***Heavy Pieces of Lead***

Ayoub Aghakhani

Characters: (In order of appearance)

Ghadeh Jaber Young

Doctor Forty and something

*Stage is as deep as we can see the background and foreground in poor light. We can always see the doctor in the background and the acts are occurred in the foreground. Light is the border between these two spaces.)*

*(Ghadeh comes to the foreground, under the spot light, towards audience.)*

Ghadeh: I hate the war. I always hated it. I have been around the world. I've been a journalist. I've been a poet. I've been in Africa. I was born in African Lagos but I am Lebanese. I've been in Europe. Different places.I haven't seen anyone who loves war, even those who start it. We don't have good war. War is war. It's bad just like we don't have bad peace. Peace is peace and it's good. I still don't get it why people have to kill each other. Why our seaside home in Tyre with its beautiful balcony have to be destroyed in war? The balcony that I used to write there. I used to write about these things. The wars that only have Islam in their names. Mustafa had seen my signature under those writings in the newspapers. I knew nothing about it, nothing. I think he was a brute warrior that everyone calls him doctor and he was well educated… and he was an associate of this war.

*(The spot light goes to the doctor in the background. A man nor young or old.)*

Doctor: The reaction of Sulfide glycol with two hydrochloric acid molecules makes a gas that have been used for the first time in human history in the first world war. Sulfide mustard! Or mustard gas! It has interesting mechanism to destroy life. It quickly enters the first cell and puts an active alkylate group on the cell's DNA. This little change causes the cell to lose it's will to duplicate and die after it's normal lifespan without any remnants. In reality this weapon does not kill but stops the continuity. It is the complex color of modern wars. Exciting, philosophical and brutal! It seems in these time fighting for the lives of people is more complicated than fighting to kill them.

*(Stage lightens up. Ghadeh is standing in front of the doctor with his back to audience.)*

Ghadeh: Why are you telling these to me?

Doctor: Do you want to write about life or death?

Ghadeh: About anything in my heart. There is no death in my heart.

Doctor: *(smiles)* I know. Your writings tell this truth. A young girl with European culture who wants to find out more than the luxurious life that his pearl merchant father made for her.

Ghadeh: He is sick.

Doctor: Your father?

Ghadeh: He is.

Doctor: Why?

Ghadeh: Heart disease.

Doctor: I pray for him.

Ghadeh: What do want from me?

Doctor: Are you in a hurry?

Ghadeh: I didn't want to come.

Doctor: Then why you came?

Ghadeh: Because Mr. Musa Sadr wanted me to meet you and this institute.

Doctor: How do you know Imam Musa Sadr.

Ghadeh: Our town's cleric introduced him to me.

Doctor: Who is he?

Ghadeh: Sayyid Muhammad Ghoravi.

Doctor: I see… Then why you didn't want to come?

Ghadeh: I don't like the warmongers.

Doctor: I am a warmonger?

Ghadeh: What is you wearing?

Doctor: You judge me from my cloths, miss writer?

Ghadeh: They all say this. They all know you.

Doctor: Except you, apparently.

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: *(Moves towards Ghadeh but she moves back.)* How old are you?

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: Did you pass twenty?

Ghadeh: You even know my father's job, how come you don't know my age?

Doctor: Is it?

Ghadeh: Passed?

Doctor: You are young Ghadeh Jaber, very young!

Ghadeh: So?

Doctor: Sometimes people who hate the war as much as you do have to wear these clothes.

Ghadeh: *(smiles)*….

Doctor: You are a warmonger. Did you know that?

Ghadeh: Bullshit.

Doctor: There was always war outside. But with some bogus names. Education! Success! Marriage! Love! Buy! Sell! Rise! Surely you have fought in one of these fields. Without these clothes. You are a warrior Ghadeh. Just like me.

Ghadeh: Sophistry!

Doctor: Do you want to begin your discovery now?

Ghadeh: I don't want to discover anything.

Doctor: Yes, you do Ghadeh. Everyone with pen do.*(pause)* Do you want to?

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: I'm waiting.

Ghadeh: If I want to?

Doctor: Take off your shoes and sit on the ground.

Ghadeh: What?

Doctor: You didn't hear?

Ghadeh: Why do I have to do this?

