

DISOBEDIENCE

Written by

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Based on the novel by
Naomi Alderman.

An Orthodox Jewish synagogue in North West London is bursting with PEOPLE. The Torah is in the arch. The doors are closed.

Everybody holds their breath as their spiritual leader, the old and frail RAV KRUSHKA (70s) steps up to the podium, helped by a younger Rabbi, DOVID KUPERMAN, tall, attractive, (40s).

RAV KRUSHKA

In the beginning, Hashem made three types of creatures: the angels, the beasts and the human beings.

His face lights up speaking about the Torah.

RAV KRUSHKA (CONT'D)

The angels, He created from His pure word. The angels have no will to do evil, they cannot deviate for one moment from His purpose...

The crowd hangs on his every word.

RAV KRUSHKA (CONT'D)

The beasts have only their instinct to guide them. They too follow the commands of their Maker... The Torah states that Hashem spent almost six whole days of creation fashioning these creatures. Then just before sunset, He took a small quantity of earth and from it He fashioned man-and-woman. An afterthought? Or His crowning achievement?

The Rav looks weak, but wants to carry on.

RAV KRUSHKA (CONT'D)

So, what is this thing, man? Woman? It is a being with the power to disobey. Alone among all the creatures we have free will.

His strength is failing him. He's unable to speak for a few moments. He tries again, more urgently.

RAV KRUSHKA (CONT'D)

We hang suspended between two certainties: the clarity of the angels and the desires of the beasts.

(MORE)

RAV KRUSHKA (CONT'D)

Hashem gave us Choice which is both
a privilege and a burden: we must
then Choose the tangled life we
live.

The Rav closes his eyes for a moment. When he opens them, he stares at the crowd, blankly. He can't continue.

Dovid takes the Rav's arm and starts leading him back to his seat. The Rav stops, mumbles something in Yiddish about not being able to see very clearly...

And collapses.

An instant of stunned silence, then several MEN rush over to the body.

2 INT. MORGUE. FUNERAL RITES MONTAGE. DAY 2

A HAND rips the right lapel of a coat. This is Dovid, who watches the funeral ritual of the Rav.

The CHEVRA KADISHA --almost silhouettes-- clean the Rav's nails with small wooden sticks.

They purify the body by pouring three lots of water continuously.

They put clay upon his eyes and mouth.

They cover the Rav's head and clothe him.

The Chevra Kadisha surround the Rav's body and ask his forgiveness.

They put the body into a coffin and nail the lid down with two wooden sticks.

3 EXT. CEMETERY. DAY 3

The burial. Chants and prayers are uttered as the coffin is cast into a hole. CRACK.

4 INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. NIGHT 4

RONIT KRUSHKA (40) dances softly, enjoying herself, at an intimate gathering in a trendy downtown apartment. She is a beautiful woman, made irresistible by the abandon with which she dances.

Ronit holds her hand out to someone. A GIRL joins her on the floor.

They dance moving closer, until their foreheads touch. A MAN (30s) now comes over and dances with them both.

5 INT. THE NEW YORK SUBWAY. DAWN. 5

Ronit sits on one side of the carriage, alone. The train speeds through the city which is blurred lights and shapes through the window.

6 EXT. A STREET IN MANHATTAN. DAWN. 6

Ronit walks towards her apartment. She smokes her last cigarette of the night, throws the butt towards the road, reaches for her keys and goes to the front door of a large warehouse type building.

7 INT. RONIT'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM/BEDROOM. MANHATTAN. DAWN.7

Ronit is in a t-shirt and pyjama bottoms. She walks from the living room to her bedroom. The living room is sparse, basic and functional. There is no element of family. There are stacks of large art books and some photographic equipment, piles of photo contact sheets on the floor. Ronit walks into the bedroom and perches on the couch next to a large window. She looks at the vast cityscape whilst taking out her earrings and undoing her necklace; placing them on the window sill. The view is of buildings, a vast and lonely city. Ronit gets into bed. She drinks some water and puts in a gumshield to stop her grinding her teeth. She lies down and tries to sleep. The water pipes start to make a noise.

8 INT. A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO. MANHATTAN. DAY. 8

Ronit takes pictures of an OLD MAN, 70s, from various angles. He wears jeans, he's shirtless and is completely tattooed. He seems relaxed and looks at Ronit. He looks iconic and is friendly. CLAUDIA, African-American, stylish, confident, 30s, stands at the side of a white backdrop. On chairs at the side there are various OLDER TATTOOED PEOPLE. They drink coffee and watch.

OLD MAN

Are you getting what you need?

RONIT

Yes. This is great. Thank you. Are you okay?

OLD MAN

I'll need a smoke in a bit.

RONIT

Just five more minutes.

The TATTOOED MAN nods. A knock on the door a level above. Claudia goes up the spiral stairs. Ronit looks around but keeps taking pictures. Claudia comes back down to Ronit, serious.

CLAUDIA

Ronnie.. You need to speak to this man.

Ronit is about to protest but sees Claudia's expression. Ronit goes up the staircase and looks to the door. She sees the silhouette of an older man, an ORTHODOX JEW. He wears a hat and a long black coat. Ronit puts her camera down and approaches him. She hesitates now, he is framed by the door, almost a silhouette of another time. She walks towards him, suddenly quietly terrified.

9

INT. A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO. MANHATTAN. DAY.

9

Ronit takes more photos of the Old Man. But now Ronit's hands are shaking, she is in quiet shock, distracted, but trying to carry on. The Old Man takes out a battered old silver cigarette case from his back pocket.

OLD MAN

Are you okay? Do you want to stop?

Ronit stares, nods.

RONIT

No, I'm fine.

OLD MAN

.. Okay..

RONIT

Actually... Can I have a cigarette?

OLD MAN

Sure. I'll have one with you.

The Old Man offers her a cigarette from his case. Ronit takes it with a shaking hand.

RONIT

Thanks.

She heads towards a door to a balcony. The Old Man follows her.

CLAUDIA

Do you want a coffee or something?

No. RONIT (GENTLE)

10 EXT. PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO. A BALCONY. MANHATTAN. DAY. 10

The Old Man gets out his zippo and lights the cigarette for a clearly shaken Ronit. It's a long way down and it is noisy and industrial below.

OLD MAN

You take it easy.. I've been there.

Ronit nods, she doesn't want to speak for fear of breaking down. The OLD MAN puts his hand on her shoulder for a moment.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

..You'll be okay. The world stops for a bit. Then it starts turning again.

Ronit breathes and smokes, looks down at the people who are like ants beneath her.

11 INT. A CAB. MANHATTAN. DAY. 11

Ronit and Claudia sit in the back of a cab. Ronit is in quiet shock. They have a lot of equipment with them. Boxes and lights.

RONIT

I'm not going to London.

CLAUDIA

Okay.. You do what you need to do Ronnie. Are you sure though?

RONIT

I think so.

CLAUDIA

Can I do anything?

RONIT

No.. I'm going to walk..

Claudia nods, leans forward to the cab driver.

CLAUDIA (TO THE DRIVER)

Could you pull over please?

RONIT (TO HERSELF)

..I kept meaning to send pipe tobacco... And I didn't.

Claudia puts her hand on Ronit's arm.

RONIT (TO CLAUDIA) (CONT'D)
Can you take this back?

CLAUDIA
Of course...

RONIT
Thanks. Thanks Claudia.

12 EXT. NEW YORK STREET. DAY. 12

Ronit closes the cab door and walks away from the traffic. She is shaken, trying to grasp reality.

13 INT. NEW YORK BAR. DAY. 13

Ronit sits in a trendy but almost empty bar and drinks a glass of wine, her bottle is almost empty. STEVEN, 40s, taps away at a lap top, busy. He is attractive, intelligent looking and slightly craggy. He looks over at Ronit. She looks straight back at him. He smiles at her.

STEVEN
Hi.

Ronit half smiles but doesn't reply, she can't do small talk. He looks back to his computer but then looks at her again and Ronit looks back at him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I'm Steven.

Ronit nods, then looks back to her drink.

14 INT. NEW YORK BAR. A BATHROOM. DAY. 14

Ronit and Steven, clothed, are in a cubicle, having quiet sex. Ronit is trying to distract herself from the pain she is feeling; she feels primal, from her grief comes a need for sex.

15 EXT. NEW YORK STREET. DAY. 15

Ronit walks, she needs to just walk and walk, very alert but lost .

