he does he knocks mainly breakable objects flying. Ella runs after him, managing to catch every object he sends flying just before it shatters, replaces it as she catches other things he sends flying. She appears to be very skilled in this situation as if it is routine. As she runs after him she continues speaking.**

Ella: Why don't you play her what you played for me today? She loves it when you play for her. And you can watch Shrek together (**Lior enthuses even more**) and when I'm finished we can make a fun supper, maybe we'll make scrambled eggs and tomatoes, what...

**Lior takes the picture down from the wall and before Ella can get to him it shatters on the floor. Lior is frightened and freezes.**

Ella: It's all right!

**Lior's growling becomes increasingly frightened and he covers his face with his shirt as he growls hysterically.**

Ella: It's all right, really. Look! I've got another one. (**From the cupboard she takes a copy of the picture and goes to hang it on the wall**) Instead of going to the picture framer's every week I had some more made. What a clever Mom you've got! (**Hangs the picture**) See? Everything's all right. This one's even better.

**Lior's body is trembling. She hurries to him. She hugs him. She sings softly into his ear until he calms down in her arms. The doorbell rings.**

Ella: That's probably Miriam. Go and open the door for her. (**Lior starts running out joyfully. She shouts after him**) Take your cello!

**Lior continues running out, lowing happily. Ella picks up his cello and shoes and follows him out. Voices are heard off, particularly Lior's growls of joy. Ella returns to the office. She waves them goodbye, blows a kiss and shuts the door. The voices off stop. She sits down tiredly.**

Ella: O, God...

**A knock on the door. The cello plays a single long, low note. Ella straightens up. She gets up and opens the door to the garden. Facing her is a tall man wearing a**

**long coat and a hat, like the actor in the picture on the wall. She moves aside to let him in.**

Ella: Please come in.

**The Man enters. Ella looks at him, puzzled, looks at the picture on the wall and then back at him. He walks around the room, scrutinizing it. He stops at a big colorful painting hanging on the wall.**

G: Good. Very good.

Ella: My son painted it.

G: He's talented.

Ella: He's autistic.

G: **(Scrutinizing the painting)** Yes, I know.

Ella: You know?

G: Qualitative PDD impairment, **(scrutinizing the painting)** pervasive developmental disorder in verbal communication with 'islands of ability...'

Ella: How... What? Have you investigated me or something? **(He does not reply as he scrutinizes the paintings)**... I had a feeling that you're from the Security Services.

G: I'm not from the Security Services.

Ella: Or the Mossad.

G: What Mossad?

Ella: **The** Mossad.

G: Ah, no, no.

Ella: The Air Force?

G: Getting warmer. **(Moves to the couch)** Do I sit? Or lie down? What are the rules? This is my first time and...

- Ella: With me people usually sit, but if you want... **(He sits down. She sits down facing him)** So... who have you talked to about me?
- G: Does that bother you?
- Ella: Honestly? Yes.
- G: Why? Have you got something to hide?
- Ella: No. It's just that I can understand someone wanting recommendations for a psychologist, but I prefer to keep my private life outside this room. And why do I suddenly feel that I'm under investigation?
- G: It's a nice room. The garden in the entrance, too. I was very impressed.
- Ella: Thank you. Now, let's start at the beginning. I'm Ella.
- G: Ella?
- Ella: After the Hebrew name of the tree, not the Hebrew "goddess".
- G: Ah.
- Ella: And you? **(Her notebook at the ready)**
- G: Me?
- Ella: What's your name?
- G: I am who I am.
- Ella: That's obvious. But you must have a name.
- G: You can carry on calling me G.
- Ella: Look, if you're worried about publicity I can assure you of complete confidentiality. I've got some well-known patients and they know that all their secrets remain in this room...
- G: The name is really immaterial. Call me whatever you like. Just choose a name and I'll answer to it.
- Ella: No problem, we'll come back to that. Do you want to tell me how old you are?
- G: Five thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight... next week.

Ella: Aha. Yes, I sometimes feel that way too. So... what do you do? What's your profession?

G: **(Pause)** You can write... artist.

Ella: **(Raising her head from her notebook and looking at him)** Is that why you didn't want to tell me your name? You're... well known.

G: Pretty well known.

Ella: I'm sorry, I don't see an awful lot of television, most of the time I watch Shrek.

G: That's all right.

Ella: A creative or a performing artist?

G: Both.

Ella: In what sphere? Painting, writing, musi...

G: In all spheres.

Ella: Ah, multi...?

G: Yes. Multi.

Ella: Interesting.

G: Yes, interesting.

Ella: Do you want to tell me what happened? What brought you to me?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: On the phone I heard a kind of distress?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: If it's difficult for you we can begin with something else. Would you like to begin by telling me something about yourself? Or about your parents?

G: My parents?

Ella: Your parents. You know, sometimes it's easier to start from the parents. For instance, what kind of father did you have?

G: I didn't.

Ella: He died?

G: He never existed.

Ella: I see. So you were raised just by your mother?

G: There's no mother either.

Ella: No mother?

G: No mother.

Ella: From what age?

G: From time immemorial.

Ella: An orphan from birth?

G: An orphan from birth.

Ella: Were you ever in therapy?

G: No.

Ella: You could have saved yourself so many years of suffering. Never mind, better late than never.

G: It might already be too late.

Ella: It's never too late to make a change.

G: You're optimistic.

Ella: Always.

G: I know.

Ella: What else do you know about me?

G: I know everything.

Ella: Everything?

G: Every – thing.



- Ella: By what right? How? What? Have I been under surveillance? How long have I been under surveillance?
- G: Calm down, nobody's been following you.
- Ella: All right, look, I feel very uncomfortable with what's going on here. I don't think I can treat you.
- G: You're dropping me?
- Ella: It just seems to me that it won't work, you see. The starting point where you've already investigated me makes me feel very uncomfortable. I have to be honest with you, I'm not coming into this dialogue clean, and that's a very unpromising start for therapy. **(She gets up)** I'll be happy to recommend somebody...
- G: Wait! Sit down a moment. **(She stops)** Please... just listen to me. That's all I ask... I've got to talk to somebody... or... something terrible will happen.
- Ella: What do you mean, 'something terrible'?
- G: Something extremely terrible.
- Ella: Okay, I'm listening.
- G: Thank you.
- Ella: On condition that you tell me the truth.
- G: Whatever you want to know.
- Ella: For instance, who are you?
- G: I can't tell you who I am.
- Ella: Perhaps you don't *want* to tell me...
- G: I can't!
- Ella: Why not?
- G: Because you won't believe me.
- Ella: Try me!
- G: I'm God.

**Pause.**

Ella: I see. (**Her tone of voice changes. She speaks to him as if to a retarded child**) How long have you felt like this?

G: Like what?

Ella: Like God.

G: I don't feel *like* God.

Ella: Thank the Lord, for a moment I thought that you said...

G: I am God.

Ella: Aha. Listen, I'd very much like to help you, truly, I sense that you're in serious distress...

G: You have no idea.

Ella: But with all the will in the world I don't think I'm the right person to treat you. I'm a psychologist not a psychiatrist, I'm not licensed to prescribe medication.

G: I'm not interested in medication.

Ella: I'm not a big believer in pills either, but in your case I'd consider trying it. I'll give you the name of a good psychiatrist...

G: No, no, no. No psychiatrists.

Ella: You don't have to be scared of a psychiatrist. He won't bite. He'll help you.

G: No, no.

Ella: It doesn't mean that you're... mad or anything, if that's what's bothering you. You really aren't alone, there are lots of cases like this, you wouldn't believe how many. You've got a problem that's very common today, it's called...

G: (**Cuts her short**) No! It's either you or nobody.

Ella: No, no, listen. With all due respect to your research, you've made a basic mistake. I specialize mainly in treating children with learning disabilities.

I've got no experience in treating... what you're suffering from, I'm liable to harm you. This is Dr. Yovel's number, I'll call him now if you like. (**She starts dialing**)

G: No! (**Reaches out and cuts off the call**)

Ella: Why not?

G: Put the phone down.

Ella: But...

G: Put the phone down! Please don't make me do things I don't want to.

Ella: Okay, calm down. First calm down... I'm putting the phone down, see? (**Without warning she starts shouting outside**) Miri...!

G: Let there be silence!

**G waves his hand. She freezes, paralyzed and struck dumb. She tries to call out but nothing happens)**

G: I'm sorry, I don't often do this stuff but you left me no choice. I don't have much time and I've got to talk to somebody. All I want, all I ask, is one hour of your time, that's all. I'll pay like everyone else and afterwards you'll never see me again.

**Ella is paralyzed, only her eyes are moving.**

G: What do you say?

**The paralyzed Ella tries to communicate with her eyes.**

G: I'll free you if you promise not to shout...

