

- BOGO -

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## CHARACTERS

6 ACTORS, 3 WOMEN, 3 MEN

EVIE - (Mid 30s, then early 50s, Female) - A surrogate. Gili's wife

GILI - (40, then late 50s, Female) - A Rabbi.  
Evie's wife

PIP GORDON - (Mid 30s, then early 50s, Male) - Percy's husband

PERCY GORDON - (Mid 30s, then early 50s, Male) - Pip's husband

DR. GIDEON LERNER - (Mid 30s, then early 50s, Male) - A pediatrician

BONNIE GORDON - (18 - Female) - Pip and Percy's daughter

There is also an offstage voice of ASHER, a 13-year-old boy, to be played by the actor playing Bonnie.

## SETTING

The play spans 18 years ago, eventually landing in present day.

- GILI AND EVIE'S HOME
- AN EXAM ROOM AT A PEDIATRICIAN'S OFFICE
- A HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

## BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Evie, a surrogate who once carried a child for Percy and Pip, shocks everyone, including her rabbi wife Gili, when she announces she wants to gift the two men a free sibling for their son. No fees, no contracts. Just faith, gratitude, and the goodness of her heart guiding this astonishingly generous offer. But when long-buried truths begin to surface, Evie's claims of good intentions start to unravel, unleashing a chain reaction of consequences she's desperate to control. Can she truly claim moral righteousness if she refuses to face the harm she's caused?

ACT 1

MONDAY, 18 AND A HALF YEARS AGO

In this open design home, we see a modest living room, tidy but lived-in. There's a couch that looks like it's hosted every argument and nap of the last decade. A subtle blend of domestic and spiritual decorates the walls and shelves: a few framed family photos, some Judaica, a mirror, some nursing books on a bookshelf.

Upstage, is a kitchen and dining area. On the fridge, you can find more pictures, along with a Pride Flag magnet. At the nearby dining table a single havdalah candle burns. GILI (40) sits at the table. EVIE (35) stands across from her.

For free? GILI

Yes. EVIE

Why would you want to do that? GILI

I have a few reasons actually. EVIE

It's a lot of money you'd be giving up. GILI

I know. EVIE

And time. GILI

Nine months. EVIE

GILI

Why wouldn't you want to be paid for that?

EVIE

Remember that cancer scare I had last year?

Gili frowns. Scrolls through mental files. Lands on:

GILI

You mean the freckle?

EVIE

It turned out to be a freckle. But at the time I thought it was cancer.

GILI

(Correcting, lightly incredulous)

Well, you thought it needed to be checked out. And then a day later you checked it out and it was a freckle.

EVIE

It was scary.

GILI

(Skeptically)

Was it?

EVIE

I spoke with Rabbi Elliot about it.

GILI

About your freckle?

EVIE

I wanted some guidance.

GILI

(Confused)

...So why would you speak with Elliot?

EVIE

Spiritual guidance.

GILI

No, I understand that. Why would you speak with *Elliot*?

EVIE

Because he's a rabbi.

GILI

(A little offended)

*I'm* a rabbi. *Head* rabbi. Why not speak with me?

EVIE

I wanted to speak with a different rabbi. One who is not my wife.

Gili absorbs this, trying not to be offended.

GILI

What did Elliot say?

EVIE

He suggested this cancer scare-

GILI

Freckle.

EVIE

Should act as a reminder of all the things for which I have to be grateful. I have been given many blessings, perhaps it's time I give something in return.

GILI

This is a big something you're suggesting.

EVIE

He suggested a kind of pidyon nefesh. \*

GILI

...A pidyon nefesh?

EVIE

Yeah. An offering that acts as a mystical "redemption of the soul." \*

GILI

Yes, I... I know what a pidyon nefesh is.

EVIE

A tzedakah act of unusual significance.

GILI

You know I'm also a rabbi.

EVIE

Something that goes beyond money.

GILI

I'm actually Elliot's boss.

EVIE

A sacrifice of self. I've been the vessel of so much life. Now's my chance to elevate that gift. To give without reward. To give back.

GILI

So you want to give someone... a *free* baby?

Evie nods.

EVIE

I've done four surrogacies. And every one of them I've expected something in return.

GILI

As you should. You give up 40 weeks of your life, you should expect something in return.

EVIE

We still have my nurse's salary. We won't be destitute.

GILI

It's not about the money. Though your surrogacy salary does help pay for our vacations.

EVIE

I know.

GILI

We won't be able to go to Galapagos next spring.

EVIE

It wouldn't be a sacrifice if it didn't hurt a little.

GILI

Why does it have to hurt me? My soul is redeemed.

Evie shrugs slightly.

EVIE

There's a second reason, too.

GILI

A second reason?

EVIE

Have you heard of the idea of gilgul neshamot?

Gili hasn't.

EVIE

It's the transmigration of unborn souls waiting for a "tikkun."

GILI

(Nodding facetiously)

Oh that gilgul neshamot. Sure. I was going to write my thesis on gilgul neshamot in rabbinical school but instead I focused on whether microwaving a dairy fork makes it treyf.

EVIE

I know how this sounds.

GILI

It sounds like I'm on Jewish Jeopardy.

Evie shifts, sitting forward now. A bit more earnest.

EVIE

It's just I had this dream. But it wasn't a dream. It was a child. The soul of a child. It spoke to me. Asking to be born. And not just into any family. Into a family I had already helped once before.

GILI

Which family?

EVIE

Percy and Pip Gordon. Remember them? I surrogated for them three years ago. A son. Dylan.

Gili narrows her eyes, trying to get a clear picture.

GILI

You had a dream where you spoke with the soul of an unborn child wanting to be Dylan's sibling and asking you to birth it?

EVIE

Yes. A gilgul neshamot.  
And a pidyon nefesh. Kind of.

\*

GILI

Have you considered the possibility that Percy and Pip don't want another child?

EVIE

They do. I called them. I asked them.

GILI

(Surprised)

You asked them? Already?

EVIE

I told them I wanted to give them a free baby.  
(Then, off Gili's reaction)  
I know I should have talked to you first.

GILI

(More than a hint of sarcasm)

No, I love weighing in on important decisions after you've already made them.

EVIE

I'm sorry. But you have to admit, it's perfect. They told me they always wanted a sibling for Dylan but couldn't really afford another surrogacy.

GILI

It's perfect for *them*.

EVIE

It's perfect for us, too. Don't you see? This would be my 5th surrogacy. Including Micah, it's my 6th child. Do you know what that means?

GILI

Does it mean a free trip to Galapagos?

Evie ignores the joke. Or doesn't hear it.

EVIE

Six is the number of days it took to create the world!

GILI

Are you about to give me a third reason to give away a free baby?

EVIE

(Plowing ahead)

On the seventh day, God rested. But the sixth? That was the final act of creation. Humanity.

GILI

So we have a pidyon nefesh, a gilgul neshamot and now Humanity.

EVIE

The sixth child! It's supposed to be different. It feels like the final act of something. I think it's supposed to be given freely. Given for God!

GILI

I don't think I want you speaking with Rabbi Elliot anymore.

Evie steps closer now. Her voice soft. This matters.

EVIE

Please be OK with this, Gili.  
This is the universe talking. I'm sure of it.

Gili sees it.

GILI

I mean... It's your body, Evie. You can do with it what you want. You don't have to convince me. You certainly don't have to convince me three times.

Evie smiles.

EVIE

So you're good?

Gili nods.

GILI

You had me at pidyon nefesh.

Evie smiles gratefully.

The doorbell rings.

EVIE

That's Percy and Pip.

They're here?  
GILI

Of course. We have to inseminate.  
EVIE

Today?  
GILI

Is that a problem?  
EVIE

It's not a problem, I just didn't know there would be sperm in the house today.  
GILI

It has to be today. I'm ovulating. Can you grab me a specimen cup from the bathroom?  
EVIE

Gili goes to retrieve a specimen cup from an adjacent bathroom. Evie answers the door. PIP (30s) enters. He is vibrating with emotion.

Oh. My. God!  
PIP

Pip hugs Evie tightly.

This is such a miracle, you have no idea.  
PIP

I'm so glad you're excited.  
EVIE

I am more than excited!  
PIP

Gili returns with a specimen cup.

I feel like I'm about to burst!  
PIP

Hold on. Here's a cup.  
GILI  
(Dryly)

She hands it to Evie.

PIP

Hi Gili. It's so nice to see you again. Especially under these circumstances. Honestly, I don't even know the word to express my gratitude and to tell you guys what kind of gift this is.

GILI

The word you're looking for is Galapagos.

Pip grabs her hands. Deep, sincere eye contact.

PIP

(Sincerely)

Galapagos.

(Then)

Hebrew is such a beautiful language.

EVIE

Where's Percy?

PIP

Hmm?

EVIE

Is he parking the car?

GILI

You should tell him not to park on this side of the street. It's street cleaning.

PIP

Why do you assume he drove?

EVIE

Because... you're in here.

PIP

Everyone always assumes I don't do things. I don't cook. I'm not handy. I don't drive.

EVIE

I know you do things.

PIP

I actually don't drive. I also don't cook and I'm not handy. But I don't like that people assume that of me. I could do those things. I just don't need to. I have Percy.

EVIE

So is Percy parking the car?

GILI

You should tell him there's street cleaning.

PIP

Actually I took a car service to get here.

EVIE

A car service?

GILI

That begs the question... Where's Percy?

PIP

He's not coming.

Gili lifts an eyebrow. Evie blinks.

EVIE

He's not coming?

PIP

He's not coming.

GILI

...Pun clearly intended?

EVIE

Wait. Why isn't Percy coming?

PIP

It's a thing.

GILI

Is everything all right between you two?

PIP

Oh yes. Not to worry. We're fine. Absolutely.

GILI

So why isn't he here?

Pip exhales. Deeply.

PIP

We never did a DNA test to see who was the actual father of Dylan. Me or him.

Gili nods, hoping by doing so, she'll gain some understanding for the apparent non sequitur.

PIP

We didn't want either of us to feel like we're not the parent. And we didn't want Dylan to feel like one of us was not his dad.

EVIE

That makes total sense.

GILI

Not to the question, "why isn't Percy here."

PIP

The fact is, no DNA test was needed. Dylan is basically a clone of Percy.

EVIE

He does look a lot like him.

PIP

If you look at picture of Percy when he was three and Dylan, it's uncanny.

EVIE

His DNA is strong.

PIP

Every where we go, our family, our friends, even total strangers point out how much Dylan looks just like Percy. So the whole not having a DNA test is basically irrelevant.

GILI

Speaking of irrelevant-

PIP

Everyone knows Dylan is Percy's and they point it out every chance they get. So... I talked with Percy and said I want this next child to be mine. Biologically mine.

EVIE

You don't want him to contribute his sperm?

PIP

No.

EVIE

He agreed?

Pip nods.

PIP

Yes.

(Then)

Well... No. Not at first. We had to have a discussion. But eventually I won.

GILI

Can you win a discussion?

PIP

It was more of an argument.

EVIE

I am so sorry. I didn't mean for this to cause a problem.

PIP

It's not a problem. It was a small fight. A few dishes were thrown. It's fine. We hashed it out. Now he's on board.

EVIE

Good.

PIP

Completely supportive.

GILI

So supportive that he's not here?

PIP

Well, Percy doesn't like to lose.  
And he's still very angry.

GILI

Are you sure you guys don't want to wait until you've talked this out some more?

EVIE

They can't wait. It has to be today. I'm ovulating.

GILI

You do that every month.

PIP

It's fine. We can do this today.

