

# UNDER THE SKIN

A Play Based on a True Story

by

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Actress 1:	CHARLOTTE BROD ILSE KOHLMANN (BUBE)	66, Israeli holocaust survivor living in Tel Aviv 30, Nazi in a women's labor-camp
Actress 2:	KIRSTEN EBERHARDT LOTTE ROSNER	22, Young German journalist 22, Young CHARLOTTE, Prima Ballerina, Prisoner in a labor-camp
Actress 3:	IDA BERMAN DR. SCHMIDT CABARET HOST	22, Prisoner in a labor-camp Nazi Physician in a labor-camp Nazi host of the S.S. officer's party

The actresses who play CHARLOTTE and KIRSTEN in the frame story, play ILSE and LOTTE ROSNER during the flashbacks to WWII. The change of characters should take place in front of the audience.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The play is based on the historical story of the love affair between the lesbian Nazi officer Anneliese Kohlmann and Lotte Winter, one of her female Jewish prisoners in Neuengamme concentration camp.

The play is based on Kohlmann's Belsen trial transcript, and also on Holocaust survivors' testimonies, including the testimony of Ruth Bondy, a well-known Israeli writer, translator and journalist.



Women guards shortly after their arrest at Bergen Belsen, 02 May 1945. The first three are wearing their Nazi uniforms while Kohlmann is in a poorly fitted men's uniform because, when arrested, she was wearing a prisoner's clothing.

## **SYNOPSIS**

The play takes place both in Tel Aviv during the 1991's Gulf War and in 1944 Nazi Germany. Charlotte Brod is an elderly Holocaust survivor who lives in a Tel Aviv apartment and is haunted by the ghosts of the past. One evening during the Gulf War, Kirsten Eberhardt, a young German journalist, knocks on her door and questions her about a secret love affair that took place in the Neuengamme concentration camp between the Jewish prisoner and her Nazi commander, Ilse Kohlmann (based on Anneliese Kohlmann).

Towards the end of the war, with the shutting down of the labor-camp and the transfer of the prisoners to Bergen-Belsen, the Nazi officer wore a prisoner uniform, disguised herself as a Jewish woman, and willingly entered Bergen-Belsen in order to share the same fate as her lover. After Bergen Belsen had been liberated by the British Army, the Jewish prisoner turned a cold shoulder towards her Nazi lover, and handed her over to the British soldiers, who sentenced her to death by hanging.

This closes the circle in which a Nazi turns into a Jew and the Jew turns into a hangman. The clear distinction between executioner and victim is broken and blurred. The show blurs the seemingly distinct definitions of good and bad, love and exploitation, then and now, Jewish and Nazi.

**SCENE BREAKDOWN**

Scene 1	CHARLOTTE's apartment, Tel-Aviv.	22 February 1991.
Scene 2	Leather factory, Nuengamme labor-camp.	10 August, 1944.
Scene 3	CHARLOTTE's apartment, Tel-Aviv.	22 February 1991.
Scene 4	Prisoner's block, Nuengamme labor-camp.	12 August, 1944.
Scene 5	DOCTOR SCHMIDT's office, Nuengamme.	Later that day.
Scene 6	BUBE's room, Nuengamme labor-camp.	That night.
Scene 7	Leather factory, Nuengamme labor-camp.	The next morning.
Scene 8	Charlotte's apartment, Tel-Aviv.	22 February 1991.
Scene 9	BUBE's room, Nuengamme labor-camp.	7 October, 1944.
Scene 10	Charlotte's apartment, Tel-Aviv.	22 February 1991.
Scene 11	Nazi officer's club, Nuengamme labor-camp.	3 April, 1945.
Scene 12	Leather factory, Nuengamme labor-camp.	The next morning.
Scene 13	A wooden cattle train car.	The next day.
Scene 14	Charlotte's apartment, Tel-Aviv.	22 February 1991.
Scene 15	Courtyard, Bergen-Belsen.	5 April, 1945.
Scene 16	Courtyard, Bergen-Belsen.	15 April, 1945.
Scene 17	Charlotte's apartment, Tel-Aviv.	22 February 1991.

## **SETTINGS**

CHARLOTTE's living room in Tel Aviv; Leather factory at Nuengamme labor-camp in Hamburg; Prisoner's block at Nuengamme labor-camp; S.S. woman ILSE KOHLMANN's room in Nuengamme labor-camp; The Nazi officer's club in Nuengamme labor-camp; Back room at the Nazi officer's club; A wooden cattle train car used to transport prisoners; A courtyard at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

The same scenery and requisites from CHARLOTTE's living room also serves in the scenes from the labor-camp and the concentration camp, as if the Holocaust is still present in CHARLOTTE's house.