**The door is kicked open. Enter Lior at a joyful gallop. He halts. He looks at his paralyzed mother. She looks back at him. She looks at G. The three exchange glances. G makes a hand gesture and frees her. She quickly moves to Lior.**

Ella: Is everything all right, honey? Is anything wrong? **(He puts his arm around her)** Go back into the living room, sweetie, Miriam's calling you. I'll be through here soon, all right? Go, sweetie, I'll be right there. I'll finish up even earlier than I told you I would. **(She says goodbye with a hug. He exits. She turns to G, her eyes blazing)** Now you listen good, I don't know what that was and I don't want to know. I want you to leave right now. This... thing is not for me, understand?

G: So you're giving up on a patient just because he's a little unusual? Where's your psychologist's oath?

Ella: There's no such thing as a psychologist's oath!

G: There isn't?

Ella: No! So please...

G: I want to understand. You see somebody in distress and throw him out? Just because he's God?

Ella: You're not God, sir. Maybe you know a couple of magic tricks, nothing we haven't seen on TV by the way, but you're not God. There is no God. Look around you, do you think there's a God?

G: You know there is.

Ella: Me? You're mistaken, sir. I told you at the outset that there's something screwed up in your research. Look at me. I'm secular. I eat creepy-crawlies with a cheese topping. I don't believe in God.

G: You don't believe in God?

Ella: I'm sorry.

G: So who have you been talking to every day for the last thirty-six years?

Ella: Excuse me?

G: You don't go to sleep without the daily reprimand. What was it yesterday, let me think... ah, yes... about the rain. You've been a bit of a nag about rain recently...

Ella: **(Losing her self-assurance)** What is this...? **(Looks around)** What are you? A mind reader? What's going on? I don't underst...

G: I'll never forget that first time... You were four. Late at night. Your parents thought you were asleep and talked about you. Your father told your mother you were stupid. "There's nothing to be done, the child's dumb! She came out dumb, it happens..." He was angry because you refused to stand on a chair and recite the 'Why Is This Night' song on Passover Eve.

**Ella looks at him, astonished.**

G: That same night you told me that you didn't believe in me any more, "Because you don't pity little children".

**Ella is in shock.**

G: "And it's a fact that you killed all the babies born in Egypt just to make Pharaoh mad". That's what you remembered from the whole tale. The "poor" Egyptian babies.

**Ella freezes.**

G: What have you got to say about that?

Ella: **(Swallows saliva)** I'm sorry, I don't remember what happened when I was four. And I'm sure there are lots of four-year-old girls who say the same thing at Passover.

G: And at thirty-four? I'm sure you remember your thirty-fourth birthday.

**Ella's eyes almost pop out of their sockets.**

G: Should I refresh your memory?

Ella: No!

G: So you know what I'm talking about.

Ella: Stop it! Stop it! What is this?

G: What's the matter? You're as white as a sheet... Come, sit down.

**He gets up and pours her a glass of water. She takes the glass. She downs the water in one gulp. She puts the glass down on the table. He sits back down on his chair.**

G: Are you all right?

Ella: What's going on here?

G: So you admit speaking to me?

Ella: I was talking to an imaginary figure!

G: Sometimes reality and imagination deceive us, eh?

Ella: I didn't really think for a minute that there was somebody there.

G: You never doubted my existence.

Ella: I didn't doubt it?

G: You didn't doubt it.

Ella: And how I doubted it.

G: How can you be so angry with somebody who doesn't exist? To try and educate somebody who doesn't exist?

Ella: I didn't seriously believe for even one second that somebody...

G: Heard? Oh, I heard. Every word, every rebuke, every doubt, every question, you didn't stop reproaching me, but you made me laugh too, and there was only one thing you didn't do. You never asked me for anything.

Ella: You see? Because I didn't believe that there really was somebody there.

G: Because you didn't trust me to deliver the goods. What did you always say whenever you were really teed off with me? "There are only two possibilities, either there's no God, or if there is... then I wouldn't want to meet him in a dark alley".

Ella: I didn't say 'dark alley', I said I wouldn't want to know him.

G: You said 'dark alley'.

**Silence. They look at one another.**

Ella: This is crazy.

G: What is?

Ella: What's happening here. Am I hallucinating, or what? I'm clinically dead and this is my hallucination? Because I can't afford to die right now...

G: You're not dead! And you're not hallucinating.

Ella: Then what is this? Am I being filmed? What?

G: Ella.

Ella: What?

G: Look at me.

Ella: I can't. **(She looks at him)**

G: It's me.

Ella: No.

G: Yes.

Ella: O, God...

G: Here I am.

**Pause. They look at one another. The words stick in Ella's throat. She starts making a series of movements. Each time she opens her mouth to say something and doesn't know what. He lets her squirm for a long time.**

G: What?

Ella: Who designed your costume?

G: I tried to look like that picture, I saw that you're hooked on it. How many times have you had it framed in the past year? Sixteen?

Ella: I don't... I don't... I don't... it's not... I just don't... don't... I don't... it's not... no, it's not... not...

G: Not what?

Ella: Logical.

G: Aha. And apart from this everything is logical, right? Wherever you look, only pure logic, right?

Ella: Still...

G: Still what? You're all prepared to believe the biggest nonsense and not believe in the most self-evident thing there is. Your whole body starts trembling when you see a black cat and you get a severe anxiety attack when a mirror breaks... Have you ever seen the digestive system from the inside? Who do you think planned that long and tortuous tract that starts at the mouth and ends at the you-know-what. Have you ever tried to fold seven and a half meters into a belly the size of half a shoebox? How does the spleen, which is just this big, know precisely when to secrete the enzymes that break down the fats you consume in commercial quantities, and who do you think thought up the duodenum?

Ella: First of all, don't talk to me in the plural. I don't know who 'you all' are. I don't believe in anything anymore.

G: No? You believe that one day your son will say the word "Mommy" even though he's already sixteen and has never said a single word, and even



though all the specialists have told you that there's no chance of him saying the word 'Mommy' and/or any other word, but you go on believing.

**Ella remains silent.**

G: You believe that one day your husband will come back to you even though he's remarried and has got new, healthy children, and you know that you will never have any more healthy children because no man in his right mind would put his head into a bed with an autistic child. And you go on believing.

**Silence. She fixes him with a look. She starts nodding slowly.**

G: What?

Ella: Now you've convinced me. This cruelty is familiar. It's you. There's no doubt. Only God could be so... inhuman.

G: **(Surprised)** I've hurt you.

Ella: It's all right. I'm used to it. **(As cold as ice)** So what do you want of me?

G: What anyone who comes to you wants – psychological treatment.

Ella: You don't really think that I can treat you.

G: Why not?

Ella: Because you're... because I haven't got the training to treat you, I haven't been to any extension courses on how to treat the Divine patient... or anything like that.

G: There's always a first time.

Ella: But why have you come to me? There are so many psychologists.

G: Let's start with the fact that you're not one of my biggest fans.

Ella: I didn't know that you...

- G: Don't apologize. I want you to relate to me just as you have until now.
- Ella: There's a vast difference between talking at night with an imaginary figure and treating God.
- G: Therapy is therapy, what's the difference?
- Ella: What's the difference? Let's start with the fact that you didn't have a mother.
- G: So?
- Ella: So who can we blame for everything you've done?

**Silence.**

- G: What's the problem? Do I frighten you?
- Ella: No... maybe. A bit. As well.
- G: I promise you I won't harm a hair of your head.
- Ella: We've heard all about your promises. The wolf and the lamb have been waiting two thousand years for the apartment you promised them.
- G: I swear to you...
- Ella: **(Jumps)** On who? On who will you swear to me?

**G remains silent.**

- G: All right.
- Ella: What?
- G: **(Gets up)** I tried. At least nobody can say I didn't try.
- Ella: Where are you going?
- G: I won't trouble you any further. **(He starts to leave)**
- Ella: Stop! **(He halts)** Wait a minute.

- G: There's no point. You're right, it won't work. Coming here was a mistake.
- Ella: No, no. You didn't make a mistake. If you came, you evidently felt a need...
- G: It was a moment of weakness. And it's passed. **(He starts to leave)**
- Ella: Don't go. **(G halts. Smiles fleetingly to himself)** Please.
- G: **(Immediately)** All right. **(He sits down again, pleased with himself)**
- Ella: That was a cheap shot.
- G: But it worked.
- Ella: All right, what... How many sessions did you have in mind?
- G: Just one.
- Ella: One session? There's no such thing. Therapy is a long process.
- G: I'm a quick study.
- Ella: You can't undergo an experience, internalize it and also work through it in fifty minutes.
- G: That's the way the cookie crumbles. One session.
- Ella: I can't... All right.
- G: What's all right?
- Ella: All right, let's get started. We'll try, see what happens. It... certainly, but... I'm prepared to try... I'm not promising anything.
- G: I thank you.
- Ella: There's nothing to thank me for yet. So all right, so... tell me why you came.
- G: **(Starts confidently)** It's like this. I... **(He can't go on)** I...

**He bursts into tears. He unsuccessfully tries to stop crying. His weeping only gets worse. Ella does not know what to do with herself. She looks at God breaking down in tears in her clinic. Her movements display helplessness and concern. She gets up and hands him a box of tissues. He takes tissue after tissue but his weeping only increases. She considers stroking his head but at the last moment**

**pulls her hand back. There are no more tissues. She doesn't know what to do and runs to bring him a toilet roll.**

G: I'm sorry... it's... **(Weeps)**

Ella: It's all right. It's good. Don't try and stop the crying.