EVIE

They want to do it today.

GILI

I just figured you'd want him here.

PIP

What do I need him here for?

GILI

Moral support. Cheerleading. A helping hand?

PIP

I got you two.

GILI

A helping hand is not part of the service.

PIP

I'm good. I can do this. All I need is a scented candle, my Josh Groban CD-

Gili approaches Pip.

GILI

Pip, can I weigh in here for a moment?

PIP

-And a photo of Jake Gyllenhaal looking slightly disappointed in me.

GILI

Just a little Rabbinic counsel.

PIP

You're not going to get all Leviticus on me, are you?

GILI

No.

PIP

(Quoting Leviticus)

"If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination."

GILI

I don't feel that way.

PIP

"They shall be put to death; their blood is upon them."

GILI

No one is going to put you to death.

EVIE

But blood will be upon *me* if we don't get a move on and inseminate soon.

GILI

This is not about Leviticus. It's about timing.

PIP

Timing?

EVIE

Did I mention I'm ovulating?

GILI

In halacha, timing matters.

Pip nods respectfully.

PIP

I hear that.

(Then, confused)

But I don't understand it. What is Chachahahaha?

GILI

In Judaism we don't light Shabbat candles whenever we feel like it. We don't blow shofar on any old Tuesday.

PIP

Jafar? From Aladdin?

GILI

We wait. We align. There is holiness in doing something at the right time.

Gili softens.

GILI

You and Percy are in the middle of something. It's raw and clearly there's a lot of emotion. Maybe what you're fighting about isn't even the point. Maybe it's just your bodies trying to say, "Hold up. Let's be sure."

This offer that Evie has made to you... It's not disappearing. She is not going to back out. You're not missing your one window by taking a beat. You are allowed to wait. Wait until you and Percy are 100 percent in alignment. You can still do this. You just don't have to do it today. That would be my suggestion.

A long moment. Pip takes this in. He nods, slow, sincere.

PIP

I mean, I do hate that we fought.

GILI

Of course. Look, the day a child is conceived, especially like this, isn't just biology. It's memory. It's story. Years from now, you may want to tell this child where they came from. Do you really want to say, "we were fighting, I was alone, dishes were broken." Is that how you want to remember it?

PIP

... No. I guess not.

GILI

Go home. Go to Percy. Find out what this argument is really all about.

Pip nods. Just then, Gili's phone rings. She answers it.

GILI

(On the phone)

Hello... She what?

Tell her I'm coming! And tell her to stop quoting Web MD.

She hangs up, already throwing on her coat.

GILI

(To Evie and Pip)

Sorry. Gotta run. Bris gone bad.

EVIE

How long are you going to be?

GILI

I don't know.

EVIE

Can you pick up Micah on your way back?

GILI

Where is he?

EVIE

Jeremy's.

GILI

(Nodding, as if to say probably)

I'll call you.

(To Pip)

Pip, great seeing you. Please give Percy my best.

She's out the door in a flash. The sound of it closing behind her leaves a hush.

Pip looks to Evie. Slightly sheepish, slightly raw.

PIP

So... I guess I'll... talk to Percy.

Evie nods. No pressure, but clearly hoping he'll reconsider.

EVIE

I mean, if you guys can work it out today, you can come back later.

PIP

(Shaking his head)

Percy can hold a grudge for a while. He's still mad at me for putting the cast iron skillet in the dishwasher.

(Then)

I did that two years ago!

Evie nods, empathetically.

PIP

But you said the offer is not disappearing. We can wait.

EVIE

I didn't say that. *Gili* said that.

PIP

Oh. So... how long is the offer good for?

EVIE

It's not about how long the offer is good, it's about whether the time is right.

PIP

But Percy and I are fighting. Doesn't that mean the time isn't right?

Evie gently, but firmly, takes a step toward him.

EVIE

My dreams tell me otherwise. Not to mention my cycle. I mean, not to disagree with my wife, but... of course she thinks you should wait. She'd make you wait three days after your mikvah. You know what I mean?

PIP

(Pip nods and laughs, then:)

I don't.

EVIE

(Barreling on)

And it's the 18th of Adar!

PIP

Adar?

EVIE

Adar! That's the 12th month of the Hebrew calendar!

PIP

Wow.

EVIE

It's all about joy and good fortune!

Pip nods. Then:

PIP

In Lord of The Rings, Adar was an elf who was captured and twisted by Morgoth to become one of the first orcs.

EVIE

Adar is not important. It's the 18th! That's what's significant! 18 is 'chai!' Life! It's literally the best day to create a baby.

Pip sways. He's still torn.

PIP

So you think I should do this?

EVIE

I do.

PIP

Right now?

EVIE

Absolutely right now. I wouldn't offer this unless I knew in my heart it was the right time. There's a soul hovering, waiting to incarnate. And if you don't show up now, it may find someone else.

(Then)

But look, ultimately it's up to you. Far be it from me to push you or force my spiritual beliefs on a decision as personal and private as this. Honestly, no pressure.

Slight beat.

EVIE

Just know, not every soul waits forever.

A long pause. Then, like it's Excalibur, Pip produces a photo of Jake Gyllenhaal from his jacket.

PIP

Let's do this!

Black out.

7 MINUTES LATER

Evie is standing at her front door, waving with one hand, holding a filled specimen cup with the other.

EVIE

(Calling off to Pip)

Get home safe! I'll call you next week!

She closes the door. Examines the cup, then briskly moves towards the hall.

The doorbell rings. Evie pivots. She returns to the door.

EVIE

Did you forget something?

She opens the door. Standing there is PERCY (30s).

EVIE

Percy.

PERCY

Evie.

Percy steps inside.

EVIE

If you're looking for Pip? He literally just left.

PERCY

I know. I followed him here. I've been waiting outside for him to finish for like ten minutes. Back home he would have finished five times already.

EVIE

Why were you waiting outside? Why not just come in?

PERCY

I don't want him to know I was here. Also, I'm illegally parked.

EVIE

I don't understand.

PERCY

(Re: Specimen)

Before you take out your turkey baster, I need to put *my* gentleman's gravy in that cup, as well.

Evie grimaces.

EVIE

I don't think it's gentlemanly to use the term 'gentleman's gravy.'

PERCY

(Shifting tone)

Can I just say how grateful we are, by the way. This is such an incredible gift.

EVIE

I'm happy to do it.

PERCY

I don't know why you chose us. I don't know how we got so lucky-

EVIE

I chose you because you are wonderful parents to Dylan. Because you guys are a solid couple whose relationship is built on mutual respect and honesty. And because I personally like you both.

PERCY

That's really sweet.

EVIE

(Abrupt)

Now why are you here?

PERCY

Because...

He points to the cup.

PERCY

You know... the gravy.

EVIE

Please stop saying that.

PERCY

The baby batter. Love tadpoles? Juice of the loins? Pick one. I'm illegally parked - Kind of on a tight timeline.

EVIE

(Sarcastic)

Really? Because I can stand here all day holding your partner's jizz.

PERCY

I'm here to participate.

EVIE

I get that. I was just under the impression that Pip was going to be the biological father. He said he spoke with you about this. Fought with you. Threw some dishes. But ultimately you agreed.

PERCY

He did speak with me. We did fight. No dishes were thrown. It was actually a Diptyque candle jar. I think it's important to be specific. It was a gift from our friend Patrick. He got it at Neiman Marcus for \$85. Scent was Feu de Bois.

EVIE

(Again re: the specimen)

Tight timeline.

PERCY

And yes, ultimately I did agree. But when I agreed... I was lying.

EVIE

You were lying?

PERCY

I was lying.

(Then)

Thank you, by the way, for saying our relationship is built on honesty. That really meant a lot. \*

EVIE

Why were you lying?

PERCY

I had to lie. Dishes were being thrown.

EVIE

Listen, this is supposed to be a charitable offering, but if it's doing more harm than good-

PERCY

It's not! This is incredible what you're doing and we want to take advantage of it.

EVIE

Then let me get basting.

PERCY

Pip is infertile!

Evie freezes.

EVIE

...What?

PERCY

He's firing blanks. His gravy is... spermless.

Evie paces in frustration.

EVIE

Why would he come here then? Just to waste my time?

PERCY

He doesn't know.

EVIE

That he's infertile? How does he not know? How do *you* know and he doesn't?

PERCY

Back when we first decided to do this, with Dylan, I thought we should get tested. Get our swimmers tested. Pip was a huge pothead. *And* he wore tighty whities. *And*, I'm not a doctor, but I thought the veins in his scrotum seemed particularly large.

Evie is unsure what this last reason has to do with anything.

PERCY

I read that enlarged veins in the scrotum might increase testicular temperature and affect sperm production.

EVIE

OK. So you each got a fertility test.

PERCY

Yes. I didn't tell him it was because I thought his ball veins were big. I simply suggested we get tested to play it safe. You know, you're not cheap, and there's no point in going through this process if we're firing blanks.

EVIE

Yeah, I still don't understand why Pip doesn't know he's infertile.

PERCY

Cause I didn't tell him that either. We got the results in the mail. I'm the one who goes through the mail so... I checked. Both. My swimmers are all good. Olympians, actually. Not to brag, but they're like Jim Phelps.

EVIE

I think you mean Michael Phelps. Jim Phelps is from Mission Impossible.

PERCY

Which is what it would have been if we went with Pip's sperm.

EVIE

So you opened up Pip's mail, which is a federal offense. Checked his medical results. Also illegal. And then you lied to him about what you read?

\*

PERCY

I didn't lie to him... I just didn't tell him the truth.

EVIE

*Why* didn't you tell him the truth?

PERCY

I didn't want him to feel broken. He already has enough doubt in himself. So I told him he's good. We're both good. I didn't think it would make a difference. It *didn't* make a difference. We both put our man jam in the cup and we got a baby.

EVIE

A baby that looks just like you.

PERCY

Who would've thunk.

EVIE

And now he wants one of his own.

PERCY

We'll tell him this one's his. What are the odds they both look just like me? He doesn't need to know I was here. Give me 2 minutes to add my magic marinade and I'll be out of your way. Hopefully before I get a ticket.

Evie takes a beat to consider this.

EVIE

I just... I'm not sure I like all the lying.

PERCY

Of course. Who does? But...  
Sometimes we have to lie to protect the people we love.

\*

Evie takes that in, unsettled.

Black out.

18 MONTHS LATER

Lights come up on an exam room. Pip and Percy sit side by side. Their 10-month old baby, Bonnie, is in a stroller nearby.

PIP

I'm already impressed.

PERCY

Is it the aquarium wallpaper here in the exam room or the Duplo Fire Station in the waiting room?

PIP

At Dr. Linda's we waited 45 minutes just to get into an exam room, and then another 45 minutes for Linda to walk in. Our appointment would be at 9:00 we wouldn't see her till 10:30. Is my time not as important as hers?

Percy shrugs.

PERCY

(Dryly)

Dr. Linda diagnosed our son's early asthma. You teach violin to 5-year-olds. I'd say it's on par.

PIP

And *then* when Linda *would* walk in, she would spend maybe 5-minutes with us. I always felt rushed AND she'd never really explain anything. We'd leave there with more questions than we had when we came in.

PERCY

I never had a problem with Dr. Linda.

PIP

No, of course not. You chose her.

PERCY

What's that supposed to mean?

PIP

It means that for years you have asked me to engage, take more ownership, make more decisions, but when I do they are always wrong. We haven't even met this doctor yet, but because I chose him, you don't like him.

PERCY

I'm not saying I don't like him. I'm saying I didn't have a problem with our last doctor. And neither did Dylan, by the way. He liked Dr. Linda.