Doctor: I want to introduce you to another world. A world that you haven't experienced yet.

Ghadeh: I might be young but I am not stupid.

*(Ghadeh exits quickly. Doctor wants to stop her but changes his mind and slowly returns to background and sits. Darkness. Spot light turns slowly on Ghadeh in the foreground.)*

Ghadeh: A few days later Sayyid Muhammad Ghoravi came to visit my father. When he was leaving he gave me an AMAL organization calendar and said it's a gift. I didn't pay attention that time. I said it's a calendar and threw it on my desk. At night when I was writing alone, I saw twelve paintings for twelve months on the calendar. They were very beautiful but there was no name or signature under them. One of them had a dark background with a candle burning with a small flame and it's light was so little. Under the painting something was written in Arabic:

maybe I can't abolish the darkness but with this small light I can show the difference between light and darkness, between truth and vain and someone who is chasing light even if the light is small it is big in the heart.

*(pause)* someone who chases the light. Someone like me.

*(Stage lightens up and Ghadeh is standing in front of the doctor. Doctor is watching her with a smile.)*

Doctor: They said you want to see me. But they didn't told me that you want to be silent. I have a lot of work to do in the institute.

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: You can wait in the office, I will check something and comeback maybe then you will …

*(Doctor freezes when see Ghadeh takes of her shoes and sits down.)*

Ghadeh: Do you draw paintings?

*(Doctor stands up slowly and moves away from Ghadeh.)*

Doctor: Did someone say something to you?

Ghadeh: You didn’t answer me.

Doctor: You too.

Ghadeh: I saw your organization's calendar, as a gift.

Doctor: They don’t have signature.

Ghadeh: But I know the people around you.

Doctor: Which one did you like the most?

Ghadeh: The candle.

Doctor: Why?

Ghadeh: It was so good. I didn't think that a warrior could know the meaning of candle and sacrifice so well and show it with his art.

Doctor: And I didn't know a Lebanese girl could understand these beauties.

Ghadeh: *(angry)* Why?

*(doctor picks a box from a corner and moves toward Ghadeh and stands in front of her.)*

Doctor: Because Lebanon is fertile for war as it is for olive and palm. You have roots in war without you knowing it.

Ghadeh: What about you?

Doctor: No. I am from a troubled land but war…No! it’s not ours.

Ghadeh: So where did you learn to fight? Where did you wear it's cloths?

Doctor: Egypt. I trained there.

Ghadeh: Why?

Doctor: It was necessary to train guerrillas.

Ghadeh: For what?

Doctor: Did you look at the Arab countries around you? Arab nationalism is everywhere. The split that it's making is irrecoverable. Our organization that Imam Musa Sadr had built has the same goal. To confront the extreme nationalism.

Ghadeh: You must kill to confront?

Doctor: I don't decide the rules of the game. I only try to play good enough to win.

Ghadeh: I am not rude but I want to say something honestly.

Doctor: Say it.

Ghadeh: Some say the doctor has personal motives for his works.

Doctor: Funny!

Ghadeh: You didn't surprised?

Doctor: The words don’t surprise me but acts do!

Ghadeh: You don't have any?

Doctor: Pardon?

Ghadeh: Personal motives.

Doctor: If only you asked them.

Ghadeh: I asked.

Doctor: Well?

Ghadeh: You were in America before you came here?

Doctor: No!

Ghadeh: No?

Doctor: I was in Egypt.

Ghadeh: Ok! Before that!

Doctor: I was a student!California!

Ghadeh: But the Shah of Iran cut your scholarship?

Doctor: *(laughs)* He was right. It was reasonable reaction. If I was in his place I would do the same.

Ghadeh: Why?

Doctor: I was doing anti regime activities among the students. Do you expect that they rewarded me?

Ghadeh: Well … They say… Your motives… are… personal.

Doctor: These rumors are for teenagers. You said you passed the twenty.

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: *(Holds the box in front of her)* Take it!

Ghadeh: *(Surprised)* What's this?

Doctor: Take it. You will know.

*(Ghadeh takes the box with cautious.)*

Doctor: It's a gift

Ghadeh: From who?

Doctor: Who gave it to you?

Ghadeh: You?!

Doctor: *(smiles)*

Ghadeh: Why do you have to give me a gift?!