## **TIME**

22 February 1991, Thursday evening during the Gulf War.

August 1944 - April 1945 during WWII.

SCENE 1

SETTING: CHARLOTTE's living room in Tel Aviv.  
22 February 1991, Thursday evening during the Gulf War.

AT RISE: CHARLOTTE is resting on a chair. IDA, wearing a prisoner's uniform with a yellow badge, is a ghost from the past haunting the house. She is seen only by CHARLOTTE.

IDA

(to the audience)

February, 1991. A Thursday evening during the gulf war. Tel Aviv, Jericho Street No. 6, second floor.

(looking at CHARLOTTE)

Here, for the past 43 years, lives Charlotte Rosner, haunted by her ghosts.

(KIRSTEN knocks on the door. Hanging from her shoulder is a cardboard box containing a gas mask (NBC mask used during the Gulf War). At this point her behavior is a bit pushy and rude. She is wearing an intimidating Nazi-looking leather jacket.)

KIRSTEN

Frau Rosner? Frau Rosner? Frau Charlotte Rosner?

(CHARLOTTE, walking with a cane, slowly makes her way to the door.)

CHARLOTTE

(through the closed door)

Who's there?

KIRSTEN

It's Kirsten Eberhardt, the reporter from Berlin. We spoke on the phone earlier.

CHARLOTTE

What are you doing here? I told you you've made a mistake. Why did you come all this way!?

KIRSTEN

I came to cover the war. I thought perhaps we could have that interview we never managed to schedule...

CHARLOTTE

Why can't you leave me alone!?

KIRSTEN

Frau Rosner, I've brought something that belongs to you.

CHARLOTTE

I don't want anything from you!

KIRSTEN

But it belongs to you.

CHARLOTTE

I don't need a gas mask. The Iraqis should be afraid of me instead!

KIRSTEN

It's your Certificate of Excellence from the National Ballet in Prague.

CHARLOTTE

I told you, you've mistaken me for someone else.

KIRSTEN

Are you Lotte Rosner, born in 1924 at 5 Karlova Strasse, Prague? Transported to Terezin ghetto in May 1943? And from there to Auschwitz and a few months later to Nuengamme labor camp?

CHARLOTTE

Look at the nameplate - it says 'Charlotte Brod'!

(Siren. KIRSTEN starts banging hysterically on the door.)

KIRSTEN

Frau Rosner, Frau Rosner!... Mrs. Brod, Mrs. Brod! Please open the door!

(CHARLOTTE opens the door and lets KIRSTEN in.)

CHARLOTTE

Fine, come in! But only until the 'all clear' siren.

(KIRSTEN storms in, bends down in the corner and puts on her gas mask. CHARLOTTE stands near the door looking at her in scorn.)

KIRSTEN

Is this a sealed room?

CHARLOTTE

Not enough!

KIRSTEN

(through the gas mask)

Aren't you gonna wear a mask?

CHARLOTTE

I can't understand you. Take off that silly thing!

KIRSTEN

I was told to wear a gas mask whenever I hear a siren.

CHARLOTTE

You Germans have always been so good at following orders!

KIRSTEN

They say Saddam has nerve gas.

CHARLOTTE

Well, he learned that from the best teachers.

(KIRSTEN takes off her gas mask.)

CHARLOTTE

Now, that's better.

(KIRSTEN hands her the certificate that was hidden in her coat. CHARLOTTE grabs it from her and examines it with astonishment. IDA is examining it too, over CHARLOTTE's shoulder.)

CHARLOTTE

Where did you find this old thing?

KIRSTEN

I came across it while doing research for an article on the Prima Ballerina Charlotte Rosner.

(KIRSTEN points at the certificate)

5<sup>th</sup> of May 1942. The eve of the evacuation of the Jews to Tarazin Getto. That's why it never reached you.

CHARLOTTE

And why are you so sure that I am this exceptional dancer? *Your* Lotte Rosner was reduced to ashes long ago.