PIP

Dylan likes the registered sex offender down the street. And by the way, you hated waiting on Dr. Linda, as well. Don't deny it.

PERCY

They all make you wait.

PIP

Is it too much to ask for a pediatrician who is on time, and can over explain to those of us without medical degrees?

DR. GIDEON LERNER (Mid 30s) enters.

GIDEON

Hello. I'm Dr. Lerner. That's spelled L E R N E R not Dr. Learner, L E A R N E R. Though the name Lerner, L E R N E R, actually means learner, L E A R N E R, as in someone who learns L E A R N S.

Percy exchanges a glance with Pip.

GIDEON

Homophonically, I realize it can be confusing. Nevertheless, I think it's an important distinction to make with all my new patients, as I believe when some people hear the name Dr. Lerner L E R N E R, they think the name they're hearing is Dr. Learner, L E A R N E R, and subconsciously assume I am still *learning* L E A R N I N G. Learning to be a doctor, I suppose, as if I'm still in some kind of clinical apprenticeship. I assure you, I am not. Unfortunately, because of my homophonic name, I believe those people are subconsciously less comfortable with me taking care of their children.

PERCY

(Dryly)

Yes, it's probably because of the name.

GIDEON

Rest assured, my education is thorough and complete, including 13 years of primary and secondary school, 4 years for my undergraduate degree with a double major in biology and health sciences, 4 years of medical school, which was 2 years of classroom and lab-based sciences and 2 years of clinical rotations, and finally 3 years of pediatric residency, totaling 24 years of education. Hopefully that puts your mind at ease, at least with regards to my name.

PERCY

Completely. Your name is no longer my biggest concern.

He looks at the baby in the stroller.

GIDEON

Is this your baby?

PIP

Yes. I'm the biological father.

Percy glares at Pip, a slight roll of the eyes.  
Gideon examines the chart.

GIDEON

Her name is Bonnie?

PIP

Yeah.

PERCY

We also have another child. Dylan. 4 years old. Though we had just seen our previous pediatrician, so there was no reason for him to come today. He's home with my mom.

GIDEON

May I ask why you decided to switch pediatricians?

PIP

Our last doctor didn't really value our time.

PERCY

(To Gideon re: Pip, a hint of sarcasm)

And his time is pretty important.

GIDEON

(To Pip)

Oh? What do you do?

PIP

I'm a classical music educator, specializing in string pedagogy.

Gideon smiles politely.

GIDEON

Well, one thing I can promise you both is that I will value your time.

PIP

(Earnest and impressed)

Clearly. Our appointment was for 8:30 this morning and I think when you walked in the room it was 8:31.

Gideon checks his watch, disappointed in himself.

GIDEON

(Sincerely)

In that case, I apologize for being late.

PIP

No, no. That wasn't meant as a-

GIDEON

I try to stay on schedule, not only because I respect your time, but because, due to the particular configuration of my neurology, even minor tardiness generates a disproportionate amount of psychological discomfort.

(Then)

You should know, by the way, I'm on the spectrum.

PERCY  
(Sarcastic disbelief)

What? Get out of town.

GIDEON  
(Nodding)

It's true. High-functioning. Diagnosed at 11. My autism manifests most noticeably in three areas:

- An intolerance for inefficiency, which I channel into hyper-punctuality.
- A need for precision, both linguistic and procedural.
- And finally, some interpersonal irregularities. For example, I've been told I over-explain.

PERCY  
We hadn't noticed that, Dr. Lerner.  
(To Pip, pointedly)

L E R N E R.

GIDEON  
I may, at times, present as blunt, disinterested, or robotic. But I assure you, I am none of those things. I simply process differently. It's also worth noting my neurodivergence makes me exceptionally good at systems, routines, and patterns, which children thrive on. I notice the smallest developmental shifts and I rarely forget a face, a birthdate, or a vaccination schedule. Kids don't mind that I'm awkward. They just want to be seen and understood. And... that's something I certainly can relate to quite well.

I like to tell new parents this up front so you know who you're getting involved with. If you're comfortable with everything I've said, then I believe we'll be a good fit and we can proceed with the exam.

PIP  
I think we're more than comfortable, Dr. Lerner.

PERCY  
(Pointedly again)  
L E R N E R.

PIP  
Bonnie was 5 weeks premature, so it will be reassuring to have a doctor with such great attention to detail.

Gideon looks at her chart again.

GIDEON

(Somewhat dubious)

5-weeks? Interesting. You wouldn't know it to look at her chart. Her premature birth hasn't affected her length or weight. She's in the top percentile for both.

PIP

She takes after me. I'm her biological father.

A shake of the head and another eye roll from Percy.

GIDEON

Her reflex response is also good.

PIP

I'm like a cat!

GIDEON

She had no jaundice, no distress markers.

(Then)

I see she does have a mild third toe syndactyly.

He checks Bonnie's feet.

PIP

A what now?

GIDEON

Fused second and third toes.

PERCY

Yeah, we noticed that, as well. How does one get that?

GIDEON

It can be something you inherit.

PERCY

Well, you know, he's the biological father.

GIDEON

(To Pip)

Do you have fused toes?

PIP

I could model Jimmy Choo Strappy Heels. No, I don't have fused toes.

GIDEON

Perhaps your surrogate then? I assume you used one.

PERCY

(Snidely)

Yes. We didn't get each other pregnant.

PIP

We can ask her. Though I think she would have disclosed that.

GIDEON

Well, it doesn't have to be hereditary. It could be a spontaneous genetic mutation. Honestly, I wouldn't worry about it. I have a syndactyly, it's never impacted me.

PIP

We'll ask Evie either way.

GIDEON

...Evie?

PIP

Evie Kaplan. Our surrogate. For both our kids actually.

PERCY

She does quality work. In case you're interested.

PIP

Actually, you probably know her. I mean, she's how we found you.

GIDEON

Oh? She... referred me?

PIP

Well, four years ago she did. She gave us a list of five pediatricians she recommended.

PERCY

We were with the first one until Pip decided he didn't like waiting in her waiting room.

GIDEON

I was number two? That's flattering.

PERCY

No. Number two retired. Number three moved. Number four had a weird mustache. You were number five.

PIP

But I don't think the list was in any kind of order of preference.

Gideon nods.

PERCY

You know, I'm pretty sure I've seen Evie's feet. I don't think she has a syn-dact a thing either.

GIDEON

You've seen your surrogate's feet?

PERCY

We're pretty tight. She did a BOGO for us.

GIDEON

...I don't understand.

PERCY

Buy one get one free.

GIDEON

...I don't understand that phrase in a reproductive context.

PIP

She surrogated Bonnie for free.

PERCY

That's why we call her Bogo.

PIP

I'm not sold on that nickname.

GIDEON

She gave you a free baby? I guess you are very close.

PERCY

Well, we have ejaculated in her house on numerous occasions.

PIP

I wouldn't say we're *very* close.

GIDEON

Gestational surrogacy without compensation typically implies a more personal connection.

PIP

We had our son with her about 4 years ago-

PERCY

We paid full price for that one.

PIP

We've kept in touch with her since. Nothing major. A mother's day card every year. We visited her and her wife two years ago. We like her, but you know, we live separate lives. Anyway, a year ago February she contacted us, kind of out of the blue, and said she wanted to gift us a free sibling. \*

GIDEON

And she didn't tell you why?

PIP

She had some religious reasons. We didn't really understand them, nor did we need to.

PERCY

Who looks a gift fetus in the mouth?

PIP

Percy!

PERCY

What? It's just an expression.

GIDEON

I never heard that expression.

PERCY

Don't bite the embryo that feeds you.

GIDEON

That one makes no sense.

PERCY

Beggars can't be choosers?

GIDEON

Finally, one I understand. \*

PERCY

It basically means don't sniff the placenta and ask for store credit.

PIP

Good Christ!

Black out.

TWO DAYS LATER

Evie and Gili's home. A doorbell rings. Gili emerges from a bedroom.

GILI

(Calling offstage)

I got it.

She opens the door. Gideon stands there, rigid and formal.

GILI

Can I help you?

GIDEON

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Gideon Lerner. L E R N E R. Not Dr. Gideon Learner. L E A R N E R.

GILI

(Somewhat thrown)

...Thank you for clarifying.

GIDEON

I am here to see Evie Kaplan.

GILI

May I ask what it's regarding?

GIDEON

Yes.

A small, awkward pause.

GILI

(Realizing he's waiting for the prompt)

...What is it regarding?

GIDEON

I would like to talk with her about her surrogacy services.

GILI

Of course. She's in the shower at the moment. Most people call ahead and make an appointment.

GIDEON

I apologize for not calling in advance. I understand that's customary. I'm not particularly effective on the phone. There are silences I don't know how to fill. I sound abrupt, or cold, or like I'm trying to end the conversation when in fact I wish to sustain it. Given the nature of what I'd like to discuss with Ms. Kaplan, I didn't want to risk any misunderstanding or confusion.

Gili softens.

GILI

I understand.

(Then, gently)

Come in. I'll let her know you're waiting.

GIDEON

I wonder if I can trouble you for a glass of water first. I've found that my vocal cords dry out more quickly than average when I'm anticipating an important conversation.

GILI

Of course.

She heads towards the kitchen.

GILI

No reason to be nervous, Mr. Lerner.

GIDEON

(Correcting reflexively)

*Dr. Lerner.*

L E R N E R not L E A R N E R.

GILI

Right. Doctor. What are you a doctor of?

GIDEON

I'm a pediatrician.

GILI

(Attempting humor)

Do a lot of babies misspell your name?

GIDEON

(Earnestly)

No. Children don't attempt spelling until around four and a half. Even then, proper surname spelling is rare unless it's monosyllabic or phonetically intuitive.

Gili returns with a glass of water.

GILI

Here you go.

Gideon takes it and downs the entire glass in one focused gulp.

GILI

Would you... like some more?

GIDEON

(Handing her the cup)

Please.

She heads back to kitchen to refill the cup.

GIDEON

You are very kind. May I ask your name?

GILI

You may.

GIDEON

What is your name?

GILI

Gili. Rabbi Gili Kaplan. K A P L A N.

Gideon furrows his brow, confused.

GIDEON

Curious.

GILI

What?

GIDEON

I don't understand why you felt the need to spell it.

GILI

No reason.

Evie enters, her hair is still wet.

EVIE

Who was at the door?

GILI

Evie, this is Dr. Lerner. L E R-.

EVIE

(recognizing him, stopped cold)

Gideon?

GIDEON

...Hello Evie.

A charged silence.

GILI

(To Evie, trying to track the energy)

I guess you already know how to spell it.

EVIE

Yes. Sorry. Gideon is a... is a doctor.

GILI

I know. That's why I called him Dr. Lerner.

EVIE

I mean a doctor I know. A doctor I've worked with. He's Avi Horowitz's pediatrician. Remember Avi? He was my second.

GILI

Oh sure. Avi.

EVIE

(To Gideon, scrambling for normalcy)

How is Avi? Is that why you're here?

GIDEON

I'm not at liberty to discuss a patient's health. Nor is it the reason why I'm here. My presence is one of a personal nature.

Gili clocks that.

GILI

That's my cue.

(To Evie)

I'm running to the store. You need anything?

EVIE

Whatever is on the list.

GILI

Dr. Lerner, nice to meet you. Good luck with everything.

Gili exits, closing the door behind her.

Evie watches her go out the window then whips around on Gideon.

EVIE

What are you doing here?

GIDEON

I met our daughter two days ago.