Doctor: Personal motives!

*(Silence. Suddenly doctor laughs and Ghadeh too. Then Ghadeh opens the box. There is a beautiful scarf in it.)*

Ghadeh: This…

Doctor: A red scarf with big flowers!

Ghadeh: Means…

Doctor: Put it on your head. If you want to work with us.

Ghadeh: I didn’t say so.

Doctor: But you took off your shoes…

Ghadeh: I did this in front of a painter who I admire…

Doctor: Where do you work these days?

Ghadeh: What?

Doctor: Now… beside writing what are you doing?

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: Universities are closed.

Ghadeh: I work in high schools. I’m a teacher.

Doctor: Work with us!

Ghadeh: And do what?

Doctor: You are good writer and you can write beautiful things.

Ghadeh: At last you praised me!

Doctor: Come and write in here.

Ghadeh: I can't leave the high school. I don’t want to.

Doctor: We give you more money. Just come.

Ghadeh: I don't work for money.

Doctor: *(smiles)*…

Ghadeh: I love people. My senses tell me to go to the young adults. If it was about money my pen was dried out.

Doctor: Very well, but you didn't see the children in here. If you see them and your senses tell you to work with them. Then what?

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: These are orphaned children. You must be so cruel if you see them and be indifferent.

Ghadeh: If I saw them… and I wasn’t indifferent?!

Doctor: You put on that scarf and everything begins.

*(Light is only on Ghadeh now and she is in front and the scarf is in her hands.)*

Ghadeh: This was the first gift that Mustafa gave to me. *(Puts the scarf on her head.)* when I put on the scarf he was smiling at me and said: guys know that you are a European girl but they want to see you with scarf in here. It was obvious that he was under pressure from his coworkers because of me. He never imposed something on me. And I felt it that he wanted to do so, because he wanted to get to the point faster. But he waited and brought me forward step by step.

*(Again light brightens the entire stage including Ghadeh and Doctor.)*

Doctor: I hope that your writing has a sufficient effect on them. We must collect these helps. From first day of this institute, our main goal was to attract sponsor for these children. And now we have the might of your pen I think…

Ghadeh: *(Cuts his words) W*hy your wife's name was Parvaneh?

Doctor: *(Surprised)* what?

Ghadeh: Wasn’t she American?

Doctor: Where you heard that?

Ghadeh: What's the importance?!

Doctor: *(silence)* She was a good woman.

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: It's a shame that she couldn't bear it.

Ghadeh: Parvaneh?

Doctor: I loved her so much that I named her Parvaneh. I talked with her about love and burning and dying. I analogized myself as a candle and told her that anyone who comes too close to me will burn her wings… but she said it's not important …and I … named her… Parvaneh

Ghadeh: Did she burn her wings?

Doctor: Why don’t you ask herself?

Ghadeh: I'm asking you.

Doctor: I don’t know. Maybe.

Ghadeh: How did you meet?

Doctor: Her mother caused it. She was a special woman. She was that kind of woman who gathered the orphans and grew them. At first I didn’t believe her but then I actually saw it. She was sitting on wheelchair without any movements. Then she told to the nurse to go to some room and throw a blanket on someone and return. She knew about the future. She wasn’t a fortune teller but she was like them in some ways. When we decided to come to Lebanon with Parvaneh, she said: let me see your future then you can go. I said ok. She said: you don’t return here. I see you are running on the mountains and you have a gun. I can see it.

*(Ghadeh is laughing.)*

She said: I can see something else too

*(Doctor is silent and Ghadeh isn’t laughing anymore.)*

She said: I can see that you don’t live with my daughter and you don’t return here. She was talking about America but then she said something horrific.

Ghadeh: *(excited and terrorized)* What?

Doctor: She said: I see you in a sea of blood.

*(Silence. Ghadeh is terrified)*

Ghadeh: But I heard that Parvaneh came here with you. They all have good memories of her.

Doctor: We went to Greece with our car and then came here. Yes Imam Musa Sadr handed the orphans of Jabal Amel to us. She really was a kind woman. You can’t imagine how she behaved with wounded people that they brought to us. She talked to them. She helped them to eat. She stayed with them for hours. Of course they have good memories of her.