**G bursts into tears again.**

Ella: Well, not that much. **(She looks towards the door fearing that his weeping will be heard)**

G: I'm sorry. That's... never happened to me before.

Ella: It's all right. Let it out. That's what I'm here for.

**G begins to calm down. He tries to speak but can't.**

Ella: **(Softly)** What happened?

**G bursts into tears again. The scraping of a cello is heard from outside. Ella looks towards the door. The scraping becomes the playing of a moving piece of music. G manages to calm down and breathe deeply until he regains his composure. The playing stops.**

Ella: Are you all right? Can you continue?

G: Yes, I'm sorry.

Ella: Don't be. That's why you've come to me. You're neither the first nor the last to cry here.

G: **(On the verge of tears)** But I... **(Points upward)**

Ella: All the more so! So what happened? Tell me.

G: I want to die.

Ella: To die.

G: To die.

Ella: Why die? (**Laughs**)

G: What's so funny?

Ella: You can't die.

G: Why can't I die?

Ella: Because you're not... alive?

G: Excuse me?

Ella: I mean, physically you don't... really exist. That is, you exist, but more... in people's minds...

G: So?

Ella: So, even if all humankind becomes extinct, and only one person remains on earth and still believes that there is a God...

G: So?

Ella: So? To really die you'll have to kill us all.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: I mean ev-ery-one.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: And after The Flood you promised you'd never do that again, so I can't exactly see how you can get yourself out of this quandary.

**G is silent and looks at her.**

- Ella: You're not planning to break the promise you gave to Noah.
- G: Noah? You mean that drunkard who lay with his sons? That promise?
- Ella: You'd break that promise?
- G: After four thousand years even promises are subject to the statute of limitations.
- Ella: So that's what you want to do? Another Flood?
- G: Upgraded.
- Ella: Upgraded?
- G: This time I won't leave even one righteous man, not that there is any such thing, but even if there were, I won't leave him.
- Ella: I see.
- G: This time it will be final, terminal and irreversible.
- Ella: I see.
- G: The End. Finita la Commedia.
- Ella: Aha.
- G: That's all you've got to say? 'Aha?'
- Ella: What do you expect me to say?
- G: Do you understand what I'm telling you?
- Ella: It seems you're talking about – a total loss.
- G: I'm serious, Ella.

**She looks at him. He nods. She gets up suddenly, goes to her desk and looks for something in a drawer.**

- G: Looking for a cigarette?
- Ella: How did you...? Yes, I kept one in here.
- G: But you stopped smoking eight months ago.

- Ella: Which makes me look pretty stupid if there's going to be a Flood, doesn't it? (**Takes things from the drawer**) I'm sure I had a cigarette in here... Aha! Thank God.
- G: It's a pleasure.
- Ella: (**Takes out the cigarette**) There you are, my precious... My smoking won't bother you, will it? What can passive smoking do to you anyway? Shit, where am I going to find a lighter now?
- G: Don't light it.
- Ella: Why not?
- G: Because... perhaps... I don't know what might happen here. Maybe you'll manage to change my mind...
- Ella: **I'll** manage to change **your** mind? Since when have you changed your mind after you've decided to do something? The Patriarch Abraham didn't manage to change your mind when he tried to save Sodom, and he was a man who was willing to sacrifice his son for you, so **I'll** manage to do it?
- G: Moses managed to change my mind. I was about to annihilate the whole people after the Golden Calf, and he persuaded me not to do it.
- Ella: (**Rummaging through the drawers**) Moses saved you from embarrassment of international proportions. To take an entire people out of Egypt with all the effects, bells and pillars of fire, just to kill them in the wilderness a second later, what would that look like? Where's that lighter?
- G: To this day I'm sorry I listened to him.
- Ella: So what chance does that leave **me**?
- G: You're the optimist, aren't you?
- Ella: Yes. Just remind me how long I've got to change your mind? Fifty minutes?
- G: Ten of them have already been wasted.
- Ella: Forty minutes? Forty whole minutes to save the world! Even Bruce Willis had more time than that! Where's that fucking lighter!

G: Sit down!

**Ella sits down obediently.**

G: Aren't you supposed to ask me why I want to die?

Ella: You're right, I'm sorry, that's most unprofessional of me. I'm thinking of myself instead of about you. Maybe it's because I've never treated anybody who's going to kill me...

G: It's not personal, Ella.

Ella: Sure, sure. Nothing you do is personal. Okay. **(Straightens up and collects herself)** It won't happen again. Talk. I'm listening.

G: I can't go on.

Ella: **(Losing her composure again)** You can't go on? So resign and let another God run things.

G: I'm beginning to think you're right.

Ella: Really?

G: It won't work. You're only preoccupied with your own anger.

Ella: Hold it, don't give up so quickly. Let's not do anything hasty, okay? Let's talk about what's happening here and now. Why I can't manage to be... empathetic towards you?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: No, I'm empathetic towards everything that moves.

G: I know.

Ella: When I was a student I even treated the most contemptible prison inmates and managed to feel empathy... Why is it that with you...?

G: **(Sighs)** That's the story of my life.



- Ella: I should be feeling compassion right now.
- G: But you're not.
- Ella: No.
- G: Do you want to talk about it?
- Ella: Yes... No! Not at all! How did we get to talking about me? I'm supposed to be treating you, not you me. **(She slaps her forehead)**
- G: That's the story of my life as well.
- Ella: Oh yes? You just hear about other people's troubles all day long.
- G: All day and every day. Multiply three hundred and sixty days five thousand seven hundred and eighty-six years, and multiply that by a billion people a day.
- Ella: That's... Wow!
- G: And when do they come to me? Only when things are bad. Does anyone even glance in my direction when things are good? No way. Only when things are very, very bad, then they suddenly remember me.
- Ella: That's only natural, when there's distress probably...
- G: The most repugnant murderers suddenly appear in court wearing a yarmulke and a beard. "Hey, hello there! Where've you been till now? 'With God's help' all of a sudden? Did you remember me when you attacked those old ladies? When you sold heroin to kids you did it without God's help, right? By the way, you're holding the Book of Psalms upside down". At the moment before death the most devout secularists, eaters of rabbits and carrion, suddenly ask everybody: "Pray for me..." "Hello! The pork hasn't yet dried on your lips!" My brain's gone into system overload! I may be God, but I've only got two ears!
- Ella: Sounds to me like you're a little ragged from all... this work.
- G: **(Laughs bitterly)** Ragged... a nice word.
- Ella: Describe what you're feeling.
- G: Nothing.

- Ella: What do mean by ‘nothing’?
- G: I don’t feel anything any more. I don’t want anything. I don’t expect anything. I don’t hope for anything. Nothing interests me. I don’t care about anything.
- Ella: If you didn’t care you wouldn’t have come here. How long have you felt this way?
- G: Something like... two thousand, two thousand five hundred years, give or take.
- Ella: You’ve been depressed for two thousand years and only now you’ve come for therapy? What were you waiting for?
- G: I thought that time would heal.
- Ella: That’s quite some time.

**Silence.**

- Ella: What’s the first memory you recall?
- G: In the beginning I created the heaven and the earth...
- Ella: Before that. What was before that?
- G: There was darkness.
- Ella: What else?
- G: The earth was without form and void.
- Ella: What else?
- G: The Spirit.
- Ella: Yes, we know that, but what did you feel?
- G: It was a long time ago.
- Ella: Try and go back to that moment. We’ve got without form and void, and darkness on the face of the deep. How do you feel about that?

- G: As usual.
- Ella: Didn't you feel any... loneliness? As usual?
- G: Why loneliness?
- Ella: Who did you play with, the without form and void?
- G: I really don't remember. I've got a complete blackout about that entire period.
- Ella: I'll help you to remember. Let's think, it probably wasn't very nice being completely alone in the world.
- G: Maybe.
- Ella: In my experience it feels like... a kind of prison perhaps?
- G: Could be.
- Ella: No mother, no father, no brother, no sister, no friends...
- G: Do you want me to start crying or what? Yes, it was bad, it was spectacularly bad. I was alone like a stray dog. I hovered alone in the darkness...
- Ella: And then what? You suddenly decided to create a world?
- G: **(Enthusiastically)** It was a kind of outburst of inspiration. I suddenly saw the whole story in my mind. The whole seven days, day by day.
- Ella: How did you feel about it?
- G: Up until the fifth day I was euphoric.
- Ella: Can you reconstruct that feeling?
- G: Tremendous excitement. Exaltation I've never experienced since then and never will again. My high point was at the age of one week and since then I've only slid down the slope.
- Ella: Just a moment. Let's stay with the high point for a minute. It was probably terribly exciting to see the first sunrise, trees, flowers, the first ladybird.
- G: Look, I'm not one to boast...