KIRSTEN

Frau Rosner, I've spent over a year searching for you. I have located 16 Czech prisoners named Charlotte that were transported on May 1943 to Nuengamme Labor camp. One died at the camp and the other 15 were transported to Bergen-Belsen, from which only 6 survived. One had moved to America – I've spoken with her, she was born in Nikolsburg, not in Prague. Two others had returned to the Czech Republic – but the age wasn't right. Three more came to Israel – two of them already passed away. I've inquired. They did not study dancing at the academy. Only you were left. So it must be you.

CHARLOTTE

And what makes me so special that you'd hunt me down for over a year? Have you come to finish what your grandparents failed to complete?

KIRSTEN

And how do you know what my grandparents did during the war, hm!? What if they hid Jews in a secret room under their carpet?

CHARLOTTE

I have no idea what skeletons your grandparents have hidden under their carpet, and I really don't care to find out.

KIRSTEN

I shouldn't have come here. I'm sorry.

(A missile hits a nearby building.

A transition of characters takes place for the flashback:

The actress who played KIRSTEN takes off her Nazi-looking leather jacket and hands it to the actress who played CHARLOTTE, who will now become BUBE, the Nazi S.S. Woman. Then they both take out a yellow badge and a swastika to complete the transition.)

**SCENE 2**

SETTING: Nuengamme labor camp. A leather processing factory. 10 August, 1944.

AT RISE: LOTTE and IDA are working, scraping large sheets of leather. LOTTE looks ill and exhausted. At the background BUBE is watching over them, or standing with her back towards them. Three nearby explosions are heard.

IDA

With all these bombings, we'll end up being killed by the British instead...

LOTTE

At this point, it hardly matters who does the killing anymore...

IDA

Madame De Botton nearly killed me once. She caught me eating chocolate before a performance and punished me by making me eat nothing but carrots for a month. I turned completely orange! I practically had carrot poisoning. I could have died!

(Freeze. IDA stands up.)

IDA

(to the audience)

Nuengamme, August, 1944. A labor camp for women. A leather processing factory for the Reich. In this factory, for the past year, two prisoners have been working: Prisoner A26634 – Charlotte Rosner – and prisoner A26637 – Ida Berman.

(IDA sits back down. Freeze ends.)

LOTTE

Ida, I can't go on anymore...

IDA

Lotte, you must stay strong! We're only here because we're useful to the Reich! The moment we stop being useful, they'll send us to the "clinic." And we both know what sort of "treatment" awaits us there...

(IDA is secretly giving LOTTE a piece of bread she was saving for herself. LOTTE is shocked by this gesture, but quickly eats the bread.)

IDA

Now, straighten up, breath deep and get back to work!

LOTTE

I swear I'll find a way to repay you for this.

(BUBE steps towards them. LOTTE and IDA speed up the pace of their work.)

Bube! LOTTE

This is it. We're dead. IDA

Put everything down and stand in line! BUBE

(Freeze. IDA stands up.)

IDA  
(To the audience)

Bube. At least, this is how we call her. "Bube" means "boy" in German. They say every now and then she sneaks in a prisoner for a "Rendez-Vous". The next day that prisoner shows up with her dress repaired or with a new flannel shirt, all washed and clean. Just thinking about it makes me sick!

(Freeze ends.)

I told you to stand in line! BUBE

(IDA and LOTTE get up and stand in line.)

BUBE  
The camp commandant needs five volunteers. Those of you who want to feed pigs, step forward.

(BUBE counts, in German, four invisible girls.)

Eins, Twei, Drei, Veir... BUBE

(LOTTE steps forward.)

You? Do you have any experience with pigs?

LOTTE  
Yes. I grew up on a farm. Every morning, I used to...

BUBE  
You're lying! Jews do not grow pigs!

LOTTE  
I swear, it's true!

BUBE  
Are you arguing with me? I said no!

(BUBE hits LOTTE with her club.)

BUBE

Fünf – you five come with me. The rest of you get back to work!

(BUBE exits with the invisible girls. IDA and LOTTE go back to work.)

IDA

Didn't I tell you never to volunteer here?

LOTTE

Where pigs eat, humans might find some scraps too.

(Five shots are heard from off stage.)

She killed them!

(pause)

Ida, I insisted on walking towards my own death and that monster... she saved my life.

IDA

That was a close call.

(Another transition of characters – back to the present:  
The actress who played BUBE enters and stands by the actress who played LOTTE. The two actresses take off the yellow badge and the swastika. The actress who played BUBE takes off her Nazi leather coat and hands it too the actress who played LOTTE, who will now become KIRSTEN again.)