Ghadeh: So… Then…

Doctor: But she had hard times too. We had only one room with our children. It was the worst for her. She wanted to return. I said: we can’t, we don’t only have four kids, we have six hundred kids. I can’t leave them.

Ghadeh: But she didn’t stay, did she?

Doctor: She didn’t. She took the children by herself to force me.

*(Tears stop doctor and Ghadeh is uncomfortable. she doesn’t know what to do.)*

Ghadeh: I … Do you want some water?

*(Doctor shakes his head to say no.)*

Ghadeh: Don’t think about it. I’m sorry that I was curious.

Doctor: Don’t worry about it.

Ghadeh: I think… It was simple for you.

Doctor: Separation?

Ghadeh: Yes!

Doctor: It wasn’t hard. Though I love them,I have to stay here. I paid a price to remain in Lebanon that many doesn’t know.

*(Doctor gazes toward the outside. Ghadeh is waiting. Doctor’s silence is endless.)*

Ghadeh: *(cautious)* Mr. Ghoravi said you loved your four years old son. He was always with you. *(Laughs cautiously.)* He said he impersonated Imam Musa Sadr and he liked…

*(Suddenly doctor turns and his face is full of tears.)*

Doctor: Believe me when she called I was sure what she would say. I told her that I know what you want to say. It’s revealed to me. She was sad that I don’t go. With that situation she didn’t believed I became so cruel. Cruel that was the word that she believed was right for me. I was. Wasn’t i? think. I said: why you put so much pressure on me? She said: me? She didn’t believe that I named her work putting pressure. She said: I saw no one that behave like you in this situation. What is duty? Ha? What is duty?

Ghadeh: *(confused)* Doctor!

Doctor: *(repeating while crying.)* What is duty? What is duty? What is duty?

Ghadeh: Doctor!

Doctor: What is duty?

Ghadeh: *(moves and stops at the door.)* I know you’ve been hurt. I go. I’m sorry.

*(Ghadeh turns to go. Doctor calls her hardly.)*

Doctor: Ghadeh!

*(Ghadeh returns slowly and stands still.)*

Doctor: Where are you going? ...don’t you… have a meeting with them… in half an hour?

Ghadeh: I… was so curious… really… I … can’t bear men crying… specially… you!

Doctor: *(Gazes upon Ghadeh with a smile for moments)* I am sorry.

Ghadeh: *(Surprised by his actions)* No… oh no… no no no… you… I didn’t mean… why are you sorry? I… I… was so… I should…

Doctor: Do you know who was the emperor of Germany in the first world war?

Ghadeh: Ha? No!

Doctor: Wilhelm the second! King of England was George the fifth who was Wilhelm’s cousin. And Tzar of Russia was Nikolai the second whose wife was Wilhelm’s cousin. They were all a family!

Ghadeh: *(smiles while confused)* …

Doctor: Imagine! If their grandfather didn’t get married to their grandmother we had a much safer world!

Ghadeh: What do you mean?

Doctor: We should think more before marrying someone!

*(Silence. They both laugh for a long time. Then slowly laughs end and they are looking at each other.)*

Ghadeh: In that painting…

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: The painting in the calendar…

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: The one I love…

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: You are the candle!

*(Stage becomes dark and a spot light opens on Ghadeh.)*

Ghadeh: There is no need for high IQ to understand that he wanted to hide something. Something that hurts his entire body. Deep in his heart he had an excruciating secret. The other day I sensed that he was telling me the things that no one else knew… but …. He didn’t move forward.He stopped! I waited a lot for his secret.

*(Light opens on the entire stage. Doctor is working on an old radio and Ghadeh is talking.)*