- 16 INT. ICE SKATING RINK. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 16
- There are a few PEOPLE, MUSIC over the speakers. Ronit starts to skate around the rink. With every lap she goes faster, more frantically. She falls down and gets back up. She tries harder, hoping to cast out her anxiety. She skates faster and faster, but again falls hard on the ice. Finally, she gives up.
- 17 INT. ICE SKATING RINK. DRESSING ROOM. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 17
- Still panting, Ronit takes off her skates. She has no choice but to accept it -- she stands up and tries to rip the right side of her collar. The seams won't give, Ronit gets frustrated. Finally, she uses her teeth and hands... then RIPS.
- 18 INT. AN AEROPLANE. DAWN. 18
- Ronit is bundled up on a seat with her jumper behind her neck. She half wakes with the golden light that comes through the window. She takes in the beauty of it, the pink and gold clouds, then closes her eyes again.
- 19 INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT ARRIVALS. LONDON. DAY. 19
- Various CABBIES and PEOPLE stand with signs with names of different people. Ronit looks at the signs and walks past, no one is expecting her.
- 20 I/E. TAXI/ NORTH CIRCULAR. DAY. 20
- Ronit is in the back of a taxi, exhausted and nervous. The roofs of London houses hurtle past as they are on an elevated road.
- 21 I/E. TAXI/ HENDON HIGH STREET. DAY. 21
- Ronit looks out at suburbia; there are shops with occasional Hebrew letters, PEOPLE in Orthodox Jewish outfits... large families.

22

EXT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. HENDON. DAY.

22

The taxi drops Ronit off on a street of small houses.

Ronit is about to cross the road but a door opens to the house opposite and a SMALL GROUP of Orthodox Jews come out. Ronit wears a shirt that shows her cleavage. As she looks at the group she automatically does up the buttons to the neck.

Ronit waits for them to leave, half-hidden behind a tree. Then she crosses over with her large wheelie suitcase. The wheels sound loud in the silence. The door is open.

Ronit waits and looks at the open door. A TEENAGE GIRL comes out and sees Ronit and walks back inside. Dovid Kuperman appears now. He's tall, a handsome face but slightly worn, unshaven, tired, and his lapel is torn. He is shocked to see Ronit there, with her bags.

DOVID

Ronit....

It's all awkward. He nods, sighs.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Ronit..

Ronit smiles, unsure.

RONIT

Hello Dovid.

DOVID

We weren't expecting you.

RONIT

No..

DOVID

... May you live a long life.

Ronit looks at him, hurt, imploring. She moves forward to hug him but he draw back. He cannot touch her, these are the rules. Ronit sees this, remembering.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Did you come straight from the airport?

RONIT

..Yeah.. I'll go to a hotel.

Dovid nods.

DOVID
..People are here.. To honour the
Rav..

RONIT
Right..

DOVID
Are you okay?

Ronit nods, tries to be strong.

RONIT
How did he die?

DOVID
Pneumonia finally.

Ronit's bag falls over, uneven weight. Dovid picks it up for her.

DOVID (CONT'D)
Can you face everyone?

RONIT
Yeah..

DOVID
... It's good to see you Ronit.

Ronit is grateful for his warmth, smiles at Dovid.

RONIT
Is it?

Dovid opens the door wider, he takes her bag in. Ronit takes a deep breath, ready to face people. Dovid beckons her in.

23

INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

23

The room has a dozen PEOPLE. A RITUAL CANDLE burns on a side table, the mirror on the wall is covered, there's a table with food.

Ronit follows Dovid, uncomfortable to find that her presence doesn't go unnoticed. A MAN nods at her, gravely, a few WOMEN turn to look at her openly and murmur, but no one speaks to her.

Ronit looks around the room, gets more stares... She goes over to the table and looks at the food instead -- the dishes and the way they're served: it takes her back. The young WIVES obviously admire DOVID as a young and handsome leader. FRUMA HARTOG (60s) walks in, she is in her thick coat and sees Ronit.

RONIT

Fruma..

Fruma puts her arms out and goes quickly to Ronit and hugs her.

FRUMA

Moshe.. Look! Look... Ronit? It's really you.. Ronit is here... Of course you're here. Moshe!

MOSHE HARTOG, 60s, walks over to them, imposing, large coat. He stares at Ronit.

RONIT

Uncle Hartog. How are you?

HARTOG

Ronit.... How are you?

Ronit shrugs, stuck for words. Hartog and Ronit evidently have a troubled history but Hartog puts his hands above Ronit's shoulders, indicating his awkward sympathy but not touching her. Hartog wants to cry about his brother-in-law the Rav.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

May you live a long life.

Hartog is tapped on the shoulder by an OLD MAN and, relieved, he turns to talk to him.

FRUMA indicates that she'll hang up her coat and walks towards the hall. HINDA (40) waves over, fascinated at Ronit, who nods. HINDA touches her heart and indicates tears down her own cheek, the gesture annoys Ronit. Dovid approaches and Hinda smiles a huge smile at him which Ronit registers. Hinda's FEMALE FRIEND also gives Dovid a huge smile, they look at Dovid and Ronit, intrigued, then away as Ronit stares back at them.

DOVID
Are you alright?

RONIT
Can I get a coffee?

Dovid nods.... He starts towards the kitchen through the dining room. Ronit follows.

23A INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. DAY.

23A

There are a few PEOPLE in this room, talking, eating. Ronit is about to follow Dovid into the kitchen but now she sees ESTI KUPERMAN (30s), dressed like a perfect Orthodox wife: wig, headscarf, high neck, long sleeves, a skirt to her feet... in spite of which her beauty and sensuality radiate.

Esti looks over at Ronit-- her slacks, designer coat, haircut and makeup... It's like they come from different eras. Ronit and Esti signal hello with a nod. They look at each other almost antagonistically for a moment. Fruma approaches Ronit.

FRUMA
Ronit.. It's so good that you came.
When will you go back? Will you
stay for the Hespel?

RONIT
..How have you been Fruma?

FRUMA
Oh you know Ronit..My eyes. My
back..But I don't complain. And the
Rav, Ronit.. We are bereft. But you
know Dovid may take over at the
shul? And you.. Married?

RONIT
No.

They look across at Hinda who has just walked through with her Friend, curious.

FRUMA

Did you speak to Hinda yet? You
were friends no?

RONIT

No.

Fruma nods. Ronit looks over at Esti. Fruma follows her gaze.

FRUMA

Three boys Hinda has. And there's
Esti of course.

RONIT

What does Esti do now?

FRUMA

Esti teaches at your old girls'
school. No children.

Ronit and Esti catch each other's eye again.

FRUMA (CONT'D)

Esti has forgiven you Ronit. We all
have.

RONIT

What? For what?

FRUMA

For everything. Your.. Rage.

Ronit cannot reply, puzzled and quietly angry.

FRUMA (CONT'D)

Dovid nursed the Rav you know.. to
the end. He was like a son to him.
Never left his side. But so much
pain. It was a release. It must be
so hard for you not to have said
goodbye.

It's all too much for Ronit. She takes her cigarettes out of
her bag.

RONIT

Excuse me Fruma.

FRUMA

You'll never conceive. With the
nicotine Ronit. And all these
mobile phones.

Ronit walks away towards the kitchen, Fruma turns, concerned,
to the WOMAN next to her.

24 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

24

Ronit walks over to Dovid who pours her a coffee from a jug flask.

RONIT
Fruma just referred to "my rage".

DOVID
Do you still take it black?

Dovid hands Ronit a coffee.

RONIT
Yeah.. I'll get a cab in a bit.

DOVID
Stay here Ronit.

Dovid smiles, Ronit smiles, she appreciates his warmth. Dovid seems to be somewhat quietly battling with himself.

RONIT
Will you take over at the shul?

Dovid shrugs.

DOVID
It's too early to think of such things..

He pauses, really takes Ronit in.

DOVID (CONT'D)
So you came.. To mourn the Rav?

RONIT
Why else would I be here?

Dovid shrugs.

DOVID
You were never very predictable.

RONIT
Are you still angry with me?

Dovid doesn't know if he is or he isn't.

DOVID
You left very suddenly.....

Ronit and Dovid are silent for a moment.

RONIT
Are you married?

DOVID smiles, nods.

RONIT (CONT'D)
When did that happen?

DOVID
A while ago.

RONIT
Who is she? Do I know her?
It's not Hinda? Please.. Hinda of
Hendon...

Dovid keeps his wife's name to himself.

RONIT (CONT'D)
Shit.. It Is Hinda.. I'm sorry..no?
Dovid?

Ronit smiles, that would be awful. Dovid smiles. Ronit is trying to resurrect their old camaraderie and humour which seems to be all but absent.

DOVID
No. No, I didn't marry Hinda.

RONIT
Good. So that leaves a hundred
identical to Hinda.

DOVID
Don't be cruel.

Esti walks past them with some plates. Ronit stares at her.

RONIT
Esti..

ESTI
Ronit. How are you?

The women look at each other, Esti stacked with plates, Ronit just a cigarette.

RONIT
I'm..here..which is.. Strange. You?

Esti looks to Dovid, what have they been talking about?

ESTI
... May you live a long life.