**SCENE 3**

SETTING: CHARLOTTE's apartment, right after SCENE 1.

AT RISE: KIRSTEN looks out of the window trying to locate the missile's hitting target.

KIRSTEN  
That was close!

CHARLOTTE  
Prime Minister Shamir -- that spineless coward! They're firing rockets at us, and we just sit here doing nothing!

KIRSTEN  
The US has a whole coalition that's fighting Iraq.

CHARLOTTE  
We have our own army! We can take care of ourselves!

(Pause)

KIRSTEN  
Aren't you afraid of staying here by yourself?

CHARLOTTE  
Do you want to be my babysitter? I should warn you — the pay is terrible.

KIRSTEN  
Tel Aviv is almost empty. Yesterday we could barely find one person to interview about the war.

CHARLOTTE  
This is my home. Where else would I go?  
But what are YOU doing here at a time like this? Doesn't your mother worry about you?

KIRSTEN  
We get along better when we're far away.

CHARLOTTE  
Is Germany so boring that you had to come all the way here to witness someone else's war? I hope they pay you a good risk premium.

KIRSTEN  
For the war?

CHARLOTTE  
For entering my house.

KIRSTEN  
(laughing)  
Tamara warned me you don't like visitors.

CHARLOTTE

You've talked to my daughter?!

KIRSTEN

You did not agree to talk to me, but she did.

CHARLOTTE

You had no right!

KIRSTEN

She didn't even know you were a dancer!

CHARLOTTE

That is absolutely none of your business!

KIRSTEN

You were the best dancer in the Czech Republic! Why did you quit dancing after the war?

CHARLOTTE

That was in another lifetime entirely!

(CHARLOTTE rolls up her sleeve and extends her arm towards KIRSTEN.)

CHARLOTTE

Do you see this?

KIRSTEN

I don't see anything...

CHARLOTTE

Exactly. I took it off. I took off this Nazi souvenir from under my skin!

(CHARLOTTE turns away from KIRSTEN in order to calm herself down. KIRSTEN takes out an old photograph and examines it carefully.)

KIRSTEN

Is this you?

CHARLOTTE

How did you get this?

KIRSTEN

You were very pretty...

CHARLOTTE

Enough prying. Out you go!

KIRSTEN

You said I could stay till the "all clear" siren.

CHARLOTTE

I appreciate your concern, but I get along just fine on my own.

KIRSTEN

From what I heard you always manage to get along.

CHARLOTTE

Now, look here Christina,

KIRSTEN

Kirsten.

CHARLOTTE

Whatever your name is, tell me the truth – Why did you come here?

KIRSTEN

Does the name “Ilse Kohlmann” ring a bell?

(The characters transition back to the past.)

**SCENE 4**

SETTING: LOTTE and IDA's block at Nuengamme labor-camp. 12 August, 1944.

AT RISE: LOTTE and IDA stand in attention in front of BUBE.

BUBE

No food today!

(BUBE Exits. IDA tries to cheer LOTTE up as they get ready for their night sleep. LOTTE is taking her shoes off and lies on a wooden sleeping bench.)

IDA

She's almost as tough as Madam De Botton!

(IDA and LOTTE both laughing sadly.)

LOTTE

Last night I dreamt I was backstage before opening night, and Madam De Botton was forcing my swollen knees into a bucket of ice water.

(IDA is quoting Madam De Botton while mimicking her accent and LOTTE joins her.)

IDA

"Any dancer who wakes up in the morning without pain must be already dead!"

LOTTE

How I long for that pain now.

(IDA and LOTTE lie down for their night sleep. Suddenly IDA give LOTTE a gift-like package wrapped in a gray piece of cloth.)

LOTTE

What is it, Ida?

IDA

"There once was beautiful country girl named Giselle. The thing she liked most in the world was to dance. But her mother forbade her to dance because she had a weak heart and the exhaustion could kill her"

(LOTTE opens up the package and finds crudely made leather ballet point shoes.)

How I wanted to steal it away from you, but the damned Nazis did it before me.

LOTTE

Ida!...

IDA

I've been stealing pieces of leather for months. This is my best pair so far...

LOTTE

Are you mad?! if Bube had caught you she would have...

IDA

They're not as nice as the ones you had, but -

LOTTE

They are fantastic, Ida! Thank you!

IDA

Do you still remember your ballet part? Huh Giselle?