A heavy silence. Evie stares at him, not quite processing, then rejects it.

EVIE

I don't know what you're talking about.

GIDEON

Bonnie Gordon. They are thinking about the nickname *Bogo*. I don't approve.

EVIE

Bonnie Gordon is Pip and Percy Gordon's daughter. Seriously, what are you talking about?

GIDEON

You and I had sex 19 months ago. New Year's eve. Bonnie Gordon was born October 11th last year. That's 284 days later. Forty weeks plus four days. Well within the normal gestational range.

EVIE

Bonnie was conceived in February. She was born early. About five weeks.

GIDEON

Unlikely.

Evie exhales a frustrated, defensive breath. She shakes her head, bracing.

EVIE

Gideon, if I hurt you... it was not my intention to do so.

GIDEON

What, specifically, was your intention that evening when we were together? Because my intention was to express my affection in a physical form. An affection you were aware of. And... I believe... exploited. At least, that is the only conclusion available to me.

EVIE

I wasn't...

GIDEON

Aware? That's incorrect. Two years ago, May 19th, I asked if you would be interested in attending a movie with me. You said no.

EVIE

It was a documentary about competitive cup stacking. I said no because I respect myself.

GIDEON

I then said I would like to explore a romantic relationship with you. I made my intentions clear. You were aware of my affection. Please do not deny it.

EVIE

I am not denying it.

GIDEON

You then said you were married. I didn't pursue things further. What would be the point? Seven months later at the Hope and Health New Year's Gala you had sex with me.

EVIE

You had sex with me, too, Gideon. Why did you have sex with me if you knew I was married?

GIDEON

I didn't initiate.

EVIE

You're saying I did?

GIDEON

You sought me out. You laughed at all my jokes, though most of them were unintentional. You brushed lint off my shoulder that wasn't there. You told me you liked my posture and that I "smelled like safety."

EVIE

(Shaking her head)

You misinterpreted. Those things can mean anything.

GIDEON

You then placed your hand down my pants and said you wanted to have sex with me. That seems significantly less ambiguous.

Evie flinches, the memory of that moment hitting her.

GIDEON

I assumed your marriage was over. At the time, it was the only explanation that made sense. Looking back now... I concede the possibility that I served a function that night.

EVIE

I wasn't exploiting you.

GIDEON

I'd like to know what that function was.

EVIE

Look... it was New Year's Eve. We were drunk-

GIDEON

I don't drink. Alcohol dulls the senses and compromises executive function.

EVIE

*I* was drunk.

GIDEON

Are you suggesting that you didn't know what you were doing? That *I* was the one taking advantage?

EVIE

No, I'm not saying that- Why are we rehashing this? We've been through this already over a year ago.

GIDEON

And yet I still don't understand why.

EVIE

I told you. Gili and I had a fight-

GIDEON

Yes. I know. You were discussing your practice of charging clients different fees based on their ability to pay. Gili said that was unethical. You disagreed.

EVIE

Gideon-

GIDEON

Things escalated. She said you're not as altruistic as you think you are. You said you're completely self-less and you wish Gili would appreciate that more.

EVIE

I know what I said!

GIDEON

You then stormed out, went to the New Year's Gala alone and had sex with me. I still don't understand why.

EVIE

Why what?

GIDEON

Why ME?

The question lands hard.

GIDEON

There were other people there that you could have been with. Men and women. Certainly if your goal was to punish your wife, if only in the moment, if only in secret, there were more suitable candidates. People who have not previously expressed interest in you and who would have no problem sharing a night of meaningless sex. And yet you chose me. Why?

Evie rubs her temples, overwhelmed, cornered.

EVIE

I don't know what you want me to say. I don't know why I chose you. I wish I hadn't. Is there no way we can just forget it ever happened?

GIDEON

How do we do that... when there is a child involved?

EVIE

Oh my God. Gideon, I swear to you, she is not your child.

GIDEON

The timing is suspect, of course, but it's not the only evidence. Bonnie and I are the same blood type. She has a syndactyly just like me. She resembles me in hair color and eye color.

EVIE

Percy Gordon has your color hair. And Pip has your color eyes.

GIDEON

I don't think that's a coincidence. I think that's one of the reasons you selected them.

EVIE

Selected them? What are you even talking about?

GIDEON

Here's what I deduce, please correct me if I am wrong. You had sex with me, apparently for reasons you don't know, nevertheless, a month later you found out you were pregnant.

EVIE

You're wrong.

GIDEON

Let's assume I'm not wrong.

EVIE

You just told me to correct you if you're wrong, now I have to pretend you're not wrong?

GIDEON

I wrongly assumed you would correct me if I was *actually* wrong, not because you *prefer* me to be wrong.

EVIE

You think I'm lying?

GIDEON

I do. But I will disregard your lies for now.

EVIE

If you think I'm lying what is the point of this?

GIDEON

Your wife will be back from her shopping soon enough. Do you really want me to spend time explaining the purpose of this despite your lying, or should I simply continue my deductions?

Evie drops onto a chair defeated.

EVIE

Continue.

GIDEON

Very well. Please correct me if I'm wrong. You found out you were pregnant, a pregnancy you couldn't terminate because you are pro life, a stance you made clear during the Medical Ethics Luncheon where we first met.

EVIE

I never said-

GIDEON

It was during the icebreaker, I believe. We were asked to go around the room, state our names and a hobby we enjoy.

EVIE

I am not pro life. I think women should be allowed to choose. I just don't personally believe in abortion for myself.

GIDEON

Correction noted.

EVIE

I also wasn't pregnant!

GIDEON

Disregarded.

Gideon continues, unbothered.

GIDEON

Your pregnancy is obviously problematic as it would reveal to your wife your infidelity, which you have been keeping secret from her.

EVIE

(Shamefully)

Yes. That is true. I have not told her about you.

GIDEON

Thank you for your honesty.

EVIE

But again, I wasn't pregnant!

GIDEON

However short lived.

Evie groans. This is spiraling.

GIDEON

The good news is-

EVIE

Oh, there's good news?

\*

GIDEON

You are a surrogate, are you not?

EVIE

You know I am.

GIDEON

You can attribute the pregnancy on a client. Preferably an old one, as finding and securing a new client can be a timely process and time was the one thing you did not have. So you came up with a ruse.

EVIE

This is absolutely not true!

GIDEON

You told your wife you wanted to do a surrogacy no charge. Give away a free sibling to a previous client. You contacted Percy and Pip Gordon not only because they resemble me in hair color and eye color, but also because you suspected they would jump at the opportunity to be gifted your services and gain a second child. Sure enough they did. 8 months later, October 11th, Bonnie was born.

EVIE

This is all lies!

GIDEON

Bonnie was not born October 11th?

EVIE

That's true, but everything else you said is bullshit! Bonnie is Percy and Pip's daughter!

GIDEON

If she is indeed their daughter as you assert, she was born one month premature, though nothing in her chart suggests a premature birth. \*

EVIE

That is not uncommon.

GIDEON

If she is my child, on the other hand, she was born right on schedule.

EVIE

She is not your child, you have to believe me.

GIDEON

Why do I have to believe you? What happens if I don't?

Evie glares at him.

GIDEON

There is one way to know for sure. Bonnie is my patient, after all. A DNA test would be easy and get to the bottom of this. If she is Pip and Percy's child, I will leave you alone and never bother you again. If she is mine... Well, I hope Pip and Percy will understand. And your wife.

Gideon turns to leave.

GIDEON

I'll let you know when the test results come back. Good day.

Gideon starts for the door.

EVIE

Wait!

Gideon stops. Still facing away.

EVIE

Fine.

(Small, crushed)

She is yours.

Gideon turns to her.

GIDEON

You lie so easily and with such conviction.

EVIE

I just want to save my marriage. And not get sued. Can you understand that?

Gideon gives a small, ambiguous shrug. Is it empathy or dismissal? Unclear.

EVIE

What do you want?

GIDEON

What do I want?

EVIE

To let it go. To let... her go.

GIDEON

You're suggesting there is something you can give me... that would keep me quiet... about all of this?

EVIE

I'm hoping.

GIDEON

And if the thing I want... is you?

EVIE

I'm hoping it's not.

GIDEON

Why?

EVIE

Because I don't feel that way about you.

GIDEON

Then why did you have sex with me?

Evie looks away. Shame, anger, avoidance.

GIDEON

I'm just looking for a coherent explanation for an emotional event that I can not seem to categorize. You want me to be able to move past that night, but I can't until the story makes sense.

Why?

EVIE

I was angry. I was hurt. I was lonely.

GIDEON

Why me?

EVIE

I knew you would say yes!  
I knew how you felt about me.  
And I exploited it.

Gideon nods.

GIDEON

You lied about that, as well.

EVIE

I'm sorry.

GIDEON

Don't apologize. Not unless you are truly remorseful.

Evie stands there empty, lost.

EVIE

What do you want?

GIDEON

Justice. Balance. Accountability.

What I want... is not you. Why would it be? You've made it clear that your feelings for me are not reciprocal. I don't say that with bitterness. Not anymore. I'm accustomed to that inequality. It has defined most of my relationships. Not just romantic ones, but friendships too. I tend to feel things more deeply than people realize, and those feelings have yet to be returned in kind. Or maybe I interpret the world in a way that renders those feelings... incompatible.

\*

EVIE

Gideon, just tell me.

GIDEON

People often say I'm difficult to read. That may be true. I read *them* just fine, though. I read when I'm being tolerated. I read when I'm being humored. I read when I'm being lied to. And I read when my presence is considered an obstacle to the smooth functioning of the social machine. And so... I have stopped hoping for romantic love. Not just from you, but from any woman. Statistically, it's improbable. Experientially, it's exhausting.

EVIE

I'm sorry.

GIDEON

I don't need pity and I'm not asking for it. But there is something I want. It is another kind of love. One I believe I am capable of giving fully and receiving clearly. One that is not predicated on flirtation or small talk or whatever invisible social lubricant I always seem to misapply. I want a child. I want what you gave Pip and Percy.

EVIE

I can't take Bonnie away from them.

GIDEON

I don't want Bonnie. I am not a monster.

EVIE

Then what do you want?

GIDEON

I've already said. I want a child. I want a person who is part of me, who is mine, who doesn't have to learn to accept me because they will know me from the beginning. I want you to birth me a child. A different child.

EVIE

You want to hire me as a surrogate?

GIDEON

Not hire you, no. This child will be freely given. The way you supposedly did for Pip and Percy. Not for money. Not as a job. Not as a service. But as a gift. From you... to me.

Evie recoils.

EVIE

I can't do that.

GIDEON

Why?

EVIE

Because how am I to explain it to Gili?

GIDEON

How did you explain it the last time?

EVIE

I appealed to her... Rabbinical nature.

GIDEON

Do so again. It clearly worked then.

EVIE

She'll get suspicious.

GIDEON

That's not my problem.

EVIE

Do you understand the position you are putting me in?

GIDEON

Yes. I am asking you to lie to your wife. Given how easily lies come to you, I don't think this should be a problem.

EVIE

It's not as easy as you think. I've already burned through every excuse Rabbi Elliot helped me find last time.

GIDEON

I don't know who Rabbi Elliot is.

EVIE

She's not going to believe me, Gideon. You understand? Do you know how absurd it will sound if I tell her I want another pidyon nefesh! Another gilgul neshamot!

GIDEON

That does sound absurd. Also, I don't know what a pidyon nefesh or a gilgul neshamot are. My Bar Mitzvah portion was Parashat Yisro from Exodus.