RONIT
..Fruma said you're teaching.

ESTI
I am... You look very New York.

RONIT
You look very.. frum.

ESTI
Shall I take more food out?

RONIT
Leave it. I'll do it. Or Dovid's
wife.. when she appears.

Ronit looks to Esti for some humorous support. Esti simply looks at her, puts down the plates.

RONIT (CONT'D)
So who became Mrs. Kuperman Esti?
Do we approve?

Ronit wants to reconnect with them...Dovid and Esti look at each other.

DOVID
Ronit was going to go to a hotel.
But I told her she should stay with
us.

Esti hesitates, unsure, then nods.

ESTI
Yes.. Yes you must.

RONIT
What?

Ronit looks to Esti who looks down. Esti looks to Dovid who stares straight back at Ronit who realises that they are married. And is beyond surprised.

DOVID
I'll fold down the bed in the spare
room?

ESTI
I'll do it.

But Esti is slightly embarrassed at the domestic request.

RONIT
You two.. You're married..

DOVID
Yes. Yes we are, Ronit.

RONIT
You're married..

Ronit is amazed.

DOVID
The Rav gave us his blessing.
Baruch Hashem.

RONIT
Nobody told me. You didn't let me
know.

ESTI
You disappeared.

Esti leaves them to sort the spare room.

DOVID
The hesped will be a big event..
The Rav was so loved... I don't
know how I'm going to cope without
him.

This is all too awkward for Ronit whose loss is more complex.

RONIT
You and Esti got married? It was
always the three of us.

DOVID
You went away. That left the two of
us.

Ronit is shocked and quietly raging.

RONIT
I would have come over, if you'd
told me he was ill.

DOVID
The Rav didn't want you to know.

Ronit nods, she feels rejected once more by her father. Dovid
can see this and is sorry.

DOVID (CONT'D)

He became very frail. He probably didn't want you to see him like that.

RONIT

You still should have called me.
Then I could have been here.

Ronit is confused and angry, she struggles to contain herself. She lights up a cigarette. Dovid opens a door for her to step into the garden. They really look at each other. Ronit doesn't move outside.

DOVID

This week has been harsh Ronit...
Please?

RONIT

My father just died.

DOVID (GENTLY)

I know. I was there.

Dovid looks away, upset. Ronit is lost. Dovid drums the table with his fingers, tired, blasted. Ronit throws her lit cigarette butt away and starts to walk away from Dovid. She tries to overcome her upset.

RONIT

At least you told me he was dead.

Dovid didn't let her know but he lets this go by.. He is very determined to make things good.

DOVID

Ronit.. It is important that this week is conducted with honour.

It's not a threat but a plea.

RONIT

Honour..

DOVID

That is the most important thing.

RONIT

Absolutely.

Dovid sighs, real pain and trouble has arrived.

25 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. THE LIVING ROOM. DUSK. 25

Dovid stands by the ritual candle. Esti is behind him. Hartog stands beside Esti and Fruma beside him. Still stunned, Ronit stands apart from them and back as the people gather around him for the end of shiva.

DOVID

(recites in Hebrew)

Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the Lord will be your
everlasting light, and your days of
mourning shall be ended.

Dovid heads for the front door, everybody follows him. Ronit stands there looking, but finds herself being pulled into the group.

26 EXT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. STREET. DUSK. 26

Ronit is in the group of Men and Women that walk around the block to the right, part of the ritual.

She can see Dovid and Esti walking ahead, through the faces.

Suddenly, Esti turns back and looks at Ronit who stares back at her for a second.

These events are affecting Ronit, who unexpectedly finds herself absorbed by the strength of the Orthodox Jewish world.

27 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. ATTIC GUEST ROOM. NIGHT. 27

Esti shows Ronit into the guest room. Ronit takes in the place -- mismatched furniture from long ago, a sofa bed turned down. Dovid's teenage quilt cover with cars on it. Esti goes to the closet.

ESTI

I'll get you some hangers.

She throws some things around inside the closet, awkward. Ronit looks at her.

ESTI (CONT'D)

What? I look older?

RONIT

I wasn't thinking that.

ESTI
I look tired. We all do.

RONIT
Should I stay somewhere else?...
Esti?

ESTI
Do what you want Ronit.

Ronit sighs, this is all going to be difficult.

RONIT
Does this window open?

ESTI
No. If you want to smoke you need
to go downstairs.

Esti walks out of the room. On the table, Ronit sees the latest issue of the *Jewish Messenger*. She flips a page and finds --

INSERT -- RAV KRUSHKA'S OBITUARY
A PHOTO of the Rav when he was younger, charismatic.

Ronit starts to read. Something suddenly upsets her.

Dovid comes in with an extra blanket. He puts it on the bed.

DOVID
Do you need anything?

RONIT
No.

RONIT (READS..) (CONT'D)
"...Rav Krushka's untimely death... is a crushing blow to Anglo-Jewry. He was a giant of the faith. Sadly he left no children."

Ronit looks up at Dovid, hurt.

DOVID
Lazy journalism. That would have upset the Rav.

Dovid takes the paper from Ronit.

RONIT
Childless..

DOVID

It's probably some twelve year old reporter. Forget about it.

Ronit feels vulnerable, all this talk of her father and she is not really involved in any of it.

RONIT

Everybody loves him so much. I used to wonder if I loved him as much as all those strangers did. Or sometimes if I loved him at all.

DOVID

You're his daughter.

RONIT

He was always closer to you.

DOVID

..He enjoyed teaching me.

RONIT

I used to wonder how the two of you could talk together for so long.

DOVID

He'd talk and I'd listen. Mostly about the Torah..Try to get some sleep Ronit.

Esti comes in and puts some hangers in the wardrobe, a towel on her arm. Dovid loiters, waiting for her to finish the task and they can both go. Esti puts the towel on the bed.

RONIT

Thanks..
Dovid..

She goes to her suitcase and looks for something. Takes out an art catalogue of her photographs. She gives it to Dovid.

RONIT (CONT'D)

I brought this for you.

DOVID

Your pictures. Wonderful..

Esti waits at the door.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Thank you Ronit. Good night.

RONIT

So are you two well? Is it good?..
being married? ..

Dovid hesitates, nods.

DOVID

We're very happy.

Dovid and Esti exit.

28 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT. 28

Esti goes to a covered mirror and takes the drape off it. She catches sight of herself for a moment, worried. Then she goes towards the kitchen.

28A INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 28A

Esti goes to the sink and turns on the tap. She takes a glass from the draining board and she's surprised to see -- her hands are shaking.

29 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOVID & ESTI'S BEDROOM. DAY. 29

Esti sits on her bed, already dressed, her wig on. She watches Dovid who wakes up. He almost immediately starts to say a morning blessing. He looks beautiful, half asleep.

DOVID

*Modeh Ani Lefanecha, Melech Chai
Vekayam, Shehechezarta Bi Nishmati,
Bechemla, Raba Emunatecha.*

Esti crosses to him. He looks at her, what does she want? She kisses him on the mouth, with passion. He is surprised. She leaves the room. He gets up and goes to wash his hands in the water jug and bowl on a nearby table.

30 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY. 30

Esti and Dovid sit at the table after breakfast, having tea. Esti turns the pages of Ronit's monogram, they are photographic portraits of twins.

ESTI

Have you looked at these?

DOVID

No.

Ronit appears at the bottom of the stairs, still in her pyjamas.

 DOVID (CONT'D)
Morning Ronit.. Did you sleep?

Ronit comes and sits with them at the table, restless. Esti pours her a cup of tea.

RONIT

Not really.

Ronit drinks her tea.

DOVID

What will you do today? Do you want us to show you the new wing of the shul?

RONIT

I'm fine. I want to have a wander round the old places.

A pause, "their old places." Esti sorts her bag for school.

ESTI (TO DOVID)

You've read Othello haven't you? Mrs. Shapiro wants your approval on my teaching it.

Ronit looks at them. She is totally floored by the need for the husband's compliance.

DOVID

It's a great play. Why wouldn't you teach it?..Where will you go Ronit?

RONIT

I'll go to Greenbergs and eat cakes. Sit at our table... Where we all planned our escape together.

ESTI

Your pictures are very beautiful Ronit.

RONIT

Thank you.

ESTI

Do you have a dark room?

RONIT

Yeah, I've sectioned part of the room off.

ESTI

Do you remember my grandfather's dark room?

(MORE)

ESTI (CONT'D)

Under the stairs with the red light
and the pictures gradually coming
out. I liked the smell in there..

RONIT

It was always very warm..we got
high on the developing fluid.

DOVID

I didn't know you did that.

Esti looks at the cover, " Identical ; by Ronnie Curtis."

ESTI

Is Curtis your married name?

RONIT

No. I'm single.. Mrs. Kuperman.