- Ella: On the contrary. Boast away. Who can you boast to if not your psychologist?
- G: Have you ever counted the number of shades of green there are?
- Ella: How many?
- G: **(Proudly)** Thirty-six.
- Ella: Amazing.
- G: And the zebra? And the giraffe?
- Ella: They're beautiful.
- G: The moon?
- Ella: Nice.
- G: Just 'nice'?
- Ella: No, it's captivating. That trick of its light actually being the sun's reflection... it's... art.
- G: And the kangaroo?
- Ella: Indubitably. That pocket was a flash of brilliance.
- G: It came to me at the last minute. "Why not put in a little pocket for the baby?"
- Ella: Yes. I'm somewhat less enthusiastic about mosquitoes.
- G: Don't knock mosquitoes.
- Ella: Let's not get into that charming genre of insects, okay? What were you thinking when you created them, the ones that fly into the room and land on the bed? What did you say? "Let there be bugs"?
- G: **(Laughs)** Why not? Can't I have a bit of fun?
- Ella: It amuses you?
- G: **(Shakes his head)** No.
- Ella: You said that up to the fifth day you were euphoric. What happened on the sixth day?

- G: Don't you know what happened on the sixth day?
- Ella: You created Man?
- G: Bloody Friday.
- Ella: That bad?
- G: That bad. Not a day goes by when I don't tear out the hair I haven't got. Why didn't I stop on the fifth day? What a fool, idiot, dummy, lamebrain, nincompoop! What a wonderful world it was until you arrived. A vast peaceful safari park.
- Ella: Incidentally, not that it's important, but according to scientific studies it took something like fifteen billion years from the creation of the world until the first man arrived on it.
- G: You don't say? It seemed like just a day to me. How time flies when you're having fun.
- Ella: So... if it was so good, why did you create him?
- G: That's the million-dollar question. **(Dramatically)** Why did I create fucking Man?
- Ella: Could it have been that there was a need? Some kind of distress?
- G: Search me, I don't know.
- Ella: Try and remember the moment before the decision. The moment before you said, "Let's create Man". What did you feel?
- G: I don't remember. I evidently wasn't concentrating.
- Ella: You weren't concentrating when you created Man?
- G: Do you think I would have been that foolish if I'd been concentrating?
- Ella: Could it be that you're evading the issue now?
- G: Evading what?
- Ella: You were missing something. I'm looking for that something. What were you missing in that huge enchanted safari park of yours?
- G: Someone who...

Ella: ... Would understand you?

G: No. Someone who...

Ella: ... Would appreciate you?

G: No.

Ella: Admire you?

G: No, no.

Ella: Love you?

G: No! Somebody who would water the trees.

Ella: What?

G: And feed the animals and deal with all the maintenance of this thing.

Ella: Ah, a Filipina!

G: You're losing your temper again.

Ella: I apologize. To the Filipinos.

**Silence.**

G: A friend.

Ella: What friend?

G: That's what was missing.

Ella: A friend.

G: Somebody... to grow up with.

Ella: That's good. Somebody to grow up with.

G: Thank you.

Ella: So you created a friend for yourself.

G: Yes. "A friend".

Ella: Why? What happened?

- G: What happened? Now I've got six billion friends and I've never felt so alone. When I said 'Go forth and multiply' I didn't mean you should do *only* that.
- Ella: Do I hear disappointment in the "friend"?
- G: Disappointment? Why disappointment? Just because I gave him the world on a silver salver and since then he's been busy destroying it? Disappointment? Me? Not at all! Why? Because my amiable friend has immersed *all* the earth in blood, polluted *all* the seas with oil and chemicals, filled the air with gases and smoke, covered the skies with airplanes, flooded Space with satellites, and whenever you see a flash in the sky you don't know whether to make a wish or run to the nearest bomb shelter. Disappointment? Not at all! Me? Why?
- Ella: So that's why you want to create a Flood.
- G: Can you understand what it's like to see your life's work go down the tubes? And who's done it? My "best friend".
- Ella: Do you know who you suddenly remind me of? You're just like my mother. If she could, she too would have destroyed anybody who didn't meet her expectations, which is just about the whole world.
- G: Are you calling me a Jewish mother?
- Ella: What were your expectations of this friend?
- G: Expectations?
- Ella: Apart from him being a good gardener.
- G: Everything you expect from a friend. Loyalty.
- Ella: What else?
- G: That he know how to listen.
- Ella: What else?
- G: That he does what he's told, that he's happy when he thinks about me, that he trusts me, that he come whenever I call...
- Ella: He sounds like my dog.

- G: First a Jewish mother, now a dog...
- Ella: Excuse me, I'm just trying to understand what your expectations were, really and profoundly.
- G: What are you trying to say?
- Ella: That perhaps you were looking for something else?
- G: What?
- Ella: *You tell me.*

**Silence.**

- Ella: I've got time.
- G: You're not one of those psychologists that keep quiet for an hour and then take two hundred shekels...
- Ella: Four hundred.
- G: Four hundred shekels for dimestore psychology?
- Ella: Why is it so hard for you to admit it?
- G: Admit what?
- Ella: What you were looking for.
- G: What I was looking for?
- Ella: It begins with 'L'.
- G: L... em...
- Ella: L-O...
- G: L-O... L-O... Can I have another clue?
- Ella: L-O-V-E.
- G: Oh, come on, that's so banal. Couldn't you come up with something more original? Do you think I'm a pitiful creature like you whose entire being depends on that fanciful thing called 'love'?



Ella: I have the feeling you are.  
G: Then you're mistaken.  
Ella: I have the feeling I'm not.  
G: And for that you get four hundred shekels?  
Ella: The truth? Yes. In the end it all comes down to that. It doesn't matter who it is and what the problem is, in the end everybody wants L-O-V-E.  
G: That's pathetic.  
Ella: It's a fact.  
G: I'm exempt from that need, thank God.  
Ella: My feeling? You want it more than anyone.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: And you also get more than anyone.  
G: What do I get?  
Ella: Love.  
G: Is that what you think?  
Ella: Don't you feel it?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Just look at what goes on the churches, mosques, synagogues...  
G: What goes on?  
Ella: You're enjoying an amazing comeback. There's no room for a pin. They're all fighting over you. They're praying to you, they're prepared to die for you, you've never been so popular.

G: They don't love *me*. They're in love with Jesus, they're mad about Muhammad, they sanctify every crumb that falls from the lips of their priests, each of them says something different about me until even I don't know who I am, and in the end it somehow ends with a small – or big – war over the sanctification of my name of course, people get killed, animals die, houses go up in flames, and I'd be happy if you'd explain to me how I'm supposed to conclude from all that that somebody loves me.

**Ella remains silent.**

Ella: Let's go back to the moment you created Man. What went wrong there? When did you feel that it wasn't... working?

G: From the first moment he pulled a face.

Ella: Pulled a face?

G: I show him the world, the trees, the flowers, the animals, the birds, the waterfalls... It's all yours – from me. And he... down at the mouth.

Ella: Why?

G: Why. Until I realized.

Ella: What?

G: That... Cherchez la femme.

Ella: So you weren't planning to create Woman?

G: I was satisfied with him.

Ella: But you felt that he wasn't satisfied with you?

G: So I created Woman for him. So he'd be satisfied.

Ella: Very generous of you.

G: I fixed her for him just as he wanted.

Ella: Just as he wanted?

G: He wouldn't stop pestering me about the breasts.

- Ella: So you arranged...
- G: A pair of breasts like ‘two young roes that are twins’.
- Ella: I see.
- G: He was very pleased. All of a sudden he went all poetic on me. (**Derisively**) ‘How fair is thy love, my sister, how much better is thy love than wine! Thy lips drop as the honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue...’  
Yeah, right.
- Ella: And how did *you* feel about this?
- G: About what?
- Ella: About him seeing her and starting... to sing.
- G: I just didn’t understand.
- Ella: What didn’t you understand?
- G: What she had that I didn’t.
- Ella: You felt... jealousy perhaps?
- G: From the moment she came on the scene he was suddenly terribly busy. And what with? Playing all kinds of idiotic games with her, “find me if you can – Peek-a-boo”...
- Ella: So you sent the serpent to tempt her?
- G: I didn’t send it. It slithered on its own.
- Ella: You just let things flow.
- G: (**Self-satisfied**) It took it exactly one minute to tempt her to eat the apple.
- Ella: So the sting worked?
- G: It was predictable.
- Ella: And then what? What did you expect would happen afterwards? That Man would get mad at her and run back into your arms?
- G: Mad? That idiot didn’t even argue with her. He scarfed the apple as if there were no God.
- Ella: And in your experience... He preferred listening to *her* rather than you.

- G: He didn't remember me at all. Like I didn't exist. Air.
- Ella: Could that be why you hate women?
- G: Me? Hate women? Where did that come from?
- Ella: Just look at the punishment you gave her.
- G: What happened? So I said, 'In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children', what's the big deal? What's all the weeping and lamenting? Anyway, you get an epidural today.
- Ella: I'm not talking about 'In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children', I'm talking about you letting that 'idiot', as *you* call him, dominate her.
- G: It's called 'educational punishment'. Spare the rod and spoil the daughter...