Ghadeh: “You are crazy! he is twenty years older than you!” Oh god I think I am in the middle of a play that everyone else know the dialogues except me! Everyone talks like each other! It’s clear that It is a bad play! Mother, father, family, friends they all know it by heart. Believe me I wish that my father was a teacher instead of being merchant between Africa and Japan. I wish he was a normal man.Then everything was something else. *(Silence)* I know you are under pressure. The days when I was in the institute your friends pressure you that who is she? Why is she like this? Her hijab, her family… I’m sure, even if you say no! Why are we like this? We always read, heard and told that the true love happens once. Now all of these people want to stop you. I told them he is different. I always wrote that the Tyre, every piece of Jabal Amel brings the voice of Abazar, but I can’t find it. I need a hand. I need a help. I say Mustafa is the hand that I want. They say life is not poem. He has nothing and he is twenty years older than you. Ah… I wish my grandmother was alive. Only my grandmother could shut them up. She knew my pain. She lived in Palestine with his husband and two daughters. A young Sunni guy wanted one of the girls and there is no opposition. But the boy comes on Ashura day for talks and my grandmother becomes angry and lets him go. My grandfather wasn’t a man of faith and wanted to throw the wedding but my grandmother took her daughter and rode a horse and came to this side of the border, to Tyre. You had to see my grandmother, he wore hijab and threw Imam Hussein’s ceremony in her home. She took me under her arms and thought me the prayers and she loved it when I said the prayers. Now if she saw you she would fight everyone for you. I’m sure. *(Silence)* you don’t want to say anything?

Doctor: *(Still working on the radio with his head down.)* I don’t want to marry you while your Parents aren't agreed. They are right. I am twenty years older than you. I am Iranian. I am always in war and institute. I am not your color. I don’t even have an ID!

Ghadeh: What does it mean? What about Love? Doesn’t Imam Musa Sadr the judge? She can marry us. We don’t need the permission from my parents!

Doctor: *(Still working on the radio)* I need it.

Ghadeh: When they insist that you are not right for me, how can I satisfy them? They say all the time you rejected all of your suitors. We have waited for a prince! He doesn’t even have hair!

*(Suddenly Ghadeh understands that she said something rude. Doctor is still working on the radio. Ghadeh is shamefull and there is a long silence among them.)*

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: I am sorry… I want.

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: I said… their… words…

Doctor: *(He seems very busy.)* …

Ghadeh: *(Cautious)* doctor!

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: Mustafa!

*(Silent continues. Doctor is playing with the radio. In silence we can hear the noises of the radio. The noises fade out and we can hear a child's voice.)*

Child's voice: *(We know he is swimming.)* Dad!

*(Doctor is shocked. Child's voice is repeating.)*

Child's voice: Dad! Look at me.

*(Doctor is looking at the radio with round eyes.)*

Ghadeh: What’s happened?

Child's voice: Come on dad! Look at me! I'm swimming.

*(Doctor is breathing heavily. Ghadeh becomes terrified and moves toward him slowly.)*

Ghadeh: Mustafa!

*(When doctor sees Ghadeh, he jumps and breaks the radio with anger. Ghadeh screams and stands still.)*

Ghadeh: What’s happened?

Doctor: *(His head is down and he is looking at the broken radio.)* leave me alone.

Ghadeh: What?

Doctor: Please leave me alone.

*(Ghadeh is scared and uneasy. she moves toward the door with cautious then looks at the terrified doctor then leaves. Doctor is looking at the radio without any moves then doctor cries loud. He sits on his knees and holds his head with his hands. Darkness. In darkness we can hear him crying. Doctor's crying is stopped. Light opens on the foreground on Ghadeh.)*

Ghadeh: Life is a puzzle. You can't find it out. I always say to myself how can I forget a pain? One day one of my friends in school had a terrible toothache. She was crying. She couldn’t bear it. I was in her home. She turned on the iron and when it was hot she put in on her shoulder. It answered. She forgot her toothache.

*(Light opens on the entire stage. Doctor enters with worry and anger.)*

Ghadeh: So?

Doctor: He is right I know him.

Ghadeh: Where is he now?

Doctor: Guys lock him up in a room.

Ghadeh: They took his gun?

Doctor: They did. The institute's guard is watching the room.

Ghadeh: Why a kid in this age would come after you with an AK-47?

Doctor: You can ask him by yourself when he calms down.

Ghadeh: Who ordered him?

Doctor: From some people who want me dead.

Ghadeh: Maybe a leftist organization.

Doctor: Of course.

Ghadeh: How you know him?

*(Doctor laughs then moves right and left on the stage. He is worried.)*

Ghadeh: You don’t want to say?