(LOTTE starts dancing despite her weakness. Music from "Giselle" is heard, at first very quietly and gradually gets louder and louder as LOTTE dance faster and faster. A few moments later BUBE shows up and watches LOTTE dance from afar. LOTTE is still very weak and this dance is beyond her strength.)

IDA

Lotte, slow down...

(LOTTE collapses, gasping for breath and the music stops.)

BUBE

What's the matter? Are you ill? You must go to the clinic.

LOTTE

No. Not the clinic. Please! I'll get better...

BUBE

To the clinic!

(IDA puts on a white doctor's coat and plays DOCTOR SCHMIDT. She plays him in a grotesque manner, as if it is IDA who is playing him and not the actual actress.)

**SCENE 5**

SETTING: DR. SCHMIDT's office at Nuengamme labor-camp. A bit later that day.

AT RISE: DR. SCHMIDT is tying LOTTE's hands to a hook and gets himself ready to torture HER for his sadistic pleasure. Just as he is about to hurt LOTTE – BUBE enters.)

Doctor Schmidt!

DR. SCHMIDT  
(with heavy exaggerated German accent)  
Commandant Kohlmann?

BUBE  
Doctor Schmidt, I need your help. This prisoner is sick. I need you to take care of her.

DR. SCHMIDT  
Take care of her?

BUBE  
Take care of her.

DR. SCHMIDT  
(laughing)  
'Take care of her!' Ah, I see what you mean...

(DOCTOR SCHMIDT gets back to torture LOTTE.)

BUBE  
Doctor Schmidt!

DR. SCHMIDT  
Ya?

BUBE  
There must be some misunderstanding between us. I need you to cure her.

DR. SCHMIDT  
What is it that you're saying, Ilse? Do I sense that you have a special interest in this filthy Jew? Is she important to you?

BUBE  
She's not important to me, she's important to the Reich.

DR. SCHMIDT  
We have enough manpower. There's no need to waste good medicine on a Jewish prisoner!

BUBE

Doctor Schmidt, I'm warning you! If this prisoner dies... Cure her! Make her well or I'll turn your life such a living hell that you'll wish you had been born a Jew!

(BUBE exits. DR. SCHMIDT releases LOTTE from the hook.)

**SCENE 6**

SETTING: BUBE's private room in Nuengamme labor camp.  
Later that night.

AT RISE: Throughout the scene BUBE zigzags between softness and toughness. LOTTE is frightened and keeps quiet and motionless.

You fell down back there.

BUBE

(BUBE takes out an apple and offers it to LOTTE.)

Here, this will make you feel better.

BUBE

(LOTTE takes the apple but does not eat it.)

What is your name?

BUBE

A26634.

LOTTE

Yes... of course. Very well.

BUBE

(pause)

I'm Ilse. What is your name?

A26... Charlotte. My name is Charlotte.

LOTTE

Pleasure, Charlotte!

BUBE

(LOTTE does not respond.)

Ausgezeichnet. Excellent. You need to grow stronger, Charlotte, so you can continue working.

BUBE

(BUBE's voice softens, almost vulnerable.)

You know, I've wanted to speak with you for quite some time, but I never found the right way to approach you...

BUBE

(BUBE tries to touch LOTTE and when LOTTE shrinks, she returns to her commanding voice.)

BUBE

I see your friend has made these shoes for you at the factory.

LOTTE

Please don't hurt her! She only used leftovers that...

(BUBE softens up again.)

BUBE

Where are you from, Charlotte?

LOTTE

Prague.

BUBE

Prague! I've heard it's a magnificent city. Is it as beautiful as you are?

(LOTTE takes BUBE's hand and puts it on her breasts.)

LOTTE

Yes. Prague is a beautiful city. Like me.

(During the next monologue BUBE kisses LOTTE, throwing her onto bed and getting on top of her.)

BUBE

You're unlike all the others. The way you carry yourself — so proud and dignified. Even in these filthy uniforms, surrounded by the stench of the leather factory. You shine like a diamond buried in mud. Yesterday when I was watching you dance, I feared Commandant Klein would appear and catch us. But I just couldn't keep my eyes off of you.

LOTTE

Can I have another apple?

BUBE

You need not worry about hunger. I will provide for you. Tonight, you can sleep here, in a soft bed with a hot meal. Tomorrow, you'll return to your block.

(BUBE and LOTTE have sex and then fall asleep. Morning comes and LOTTE sneaks out of BUBE's room and goes directly to the factory to join the other prisoners.)