**Silence.**

- Ella: Do you remember the moment when they covered themselves with fig leaves?
- G: As if were only yesterday.
- Ella: What did you feel when you suddenly saw them... clothed?
- G: Shock.
- Ella: What else?
- G: I thought at first that I wasn't seeing properly. But then I saw...
- Ella: What did you see?
- G: I saw that it wasn't good.
- Ella: Were you angry?
- G: Angry? I was fuming. Enraged. I called out – 'Where art thou?' You wouldn't believe how scared he was. He almost pissed his fig leaves.
- Ella: You know, in that cry of yours I can hear *your* fear.
- G: (**Derisively**) My fear?

- Ella: In that cry I hear the profound fear... that you'd lost him.
- G: What fear? Who was afraid? Who is he, that nobody? I just have to say "Boo" and he...
- Ella: It might well be that that 'nobody' is the only friend you had, and then... it's natural that you were afraid of losing him.
- G: Do you think that I could lose him? That idiot hid behind a tree as if I couldn't see him. Hello? Should I remind you who I am?
- Ella: It's my feeling but perhaps I'm wrong...
- G: I know what you want to say and I can tell you now that you're wrong.
- Ella: But I'll say it anyway. It's my feeling that your greatest fear is of being abandoned.
- G: **(Gets up)** All right, this is starting to become a bit ridiculous. Maybe you really don't possess the tools to deal with someone who hasn't got human inferiority complexes. It's like letting a veterinary surgeon do bypass surgery on you.
- Ella: Let's take the Ten Commandments, okay? **The** Ten Commandments, right? What's the first? What's the most important commandment of the ten? Thou shalt not kill? Of course not! Thou shalt not steal? God forbid! The first commandment is 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me!'
- G: So?
- Ella: So if that's not fear of abandonment, I'm not a psychologist.
- G: **(Derisively)** Fear of abandonment... Can't you try and be a bit more original?
- Ella: I can hear very great fear in that commandment.
- G: **(Mockingly)** What else can you "hear"?
- Ella: You know. You said earlier that you're only remembered when things are bad, right?
- G: True.

Ella: It might well be that you're so afraid of being abandoned... that you make sure that things are bad all the time, only so people will need you.

G: For that you get four hundred shekels?

Ella: I see that you're very troubled by the four hundred shekels.

G: No discounts for celebrities?

Ella: Can I advertise that you came to see me?

G: Of course, but you'll be institutionalized pretty quickly.

Ella: Then no discounts.

G: That's your weakness, isn't it? Avarice. What is it about money that drives you all crazy? All day, the dollar's up, the dollar's down, who is this dollar? What has it got that you're all besotted with it? What has *it* done for mankind?

**Silence.**

Ella: Why do I have this constant feeling that you're hiding something?

G: Me?

Ella: (**Gently**) What are you hiding from me?

G: Hiding?

Ella: Is there something you're not telling me?

G: Why do you ask?

Ella: Because every time we come close to touching upon something real, you shy away. As if you're afraid I'll discover something. What are you trying so hard to hide?

G: I'm not hiding anything.

Ella: Could it be that you've done something that...

G: I haven't done anything! Drop it.

**Silence.**

Ella: Tell me, what do you expect from therapy?

G: Expectations again?

Ella: I believe that you had expectations. Having therapy certainly wasn't an easy decision for you. What did you think would happen here?

G: The truth? I didn't have any real expectations. I know that psychology is your new God, and everybody treats everybody else all day, but I had little faith.

Ella: So you didn't really believe...

G: And I was right. You decide on a theory at the outset and force it onto the day's victim, no matter what he says.

Ella: Your use of the victim metaphor is interesting.

G: What's interesting about it?

Ella: Do you experience yourself as a victim?

G: You see? You're homing in on every silly word I say by chance...

Ella: There's no such thing as 'by chance'.

G: Says who? His Majesty King Freud?

Ella: Him too.

G: Then tell him that Job said that there is 'by chance'.

Ella: Job?

G: What about Job?

Ella: You said 'tell him that Job said that there is...'

G: I said 'tell him that **God** said that there is "by chance"...

Ella: You didn't say 'God', you said 'Job'.

G: I didn't say 'Job'.

Ella: I heard 'Job'.

- G: So I got confused, I meant to say 'God'.
- Ella: But you said 'Job'. Why do you think you said 'Job'?
- G: (**Angrily**) A simple mistake, why are you bugging me?
- Ella: Do you want to talk about Job?
- G: No!
- Ella: All right. (**Soothingly**) It's all right.

**Silence. G looks at the clock and starts whistling.**

- Ella: Have you ever thought about what your friend felt?
- G: Which one?
- Ella: The first friend you created for yourself. Can you try and exchange roles with him for a moment?
- G: What for? What is this? Theatre?
- Ella: Just to see that comes out. Try and put yourself in your new friend's shoes five minutes after he was born.
- G: I don't understand why I've got to go back to the past all the time. Time is short and my past is long.
- Ella: Imagine for a moment that you're Adam. It's about half a chapter from the time of your birth and... (**Acts enthusiastically**) "Hey, this is great, Eve, come and see a hippopotamus...", and within half a chapter you're kicked out of the Garden of Eden, humiliated and cursed for all eternity, and four chapters later, of your two sons one's dead and the other's a murderer...
- G: So?
- Ella: So? You arranged a great start for your new friend.
- G: He reaped exactly what he'd sown.
- Ella: How do you think he felt?
- G: Who?



- Ella: Adam.
- G: How did he feel? When?
- Ella: At that moment. Of the expulsion. Imagine for a moment: He was only born a few chapters earlier. All of a sudden there's shouting, a ruckus, 'Where art thou?' with that impressive deep voice of yours.
- G: **(With ill-concealed pride)** Yes, I do have a fine voice.
- Ella: And those curses: 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground!'
- G: Classic.
- Ella: It must be terribly frightening, no?
- G: Add to that a strong wind and some rolling thunder...
- Ella: Tell me, in that entire episode was there a moment when you felt... compassion towards him?
- G: Compassion?
- Ella: Yes, compassion. The emotion one feels when one sees *somebody else* suffering?
- G: Don't tell me what compassion is, okay. I'm God who art full of compassion, remember?
- Ella: God full of self-pity.
- G: What?
- Ella: All I've heard so far is pity for yourself.
- G: Is that a question or a statement?
- Ella: I'm asking if there wasn't even one moment when you pitied your new creation who'd only just opened his eyes and – boom!
- G: There actually was one moment...
- Ella: **(Surprised)** There was? Tell me about it.
- G: It was towards the end, after all the shouting and cursing and so on. They were both standing there, those little people... trembling... exposed, with

the fig leaves... withered leaves that hardly hid anything... it suddenly touched me... I felt I had to do something for them...

Ella: What did you do?

G: (**Proudly**) I made them coats of skins.

Ella: What?

G: With my own hands. It's all documented, you can check. 'Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them'.

Ella: Coats of skins.

G: They didn't come out badly considering it was my first effort. The sleeves, I admit, came out a tad long...

Ella: We're talking about fashion now?

G: I beg your pardon, I simply recalled that evening. Sewing leather isn't easy, you know, it's hard material, you have to know how to work with it.

Ella: So that's what you remember of 'that evening'. That you made them coats of skins.

G: Yes.

Ella: And in your experience that was sufficient compensation for the punishment you'd given them? Coats of skins?

G: What are you trying to say?

Ella: How did you sleep that night?

G: Like a baby.

Ella: Aha, and after Cain murdered Abel, did you sleep like a baby too?

G: Why shouldn't I?

Ella: You didn't feel... a slight tremor in your wing?

G: Me? Why?

Ella: Maybe because you felt that it was you who... stirred up trouble between them a little?

G: I didn't. Abel's lamb was tastier!

- Ella: They both brought you offerings, each according to his occupation, and you preferred one to the other.
- G: What did Cain bring? Vegetables? What am I, a goat?
- Ella: Have you ever thought about this need of yours to constantly stir up conflict between brothers? Is it because you're an "only child" yourself that you're envious of that kind of relationship?
- G: Why have you made up your mind that I stir up conflict between brothers?
- Ella: Why? See Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, not to mention Isaac and Ishamael – to this day we're eating what you cooked up between them. And it all began with you permitting Cain to kill Abel.
- G: Nonsense! I warned Cain!
- Ella: You warned him? Do you remember what you said to him?
- G: I can't remember word for word what I said five thousand years ago.
- Ella: I remember. Because once I was late for a gym lesson and had to learn that whole chapter by heart. I cursed you all night.
- G: *That* I remember.
- Ella: Listen to what you said to Cain. What do they say? Unabridged – 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him'.
- G: So?
- Ella: What's all that crap?
- G: Watch your mouth!
- Ella: For three thousand years the greatest commentators have been sweating gallons and putting themselves through hoops to interpret that incomprehensible verse, and you expect Cain, the first baby on earth, to understand it?
- G: What's not clear about it?
- Ella: It's so clear that a second later he got up and murdered Abel.
- G: What was I supposed to say to him? That killing Abel was uncool?