Ronit smiles at Esti, tries to make light of things, to
pretend everything is normal.

ESTI

Will you have some breakfast?

Ronit seems nervous about something she has to say.

RONIT

Thank you both.. for..

They both look at Ronit.

RONIT (CONT'D)

For taking care of my father.

Dovid is upset by the thought of the Rav ill. He tries to
control his emotion.

DOVID

The Rav took care of me. Many
times... I have to go. Are you
ready Esti?

ESTI

I'll be there in a minute.

Dovid gets up, leaving Esti and Ronit awkward. Ronit and Esti
sit in silence for some moments.

ESTI (CONT'D)

Dovid has been incredibly upset.

Ronit is irritated by this.

RONIT

Do you really have to get permission from your husband? To teach a play?

ESTI

Don't Ronit...

RONIT

It's just a question.

ESTI

It's not what you're asking. It's the way you ask it.

RONIT

I'm just amazed..It's a classic text? It's not porn.

ESTI

I have to go.

Esti looks at Ronit and gets up, she puts some spare keys next to Ronit and takes her handbag.

31 E/I. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE/ DOVID'S CAR. DAY. 31

Dovid starts the car as Esti comes out of the house.

DOVID

Are you okay?

Esti nods. They drive away.

32 EXT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. DAY. 32

MOTHERS are walking their DAUGHTERS into school, the girls are in uniform.

Dovid stops outside the GIRLS' SCHOOL and Esti gets out of the car. She waves goodbye and heads toward the building. TWO SECURITY GUARDS stand outside. Several GIRLS, 12ish, with their mothers wave at Esti. One GIRL, RINA, 12, waves adamantly, smiling.

RINA

Good morning Mrs. Kuperman!

33 INT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY.

33

Esti and the imposing MRS. HANNAH SHAPIRO (50s), the headmistress, walk towards Esti's classroom.

MRS. SHAPIRO

Miss Scheinberg has been very capable. I worried as she's never had a class of her own but no..

ESTI

Good.. I appreciated the time off.
Thank you.

At the classroom Mrs. Shapiro walks on. Esti stops outside it, TEENAGE GIRLS are inside. They are singing the morning prayer. They kiss their prayer books and then they sit down. Esti looks in closer through the door window and sees --

The substitute teacher, MISS SCHEINBERG (20s), attractive, hopeful, stands at the whiteboard at front.

Esti stares at Miss Scheinberg, the young woman that she used to resemble.

Esti knocks and opens the door.

34

INT. SCHOOL. CLASSROOM. DAY.

34

Miss Scheinberg and the GIRLS turn to see Esti walk in. The girls stand up. They are bright and pleased to see Esti.

ESTI

Good morning, girls!

GIRLS

Good morning, Mrs. Kuperman!

Esti crosses to Miss Scheinberg.

ESTI

Thank you. For covering for me.

MISS SCHITZLER

It was a pleasure. Your class is very bright.

ESTI

Have you done me proud girls?

The girls smile back at her.

ESTI (CONT'D)

I'll take over now..

MISS SCHITZLER

Of course.

ESTI

(to the girls)
I missed you!

GIRL

We missed you too Mrs. Kuperman!

Miss Scheinberg crosses to her. Esti walks to the whiteboard. She smiles but she is troubled.

35 EXT. RIVKAH'S COUNCIL BLOCK. HENDON. DAY. 35

Dovid waits at a door of a large council house block. He rings (again).. He hears steps on the stairs. RIVKAH, (30s) opens the door, with a baby in her arms.

RIVKAH
Sorry.. Sorry.. The children!

DOVID
Hello Rivkah.. How are you?

RIVKAH
Better, much better thanks.

36 INT. RIVKAH'S FLAT. A FRONT ROOM. HENDON. DAY. 36

RIVKAH and AVI (30s) and Dovid sit around a coffee table. SHMULI (6) sits on the couch in a blanket in his pyjamas. He has a cold. One of a set of TWINS, a redhead, one year old, is held by Rivkah, the other is in a Moses basket near to them, also a redhead, and sleeps. There is a brown envelope on the table.

AVI
Thank you Dovid. I'll get it back to all of you, it was just impossible you know, with Rivkah being so ill?

DOVID
It's not a loan. It's from everyone....And you have the all clear now yes?

RIVKAH
I do.. I go for a check up every six months from now on.

DOVID
Wonderful..that's great... And you've got the day off school Shmuli?

Shmuli nods, happy.

RIVKAH
He didn't sleep. He's got a cold.

DOVID
Are you going to help your mother
instead?

SHMULI
No.

Shmuli smiles, naughty and easy with Dovid.

AVI
I saw they've started extending the
eruv?

DOVID
Yes. By a few miles.

SHMULI
What's an eruv?

DOVID
Come here.

Dovid indicates for Shmuli to come up into his arms. He lifts him up and takes him to the window. They are familiar, Shmuli trusts him.

DOVID (CONT'D)
You see the line over there in the
sky? Between the poles?

Shmuli nods.

DOVID (CONT'D)
That's the eruv.

RIVKAH
It's like a big circle around where
we live.

AVI
It's not an exact circle.

SHMULI
Where's the rest of it?

RIVKAH
It's all around us...
You know how before we couldn't
push the twins in their buggy on
Shabbos outside? And dad couldn't
carry his keys in the street?

Shmuli nods.

RIVKAH (CONT'D)
Now we can. Because the circle is
bigger and it becomes like your
house.

SHMULI
Can we go outside it?

AVI
You don't need to. We have
everything we need inside of it.

DOVID
You should go outside of it Shmuli,
when you're older. Then you'll know
if you want to stay inside.

Avi disagrees, but lets it go. Dovid puts Shmuli back down
and Rivkah tickles him. Shmuli laughs and struggles.

AVI
Be careful of your mother eh,
careful! No jumping on her!

Avi shakes his head, smiles, the family is well, thankfully.
Dovid watches them all, he aches for a family.

37 I/E. DOVID'S CAR/ SYNAGOGUE. DAY.

37

Dovid parks outside the synagogue.

He gets out and walks to the temple.

38 INT. SYNAGOGUE. STAIRWELL. DAY

38

Dovid walks down a corridor, where a few MEN go about their business.

KIRSCHBAUM (O.S.)

Dovid!

Dovid turns. YOSEF KIRSCHBAUM (60s) and DR. GIDEON RIGLER (50s) come up to him and shake hands.

DOVID

Good morning, Yosef. Dr. Rigler.

DR. RIGLER

Good morning.

KIRSCHBAUM

How are you, Dovid?

Dovid nods, smiling.

KIRSCHBAUM (CONT'D)

How is your speech coming along?
It will be a wonderful Hespel.

DR. RIGLER

The Rav would be very proud of you
Dovid.

DOVID

It will be hard to do justice to
his life and work.

KIRSCHBAUM

Ronit Krushka is staying with you?

DOVID

Yes, she is.

Kirschbaum and Dr. Rigler nod, unsure. Dovid smiles and he starts walking again, more tense.

39 INT. SYNAGOGUE. LIBRARY. DAY.

39

Dovid leads a study group with GAVRIEL, LEVI and AKIVA, three rabbinical newly married students, all in their 20s. They have open books before them.

GAVRIEL

"Ud-she'ha'melech bim'siboy nir'di
nosson reichoy."

DOVID

OK stop there. So what does it
mean? Give us the translation - in
English.

GAVRIEL

"While the king is at his table, my
perfume sends forth its fragrance."

DOVID

Yes - "A bundle of myrrh is my
beloved to me, that lies all night
between my breasts. My beloved is
to me as a cluster of henna blooms
in the vineyards of Ein-Gedi."

Dovid stops, sits back and motions to the others to comment.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Nu?

LEVI

Rashi makes the point...

DOVID

No - let's not think about Rashi's
commentaries for a moment.. What do
YOU think?

The students look at him, a touch shocked.

GAVRIEL

Is it that.. is it about Hashem and
Israel?

AKIVA

Or is it about sensuality?.. That
is the way in which true love
manifests itself?

DOVID

But might it also mean that between
a male and a female there is
something higher than that.

LEVI

No. The references to sensual
pleasures celebrate physical love
here.

(MORE)

LEVI (CONT'D)

The enjoyment of that love becomes,
in this context, the highest.

GAVRIEL

Perhaps.. but that is a limited
view. There are many different
forms of love.

DOVID

"See, you are fair, my love, you
are fair; your eyes are doves."

Dovid suddenly looks very tired. He takes off his glasses and closes his eyes. Pinches the bridge of his nose.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 "See, you are handsome, my beloved,
 yea, pleasing; and our bed is
 verdant. The beams of our house are
 cedar, and our rafters..."

Dovid stops.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 (puts on his glasses)
 Continue to read the commentaries
 to yourselves.

They look back to their books.