Doctor: He is one of the orphans of this institute. A few years ago he went and learn martial arts and karate without permission. When he returned he beat up one of the orphans. They reported me. Then I went and said to him: I challenge you. Do you accept it? He came. I told someone become the referee. When we began I jumped and hit him in the neck right where he hit the other kid. He felt on the ground and started to cry. We sent him to a hospital and he didn’t return. He is now a leftist apparently. They must encouraged him to do that. I am Iranian and I hit him. These are strong motives,aren’t they?

Ghadeh: Did you talk to him?

Doctor: I did.

Ghadeh: Did he tell you the same?

Doctor: No these are my opinions. He only said he is from an organization that wants me dead.

Ghadeh: What do you want to do with him?

Doctor: I'll wait till he calms down.

Ghadeh: Then what?

Doctor: I'll talk to him.

Ghadeh: You said you talked to him already.

Doctor: Not enough.

Ghadeh: I'm scared.

Doctor: Why?

Ghadeh: If they send one of these every day. Then what?

Doctor: *(smiles)* …

Ghadeh: I'm serious. You stopped him this time but what about the next time? If he catches you on the street then what? If he was one of the orphans then what? You even don’t have time to surprise. Do you understand me?

Doctor: Calm down Ghadeh.

Ghadeh: How can I calm down?

Doctor: Our orphans never do this. I'm friend with them. Close friend. They always talk to me. You are not with us all the time…

Ghadeh: This boy used to be one of the institute's orphans. Be reasonable.

Doctor: I am.

Ghadeh: Not as much as always.

*(Suddenly they hear a gun shot and they both jump. Doctor moves towards the sound quickly. Ghadeh sits on the ground while screaming. Doctor stops at the door.)*

Ghadeh: *(screaming.)* Don’t go please don’t go.

Doctor: *(Comes towards Ghadeh slowly and surprised.)* What are you doing Ghadeh?

Ghadeh: Don’t go. I'm scared.

Doctor: Scared of what?

Ghadeh: That something happens to you.

Doctor: *(A moment of silence.)* There was always trouble around me and you always knew it.

Ghadeh: I know.

Doctor: So what?

Ghadeh: Now… for me… I mean…

Doctor: Say it Ghadeh.

Ghadeh: I satisfied them.

*(Long silence)*

Doctor: How?

Ghadeh: I told them if you don’t permit us the religious judge will marry us the day after tomorrow.

Doctor: Did you treat them?

Ghadeh: I don’t know it's name. I wanted them to accept it. And they did. We will have a small wedding ceremony in my father's house.

Doctor: They accepted it?!

Ghadeh: It wasn’t easy…

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: I told you the end of the story.

*(Doctor moves away from excited Ghadeh in silence with a smile on his face.)*

Doctor: When they want to get rid of me I just smile but the worst thing is when I go away you don’t know why I have gone. Do you want to marry me? I do too but you have to open your eyes. Who are you marrying to? A candle? Who burns your wings? Then you think you have lost? Did you ever think of losing Ghadeh? The one who marry me must not scare of losing… usually the losers are scared of losing. They don’t even want to try it. I want to live with you in love. But you must know who I am and who you are living with. You can’t take away my gun or this cloth with marriage. I prefer to have my gun and this cloth and think about you instead of sitting at home beside you and think of my gun and cloths. If you don’t have a problem our date is on the day after tomorrow.

*(Doctor exits. Ghadeh sits on the ground and doesn’t move. Darkness. Light opens on Ghadeh in the foreground.)*

Ghadeh: They fired a bullet to scare the boy. It seems he wanted to run away from his prison. A few hours later everything was changed. The boy told Mustafa:“If you want I will go and kill all of the party leaders.” But Mustafa sent him back to the party and made a double agent of him. It was his speciality. Training the forces that count. In 1982 when Israel’s attacks were harder and he was in Iran. These boys took the guns and drove the Israelis crazy. *(Smiles)* My dowry was the Quran and grooms responsibility to guide me to perfection. It was the first wedding in Tyre that a bride has such a dowry. My sister said: “You want to send mother to the hospital tonight?” Specially when I said we don’t have a home and we will live in the institute. In a room that it’s bed were made of a few fruit boxes. For satisfying my mother he told her: “I know when your daughter wakes up in the morning before she washes her teeth maids will make the bed. I don’t have any money to pay for maids. But I promise until my death,I will make her bed and brings her coffee and milk to her bed.” And Mustafa did this till the last moment. When the Iranian revolution won he said: “I must return to Iran.” It was strange for me. I was at the two ways road for many times in my life and I always knew which way was right and which was wrong. But always I didn’t choose the right one. You know why? Because it’s the hardest job in the world.