Ella: You could have said, “Raise not your hand against Abel!” Is that literary enough for you? What’s all this ‘If thou doest well, if thou doest not well?’

G: It’s a pity it wasn’t you who wrote The Bible.

Ella: A great pity.

G: What kind of psychologist are you?

Ella: What kind of God are *you*?

G: From the moment I got here you’ve been giving me a hard time. You do everything the wrong way round. Aren’t you supposed to give me positive reinforcement? Accept me the way I am? Whatever I’ve done? Aren’t you supposed to tell me how right and positive and admirable I am and justify every terrible thing I did in my unfortunate childhood? You can find something positive in every other snotty patient and only with me there’s nothing good?

**Ella remains silent.**

G: Not even one thing?

Ella: You’re a great artist.

G: Oh, thanks very much, really... Do you really think so?

Ella: Could it be that the greater an artist a person is, the less of a man he is? Take Picasso, for instance, do you know how many women committed suicide because of him? And Dostoyevsky? He wrote *Crime and Punishment* just to pay off his gambling debts, not to mention Woody Allen who... “knew” his wife’s daughter...

G: Is that what you think of me?

Ella: Do you want to know what I really think?

G: No! What?

Ella: I think you need help. I think you’ve got a problem. A serious problem. Not something for one session or even two.

- G: So that's your diagnosis, Madam Psychologist? That I've got a 'problem'?
- Ella: You've got a problem of violence. You've gotten used to solving everything with 'a strong hand and an outstretched arm'. You don't want people to love you, you want them to fear you. Your blazing wrath, your raging anger! It's like...
- G: Like what?
- Ella: An abusive man.
- G: An abusive man?
- Ella: You're always threatening, you're cross, angry, have outbursts of rage, and then punish terribly. And right afterwards you're terribly remorseful. That's precisely the pattern of an abusive man. You're a danger to the public, sir.
- G: That is the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my life, and my life has been very, very long.
- Ella: And it's the same with everyone you love. Especially the ones you love most. You love the Jews most of all, right? "The Chosen People", well hooray for us. How romantic for us. Let's see what we got out of that enthralling love – four hundred years of slavery, forty years in the wilderness without a proper bathroom, a tiny period of happiness until you lost your temper again and sent us into two thousand years of exile in some awfully nice places where we were treated to pogroms, inquisitions and Treblinkas. That's love! Not any ordinary love, it's a covenant, right? A covenant! We cut a bit off our sons' dicks for you and what do we get in return? We get screwed!
- G: Watch your language!
- Ella: I beg your pardon.
- G: You don't understand anything!
- Ella: No, no, I don't buy all that crap about 'God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform' and that we can't understand you.
- G: You really can't understand.
- Ella: Do you understand?

- G: Yes.
- Ella: Then explain it to me.
- G: You wouldn't understand.
- Ella: Try me.
- G: I'm telling you, you wouldn't understand.
- Ella: And I'm telling you that there's nothing to understand, because you didn't have a plan. You embarked on this colossal venture without a plan.
- G: Of course I had a plan.
- Ella: What plan? You're always being surprised. That's a plan? You improvise from one moment to the next. First you act and only afterwards – you don't even think.
- G: Watch your mouth! "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"!
- Ella: My God, when are you going to grow up?
- G: **(Gets up)** Don't you speak to me like that, d'you hear?
- Ella: **(Gets up and faces him defiantly)** What will you do to me? Turn me into a pillar of salt? Bring down fire and brimstone on me? What else have you got in your repertoire this evening?
- G: I'm warning you! Don't try me!
- Ella: I'm not afraid. Understand? I'm not afraid of you. You can kill me right now for all I care. I couldn't care less about this life, do you understand? Go ahead! Destroy! Shatter! Raze! Destroy this trashcan you've created! I'm not af-raid!

**He raises his hands. She does not move. His body contorts accompanied by a frightening voice. She does not move. He seems to be fighting himself. He tries to force himself to stop. All at once he stops. He slowly lowers his hands. He hangs his head. He sits down heavily.**

- Ella: You restrained yourself! You managed to control your rage!

**G buries his head in his hands.**

Ella:     **(Excitedly)** Don't feel bad, it's wonderful. You managed to restrain your wrath. You're a hero.

**G does not look at her. He shakes his head.**

Ella:     Do you know what Freud would have done in a case like this? He would have taken a cigar from the cupboard, given it to the patient, and together they would have celebrated the change. Unfortunately I haven't got any cigars and anyway you don't look like a cigar type, but maybe I've got some chocolate. **(She starts running around the room)** Have you ever eaten chocolate? **(She halts and turns to him)** Have you ever eaten anything?

**G buries his head in his hands.**

Ella:     What?

**G remains silent. She sits down.**

Ella:     You should be happy.

**G remains silent.**

Ella:     Do you want to share what you're feeling with me?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Don't close up on me now. Talk to me. Look at me. **(He looks at her)**  
Something wonderful has happened to you. You had the power to shut me up and you chose not to use it, even though you could have. You've learnt restraint.

**G shakes his head.**

Ella: What 'no'?

G: I didn't restrain myself.

Ella: Of course you did. You were angry.

G: I was angry.

Ella: You wanted to kill me.

G: I did.

Ella: So? What stopped you? Why didn't you do it?

G: I can't!

Ella: What do you mean, 'I can't'?

G: I can't. I can't.

Ella: What can't you? You can do anything. You're Mr. Omnipotent. The King of Kings. You've got powers that...

G: Ella...

Ella: What?

G: I haven't got any powers.

Ella: Of course you have, you're...

G: I haven't. None. I can't do anything.

Ella: I don't understand. What are you trying to tell me?

**Shouts and banging are heard from outside. They both look towards the door. The door opens. Enter Lior carrying a DVD player.**



Ella: (To G) Excuse me a moment. He's not used to me working at this hour.  
 (To Lior) What's the matter? Why did you take out the DVD? Is it broken?  
 All right, calm down. We'll fix it. Look, there's something wrong with the  
 cables... one's come out again... **(She looks at G, expecting help)** Lior,  
 I'd like you to meet someone. (To G) This is Lior. (To Lior) And this is...  
 God.

**G gets up. He holds out his hand to Lior. Lior looks at Ella. She nods, takes his arm and extends his hand to G. They shake hands. Lior raises his eyes and looks straight into G's eyes. They look at one another. All at once Lior breaks away from him.**

Ella: **(Starts following Lior out)** We'll soon fix it. **(Shows the machine to G)**  
 Can you do anything with it?

**They all exit. They are heard from outside.**

Ella: **(To Lior)** It'll soon be fixed.

**G is sweating over the cables.**

Ella: What are you doing?

G: I think this cable goes into here.

Ella: No, that's the one that goes into the TV. Can't you just... fix it somehow?  
**(She hints to him with gestures of magic)**

G: If only I knew where the yellow one goes.

Ella: **(Losing her patience)** All right, give it to me.

G: No, hold on. There. It connects to here.

Ella: No. Let me have it, okay?

- G: Ah, now the red one's got nowhere to go.
- Ella: I don't believe this, you're worse than me.
- G: **(Comes back inside)** There are too many cables and not enough holes!
- Ella: **(Off, to Lior)** There. It looks okay now. **(She comes back inside, still looking towards the living room)** Is it working? Great.
- G: What?
- Ella: **(Closes the door and turns to G)** You? You who took the Children of Israel out of Egypt, who divided the Red Sea, between the Ten Plagues and the Ten Commandments – you can't even "fix" a DVD?
- G: That's what I've been trying to tell you.
- Ella: How come?
- G: I've lost my powers.
- Ella: What do you mean, you've lost them?
- G: I mean I no longer have them. No power. Nothing. It's all gone.
- Ella: Gone?
- G: I'm sick, Ella.
- Ella: Sick? How can you be sick? You're...

**G removes his hat. He suddenly appears to be old and tired.**

- Ella: Sick.
- G: I can't do anything. Anything at all.
- Ella: How? But... when you came in you did...
- G: It's all a show. I've still got a few simple tricks that any amateur magician can do.
- Ella: So that whole business of a Flood...
- G: A Flood? **(Laughs bitterly)** I can just about manage to scratch my nose.

Ella: Just a second, let me see if I understand what you're saying. God is actually just a word. You can't do anything.

G: That's more or less the situation.

Ella: Then... God isn't dead like they say, God is... sick?

G: Very sick.

Ella: O, God!

G: What?

Ella: That's awfully...

G: Sad?

Ella: Scary. It's like discovering that the Chief of the General Staff is an idiot.

G: Thank you.

Ella: I'm sorry. You know what I mean. It's just that I've never thought about the possibility of you being sick.

G: Believe me, neither have I.

Ella: Why didn't you say so right away? Why did you hide it?

G: What could I have said to you? How exactly could I have persuaded you that I'm God if I can't do anything extraordinary? You would have thrown me out. And rightly so. So I played God as you know him from the stories. I still know how to act.