40 EXT. CEMETERY STREET. DAY 40

Ronit walks. She crosses the street towards the...

41 EXT. CEMETERY. RAV'S GRAVE. DAY 41

Ronit walks through the rows of gravestones. Makes an effort to connect.

She sees, from a distance --

Four ORTHODOX TEENAGERS dressed in black with black hats, standing before a new grave: a mound of dirt. The TEENAGERS each hold a prayer book.

Ronit moves closer. It's the Rav's grave, a mound of earth.

Ronit waits for the teenagers to leave. But they don't move.

Ronit looks around at the headstones... Finally, she loses her patience. She approaches the Rav's grave.

The teenagers watch her, with surprise and desire.

Ronit gets to the grave and tries to focus on her farewell...

Ronit stares at the teenagers, they look down, but they don't leave.

Ronit looks at the grave, again tries to calm herself... But the boys are still staring.

RONIT (IN YIDDISH)
That's my dad.

The Teenagers nod and shuffle off, awkward.

RONIT (CONT'D)
Good morning, Tatti..

Ronit looks at the earth mound and leaves, upset.

42 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOVID & ESTI'S BEDROOM. DAY. 42

Dovid unbuttons his shirt. He is in his trousers, his body is fit and attractive. Esti lies down on the beds which are pulled together. She has underwear on and pulls a cover over her. Dovid sits on the side of the bed and he takes Esti's hand which is waiting to take his. Now he takes away the cover from Esti and kisses her. Esti cradles his head and kisses him, affectionate but not passionate.

43 INT. GREENBERGS' BAKERY AND CAFE. DAY. 43

Ronit points to a particular pastry that she has been aching for. The SHOP ASSISTANT points her tongs at a pastry.

RONIT
Yes. Just one... And an apple
strudel thanks.

44 EXT. GREENBERGS' BAKERY AND CAFE. DAY 44

Outside the shop Jewish and non Jewish folk hurry about, stressed. A window cleaner cleans the large shop window. We see Ronit appear and disappear behind the foam and wiper, sat at the table and looking at the two empty chairs beside her.

45 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 45

Ronit walks down the stairs wearing a tight blue skirt with a long slit up the leg. She watches Esti and Dovid preparing the candles for Shabbos. Dovid and Esti turn to look at her. Dovid is surprised by her outfit and smiles, shaking his head. Esti seems distanced from them both.

RONIT

What? Is it too much? It's only Uncle Hartog.

DOVID

It's the Goldfarbs too. Rabbi and Rebbetzin Goldfarb.

RONIT

And he still invited me?

DOVID

I've invited you.

Esti picks up the ornate Shabbos matchbox and lights a candle. Esti waves her hands over the flames three times and brings her hands to her eyes, praying. Dovid watches, Ronit mouths the familiar words and feels the rhythm of the prayer.

ESTI

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu,
melech haolam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner
shel Shabbat.*

Ronit watches Esti, who turns to look at her. Ronit is moved by the familiar ritual. Dovid and the women look beautiful in the light of the candles.

46 EXT. HARTOG'S HOUSE. STREET. NIGHT. 46

Dovid, Esti and Ronit walk up towards Hartog's house, big and impressive. They say nothing to each other but it's not awkward.

47 INT. HARTOG'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT 47

A long table with lit candles, two Challah breads under an ornate cover. Hartog stands at the head of the table. Dovid, and RABBI GOLDFARB (70s) stand on one side, Ronit, Esti, Fruma Hartog and REBBETZIN GOLDFARB (70s) on the other. They all look at Hartog, at the head of the table, holding a silver jug in his right palm, reciting.

HARTOG

*...v'shabat kad'sh'kha b'ahavah
uv'ratzon hin'chal'tanu
Barukh atah Adonai m'kadeish
hashabat.*

ALL

Amen.

Hartog pours wine into seven small glasses. He sits down, drinks from one glass, he passes a second to Rabbi Goldfarb.

Dovid looks at Esti and Ronit, across the table. They look at him.

Rabbi Goldfarb passes Dovid two glasses. Dovid drinks from his glass and passes the other glass to Esti.

Esti drinks. Hartog passes glasses to Ronit, Fruma and Rebbetzin Goldfarb. As Esti drinks she looks at Ronit who looks back at her and drinks. Rebbetzin Goldfarb drinks and stares at Ronit and without realising it, she shakes her head, Ronit should not be here.

48

INT. HARTOG'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT

48

The food has been eaten. They are drinking coffee.

GOLDFARB

So our youngest one Basha, she has just had her second boy. And they named him Daniel, for my father.

Goldfarb smiles.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB

They live in Australia. Too far. Melbourne. Thirty seven grandchildren!

GOLDFARB

We saw your photos in a magazine.

DOVID

Your pictures of the twins.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB

But they called you Ronnie Curtis? What was wrong with your real name, Krushka? You should be proud of it.

FRUMA

Artists change their names, don't
they Moshe?

ESTI

Women change their names every day.
They take their husband's name and
their own history is gone.

Everyone looks at Esti, unsure, as she has said it gently.
Everybody is silent.

ESTI (CONT'D)

What? They do, don't they?

Fruma stares at Ronit.

FRUMA

You look so much like your mother.
You have Leah's eyes, don't you
think Moshe?

Everyone looks at Ronit.. She smiles. Hartog looks at her,
nods, affected..

GOLDFARB (TO HARTOG)

Your dear sister was taken too
soon... And now the Rav..
This must all be such a shock to
you Ronit.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB

You're away it's a shock. Of course
it is! We never thought we'd see
you again.

RONIT

I'm sorry to disappoint you...

HARTOG

Ronit.. More coffee?

RONIT

No thanks. I need to sort the house
while I'm over here.

HARTOG

Nisht Shabbos gerecht...Come to the
office and we'll talk about it.

FRUMA

You must take Leah's candlesticks
Ronit. From the house.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB

Yes of course. And then you must
give them to your children.

They wait.. Ronit says nothing, stifled by the talk of
children whilst saddened by the thought of her mother. She
half nods, feeling awkward.

FRUMA

Ronit? They must be passed on
through the mother's side.. to
carry on the bloodline.

ESTI

Perhaps Ronit doesn't want to have
children..

Everyone looks at Esti, how could anyone not want them? Esti
looks down.

RONIT (TO HARTOG)
 ..Can you help me sell the house?

Hartog puts his finger to his lips, quiet! Ronit obeys.

GOLDFARB
 How old were you Dovid when the Rav
 took you in? And taught you?
 Thirteen was it?

Dovid nods.

GOLDFARB (CONT'D)
 Dovid has been doing great work in
 the community.

DOVID
 There have been a lot of problems.
 With housing. And jobs.

FRUMA
 The youth... Even one incident of
 drugs.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB
 Nothing that we cannot deal with.
 Hashem protects us.

RONIT
 Perhaps people should stop having
 such huge families.

Hartog is becoming quietly furious with Ronit.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB
 And you're not married yet? You
 must find someone Ronit. It's not
 funny growing old alone.

RONIT
 I have good friends.

REBBETZIN GOLDFARB
 Oh, I'm sure you have lots of fun.
 But that will pass. Being married..
 Well, it's the way it should be.

Her words hit a mark with Ronit, who is quietly in pain
 amongst all the couples.

RONIT
 Is it? Or is it just institutional
 obligation?

HARTOG

Ronit.. Stop right there. Yes?

Ronit approaches it as an academic problem, not an emotional one.

RONIT

If I hadn't left here when I did..
 If I'd stayed a year longer I'd
 have been married off to whoever...
 Give it ten years in some loveless
 marriage and I might have killed
 myself. Or at least felt like doing
 it.

Esti looks down, she is upset. Ronit sees this.

RONIT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.. I should go.

FRUMA

Ronit?

Ronit gets up.

RONIT

Excuse me. Thank you Fruma..
 Sorry.. That was.. lovely.

Ronit gets up and leaves. There is an awkward silence. Dovid stands.

DOVID

I'll walk Ronit back to ours. Esti?

ESTI

You go on. I'll get my coat.

Esti looks at him, then down.

49 EXT. HARTOG'S HOUSE. STREET. NIGHT

49

Dovid catches up with Ronit who is leaving the driveway.

DOVID

Ronit..

Ronit looks back, slows a touch for Dovid to join her.

RONIT

Happy Shabbos...

They walk in time. Ronit smiles.

RONIT (CONT'D)
 Why is Rebbetzin Goldfarb so angry?
 She has a good life. What else does
 she want?

DOVID
 What do any of us want?.. Do you
 know what you really want?

Ronit shakes her head, they walk on quietly. Ronit stops now,
 she wants to cry and tries to stop herself.

RONIT
 I do. I know what I want.

Dovid stops with her, concerned.

DOVID (GENTLY)
 Ronit? What is it you want?

Ronit nods but cannot trust herself to say anything without
 crying.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 What? What is it Ronit?