EVIE

(Pleading)

Please don't make me do this. I'll find you another surrogate. I'll pay for it myself. But I can't do this.

GIDEON

No. It has to be you. I'm sorry, Evie.

He heads for the door.

GIDEON

Let me know when you're next ovulating. I will come back then.

Gideon exits.

A long moment. Evie stands perfectly still.

Then explodes.

EVIE

Dammit!

She grabs the phone, dials with unsteady hands.

EVIE

(On the phone, forcing calm)

Hello, Rabbi Elliot? I wonder if you have any time this weekend?

Black out.

**END OF ACT 1**

ACT 2

17 YEARS LATER

At Evie and Gili's house. Gili is on a zoom call with a student. We can't see the student, but we hear him preparing for his Bar Mitzvah.

ASHER (O.S.)

(Chanting)

Adonai hu ha'Elohim, Adonai hu ha'Elohim.

GILI

Very good. That's coming along.

All right. How's it going with your D'var Torah?

ASHER (O.S.)

(Less good)

...Good.

GILI

(Hearing the uncertainty)

Really?

Can I hear it?

ASHER (O.S.)

I'm... still working on it.

GILI

Hmm.

Well, let me hear what you have so far.

Some papers rustle on Asher's end of the zoom. Gili waits patiently. Finally, Asher clears his throat.

ASHER (O.S.)

(Reading)

My Torah portion, Ki Tisa, teaches us about forgiveness and the possibility that a big mistake can sometimes lead to something good. What was the big mistake, you ask? And what was the something good? Well, I'll tell you.

Gili smiles, as she waits for Asher to continue.

ASHER (O.S.)

That's as far as I've gotten.

Her smile fades.

GILI

(Shaking her head)

That's not very far, Asher.

ASHER (O.S.)

I know.

GILI

In fact, I think you just repeated the opening I suggested to you last week.

ASHER (O.S.)

I wanted to show you I was listening.

GILI

Thank you. But why aren't you *continuing*?

ASHER (O.S.)

...I want to leave the audience wanting more?

GILI

Clever. But that's not your job. Your job is to tell the story. Tell us what happened and what you learned from it, and then let your listeners decide if they want more.

ASHER (O.S.)

Didn't I just tell them what happened when I read from the Torah?

GILI

You told them in Hebrew. Now you're going to tell them in English.

ASHER (O.S.)

Why?

GILI

Because we're reformed Jews. We don't understand Hebrew. So what happened in Ki Tisa? What was the big mistake?

ASHER (O.S.)

The Israelites worshipped a golden harp.

GILI

A golden *harp*?

ASHER (O.S.)

They climbed up a beanstalk and stole it from Hashem.

GILI

You're thinking of Jack and the Beanstalk.

ASHER (O.S.)

...Yes. Jack, the Israelite, climbed up the beanstalk using his Jewish beans.

GILI

(Trying to stay patient)

The Israelites worshipped a Golden *Calf*.

Do you know why that was a mistake?

ASHER (O.S.)

Yes.

They thought it was a harp.

A slight shake of Gili's head.

GILI

Asher, your Bar Mitzvah is in one week. I'm going to need you to do better.

The doorbell rings. Gili looks at her watch, somewhat confused.

GILI

All right. Let's meet again Monday, so we can focus on this. OK? Please work on it.

ASHER (O.S.)

Yes, Rabbi Kaplan.

GILI

I'll see you then.

Asher ends the zoom. Gili reflects on the blank screen for a moment, then goes to answer the door.

Pip and Percy enter. Pip is carrying a bottle of wine. Percy follows. He seems to have an edge about him today.

Hello! PIP

Hi guys. GILI

Sorry we're early. PIP

No worries. GILI

Would have been here earlier but it's impossible to park around here. PERCY

Where's the birthday girl? GILI

She's coming separately. PIP

Assuming she can find a spot. PERCY

She's driving now? GILI

She's driving. She's voting. PIP

She's shtupping. PERCY

Percy! PIP

What? PERCY

PIP  
(Pointing to Gili)

Gili's a Rabbi. You probably shouldn't-

PERCY

Shouldn't what? Rabbis shtup. They *invented* shtupping.

GILI

Well... *Perfected* maybe.

PERCY

They do it through a hole in a sheet. Apparently that makes it hotter.

PIP

Jesus!

PERCY

What?

PIP

I think that's a little antisemitic.

PERCY

It's not antisemitic if it's true.

GILI

It's not true.

PERCY

(Not hearing Gili)

And Jesus totally did it through a hole in a sheet.

(To Gili)

Am I right?

GILI

No. I don't think they even had sheets back then.

PIP

(To Percy)

Jesus didn't even have sex.

PERCY

Of course he had sex. What Bible are you reading?

PIP

The one where he *doesn't* have sex.

PERCY

He had sex with Mary.

PIP

His mother?

PERCY

The other Mary. The hooker.

PIP

That is blasphemous.

PERCY

It's not blasphemous to say Jesus liked to fuck hookers.

PIP

I'm pretty sure that's the definition of blasphemy.

GILI

Also, Jews don't have sex through a hole in a sheet.

PERCY

(offhandedly, not meaning offense)

Well, not dyke Jews obviously.

PIP

Percy!

PERCY

What?

PIP

You can't say dyke.

PERCY

You say it all the time.

PIP

Not to lesbians!

GILI

(Choosing not to engage in the  
homophobia)

No Jews, lesbian, gay or otherwise, have sex through a hole in a sheet.

PERCY

They don't?

GILI

There is no such practice in Judaism.

Why did I think there was?  
PERCY

Because you're antisemitic.  
PIP

I'm not antisemitic.  
PERCY

Well...  
GILI

What?  
PERCY

The whole sex through a sheet myth is actually a canard which plays into historical prejudices.  
GILI

See? You're antisemitic. And blasphemous.  
PIP

And possibly homophobic.  
GILI  
(A little under her breath)

Evie enters.

Hi everyone.  
EVIE

Evie!  
PIP

Where's Bonnie?  
EVIE

She's on her way.  
PIP

We actually wanted to talk to you about something before she got here.  
(Then)

Is everything OK?  
EVIE

PIP

Yeah. Oh yeah.

(Then, with a smile)

Bonnie is thinking about becoming a surrogate.

EVIE

(Beaming)

Wow. That's wonderful.

PIP

(Nodding)

Yeah.

PERCY

We want you to talk her out of it.

Beat. Evie's smile tightens.

EVIE

Why would you want to talk her out of it? And why would you want *me* to do it? I loved being a surrogate.

PERCY

Because she'll listen to you.

EVIE

She will? I see her like once or twice a year. Why would she listen to me?

PERCY

Because you were a surrogate. If *you* tell her she shouldn't be a surrogate-

EVIE

But I wouldn't tell her not to be a surrogate.

Why would you have a problem with her being a surrogate? Both of your kids were born by surrogate!

GILI

(Trying to keep Evie calm)

Evie-

EVIE

No. I never understand the stigma that surrogates get.

PIP

Surrogates get a stigma?

PERCY

All the more reason for her not to be a surrogate.

GILI

Is there another word we can use besides surrogate? I feel like we're overusing it.

PERCY

We have to use surrogate.

GILI

Why?

PERCY

(Dismissive)

Because she doesn't want to become a rabbi, thank God.

Gili raises an eyebrow at this.

PIP

(To Gili and Evie)

I am so sorry. Percy is not in a great mood today.

PERCY

Please don't tell everyone my private business.

EVIE

It's not that private.

GILI

What's going on?

PIP

He and Bonnie had a fight.

PERCY

Pip!

GILI

What about?

PERCY

She wants to become a surrogate!

Don't say surrogate.  
PIP

What am I supposed to say?  
PERCY

Say what you want? I don't have a problem with the word. I just wish there was another one we could toss in for variety's sake.  
GILI

Gestational carrier.  
PIP  
(To Evie)  
Doesn't that mean surrogate?

Why not just say womb for rent? Isn't that what you think?  
EVIE

Gestational carrier, I think.  
PIP  
(To Percy)

That's a mouthful.  
PERCY

G.C.? Can we say G.C.?  
PIP

We want you to talk Bonnie out of becoming a G.C.  
PERCY  
(To Evie)

A General Contractor?  
EVIE

A surrogate!  
PERCY

I think I'm a little offended by this conversation!  
EVIE

You should have been here when they called us dykes.  
GILI

\*

PERCY

(Defensively)

I thought that word was reclaimed.

GILI

By lesbians!

EVIE

Why wouldn't you want your gestational child to become a surrogate?

PIP

WE DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH HER BECOMING A SURROGATE!

Beat.

PIP

She's thinking about not going to college. And *just* being a surrogate instead. We just want her to get her degree first.

Pause.

Tensions ease a little. Just a little.

EVIE

Well, she can't be a surrogate until she's 21.

PIP

She can't?

EVIE

(Shaking her head)

Most agencies won't work with someone under 21. So there is no point in her *not* going to college.

PIP

That's great.

(To Percy)

Isn't that great?

(Back to Evie)

Would you be willing to tell her that?

EVIE

(Re: Percy)

So long as *he* doesn't have an issue with her becoming a surrogate afterwards.

PIP

He doesn't.

(Then, to Pip)

You don't.

Evie looks to Percy.

PERCY

(Slightly begrudgingly)

I mean, if after she graduates... with a degree... in something other than surrogacy...

EVIE

There is no degree in surrogacy.

PERCY

(More a judgment than a question)

So anyone can do it?

EVIE

(Pointedly, regarding his gender)

Not anyone.

PIP

(To Percy)

Just continue with your thought please.

PERCY

If after she graduates, if she still wants to be a-

PIP

Don't say surrogate though. Gili's right. We have over used it.

PERCY

A gestator.

EVIE

That's derogatory.

PERCY

Incubator?

EVIE

More derogatory.

PERCY

A baby oven?

PIP  
(To Evie)

I am so sorry.

PERCY  
She can do whatever she wants. It's her life.

PIP  
(To Evie)  
And it would be a very noble career for her.

EVIE  
Yes, it would.  
(Then)  
...I'll talk to her about college.

PIP  
Thank you.

Pip nudges Percy.

PERCY  
(To Evie)  
Yes. Thank you.

Another nudge from Pip.

PERCY  
And, I'm sorry if I said anything offensive. Or homophobic.

GILI  
You know, Bonnie could always go to Jewish Seminary and become a rabbi.

PERCY  
(A little too fast)  
God no!

The doorbell rings.

Gili answers the door. Bonnie enters beaming.

BONNIE  
I got a spot right out front. Can you believe it? No circling. No bargaining with God. Just there. It's a sign!

PERCY

I don't think it's a sign.

BONNIE

I think that means today's going to be good.

GILI

You can't park there. It's Tuesday. Street cleaning.

BONNIE

Where does it say that?

GILI

Right above where you parked.

PERCY

*That's* a sign.

PIP

You should probably move the car, honey.

Evie looks out the window.

EVIE

You're actually getting a ticket as we speak.

PERCY

Oh for crying out loud!

Percy makes for the door.

PIP

Where you going?

PERCY

To talk to the meter maid.

Percy exits.

PIP

(Calling after him)

Don't call him a meter maid. That's derogatory-

(Then, following him out)

Wait.

Beat. Evie gives Bonnie a hug.

EVIE

Great seeing you, honey. It's been too long.

BONNIE

It has.

GILI

Happy birthday.

BONNIE

Thanks, Gili.

(Then to Evie, knowingly)

Did they talk to you guys about me wanting to be a surrogate?

EVIE

They did.

BONNIE

Is that why we're really here?