Ella: *Which* God did you play for me?

G: The strong one. The great one. The omnipotent one. The terrible epic God!

**Silence.**

Ella: The truth? I like you a lot better this way.

G: Being sick?

Ella: When you're... soft.

G: Soft?

Ella: You can start working with soft material.

G: So that's what you want. A metro-God?

Ella: It must be very hard for you.

G: Just imagine.

Ella: Without a strong hand and an outstretched arm...

G: Helplessness. The greatest curse in the Universe.

Ella: Tell me about it.

G: Everything you said about me is true. I'm a big nothing. (**Describes a big zero with his hands**) Zero.

Ella: Is that what you feel?

G: No. I feel ten to the power of minus thirty-three below zero, but I didn't want to confuse you with complex equations. I'm a walking failure, a resounding disappointment, I created a farce and my punishment is to watch it day in day out, hour by hour. Without being able to walk out in the middle... I can't even die.

**Silence.**

G: Help me!

**Silence. He raises his eyes to her.**

Ella: I don't know.

**G looks at her, surprised.**

Ella: I mean, on the one hand I want to help you, of course, it's a professional and human instinct... but on the other, if we should mistakenly succeed and restore your powers, maybe you'll get a rush of blood to your head again and suddenly decide to destroy, shatter and annihilate...

G: I'll understand if you tell me to leave.

Ella: And on the third hand we're doing a pretty good job of destruction without you, so what's the difference?

**G remains silent. He lets her think.**

Ella: This is the first time I don't know if I want the therapy to succeed or...

G: I'll leave. It's better for everyone.

**Ella remains silent.**

G: I'm going.

**Ella remains silent.**

G: I've gone.

Ella: On the fourth hand...

G: **(Halts)** Yes?

Ella: I'm not sure that I want to live in a world without God.

G: Why not?

Ella: It's uninteresting. It's empty. It's like a work of art without a concept behind it. A beautiful painting that leaves you indifferent.

**G remains silent and tense. She looks at him thoughtfully. He looks at her hopefully. She drums on her chin as she deliberates.**

Ella: Sit down.

G: Are you sure?

Ella: Sit down, please.

G: **(Sits down)** You don't have to.

Ella: Do you want to tell me how this... sickness began?

G: It started with little things. My voice weakened. My hand suddenly began shaking, my vision of the future became blurred...

Ella: When did this start?

G: I don't remember exactly.

Ella: Approximately?

G: About two thousand years ago. But that's very approximate...

Ella: So everything that happened during... that period, happened without you?

G: But who do you blame?

Ella: Do you remember what the first symptom was?

G: A headache. A slight one.

Ella: Was there any dramatic event that preceded this 'slight' headache?

G: There were so many dramatic events during that period.

**Ella gets up and goes to look for a Bible.**

G: What are you doing?

Ella: I'm getting a Bible.

G: What for?

- Ella: I want to see when you disappeared. (**She leafs through the Bible**) If I remember from my *expanded* matriculation in Bible studies, the last time anybody heard you speak was... was...
- G: What difference does it make?
- Ella: Don't you remember the last man you spoke to?
- G: Not really. It was a long time ago, it doesn't mean anything.
- Ella: Job. (**She closes the Bible**)
- G: What's with Job all the time?
- Ella: The last person you spoke to was Job.
- G: So what? That's pure coincidence.
- Ella: My feeling is that it wasn't a coincidence at all.
- G: I don't understand where you're going with this.
- Ella: I think it's worth checking to find out if there's any connection between Job and your sudden disappearance. Since Job nobody's either heard from you or seen you.
- G: (**Derisively**) 'Disappearance...'
- Ella: You disappeared completely.
- G: I didn't. I might have shut myself off a bit, but...
- Ella: Shut yourself off a bit? My dear sir, you vanished as if the heavens had swallowed you up. Especially considering the fact that in the two thousand years that preceded Job, you hardly shut your mouth.
- G: All right, maybe I did exaggerate a bit at first, perhaps I displayed over-anxiousness...
- Ella: For two thousand years you didn't stop interfering in everything, from running wars to who'd marry whom and why, who'd get pregnant, when she'd get pregnant, you opened wombs and closed wombs, my gynecologist doesn't work that hard.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: And after Job, suddenly there's a deathly silence. Not a peep. A still small voice.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: So I think we should find out what happened with Job that silenced you...

**G heaves a long sigh.**

G: O, God...

Ella: I understand that it's hard for you to talk about Job, but maybe it'll help if you let it out once and for all. Things held in closed places for a long time tend to rot. And if there's a wound there...

G: There's no wound!

Ella: Tell me about Job.

G: What's to tell? It's all written down.

Ella: Job was 'a perfect and an upright man'?

G: Yes.

Ella: Decent?

G: Very.

Ella: He 'eschewed evil'?

G: Yes, so?

Ella: Clean of sin?

G: Clean.



Ella: Gives to the poor, brings cheer to orphans, helps the disabled, decent towards his slaves...

G: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Ella: Everything you dreamed of when you created Man. A perfect model.

G: I suppose.

Ella: And in addition to all that he loved you heart and soul.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: So in fact, standing before you is the perfect man, the fulfillment of all your dreams, who has a happy love relationship with you, and what do you do?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: What do you do?

G: Put him to a test?

Ella: That's your interpretation, let's focus on the facts for a moment. The facts are that you burned his flock, took all his property, killed his wife and ten children, and as a small bonus you arranged for him to have a skin disease that itched so badly it finally drove him out of his mind.

G: The way you describe it, it really doesn't sound all that good...

Ella: Is there any way of describing it so it'll sound good?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Is there any way...?

- G: (**Explodes**) It was Satan! He drove me crazy! He kept whispering in my ear that Job didn't really love me. That he was faking faith! "It's all a show", he told me, "he flatters you so you'll go on pampering him with happiness and riches". 'Doth Job fear God for nought?' He hammered on at me until I started to believe him.
- Ella: So you sent him to destroy Job.
- G: I didn't send him, he flew by himself.
- Ella: And again you let things flow.
- G: I didn't do anything. It was him...
- Ella: How convenient it is to put the responsibility on others, the serpent, Satan... Who is this Satan?
- G: What do you mean, who is he?
- Ella: Where did he spring from all of a sudden? In the entire Bible there's no Satan, and suddenly in the Book of Job – "Hi there, Satan". Who is it? What is it? Where did he pop up from?
- G: I don't know, he... what's the difference?
- Ella: What does he look like?
- G: Who remembers?
- Ella: Tall? Short? Fat? Thin?
- G: I don't focus on external features.
- Ella: So what *do* you remember about him? You must remember one thing.
- G: His voice.
- Ella: His voice. Try and recall his voice a moment. (**G closes his eyes**) What do you feel?
- G: A shudder.
- Ella: Try and concentrate. Where did that voice come from?
- G: What do you mean, where did it come from?

Ella: Could it be that the voice that whispered in your ear didn't come from the outside, but from inside?

G: What inside?

Ella: Yours.

G: Mine? What you're saying is that Satan is...? **(Points at himself)**

Ella: There's a little Satan inside everybody, the question is what awakens him. The question is what was there in Job that awakened your Satan.

**Silence.**

Ella: I'd like to talk about this need to put those that love you to the cruelest tests.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: **(Gently)** Why can't you believe that someone is capable of loving you?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Don't you think that there's something to love?

**G remains silent, fiddling with his fingernails.**

Ella: How did you feel when Job continued to believe in you even after the death of his whole family? What did you feel when he stood at their graveside and uttered the immortal words, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord'?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Why do I have the feeling that you didn't sleep like a baby that night?

G: I slept fine, until he started nagging.

Ella: Job?

G: "Why did you do this to me, why do I deserve it", why and why and why and why. Nineteen whole, long chapters of 'why'...

Ella: That bothered you?

G: It annoyed me. How much can you take?

Ella: What did you do?

G: In the end I gave him a piece of my mind. **(He gets up)** 'Gird up thy loins now like a man. Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him... Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth...? Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion or fill the appetite of the young lions...? Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? He paweth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield...!' That's what I told him. **(He sits down, pleased with himself)**

Ella: You know what I hear in that whole speech? I hear one word – Because.

G: Because what?

Ella: Because. That's your answer to all of Job's questions. Four whole chapters of 'because' Because I can. Because I'm strong. Because I'm far, far stronger than you. That was your answer to him.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Four chapters of nothing but ‘I am great! I am powerful! I’m a mega big-shot!’

**G remains silent.**

Ella: But Job wasn’t asking you about power, he asked you about justice.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Is that your only advantage over humans? Your power?

**G remains silent.**

Ella: **(In a thunderous voice)** ‘Gird up thy loins now like a man. Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him...?’ What’s that?

G: For your information, Cassuto wrote that it is a noble, rhetorical, descriptive and multifaceted speech, and Rashi said it is the most sublime poetry in the history of world literature.

Ella: Do you know what I hear in that sublime poetry? I hear lots of... guilt.

G: **(Shouts)** Guilt? There’s no guilt! Do you hear? You don’t get to sit there and blame me... **(He stops shouting, embarrassed).**

Ella: I’m not blaming you.