RONIT
 My dad.. My dad...I want him to
 know that I loved him... Do you
 think he knew that?

DOVID
 Yes. Yes he did. He had to know
 that.

Ronit looks at him, lost. Dovid wants to hold her but is not
 allowed to. He places his hands near to her arms as if to
 suggest holding her.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 I'm so sorry Ronit. The Rav was..
 You've lost your father.

Ronit wants comfort from him and sees behind Dovid that Esti
 is standing in the street outside Hartog's house, watching
 them.

Ronit arrives at a large wigmaker's shop. She goes in.

51 INT. WIGMAKER'S SHOP. HENDON. DAY

51

Endless rows of mannequin heads sporting all kinds of hairstyles and sensible colors and cuts. A FEMALE ASSISTANT, 60s, helps another WOMAN, 50s, to find a wig. The Assistant looks at Ronit as she comes in. Both older women are very aware of Ronit being an Outsider.

ASSISTANT

Can I help you?

RONIT

I need to speak to my uncle, Mr. Hartog.

ASSISTANT

One moment.

The Assistant slowly crosses to the door to Hartog's office. Ronit looks at the various wigs, they're awful. She tries one on, it's terrible, she takes it off. The Assistant comes back in and holds up two fingers gently.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Two minutes.

RONIT

Thanks.

The Assistant goes back to helping the Woman try her wig on. Ronit can feel their disapproval and looks; she picks up a nicer dark bob wig.

ASSISTANT

I can help you in a minute if you'd like to wait?

RONIT

No no I'm fine.. Thanks.

Ronit puts it on, it looks very French new wave. A dark curtain behind a window flicks and Hartog looks through to the shop. He holds a mobile and nods at Ronit, indicates for her to wait. Ronit waits for a few moments then a knock is heard on the door from the office, Hartog's indication to his assistant.

ASSISTANT

He's ready for you now.

Ronit walks into the office, bewigged.

52

INT. WIGMAKER'S SHOP. OFFICE. DAY

52

Hartog shows Ronit into a small office with cabinet files, stacks of papers, posters of wigs. A desk facing two chairs.

HARTOG

Have a seat, please. Ronit?

Indicating her to take the wig off, but she doesn't.

RONIT

Thanks.

HARTOG

So..

They sit. He takes his time.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

How is life... are you making a living with your photos?

Ronit is a bit thrown by his questions.

RONIT

I get by.

HARTOG

You broke the Rav's heart when you left.

Ronit tries to stay strong.

RONIT

He told me to leave.

HARTOG

For Israel yes. Not for New York. He gave you the ticket, the funds.

Ronit finds this all too hard.

RONIT

Can we talk about the house?

HARTOG

It was very hard for him. Your disappearing like that...

Hartog pushes a bunch of yale keys towards her.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

These are the keys for you to gather any personal possessions.

RONIT

Thanks. Can you help me to sell it?

Ronit takes the set of keys with various key label fobs on them. Hartog opens a drawer. He looks through some papers, grabs a folder. He takes out a document and hands it to Ronit.

HARTOG

So.. you would want to honour your family Ronit? ..clause three.. read it.

Ronit looks at the small print but does not read it.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

Rav Krushka, bless his memory, left the house and everything in it to the synagogue...

Ronit makes an effort to appear strong.

RONIT

What?

HARTOG

I'm sorry if that's a shock.

RONIT

No. No it's not. It's just.. A house.

Ronit prepares to leave.

HARTOG

A father should have a child to look after him in his final hours.

RONIT

But I didn't know he was ill.

HARTOG

How could you know when you are not here?

Ronit endeavours not to cry, to be clear.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

Your mother.. My sister.. She was a wonderful woman Ronit.. a very loyal person. When Leah died Shlomo grieved deeply for her.

RONIT

I don't remember a time when he wasn't grieving for her.

HARTOG

You were all he had left.... it must be very painful for you.. Not to receive the Rav's forgiveness.

RONIT

You're a monster Moshe. All you see is your own righteousness but you ..hurt and you hurt.

Ronit stands up, sad, furious. She has forgotten she is even wearing the wig. She is enveloped by sadness about her father's further rejection of her.

HARTOG

Ronit?

He indicates the wig but Ronit starts to walk out.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

The wig!

But she is gone.

53

INT. KOSHER SUPERMARKET. DAY

53

Esti walks down an aisle with a shopping cart.

She stops in front of the canned tomatoes, conflicted. Little Shmuli comes towards her, carrying a basket.

SHMULI

Good morning, Mrs. Kuperman!

Esti turns around to see him.

ESTI

Hello, Shmuli!

RIVKAH (30s) comes down the aisle pushing a double buggy.

ESTI (CONT'D)

Rivkah, you look great. How are you all?

RIVKAH

We're good. And all the help Esti, it was very appreciated.

One of the redhead twins starts to cry inside the buggy.

RIVKAH (CONT'D)

Oh no, she'll wake up her sister.

Rivkah lifts the cover, revealing the twins. She picks up the one that's crying, starts to rock her -- too late.

Her sister wakes up and starts crying too. Esti looks on with some distance. But Rivkah puts one of the twins in Esti's arms so she's free to pick up the other one.

Instinct takes over as Esti holds the child and starts to rock her. Much to her surprise, the baby stops crying. She looks at Esti with her big baby eyes and smiles.

RIVKAH (CONT'D)

That's Shayna.

ESTI

(coos)

Hey there, Shayna...

RIVKAH (WARM)

I saw Ronit just now. She hasn't changed, has she?

ESTI

No.. No she hasn't.

Rivkah returns one baby to the buggy. Esti reluctantly returns Shayna to Rivkah.

54

EXT. KOSHER SUPERMARKET / STREETS. DAY

54

Esti comes out of the supermarket with her wheelie shopping bag and starts down the street.

Suddenly, she spots Ronit, waiting to cross, smoking, tense, in her wig. Esti stops to watch her, puzzled.

Ronit crosses the street. Esti follows her at a distance.

Ronit walks on, intense.

Esti looks at her.

Suddenly Ronit stops and turns around. She sees Esti.

RONIT

Hello..

Esti approaches Ronit.

ESTI
 (smiles)
 Are you wearing a wig?

Ronit takes it off. Puts it in her bag.

55 EXT. RAV'S HOUSE. DAY 55

Esti and Ronit get to the Rav's deserted-looking house. It's uncared for, in need of repair. Ronit finds the key on her bunch and tries to open the front door. But it sticks. Esti takes over and gives the key a pull and push, the knack of it.

56 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 56

The place is dark and stale behind closed curtains. Ronit is shocked as she discovers -- the living room has been turned into a makeshift sickroom. There's a bed with dirty linen, an oxygen tank beside it. She takes out her cigarettes, abstracted. Esti almost shouts.

ESTI
 Ronit! Not near that..

RONIT
 I wasn't going to!..

Ronit doesn't know if she was about to light up in her distraction.. But she puts her cigarettes away. She walks to the window, throws open the curtains, the glass is yellowed with the Rav's past smoking. The light reveals just how messy and rundown everything is. The bedsheets have small spots of blood. Ronit takes this in and sees a bedcover on a chair. She takes the cover and carefully lays it over the sheets to cover them.

57 OMITTED 57

58 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. HALLWAY. DAY.

58

Ronit and Esti walk towards the stairs and Esti sees a pair of slender candlesticks. A framed picture of Ronit's mother Leah next to it.

ESTI

You should take these. Your mother's candlesticks.

Ronit looks at them and the picture of her mother.

RONIT

..I can't.

Ronit walks away.

59 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. DAY

59

Ronit looks through the jumbled room, overwhelmed. Esti accompanies her. There is a battery radio. Ronit tries it and hears static. She finds some gangsta rap music and plays it as loud as she can, which is not very loud. Her rebellion is a touch feeble.

RONIT

He left it all to the synagogue.

ESTI

Would you really want it?

RONIT

Financial freedom? Of course not. That would be far too easy... I would have liked him to remember me though, in his will. Just to have left me a pipe.. to have named me.

Ronit looks at the masses of stuff, Esti watches her. Ronit turns off the radio. Silence.

RONIT (CONT'D)

I'm not going to the Hespered.
There's no point in my being here.
I'll change my ticket.

Ronit heads for the stairs, there are piles of books everywhere, the Rav was a hoarder, stacked by the wall.

60 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. UPSTAIRS. BEDROOM. DAY

60

Ronit tries to open the door to her old bedroom, Esti stands behind her. It opens a touch but has so many boxes and books in it that they can't push the door to.

RONIT

My room..

61 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. UPSTAIRS. STUDY. DAY.

61

The Study has more order than the other rooms. Endless rows of impeccable leather bound books in Hebrew. Silence. Ronit and Esti stand at the door for a moment before going in.