(*Light open on the entire stage. Doctor is standing in the background with his baggage. Ghadeh moves toward him with joy.)*

Ghadeh: I missed you so much!

Doctor: Me too. I returned but I won’t stay.

Ghadeh: *(sad)* Why?

Doctor: They need me in Iran. Kurdistan is a mess.

Ghadeh: You need to go there?

Doctor: It’s better if you come to Iran. When you are here my heart is here. Nothing is right.

Ghadeh: You told me to stay here so the children don’t think that we abandoned them.

Doctor: I am alone. It’s hard for me.

Ghadeh: When you go to Kurdistan?

Doctor: This week.

Ghadeh: You stay here this little?

Doctor: There no other way.

Ghadeh: What is happening in Kurdistan?

Doctor: They want autonomy.

Ghadeh: Then why you don’t give them?

Doctor: Our age is not the age of tribes nor our religion.

Ghadeh: Thing there… Is it dangerous?

Doctor: Comparing to what?

Ghadeh: *(thinks)* Plagues.

Doctor: It’s much more.

Ghadeh: What do you mean?

Doctor: It’s more dangerous than plague.

*(Suddenly the known kid’s voice echoes in the stage and doctor drops the baggage.)*

Child’s voice: Come on dad!

Doctor: (loud) Turn off the radio.

Ghadeh: Mustafa!

Doctor: Please.

Ghadeh: There is no radio here.

*(doctor pick up his baggage in the silence.)*

Doctor: Let’s go Ghadeh. I am … alone.

Ghadeh: I am… not ready.

Doctor: You think… Will you be ready?

Ghadeh: For you… of course. You must give me some time.

Doctor: How much?

Ghadeh: I’ll come after you.

*(Doctor turns in desperation.)*

Doctor: If… I went and didn’t return.

Ghadeh: Stop Mustafa! For god’s sake.

Doctor: Tell Yousef that I love him like my own father. If I behave him bad as a guard…

Ghadeh: He is dead.

Doctor: *(shocked and silent.)* So… if I didn’t return… I will tell him myself.

Ghadeh: Mustafa.

Doctor: Yes my darling?

Ghadeh: Still you don’t tell me what’s going on with you? These freakish angry moments of you scares me.

Doctor: Don’t worry.

Ghadeh: Please.

Doctor: *(Breaths)* Nothing Ghadeh

Ghadeh: What is in your past that you didn’t told me.

Doctor: *(smiles)* A lot!

Ghadeh: I mean the thing that hurts you.

Doctor: *(Shakes his head.)* A lot!

Ghadeh: I am serious.

Doctor: Me too.

*(Ghadeh is disappointed. Silence.)*

Ghadeh: If you don’t want to tell me then don’t. But… there is nothing back there. Finished. Don’t look back. Look forward. Today is important and… tomorrow of course. You are reasonable enough to ask you this.

Doctor: Past is real. Our wounds are the proof of this.

Ghadeh: You must show your wounds, maybe I can heal them.

Doctor: I don’t think so.

Ghadeh: So… there is something.

Doctor: I said… a lot!

Ghadeh: So tell me how I can help.

Doctor: It’s good enough that you are here.

Ghadeh: It’s not good for me. I’m your wife.

Doctor: It’s funny. Marriage is an interesting thing. It’s like the army. Everyone is complaint about it but there are still conscripts!

Ghadeh: I am not complaining. I am sorry that I can’t help.

Doctor: You are wrong. If that was true I wouldn’t ask you to come with me.

Ghadeh: I will come. I will.

Doctor: Thank you.

*(Doctor wants to exit but Ghadeh stops him with her words.)*

Ghadeh: Mustafa!

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: Anyone… dies there?

*(Doctor turns to Ghadeh with a smile.)*

Doctor: I remember you said you passed twenty.

Voice of the child: Dad! Dad! Come on!

*(Doctor reacts strangely and looks around then returns to Ghadeh.)*

Ghadeh: Mustafa!