G: You’re not?

Ella: But perhaps *you’re* blaming yourself.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Doesn't it bother you that of all your amazing speeches throughout the Bible, speeches filled with compassion for the weak, the poor, the orphan and the stranger – that your final speech in the Bible is a speech of...  
**(Searches for the right word)** a Mafioso?

G: Wonderful. A Jewish mother, a dog, Satan, and now a Mafioso.

Ella: It doesn't bother you.

G: **(Explodes)** Doesn't bother me? Doesn't bother me? What wouldn't I give to expunge those four damned chapters... that entire terrible book... Doesn't bother me? I broke Job's heart!

**Silence.**

Ella: Could it be that it wasn't Job's heart you broke, but you own?

**G looks at her.**

Ella: Job forgave you in the end. Why can't you forgive yourself?

G: Job didn't forgive me. If you read his last sentences carefully, you won't find one word of forgiveness. 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

Ella: Meaning?

G: Meaning that now I've heard you and discovered who you are, I prefer to die. That's what Job said!

Ella: How did you feel about it?

G: **(Heaves a deep sigh)** It was the first time I'd felt that perhaps I was...

Ella: What?

G: Bad. That I was simply bad. Not abounding in loving kindness, not merciful and gracious, and certainly not full of compassion. As I...

Ella: As you what?

G: As I thought I was.

Ella: (**Gently**) Did you think you abounded in loving kindness?

G: I did.

Ella: And what did you feel when you realized that maybe you didn't...?

G: Fear.

Ella: Fear of what?

G: Of myself.

Ella: Of your power?

**G nods.**

Ella: Do you understand what's happened to you?

G: What?

Ella: Right after you delivered that fiery speech to Job on the power of your arm and the vastness of your power. What happens to you?

G: What happens to me?

Ella: What happens to your power?

G: (**Murmurs**) I started to lose it.

Ella: What?

G: I started to lose it.

Ella: You started to lose your power.

**Silence.**

- G: You're saying that I brought this on myself?
- Ella: Does that possibility seem so far-fetched?
- G: Why would I do something like that to myself?
- Ella: Perhaps... it's because... you do care about us?

**G remains silent. He looks at her inquiringly.**

- Ella: Don't you see what you've done?
- G: What have I done?
- Ella: You've taken from yourself the thing most precious to you, your power, so as not to hurt people any longer. You gave up the thing that was most important of all to you. It is the most incredible gift you could have given.

**G looks at her, surprised.**

- Ella: Look at how far you've come from those pitiful coats of skins you made for the first Man as a gesture of "caring", to giving up the thing most precious to you.

**G remains silent, looking at her.**

- Ella: You evidently love us more than you thought.

**G remains silent.**

- Ella: I've got news for you, my dear sir. You're not sick. You're healthy. The moment you divested yourself of your power, you were cured.



**G remains silent.**

Ella: Now you can finally be everything you wanted to be. Abounding in loving kindness, merciful and gracious and full of compassion... towards us.

G: Why should I be compassionate towards you?

Ella: Because now *we* suffer from the sickness of power. It's us who need therapy, not you. You're not killing little children anymore, now *we're* killing them. You're not showering down your naïve fire and brimstone any longer, now *we're* doing it, with atom bombs that would have razed Sodom and Gomorrah for you so fast that Lot's wife wouldn't have had time to turn her head! So which of us need therapy?

G: It's all because of me. You learnt it all from me. You're simply the good students of a bad teacher.

Ella: But if you've changed then maybe we can as well. After all, we were created in your image, right? Perhaps one day we, too, can liberate ourselves from power and stop hurting one another.

G: You don't really believe that?

Ella: No... but I've got to.

**Silence.**

Ella: Earlier, you mentioned my thirty-fourth birthday.

G: (**Cautiously**) Are you sure you want to talk about that?

Ella: I'm sure.

G: You planned to kill your son and then yourself.

Ella: But I didn't do it.

G: You almost did. You closed all the windows and turned on the gas.

Ella: And then I talked to you.

- G: You did.
- Ella: I said terrible things to you.
- G: There's no call to exaggerate.
- Ella: No call to exaggerate? I called you 'Hitler'! I said you were a sadist, a psychopath... what else?
- G: A vampire.
- Ella: Thank you. A monster.
- G: Mentally ill, a terrorist, and last but not least – a cannibal.
- Ella: I didn't say 'cannibal'. Did I?
- G: Twice.
- Ella: I'm sorry. I was looking for someone to blame and you... were the only one around.

**Silence.**

- G: Why didn't you do it in the end?

**Ella remains silent.**

- G: Why not, Ella?
- Ella: Because of you.
- G: Because of me?
- Ella: Because of you.
- G: But I didn't do anything... I *couldn't* have done anything.
- Ella: Perhaps. But I suddenly felt that you...
- G: What? That I what?
- Ella: That you cared.

**G remains silent.**

Ella: Don't answer. Whether it's true or not doesn't matter at all. Whether or not you really were there, in my feeling at that moment... You were there. And from that moment I related to that child as a gift. And although he doesn't talk and I'll never hear him say "Mommy", or any other word, he gives me things I'm not sure I would have been given by a normal child, do you understand? And when he plays for me or hugs me... it's worth more than a thousand words, d'you see? And even if it's all only in my mind, it wouldn't have happened without you. Without... your inspiration.

**Silence.**

Ella: You know, I suddenly thought that in fact... you've never, in all of the thousands of years of your existence... you've never... been hugged.

G: What?

Ella: Hugged.

G: I'm not built for stuff like that.

**Silence.**

Ella: Stand up a moment.

G: Why?

Ella: Stand up.

G: What for?

Ella: Stand up, don't be afraid.

G: But I don't understand what...

Ella: Get up already!

**G gets up reluctantly. Ella stands up and moves closer to him. He recoils slightly.**

G: What are you doing?

Ella: Don't be scared. I'm just going to hug you. Will you let me hug you?

G: I don't...

Ella: Just a hug. May I?

G: I don't care, but...

Ella: You don't have to do anything. Just don't move, all right? Just stand there.

G: **(Extremely stressed)** Are you allowed to do things like this? Is it legal? Isn't it a breach of your professional ethics...?

Ella: Just calm down.

G: How can I?

Ella: Close your eyes.

**G obediently closes his eyes. He is very embarrassed. Ella embraces him gently. He doesn't know what to do with himself. His arms flap helplessly in all directions. The magical playing of a cello is heard. She pats him gently on the back. He slowly relaxes in her arms and submits to the embrace. He weeps. His body is trembling in her arms. She, too, weeps.**

**He suddenly breaks away from her. The music stops. He moves away to the other end of the room. He looks through the window, his back to her.**

Ella: Are you all right?

G: **(With his back to her)** Time's up.

Ella: *I'm* supposed to say that.

G: Whatever. It's over.

Ella: It's all right, I can stay a while longer, he's calm now.

G: **(Turns to her)** No. It's over.

Ella: But...

**G moves to Lior's painting and from it takes a shiny apple. The cello is heard playing. G offers the apple to Ella. The music stops.**

Ella: (She almost takes the apple but smilingly changes her mind at the last minute) No, thank you.

G: Sometimes an apple is only an apple.

**G turns to leave and comes back. He takes some money from his pocket and puts it into her hand.**

G: Four hundred shekels.

Ella: No, there's no need.

G: No discounts for celebrities. **(Hands back the money. Waves his finger at her)** Don't change.

Ella: Don't go.

G: Goodbye Ella, named after the tree, it was a pleasure to meet you.

**He takes her hand in his, lowers his head and gently kisses it. He slowly releases her hand as he moves away until they resemble Michelangelo's painting of The Creation of Adam, as God touches Adam's hand.**

**G exits.**

**Ella looks at the door, mesmerized, the apple in her hand. The living room door opens. Enter Lior. He runs to his mother and snatches the apple from her hand. He takes a bite from it.**

Ella: No! Stop!

**A roll of thunder is heard. They look at each other. The room is illuminated by flashes of lightning followed by another roll of thunder. It starts raining. The windows overlooking the garden fill with raindrops.**

Ella: What's that? Rain? Is it raining?

**Lior starts jumping for joy.**

Ella: Rain! Rain at last! Rain, Liori! Water, water from heaven!

**Ella stands in the doorway letting the rain soak her. She collects some water in her cupped hands and brings it to Lior.**

Ella: Feel it, Liori. Feel how the rain hugs you. How much love there is in this water. It is magic. magic

Lior: Ma

Ella: **(Stunned)** What? What did you say?

Lior: Ma.

Ella: Ma?

Lior: Ma...

Ella: You said 'ma'.

Lior: Ma- Ma-. Ma- Ma- Ma-. Ma-. Ma- Ma-. Ma- Ma-. Ma...

**A muted distant roll of thunder. The music heightens as the thunder approaches. The lighting slowly goes down. The music reaches its climax. A long and dazzling flash of lightning. God's silhouette can be seen in the background. Darkness.**

**CURTAIN**