There's an old reading chair with a table and a lamp. Ronit walks over. On the table she finds the Rav's pipe stand, a tin of tobacco, and a book. She picks it up, turns a few pages. Enjoys it.

RONIT

That's all he did..stay in here all day with the Torah. And the commentaries on the Torah. And the notes on the commentaries, and the debates on the notes..

ESTI

It meant that we could do what we wanted.

Ronit smiles, remembering.

RONIT

..Do you think I should go back early?

Ronit really looks at Esti and for the first time Esti does not avoid her gaze. Esti puts her hands on Ronit's shoulders. Then Esti moves her hands to Ronit's chest and she puts her left hand on Ronit's breast and her right hand around Ronit's back and she puts her head to Ronit's heart.

ESTI

No. No I don't think you should leave at all. Ronit..

RONIT

Esti..? ..When I saw you.. My heart..

ESTI

I know..

Esti wants to cry. They are full of each other. Ronit and Esti breathe in this touch. Esti rocks for a moment with Ronit then kisses her. Boldly. Ronit kisses her back for some moments. They hold each other. Then Ronit backs off.

RONIT

No..

ESTI

Why? Why not?

Ronit turns away. She walks out of the room. Esti takes a moment to recompose herself. Then she follows.

62 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. HALLWAY. DAY.

62

Ronit walks down the stairs and Esti follows. At the door Ronit looks around at the dark hallway.

ESTI

Ronit..

RONIT

I'm sorry..

Ronit waits for Esti, ready for something to happen. But as Esti reaches her they look at each other. Ronit starts to open the door to go. Esti slams it shut.

ESTI

No! You don't just walk out! Not again! I waited Ronit! I waited such a long time!

They stare at each other. Esti holds Ronit's face. Ronit and Esti kiss hard and fast and passionate for a while. But again Ronit pulls away.

ESTI (CONT'D)

...Ronit.

Ronit walks out. Esti glances at the candlesticks and at Ronit walking away.

63 EXT. HENDON STREET. DAY.

63

Ronit and Esti walk down a street. Ronit studies Esti, Ronit is beyond confused.

ESTI

..It was me who rang the shul in
New York. To let you know.

Ronit stops and looks at her. Esti is self-conscious.

ESTI (CONT'D)

It was the right thing to do.

A couple of JEWISH MEN pass by on the sidewalk opposite; Esti and Ronit try to act normal. They keep walking. Esti's wheelie shopping bag is a bit awkward to wheel.

RONIT

Why did you get married Esti? Why
didn't you just leave?

ESTI

Do you remember what the Rav used
to say about marriage?

RONIT

No.

ESTI

You do..

Ronit almost smiles, remembering..

RONIT

.."Will you grow old by yourself?"

ESTI

No no.. "Vill you grow old alone,
with no family, no joys?"

Ronit remembers and almost laughs. Esti continues with the game.

ESTI (CONT'D)

"Dovid is a good boy, he has a
generous heart, and he's crazy
about you. Marry him!"

It hurts Esti to recollect the simplicity of it.

RONIT

So you were.. alright.. After I
left?

ESTI

No. I was.. ill..

RONIT
What sort of ill?

Esti shrugs.

ESTI

In my head..
The Rav was afraid for me... and if I
was going to have to sleep with a
man why not with our best friend?

RONIT

Esti..

ESTI

I think he felt marriage would
"cure" me... And it hasn't been a
disaster.

RONIT

And that's Enough? ..Do you have to
have sex every Friday?

ESTI

It's expected.

RONIT

It's medieval.

ESTI

It's not mandatory. Nobody gets
beaten if they don't feel like it.

Ronit really looks at Esti now.

ESTI (CONT'D)

What? ..

RONIT

What Happened to you?

ESTI

Nothing..You happened to me.. And
then I started teaching and .. That
became important.

RONIT

You can teach anywhere.

ESTI

I really love the girls. And I give
them ambition.

RONIT

To do what? Have seven babies and
be a great wife?

ESTI

Don't.. I'm a good teacher. I help them. To value themselves.

RONIT

But what about You?

ESTI

.. That is me.

RONIT

Do you want a cigarette?

ESTI

No. And you? Are you happy?

Ronit nods.

RONIT

I am.

Esti's happily not convinced.

ESTI

Have you been with other women?

RONIT

Not really.. and you?

Esti shakes her head. She takes Ronit's cigarette and stops to take one puff of it. Esti loves the cigarette puff and this makes Ronit smile. She passes it back to Ronit and they start walking again. Ronit laughs.

ESTI

What?

RONIT

Your bag. It's deeply erotic.

Esti shakes her head, smiles. This is all madness.

RONIT (CONT'D)

Let me take it.

ESTI

No. You're not frum. You don't get one.

RONIT

Please?

ESTI

No.. Okay, you can have a turn.

Ronit takes the wheelie bag, Esti takes Ronit's cigarette and they walk on.

RONIT

And children?

ESTI

I have three. In the bag. All redheads... It didn't happen... Everyone prayed for us. The Wives all think Dovid's wasted himself on a barren woman.

RONIT

They don't.

ESTI

They do. They lust for him.

RONIT

But do you want to have children?

ESTI

Yes. Desperately. But then sometimes I think I willed it this way. The air here is maybe too thin. For me. For a child.

They get to the edge of the park and go in.

64

EXT. PARK. HENDON. DUSK

64

Ronit and Esti walk through the deserted park. They stop under a white tree.

RONIT

I used to love this park...

ESTI

It's insane that you're here. We're here.

Esti laughs.. Ronit is surprised to be suddenly so moved by Esti. They hold hands as they walk but Esti is cautious.

65

EXT. PARK. TENNIS COURT. NIGHT.

65

Ronit looks over at the old tennis court. Esti walks towards the gate of the court and looks back at Ronit who follows her. Esti goes into and behind the steel gate and parks her wheelie bag. Ronit follows her. Esti stands against a brick wall.

They look at each other for a moment. The air is heightened for them -- they kiss again, in the half light, against the wall, long and passionate.

Then a flickering light. They look like they are in a silent movie. Ronit and Esti break away from each other to see why the light is happening.

Standing fifteen yards away, staring at them -- a couple, Hinda and her husband, LEV (40s). Hinda wears a long skirt and holds a tennis racquet. Lev holds a racquet too.

HINDA

Ronit? Is that you?

Esti turns white and turns away from Hinda. They're not sure how much the couple saw. Esti turns and disappears down a path and past a building.

HINDA (CONT'D)

What are you doing in here?

The light comes on and bright now. Hinda and Lev start walking towards Ronit, who stands there, not knowing what to do.

RONIT

I'm just.. seeing the old places.

HINDA

This is my husband, Lev. This is Ronit, the Rav's daughter. Remember I told you all about her?

Lev stares at Ronit sternly. Ronit shields her eyes from the bright light.

RONIT

Hi Lev. How's it going?

Lev is obviously resentful of her presence.

LEV

I hear that you're attending the Hespel. The Rav was a truly great man.

Lev's coldness infuriates Ronit.

RONIT

I know. I was his daughter. Would you like a cigarette?

They both shake their heads.

HINDA

Was that Rebbetzin Kuperman?

RONIT

Who?

HINDA

Whose shopping is that?

Ronit looks at the wheelie bag.

RONIT

Mine.

A few seconds of tense silence. No one knows what to say.

RONIT (CONT'D)

Well.. Have a good match.

HINDA

It's really good to see you. Really good. So good.

More silence... No one moves. Lev is still glaring at Ronit. The tension won't subside.

RONIT

Can I?

Ronit indicates Hinda's racquet which she gives to her. Ronit takes a ball from Lev. Ronit bounces it a bit then serves an amazing thwack of an ace to the other side. Ronit takes out her wig from her bag and gives it to a puzzled Hinda. Ronit leaves, lighting up a cigarette as she goes. She even manages to look good trailing the wheelie bag, New Yorkish.

66 EXT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. NIGHT 66

Esti runs up to the house, in turmoil. Dovid's car is not outside. She goes into the house.

67 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. HALLWAY/STAIRS. NIGHT 67

Esti runs up the stairs.

68 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. BATHROOM. NIGHT. 68

Esti runs into the bathroom, she turns on the shower. She sits on the edge of the bath. Takes her wig off, starts to undress.

68A INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. BATHROOM. NIGHT 68A

The shower is running and Esti is in it but we do not really see her, it is shower curtain and steam. A knock at the door.

DOVID (O.S.)
Esti, is that you? Are you alright?

Esti tenses up.

ESTI
Yes. I'm fine.

69 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LANDING/BATHROOM. NIGHT 69

Dovid waits outside the bathroom door.

DOVID
Esti?

The shower stops.

ESTI (O.S.)
I'll be out in a minute.

DOVID
What happened?

ESTI (O.S.)
Who? What?