Doctor: When you awake from a nightmare you tell yourself that it was only a dream. This makes you happy. But maybe one day you wake up and see that the world around you is the same as the dream.

*(Doctor exits.)*

Ghadeh: *(loud.)* Mustafa… Mustafa… Mustafa return! Please! ... Just one moment!

*(Doctor returns slowly and stands at the door.)*

Ghadeh: I will come with you to Iran. Now. Or everywhere else!

Doctor: Good!

Ghadeh: But you must tell me.

Doctor: Tell what?

Ghadeh: Your nightmares! Your nightmare!

Doctor: …

Ghadeh: for once I will set a rule for you. What will happen? ... Ha?

*(Doctor puts the baggage on the ground and sits on it after a long silence.)*

Doctor: When she called from America. I said: “I know what you want to say.” She said: “You won’t believe it.” I said: “It’s revealed to me.” She said: “So damn you if you know and you are so reckless!” …reckless… reckless… reckless… my four years old son drowned in the pool when they return to home.

*(Suddenly cries long and silent.)*

Child’s voice: Come on dad! Come and look!

Ghadeh: *(She is shocked and whispering.)* Oh god!

Doctor: I said: “I have a duty here.” There was no problem If I went America. But maybe I didn’t return anymore. Parvaneh knew this. She knew I won’t go. She said: “Do what you like, I want to divorce.” But after the divorce I still thought about them. “What is the duty?” She asked me this many times. I didn’t answer. Sometimes people ask some sorts of questions that they don’t want to hear the answer. She didn’t want to hear. Image of my beautiful son swimming in the water and wants me to look at him, doesn’t leave me even in the war. I don’t forget. His voice. His smile. I wasn't there. You don’t know what this means for a father! And then… In my nightmare… he goes under the water and he calls me again and I say: “Don’t open your mouth my son hold your breath!” And he doesn’t listen to me. He calls me.

*(He is crying hard. Ghadeh sits sadly. Moments later. Childs voice merges with the sound of water.)*

Child’ voice: Dad! Dad! Come on!

*(Doctor brings up his head and his face is wet.)*

Doctor: What is the duty Ghadeh?

Ghadeh: …

Doctor: Past never dies! it kills!

*(Ghadeh stands up and moves towards the doctor and stands. Doctor looks at her and stands hardly. Ghadeh picks the baggage and doctor smile. Darkness. Light opens on the foreground where Ghadeh is standing.)*

Ghadeh: Your dad told me when he became a minister in Iran you wrote for him that you want to go there. *(smile)* His ministry wasn’t like the American ministers that you know. I’m sure because of your mother or any other reasons you didn’t know your father. The last day of spring in the 81, one of his commanders in Dehlavieh martyred. Your dad became sad and went to the brigade for condolences.. and he died in that region… with mortar shell. I don’t know why I decide to reply your letter now, now that we don't have Mustafa anymore. Your father liked my writing. Very much. Maybe you like it too. But I have another reason for this decision. I want you to know your father. Look at his life. You see that from the first step of his journey, everybody have something of Mustafa. A long way from Tehran’s Sarpoulak to the university and America and Egypt then my country and again Iran and Kurdistan and the south. In this long way he tore apart his life and gave them to people.

Sometimes even he can’t find someone and he gives himself to the paper. His papers are with me. It seems that these pieces are like weights that he had to let go to reach higher like a balloon. He gives one piece to me, one piece to you. And they are all lead, they are all heavy. Until… where… he is so light that he can go some that he said he was running from. Death!

I hope one day, or today, show your brother and sister my letter. It’s a loss that you don’t know Mustafa Chamran.

Sincerely

Ghadeh Jaber

*(Darkness. Light opens on the background on the doctor.)*

Doctor: Oh god thank you for your gift of pain. Gift of love. You learned to me to bear. For life and death. I always wanted to be candle and burn and give light. I wanted to never need anybody. I wanted to be the cry of the people who can’t cry. O god! My pain is so much today. My soul is hurt because of the pain. My heart is boiling. My heart is broken. I am old and tired and I don’t have any wishes. I think this world is not for me anymore. I want to be with you.

*(Stage remains with light and the doctor is watching us.)*