GILI

(Her queue)

I am going to check on the cake.

BONNIE

There's a cake?

GILI

Of course.

BONNIE

What's the inscription? "Happy Birthday. This was all just a ruse to get you to talk to Evie about not following your dream"?

GILI

(Laughs)

No.

(Then)

It's only an 8-inch cake.

Gili exits.

EVIE

I just want to say for the record, we didn't know your dads had an agenda. We just found out. I love getting to celebrate this milestone birthday with you. 18 is a big deal. And... I love that you want to be a surrogate.

BONNIE

You do?

EVIE

Of course.

Some people talk about surrogacy like it's strange or transactional or somehow less than. But to me it's the opposite. When you give someone a child they thought they'd never have, there's nothing more meaningful than that. Nothing more selfless. Nothing more generous.

Bonnie nods in agreement. Then:

BONNIE

But you do get paid?

EVIE

Oh yes! Obviously.

(Then)

But, I didn't get paid with you.  
And the truth is, I've never done it for the money.

BONNIE

Why then? The Mother's Day cards?

Evie laughs. That was meant as a joke, right?

BONNIE

My dads said we had to send you one every year. All your kids have to. That's non-negotiable. You put that in the contract or something.

Maybe it wasn't. A slight beat.

EVIE

Do you know what Hakarat HaTov means?

Bonnie shakes her head.

EVIE

Recognizing the good. If it's not recognized... it's incomplete. In Judaism, acknowledgment isn't just polite. It's formative. For you, I mean. I'm not asking to be thanked. I'm asking the babies I give birth to not to grow up confused about where goodness comes from.

For Jews, gratitude matters. Intention matters. Action matters. Silence matters. And everything has consequence. That's why we believe in mitzvot. Acts we choose to do. Acts that ask something of us. Surrogacy felt like that to me. Not symbolic goodness. Actual goodness. Embodied goodness.

I know this all sounds lofty, but it's true. If you do this, it will change how you see yourself. You'll realize you're capable of something bigger than your own wants.

BONNIE

That's... I want that. I want to realize that.

EVIE

But listen... practically speaking... surrogacy isn't a forever thing. It's a moment. A meaningful one, but a short one. Most agencies cap you out after a few pregnancies, and even before that, your body starts to have opinions. You can't build a whole life around it. You shouldn't. It's not a career in the way people imagine careers.

I didn't stop doing it because it stopped mattering. I stopped because it was time to move to the next chapter. I still wanted to be close to it though. Close to those moments where what you're doing means something. Where the good is visible. Where you can say, *I helped*. So I stayed in that world. Just, you know, from the other side of the bed.

I had that option. Most surrogates either already have something else going or they're working toward something else. That's all your dads want. Have something else. Have a degree. College is not some kind of betrayal of this wonderful impulse you're having. If anything, it gives you more room. More choices.

BONNIE

I can't go to college.

EVIE

You know you can't become a surrogate until you're 21.

BONNIE

I know.

EVIE

So what would you do until then? You might as well go to school. It's also worth noting, most agencies won't take you on as a surrogate unless you've already had a family of your own. They want to make sure you're healthy. They want to make sure you can actually get pregnant.

BONNIE

I can.

EVIE

Agencies are pretty strict about who they sign up and...

(Just hearing it)

What do you mean *you can*?

BONNIE

...I'm pregnant.

Pause. Evie reflexively closes her eyes and lets out a long sigh.

BONNIE

This is a good thing.

EVIE

Is it?

BONNIE

Yes!

EVIE

Do your dads know?

BONNIE

Of course not!

EVIE

So it's so good that you decided to keep it from them?

BONNIE

I'm not trying to keep it from them.

I was just hoping... you could help me tell them.

EVIE

Oh. So everyone has an agenda.

BONNIE

If it's coming from you it will land differently. Better. Easier.

EVIE

And the father of the child? Does he know? Or do you need me to tell him, too?

BONNIE

Sure. If you can find him. He lives in Athens.

\*

EVIE

\*

(Hopeful)

\*

Please tell me you mean Athens, Georgia.

\*

Bonnie shakes her head.

\*

BONNIE

\*

His name is Dimitris... something or other.

\*

EVIE

\*

That narrows it down.

\*

BONNIE

\*

It was a spring break he'll never forget.

\*

EVIE

\*

Neither will you. Bonnie, you're pregnant? What were you thinking?

\*

BONNIE

Evie, this is a good thing.

EVIE

Yes. A pregnancy is usually a very good thing. It's just you're very young.

BONNIE

How old were you when Micah was born?

EVIE

This is not about me. Please don't model me.

BONNIE

(Not trying to be offensive)

Why not? You just said how much better you are than everyone else. Why wouldn't I want to be like you?

EVIE

I didn't say how much better I was.

BONNIE

How good it was to be a surrogate. How meaningful.

EVIE

Do you even want to be a surrogate? Or is this just some way of softening the blow of the bomb you really have to drop?

BONNIE

Yes, I want to be a surrogate. This baby has put me on a path.

EVIE

You're right about that.

BONNIE

This is the universe talking. Telling me what to do. I've already taken the tests. The blood screenings to prove I don't have Hepatitis or HIV or whatever. I'm taking this surrogacy thing very seriously, Evie. I swear!

\*  
\*

EVIE

What are you going to do with the baby? Are you taking *that* seriously? Are you going to keep it?

BONNIE

(Sarcastic)

No, I'm going to trade it for Labubus.

Yes, I'm going to keep it!

EVIE

You're going to raise it? Do you know what's involved?

BONNIE

(Sarcastic)

You put it in a pot. Add soil, water-

I know what's involved! I'm not an idiot!

EVIE

I don't think you're an idiot. I just think...

I just want whatever you do to be because you chose it. Not because you had to. And not because you felt like you couldn't do anything else.

BONNIE

I am choosing this.

Evie gives her a look of disbelief.

BONNIE

I am. Why is that so hard to believe? It's the same choice you made.

EVIE

Bonnie, when I got pregnant with Micah-

BONNIE

I'm not talking about Micah, I'm talking about me.

You had a dream that you wanted to give Dylan a sibling. You could have ignored it, but you didn't. Something spoke to you. The universe, a higher power, whatever it was, you listened and you chose to embrace it. And thank God you did because I wouldn't be here if you didn't.

(Then)

This is the universe talking to me. I just need to figure out how to convey its message to my dads.

Beat.

A noise offstage breaks the silence.

EVIE

Let's take a drive.

BONNIE

Why?

EVIE

Because I think better when I'm driving.

BONNIE

What are we thinking about?

EVIE

Your dads aren't exactly in the right frame of mind to listen to the universe right now.

BONNIE

Are they ever?

EVIE

If we're going to tell them you're pregnant, we should strategize. Timing is key.

BONNIE

OK.

(Then)

Can we take your car? I'm parked right out front. I'd rather not lose that spot.

Black out.

15 MINUTES LATER

Pip and Percy and Gili are in the living room.

PERCY

Did they say where they were going?

GILI

No.

PERCY

Did they say why they were leaving?

GILI

No.

PERCY

Did they say when they'd be back?

PIP

I'm sure it will be soon.

PERCY

IF NOT, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THE GODDAM CAKE WITHOUT 'EM!

PIP

...Percy.

PERCY

What?

PIP

Take a breath.

PERCY

I'm breathing!

PIP

You can't have birthday cake without the birthday girl.

PERCY

Watch me!

Pip does a slight eye roll, then turns to Gili.

PIP

(To Gili)

Speaking of which, how much do we owe you? For the cake.

GILI

Don't worry about it.

PIP

I insist.

PERCY

Don't insist! We just got a \$50 parking ticket.

GILI

The cake's on us.

PERCY

Thank you.

GILI

And you should make *her* pay for the parking ticket.

PERCY

Don't think I won't.

PIP

You won't.

PERCY

You don't think I will?

PIP

I don't.

PERCY

Watch me!

PIP

I'm too busy watching you not have cake.

PERCY

Oh I'll have cake! AND I'M GONNA EAT IT TOO!

Percy exits for the kitchen. Pip shakes his head, unconcerned.

GILI

Maybe he should have some cake. He seems awfully cranky.

PIP

(To Gili)

Bonnie knows how to push his buttons.  
He also just quit smoking.

Percy returns now holding the cake.

PERCY

Whoever said you can't have your cake and eat it, too....

He holds up the cake.

PIP

Should they watch you?

PERCY

Watch me!

(To Gili)

Where do you keep your cake knife and server?

The doorbell rings.

PIP

That's probably them.

PERCY

(Lowering the cake)

It better be. Or I'm going to shove this whole damn thing in my cornhole right now!

GILI

I don't think cornhole means what you think it means.

Gili opens the door. Dr. Gideon Lerner is there.

GIDEON

Hello. I'm Dr. Gideon Lerner. Is Evie home?

GILI

Dr. Lerner? Holy smokes! How long has it been?

GIDEON

17 years, 3 months and 12 days.  
It's nice to see you again, Gili.

GILI

I can't believe you remember my name.

GIDEON

There's very little I don't remember. I'm told it's one of my more socially inconvenient traits.

GILI

Right. Well... Come in, come in.

Gideon enters.

GIDEON

I apologize for not calling first. But it is imperative I speak with Evie.

GILI

(To Pip and Percy)

Guys, do you know Dr. Lerner?

Gideon sees Pip and Percy and freezes. He clearly knows them. Pip and Percy don't seem to remember Gideon, though.

PIP

(Shaking his head)

...I don't think we've met.

(Confirming with Percy)

Have we?

PERCY  
(Shaking his head)

I don't think so.

Gideon also shakes his head not wanting them  
to remember.

GILI  
(Showing off for Gideon's benefit)

Gideon Lerner. L E R N E R. Not L E A R N E R.

Pip and Percy both do a slow take to Gideon.

PIP

Oh wait/

PERCY

Yeah, we've met.

PIP

Weren't you Bonnie's doctor for like a minute?

GIDEON  
(Shaking his head, nervously)

Bonnie? I... I don't...

PERCY

Bonnie Gordon. I'm Percy Gordon. This is my husband Pip Gordon. You examined our  
daughter.

What the hell happened to you?

GIDEON  
(A weak lie)

...I don't know what you're talking about/

PERCY

We met with you once, then you called us a few days later and said you couldn't be her  
pediatrician anymore.

GIDEON  
(Evasively)

That doesn't sound like something I would do.

PIP

Well, you definitely did it.

PERCY

No explanation or nothing, you were just done with us. I'd love to know why.

GILI

Guys, it's been 17 years. You really expect him to remember?

PIP

He did just say he remembers everything.

GIDEON

Did I say that?

GILI

He said there is very little he doesn't remember.

PERCY

You don't remember us? You don't remember Bonnie?

GIDEON

I... don't.

GILI

(Brightly)

That's clearly the very little. Glad we got to the bottom of that.

Percy exchanges a skeptical look with his husband.

GIDEON

If I've come at a bad time-

GILI

It's not a bad time. Evie just stepped out for a moment but she'll be back any minute. She'll be thrilled to see you.

Beat. Gideon sits.

PIP

How do you know Evie?

GIDEON

We... uh...

GILI

She gave him a free baby.  
Did you guys know you had that in common?

This news surprises and kind of bothers Pip,  
though he tries to hide it.

PIP

Evie gave you a free baby, too?

A slight nod from Gideon.

PIP

Wow.  
Suddenly I don't feel so special anymore.  
(Then, to Gideon)  
No offense.  
It was just cool when we were the only ones.

Gideon stands.

GIDEON

You know what, I think I will come back later.

Bonnie enters.