SCENE 7

SETTING: The factory. The next morning.

AT RISE: LOTTE is already at her post because she didn't sleep in her block with the other girls. IDA enters. She is sick and coughing. When IDA sees LOTTE, she runs to her and falls into her arms.

IDA

I was terrified. I thought they had killed you.

(IDA and LOTTE start working. After a few moments LOTTE secretly gives IDA the apple.)

IDA

I can't believe it. Where did you get it?

LOTTE

...I found it!

IDA

Where?

LOTTE

You know those fruit trees by the fence on our way here? This morning, when we were passing by, one just rolled right to my feet!

IDA

Oh, We're so lucky!

(IDA makes sure BUBE is not watching, takes a big bite in the apple and hands it over to LOTTE so they can share it.)

LOTTE

I'm... not hungry.

IDA

You're... not hungry?

LOTTE

...No.

IDA

Where did you get this apple, Lotte? Who gave it to you? Was it one of the Polish workers?

LOTTE

No.

IDA

Was it the Romanian Capo?

No. LOTTE

Was it one of them!? IDA

(LOTTE looks at the ground.)

Where did you really get this apple, Lotte? And what did it cost you? IDA

She just gave it to me. LOTTE

(IDA gives her back the apple.)

I won't eat this. It's tainted! IDA

She just helped me recover. She gave me food and a proper bed to sleep in. LOTTE

(BUBE enters. IDA makes herself appear as if she were working vigorously. LOTTE is not trying to impress BUBE. BUBE and LOTTE exchange looks, then BUBE touches her teasingly with her club while passing her by. BUBE exits.)

That beast! Did she make you...? IDA

Nothing happened. She will help us! LOTTE

I don't trust her. She's a snake, and the moment she doesn't like you any more she stabs you in the back. IDA

Ida, I know what I'm doing. Trust me. She might be our only chance to survive this place. LOTTE

So, the merciful Nazi saves one Jewish prisoner... IDA

Two! LOTTE

And she kills the rest of us? IDA

You know her beatings are not as bad as those of the others. Ilse is not like them. She's LOTTE

26

different.

IDA

Ilse?! You call her Ilse?! Like she's a human being like me and you! Ilse!?

(The Characters transition back to the present.)

**SCENE 8**

SETTING: CHARLOTTE's apartment, right after SCENE 3.

AT RISE: CHARLOTTE is holding a glass of water.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know any Ilse Kohlmann.

KIRSTEN

Maybe you know her by her nickname. The girls at the camp called her "Bube". Green eyes, straight hair. Not too tall and she had...

CHARLOTTE

I don't know any Ilse Kohlmann.

KIRSTEN

That's very strange, because your name appears in her trial protocol.

(CHARLOTTE drops the glass. Water splashes everywhere.  
reaches for the glass.)

KIRSTEN

KIRSTEN

Here, let me help you.

CHARLOTTE

No need.

KIRSTEN

As long as I'm here, I can at least give you a hand.

(KIRSTEN exits. IDA stands up. CHARLOTTE hears IDA's  
monologue and feels uncomfortable hearing it)

IDA

(to the audience)

It took us a long time not to be afraid when Bube entered our block at night. She passed by us, and approached the bench where Lotte was lying and sat down with her back towards us. Then we would hear the giggling, it was like nails on a chalkboard. Sometimes Lotte would follow her out in the dark, tip-toeing. I would have rather died.

(IDA sits back down. KIRSTEN enters with a towel.)

KIRSTEN

You are just like Gertrud, you know?

CHARLOTTE

Who's Gertrud?

KIRSTEN

My mother. She also doesn't like to talk much.

CHARLOTTE

One shouldn't talk much.

KIRSTEN

Every question I asked she answered with silence. She didn't want me to come to Israel. It's too dangerous, she said. But I think it's that war that bothers her more than this one.

(pause)

We lived in West Berlin. One of the lines of the Metro passed through the east side. All the stations on the east side were closed. Trains passed through without stopping - ghost stations. From the cabin's window I could see the platforms- dark and empty. I asked my mother once - why did they turn off the lights? She did not answer.

CHARLOTTE

I don't travel by train. My daughter Tamara lives in Haifa. It's just an hour by train, but I just can't.

KIRSTEN

So why don't you move closer to her?

CHARLOTTE

Look at me. Do I look like someone people enjoy being around? I didn't even offer you something to drink. Tea?

(The Characters transition back to the past.)

**[Please contact for full play]**