BONNIE

We're home.

Gideon sees Bonnie. He can't move.

PERCY

It's about damn time. This is an ice cream cake, you know.

BONNIE

Evie and I just had ice cream.

PERCY

You did what?

GILI

Where is Evie?

BONNIE

She's parking the car.

GILI

She's not going to believe who's here.

BONNIE

Who's here?

PIP

Bonnie, this is Dr. Lerner.

BONNIE

Dr. Learner? As in someone who learns?

PIP

(To Bonnie)

He was your pediatrician when you were like one years old.

BONNIE

(To Gideon)

One? That was a good year for me, medically speaking. I think my biggest issue was teething. Now I have clogged pores and existential dread.

PERCY

Did you and Evie talk?

BONNIE

(To Gideon)

I was told I was a cute baby back then. Was I a cute baby?

PERCY

He only saw you one time, then he called and said he doesn't want to be your doctor anymore.

BONNIE

So... Not so cute?

PERCY

Did you and Evie talk?

PIP

(To Bonnie)

Of course you were a cute baby. You take after me.

GIDEON

You look just like...

PIP

She looks like me, right?

(To Gili)

Doesn't she look like me?

GIDEON

(Getting emotional)

I'm sorry I...

(To Gili)

May I use your bathroom?

Gili points the way.

GILI

Second door on your left.

Gideon quickly exits.

BONNIE

He seems weird.

GILI

He's not weird. He's autistic.

BONNIE

Can't he be both?

Bonnie's phone rings.

PERCY

Did you and Evie talk?

She looks at her phone.

BONNIE

Sorry. Gotta take this.

PERCY

Bogo!

BONNIE

Yes, we talked.

PERCY

And?

Evie enters.

EVIE

Can you believe it? No one took my spot. It's a sign.

BONNIE

I'll let her tell you.

Bonnie exits, taking her call.

PIP

(To Evie)

How'd it go?

EVIE

Good, I think. I took her to get ice cream.

PERCY

Why would you get her ice cream?

EVIE

It was just a small cup. No toppings. Not a big deal.

PERCY

We have ice cream cake here.

EVIE

I was being strategic. We were talking about serious stuff and I read that ice cream increases dopamine and lowers stress responses, which makes teenagers calmer and more receptive to rational conversation.

BONNIE (O.S.)

GODDAMIT MOTHER FUCKER!!!

Slight beat.

PIP

Maybe you should have added sprinkles.

Bonnie storms back in.

BONNIE

I can't fucking believe it!

PIP

Bonnie, what is it? What's going on?

BONNIE

I just got the results from my blood tests.

PIP

What blood tests?

BONNIE

I got my blood tested so I could become a surrogate.

PERCY

Oh for the love of Christ! You're not going to be a surrogate!

BONNIE

You made sure of that, didn't you!

PERCY

What are you talking about?

BONNIE

I HAVE TAY-SACH'S!

Beat. Evie begins to connect dots she hoped would never touch.

PIP

What the hell is Tay-Sach's?

GILI

You don't have Tay-Sach's.

BONNIE

The doctor said I have Tay-Sach's.

GILI

If you had Tay-Sach's you'd be dead. You're probably just a Tay Sach's carrier.

PIP

What the hell is Tay Sach's?

BONNIE

It's a Jewish disease. I hope you're happy!

PIP

Happy there's a disease for Jews?

BONNIE

(To Percy and Pip)

Happy that one of you gave it to me!

PERCY

One of us? We're not Jewish.

GILI

It's not exclusively a Jewish / disease.

PERCY

How do you know Evie didn't give it to you?

BONNIE

Because they would have detected it during *her* blood screenings.

\*

PIP

Either way, we wouldn't be happy if you had a disease.

BONNIE

NOW I CAN'T BECOME A SURROGATE!

PERCY

I mean, that makes me a little happy.

BONNIE

Yeah! I thought it might! Because you don't care about anyone but yourself!

PIP

Bonnie-

BONNIE

No, he doesn't! He's controlling and manipulative and doesn't give two shits that I have a disease that can kill me!

GILI

If you're just a Tay Sach's carrier, it's not fatal. It's actually quite harmless.

BONNIE

Harmless? I can't pursue my dream! You call that harmless?

PERCY  
(Pointedly)

Maybe it's a *sign*.

BONNIE

Oh fuck you!

PIP

Hey!

PERCY  
You know what, I hope it was me that gave you this Tay-Sach's and saved you from making a terrible decision! Congratulations! You just dodged a bullet! Because of me!

GILI  
Do we really have to frame this as a blessing?

PERCY  
Because of me, you're not going to be a baby oven for hire!

PIP  
That's derogatory.

PERCY  
Because of me you have to go to college and find a real career!

BONNIE  
None of that is cause of you! BELIEVE ME, ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT ME IS BECAUSE OF DADDY PIP!

PERCY  
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN DADDY PIP! HE'S INFERTILE!

Beat. The room goes still. Percy realizes he said too much.

EVIE  
(Quietly)

Oh shit.

PIP  
(Confused)

What do you mean I'm infertile? I'm not infertile.

He points to Bonnie.

Obviously I'm not infertile.

PIP

Percy looks up sheepishly. Pip sees the truth.

What did you do?

PIP

I didn't do anything.

PERCY  
(Weakly)

What did you do?

PIP

I don't want to talk about this in front of Bonnie.

PERCY

No, I want to hear this.

BONNIE

WHAT DID YOU DO?

PIP

I jerked off into the specimen cup, all right?

PERCY

Maybe I don't want to hear it.

BONNIE  
(Cringes)

What do you mean?

PIP

I gave Evie some of my sperm when we were making Bonnie.

PERCY

Why?

PIP

Because yours wasn't working!

PERCY

PIP

Bullshit!

PERCY

It wasn't.

PIP

(Shaking his head)

This is you once again taking over. Bonnie's right! You are controlling and manipulative! Every time something doesn't go exactly the way you imagined it should, you step in and "fix" it. You don't ask. You don't loop me in. You just decide. And then you lie about it!

PERCY

I'm not lying.

PIP

You've been lying for 18 years apparently!

PERCY

...Yes, I've been lying for 18 years, but with good intention.

PIP

Bullshit! There is no good intention. There's just lies. And the repercussions that follow!

PERCY

Do there have to be repercussions?

PIP

You think you can lie for all this time and there won't be consequences?

PERCY

There's already consequences. The universe handled the consequences. I gave Bonnie Tay-Sach's. Isn't that enough consequences?

BONNIE

Why do I have to suffer the consequences?

PIP

(To Percy)

You did NOT give Bonnie Tay-Sach's. I am Bonnie's father! If anyone gave Bonnie Tay-Sach's, it's me!

PERCY

I gave Bonnie Tay-Sach's.

PIP  
I GAVE HER TAY-SACH'S!

GILI  
This is a really strange argument.

PERCY  
FINE! Fine! We'll get tested. Will that make you happy? Maybe that will help you understand what I did, I did for your own good.

PIP  
(Sarcastic)  
Oh yeah! You didn't do this for you! You did this for me! Sure! Right!

PERCY  
We'll do a sperm test! A DNA test! A Tay-Sach's test! We'll test everything! And then the truth will finally be out!

EVIE  
I GAVE HER TAY-SACH'S!

Beat. They all look to Evie.

BONNIE  
(Confused)  
That's not possible.

EVIE  
It is.

BONNIE  
They screen for Tay-Sach's. They wouldn't let you be a surrogate if you had it.

EVIE  
They screen for Tay-Sach's *now*. It wasn't standard when I was first starting out as a surrogate.

GILI  
(Skeptical)  
In the early 2000s?

EVIE  
You think they cared about some Jewish disease? Even then?

GILI  
It's not exclusively Jewish.

PIP

So how long have you known you've had this?

BONNIE

And why would you be a surrogate if you knew you did have it?

EVIE

I mean...

(Backpedaling)

I don't know for sure that I have it. I've never tested myself. It never really occurred to me honestly. But now hearing you have it. It just makes the most sense that I'm the one that gave it to you. It is after all a Jewish disease.

GILI

French Canadians get Tay-Sach's, too!

EVIE

(To Pip and Percy)

I'm just saying, if you're looking for someone to blame, blame me. Or really... blame institutionalized antisemitism.

But you don't have to blame yourselves, that's my point. You certainly don't have to start taking all sorts of tests to tell you what is plainly obvious. You *both* are Bonnie's dads.

PIP

He lied to me, Evie. You both did! For 18 years! Am I supposed to let that go?

EVIE

Can you?

PIP

I don't think so! The chickens have come home to roost!

Gideon enters from the bathroom.

GIDEON

Hi Evie.

Evie's mouth drops.

EVIE

Oh my God! What are you doing here?

GILI  
(Weakly)

Surprise.  
I forgot to tell you he was here.

EVIE

Gideon... you have to go!

GIDEON

I have to talk with you.

EVIE

No, no. This is not a good time. You see this is not a good time.

GIDEON

It can't wait.

EVIE

It has to!

GIDEON

It's about Noah.

EVIE

We have guests. Please. Go home. I'll call you tomorrow.  
Give Noah my best.

GIDEON

Noah is dead!

Beat.

EVIE

What?

GIDEON

Our son is dead!

Gideon collapses into a chair, emotional.

Long pause, as everyone watches him weep.

EVIE

How? How did he die?

GIDEON

He was at his SAT prep. Not that he needed it. His PSAT score was 1350. But I sent him nonetheless. Better safe than sorry, right? His tutor is 3.7 miles from the house. I was supposed to pick him up at the end of the lesson, but I told him I was working. I told him to Uber home, which he did. He had Ubered before. I didn't think it would be an issue. I followed his progress on the app. I watched the car move across the screen.

At the corner of Jackson and Pacific... it stopped moving.

Another car had ran a red light. It crashed right into them. And just like that... He was gone.

He breaks down again. Gili approaches him.

GILI

Gideon, I'm... I'm so sorry.

GIDEON

It's my fault.

GILI

It's not your fault.

GIDEON

Of course it is.

GILI

It was an accident. It could have happened to anyone. It was... random.

Gideon looks at Gili, steady and unblinking. He shakes his head.

GIDEON

The universe is not random. The universe responds.  
I should have picked him up.

GILI

You were working.

GIDEON

I was updating my fantasy basketball projections!  
It's a thing I do. It helps me think. It helps things feel ordered.  
(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I told myself it counted as work. That it was close enough to the truth.  
“Close enough.” That’s how we justify things we don’t want to look at.

GILI

It was a harmless lie.

GIDEON

I told myself that, too. But it wasn’t harmless. And it wasn’t the only one I’ve told.

He looks to Evie.

GIDEON

I’ve lied to myself for years. Rationalizing things I’ve done, instead of atoning for them. I told myself I was restoring balance. Correcting injustice. Making something right. I used systems, logic, and righteousness to justify harm. And now I can’t stop wondering... if this is the price for that.

He weeps.

EVIE

Gideon...

GIDEON

I’m sorry.

EVIE

Gideon...

He shakes his head, then stands weakly.

GIDEON

I’m suddenly very tired. I haven’t been sleeping well. Is it all right if I lie down?

Evie nods.

EVIE

Bonnie, will you take him to my room?

Bonnie gently takes Gideon’s arm. They exit.

A silence remains. It’s heavy.

GILI

That poor man. First he lost his wife and now this.

Evie looks at Gili, then turns away suddenly filled with great shame.

PIP

He lost his wife?

GILI

(Nodding)

That's why Evie gave him a free baby all those years ago.

PIP

Jesus.

PERCY

He seems Hell-bent on blaming himself.

PIP

I guess that's what you do as a parent. You take responsibility.

Evie stands. Something in her has shifted.

GILI

Evie?

What is it?

EVIE

He... He didn't lose his wife.

GILI

(Confused)

You told me he did.

EVIE

Yeah. I know I did.

GILI

...I don't understand.

She turns to Percy and Pip.

EVIE

I've also tested for Tay-Sach's. I definitely don't have it.

\*

GILI

What are you talking about right now?

PERCY

If *you* don't have Tay-Sach's then it *is* one of us. Otherwise, how did Bonnie get it?

\*

Evie looks down.

EVIE

...Probably from Gideon.

Black out.

**END ACT 2**

\*

ACT 3

1 WEEK LATER

At Gili's home. Gideon sits on a low stool, slightly off-center, perusing the Mishnah. The mirror in the main room is covered.

Gili sits at a distance, not facing him.

They share the room, but not the space.

The doorbell rings. Gili steals a glance at Gideon, who doesn't move. She opens the door. Bonnie is there.

BONNIE

Hi Gili.

GILI

This is a pleasant surprise.

BONNIE

I heard you invited Dr. Lerner to sit Shiva here. I wanted to... pay respects, I guess.

GILI

That's very nice.

(Then)

Are your dads here?

BONNIE

They're waiting in the car. They parked illegally, so...

Gili nods.

Bonnie crosses to Gideon. Gili returns to her seat.

BONNIE

Dr. Lerner?

He looks up.

GIDEON

“Doctor” is a professional designation. I think you can call me Gideon.

BONNIE

I brought you some banana bread. Do you eat banana bread?

GIDEON

In moderation.

BONNIE

I made it with flax seed. We’re trying to eat more fiber in our house. It also has chocolate chips. I hope that’s OK. My dad, Pip, says that chocolate chips are a super food. Chocolate chips and bacon. Regardless of what you’re eating, if you add one or the other to it, it vastly improves the food.

GIDEON

The food maybe, but not your health. Too many chocolate chips can lead to hypertension, kidney damage, weight gain. And bacon, you definitely shouldn’t eat. That can cause colorectal cancer.

BONNIE

My dad would sooner remove his colo-rectum then stop eating bacon.

(Then)

But I can take this back if you don’t want it.

GIDEON

No, I look forward to trying it. It’s very thoughtful. Thank you.

Percy enters, knocking on the door as he does.

PERCY

Hello. Sorry to interrupt.

BONNIE

I thought you were waiting in the car.

PERCY

I have to use a bathroom.

BONNIE

Really? Now?

PERCY

As you may recall, there used to be two loaves of that banana bread.

(To Gili)

Gili, is it OK?

GILI

Yeah. Of course.

PERCY

I'll only be a minute.

BONNIE

Unlikely.

Percy heads towards the bathroom, but then stops and turns to Gideon.

PERCY

Uh... Dr. Lerner... I just want to say... sorry for your loss. I can't imagine... I mean...

He hesitates, unsure how to proceed. Finally:

PERCY

May his memory be a blessing.

Gideon nods. Percy exits.

BONNIE

(To Gideon)

I was wondering... um... I don't know anything about sitting Shiva but do you have to sit here the whole time?

GIDEON

I don't know the rules. I've never been that religious.

GILI

It's actually customary for the mourner to take a walk on the final day of Shiva. It symbolizes a transition from deep mourning to... re-engaging.

BONNIE

(To Gideon)

If you're up for it, do you think you'd like to take a walk with me?

You could tell me about your son...

And maybe also... you could tell me about yourself.

And I could tell you about me.

Gideon considers her request.

GIDEON

I'd like that very much.

Gideon rises slowly. Bonnie offers her arm. He hesitates, then takes it. They exit together.

Gili watches them go. After a moment, she nods. Not approval exactly. Recognition.

A moment later, Pip enters.

PIP

Hi. Sorry to bother.

GILI

Aren't you illegally parked?

PIP

Percy texted. Apparently you're out of toilet paper.

Gili calls off stage towards the bathroom.

GILI

(Shouting to Percy)

Check the cabinet!

There's a ding on Pip's phone. Pip checks it.

PIP

(Reading the text)

He found it.

An awkward moment passes between them. Then Pip turns to exit.

PIP

It's nice seeing you, Gili/

\*

GILI

Are you two all right? You and Percy.

PIP

No. Not completely. But I think we will be. Eventually.

Gili registers this. Surprisingly, it lands harder than she expects.

PIP

Did Bonnie tell you we went to your temple this morning?

GILI

No.

PIP

It was her idea. She thought we should talk with someone.

GILI

With me? I took some personal days.

\*

PIP

No. With Rabbi Elliott. Apparently he's very good.

\*

Gili bristles just a touch. She can't help it.

PIP

Unfortunately, he was busy, but we did listen to some kid doing his uh... Bar Mitzvah thing. It was... very meaningful. It was all about forgiveness. And how a mistake can sometimes lead to something wonderful.

(Then)

You know Bonnie's pregnant?

GILI

(Gili nods)

I heard.

What's she going to do?

PIP

Probably not go to college.

Gili nods. Then:

GILI

A baby brings a loaf of bread.

Pip nods hopefully.

Percy returns.

PERCY

Thanks Gili. I was touching cloth there.

\*

GILI

I don't need details.

He stops in front of her.

PERCY

Listen... We're not going to sue your wife.

\*

GILI

Thank you. I'll let her know.

PERCY

Good. I don't want to talk with her.

GILI

I understand.

PERCY

But believe me, there's a few things on my mind I'd love to let her know.

GILI

I'll tell her whatever you want.

PERCY

Really? Good. You tell her from me-

Percy sees something outside.

PERCY

Fuck! We're getting a ticket! God dammit!

\*

He runs off, yelling at the meter maid to wait.  
Pip and Gili watch him go.

PIP

I heard Evie is staying with Micah.

GILI

She has been. Though she's actually upstairs at the moment. Packing more things.

\*

PERCY

Oh? Will she be staying there... permanently?

\*

GILI

...I haven't decided yet.

Pip nods, then turns to leave, looking back one last time.

PIP

Maybe you should talk to Rabbi Elliott.

He smiles warmly, then exits.

A moment later, Evie enters, rolling a suitcase behind her.

EVIE

Was that Pip?

GILI

(Nodding)

Percy, too.

EVIE

What did they say?

GILI

They're not going to sue you.

EVIE

That's a relief. And hopeful. Maybe there's absolution there.

\*

GILI

Maybe. From them.

EVIE

...Not from you?

GILI

...I don't think so.

EVIE

I know I fucked up. I'm sorry. I feel awful!

\*

GILI

I bet you do. It's never pleasant when you realize the story you've been telling yourself just isn't true.

\*

\*

\*

EVIE

I should have told you about Gideon-

\*

\*

GILI

Do you think it's the cheating I can't forgive?

EVIE

...I don't know.

GILI

It's not the cheating. It's not even the lying. It's that you never thought you were doing anything wrong.

EVIE

I did.

GILI

You didn't. You wrapped everything in intention and mitzvot and gratitude and told yourself that made it holy.

You didn't just hurt people. You explained why it was good that you did. You just kept going, convinced God was on your side.

YOU WEAPONIZED OUR RELIGION!

...And used it to declare yourself righteous.

\*

\*

EVIE

(Weakly)

I was trying to be righteous.

GILI

Being Jewish isn't about being righteous.

It's about responsibility. It's about repair.

It's about what you do after you realize you fucked up!

\*

Evie doesn't reply. She knows she can't. Gili heads upstairs.

\*

\*

GILI

...Goodbye.

Evie exits.

Black out.

6 MONTHS LATER

A hospital waiting room in the early morning.

Percy and Pip sit side by side, trying and failing to appear calm. Pip scans the room, spots someone offstage.

PIP  
(Calling off)

Gili, over here.

Gili enters.

Hi. Any word?

GILI

Not yet.

PIP

PERCY

Why's it take so long? Surely someone's elbow-deep in something they shouldn't be.

Pip shakes his head, used to this.

Gili sits. She notices a jacket draped over the chair beside her. She recognizes it. \*

Is Evie here?

GILI

She's getting me coffee at the cafeteria.

PERCY

Percy likes to take advantage of her lingering guilt by making her buy stuff for us.

PIP  
(To Gili)

She's getting Pip a pizza.

PERCY

I also like to do that.

PIP

Gideon enters from a hallway. He's in scrubs. A mask hangs loose around his neck. He removes it as he approaches. He looks tired.

GIDEON  
Gentleman, Gili.

They all stand without meaning to.

PERCY  
What do you know?

GIDEON  
It's a girl. 7 pounds, 4 ounces. 19.5 inches. No cardiac irregularities.

PIP  
10 fingers, 10 toes?

GIDEON  
And no syndactyly. She's a very healthy baby. Despite being a few weeks early.

Pip and Percy exhale at the same time. The tension breaks, just slightly.

PERCY  
And Bonnie?

GIDEON  
(Nods assuringly)

She did very well.

(Then)  
You can see them if you want.

Pip and Percy are already gathering their things.

PIP  
Thanks Gideon. For everything.

They exit toward the hallway, suddenly eager, suddenly nervous again. Gili stays behind.

GIDEON  
(To Gili)  
You're not coming?

GILI  
I'll wait for Evie, I guess.  
I'm surprised she wasn't in there with you. Helping with the delivery.

GIDEON

She was invited. She decided against it.

He turns to go.

GILI

Does she have a name? The baby.

GIDEON

No. Not yet.

GILI

What's Bonnie waiting on?

GIDEON

It's not Bonnie's decision to make.

Have you not heard? Bonnie asked me to raise the child.

A small, overwhelmed smile crosses his face.

He nods to Gili, then exits.

A moment later, Evie returns from the cafeteria carrying two coffees and a pizza box. She stops short when she sees Gili.

EVIE

Hi.

GILI

Hey. Nice to see you.

EVIE

Yeah. Been a while.

They stand in the quiet that follows.

EVIE

Where's Percy and Pip?

GILI

Bonnie's baby was born. Or I guess I should say Gideon's baby...?

EVIE

I know. Can you believe that?

GILI

What a gift. Was that your influence?

EVIE

No. She decided that on her own. She's also going to college in the fall. Maybe study social work.

GILI

So she's not going to be a surrogate?

Evie shrugs. Then:

EVIE

I guess she realized not everything that happens to a person is the universe talking. ...Sometimes it's just us. Our mistakes. Set in motion.

\*

Gili absorbs that. Nods.

EVIE

You hungry?

Evie holds out the pizza.

GILI

Isn't that for Pip?

EVIE

There's extra.

GILI

They're taking advantage of you, you know.

EVIE

Yeah. It's all right. I'm trying to buy my way back into their hearts. Redeem myself through coffee and pizza.

GILI

How's that going?

EVIE

Slowly. Especially for Percy. He's not so quick to forgive.

GILI

Well... Forgiveness doesn't move at the same speed for everyone.

Evie looks at her.

I know.  
I can wait.  
Until it's earned. \*

EVIE

A beat.

You want to go in? See Bonnie?

GILI

No. I'm going to let them have a minute.

EVIE

Gili nods.

I'll wait with you.

GILI

They sit. Evie holds up the coffees?

You want one of these?

EVIE

It's not for you?

GILI

It was. It's all right. You take it. Consider it an olive branch.

EVIE

Gili takes the cup.

I'll consider it... a kind of pidyon nefesh. \*

GILI

They both smile. Gili sips her coffee.

Lights fade.

End of play.