Dovid opens the door a little.

DOVID
You ran into the house like you were being chased?

Esti is about to step out of the shower, nude, dripping wet. She stares at Dovid defiantly.

Dovid looks at her. Feels his intrusion.

Suddenly, Esti steps out, still dripping, comes up to Dovid and hugs him, tight and long. Dovid enjoys the embrace. He starts to kiss her passionately. Esti almost responds but then doesn't.

DOVID (CONT'D)
Dry yourself. You'll get ill.

He hands her a towel.

70 EXT. AVENUE/ HENDON PUB. NIGHT 70

Ronit crosses an avenue with Esti's wheelie bag, heads for a bar.

71 INT. HENDON PUB. NIGHT 71

Suddenly, Ronit's back in this century: noise, music, a regular CROWD wearing regular clothes, texting..

Ronit sits at the bar. The BARMAN comes over.

BARMAN
What will it be?

RONIT
A pint of lager... No.. a double
vodka and tonic.

BARMAN
Ice and lemon?

RONIT
Everything. If you have a straw
I'll have one. And an umbrella.

The barman smiles, nods. Ronit looks around. A TV is showing a football match, a goal is scored.. A group of MEN cheer.

Ronit takes out her mobile, checks her e-mail.

The Barman puts down her drink. It has a mini umbrella and straw. Ronit drinks from the straw, a kid and an adult.

INSERT -- RONIT'S PHONE

The magazine cover with the Old tattooed Man is on it. And pictures and text from an article "Ancient Patterns."

Ronit looks at the photos... they're so distant right now. She looks at the Man.

RONIT (CONT'D WHISPERS) (CONT'D)
The world has stopped.

She sighs and sucks the last dregs through her straw and opens and closes the mini umbrella, not knowing what to do.

72 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. HALLWAY/LANDING. NIGHT 72

Ronit walks in. Everything's dark except for a single lamp they've left on for her. She turns it off. The ritual candle still burns in the living room.

Ronit walks up the stairs, trying to be quiet, but at the top she walks into a small pile of books on the floor.

RONIT

Shit.. sorry.

A small lamp is on underneath Dovid and Esti's door. Ronit walks slowly, but the floorboards CREAK.

She walks up to Esti's door and listens.

73 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOVID & ESTI'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 73

Dovid and Esti lie in their beds, in the dark.

But Dovid is awake, hearing every creak outside in the corridor. He sees -- the shadow of Ronit's feet under the door.

DOVID (SHOUTS)

Ronit? Are you okay?

RONIT (O.S.)

Yes. Sorry I.. Walked into the books.

DOVID

We're in bed. Good night.

In her bed, with her back to him -- Esti is also awake.

74 INT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. CLASSROOM. DAY 74

Esti is in her classroom, teaching. 'OTHELLO AND DESDEMONA' is written on the board with lots of different lines saying character traits in different girls' writing under the two names.

ESTI

So.. what stands out for you in the play?

The class look at her, thinking. SARA puts her hand up.

SARA

The handkerchief.. With the strawberries on it.

ESTI

Why did that stay with you do you think? Do you remember what Othello says about how it was made?

Rita puts her hand up.

RINA

He says the red of it was dye from virgin's blood.

ESTI

That's right.

Sara puts up her hand.

SARA

And the lies. How Iago just lies more and more to him. And you don't really know why.

RINA

And the killing Mrs Kuperman. That was horrible.

ESTI

It was. Her death is very shocking.

Miss Scheinberg comes in and stays at the door.

MISS SCHEINBERG

I'm sorry to interrupt Mrs. Kuperman but Mrs. Shapiro needs to see you.

The GIRL puts her hand down. Esti looks at the other teacher warmly, but Miss Scheinberg looks troubled.

(CONT'D)

ESTI
Thank you Miss Scheinberg. I'll go
in the break.

MISS SCHEINBERG
"Immediately", she said.

ESTI
Oh..Keep reading the scenes in
pairs, girls.

Esti starts to leave. Miss Scheinberg stays to look after the
class.

75 INT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY. 75

Esti steps out into the corridor and walks towards Mrs.
Shapiro's office. She is nervous, terrified that this might
be to do with Ronit.

76 INT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. CORRIDOR/HEADMISTRESS' OFFICE. DAY 76

Esti knocks on the Headmistress's door.

MRS. SHAPIRO (O.S.)
Come in.

Esti enters and finds Mrs. Shapiro waiting for her... with
Hinda and Lev. They all stare at her icily.

MRS. SHAPIRO (CONT'D)
Close the door, Esti. Have a seat.

77 INT. SYNAGOGUE. SMALL SYNAGOGUE. DAY 77

A group of Rabbis surround Dovid, who recites the Torah.

DR. RIGLER (50s) is there too and is vaguely watching Dovid who seems distracted, uncomfortable, he can't lose himself in prayer. Dovid tries harder to connect.

78

INT. SYNAGOGUE. HALL. DAY

78

DR. RIGLER (50s) addresses Dovid in front of several other MEN including GOLDFARB.

RIGLER

Dovid.. You know that we would all be very happy if you chose to take on the Rav's work.

Dovid nods, thinks.

RIGLER (CONT'D)

There are always obstacles of course to anything that is challenging.

DOVID

It would be hard to measure up to the Rav in any meaningful way.

RIGLER

And your wife. She would welcome it if you took over the shul?

DOVID

Esti will be happy with whatever decision I make.

RIGLER

And Ronit Krushka? We were surprised at her being here.

DOVID

Ronit is grieving. And we will make her very welcome at the hesped.

GOLDFARB

Certainly.

RIGLER

And your wife? She is not distracted by Ronit Krushka's return?

DOVID

Why should she be? This is my house you are talking about. And I keep it in order.

RIGLER

Then do so.

Goldfrab breaks the tension.

GOLDFARB

Let us discuss the arrangements for
the choir now..

Dovid stares at Rigler, angry but trying to be flexible.

79 EXT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. DAY

79

Esti walks out of school. The TWO SECURITY GUARDS are present. A few PARENTS meet their CHILDREN. Ronit walks towards Esti, but Esti is very troubled to see her. She walks past Ronit without looking at her, indicating with a look that Ronit must follow her down a street.

RONIT

Esti?

Esti shoots her a look: *not here*. She walks off down the street. Ronit follows her.

Esti is uneasy, turns to see if anybody is watching. Esti keeps going, Ronit after her.

RONIT (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

Esti nods, they turn a corner.

80 EXT. HENDON STREET. DAY

80

This street has fewer people. Esti relaxes a little. Finally she turns to Ronit as they keep walking.

RONIT

What's happened? .. Esti?

Esti walks beside her, gathers herself.

ESTI

Yesterday ...I behaved like an adolescent.

RONIT

What?

ESTI
It was stupid. Senseless.

RONIT
Esti.. Did someone say something?
At school?

Esti looks at Ronit, longing and guilt clashing inside of her.

ESTI
Yes.. And I live here...

RONIT
Tell me.. What did they say?

They get to a corner, wait for a car to pass. Ronit looks at Esti -- her outfit, her headscarf, her neck. She feels moved... and attracted. But also Ronit feels a touch foolish and exposed.

ESTI
The headmistress... It doesn't matter. We need to stop this.

RONIT
Okay...

Ronit is really upset, trying not to cry. Esti sees this and can't bear it.

ESTI
Ronit.. Please...I can't do this.

RONIT
.. Okay.

Ronit is trying to be brave..Esti tries to find the right words.

ESTI
We try here Ronit. We try to lead a good life.

RONIT (GENTLE)
I know.. So do I.

ESTI
I do believe.. Profoundly..
(MORE)

ESTI (CONT'D)
The word of Hashem is my life.

Ronit nods. She tries to gain her reason over her emotion.

RONIT
... I'll leave. Tomorrow.

ESTI
I don't want you to go.

RONIT
Esti.. I didn't expect any of
this...

ESTI
No.

RONIT
I thought it would be simple.. I'd
be here a few days and then I'd
leave..

Esti nods her head, it's the same for her.

Ronit touches Esti's face. She looks at Ronit with longing, but again starts to feel conflicted. PEOPLE walk past them and look. Ronit and Esti look at each other, lost, found...

RONIT (CONT'D)

.. Let's go somewhere else.. Just for a few hours. Come on.

- 81 INT. TUBE. DAY 81
- Esti and Ronit stand in a full carriage, pressed close together. There is a party of OLDER TEENAGE GIRLS in their track suits going home from playing sport, looking at their phones and gossiping. Esti closes her eyes and breathes in Ronit. She opens her eyes, they look at each other, Ronit gently leans her head against Esti's neck. They subtly caress through their necks and heads and even the touch of Ronit's hair upon Esti's neck is amazing. They are completely turned on.
- 82 INT. TUBE STATION. ESCALATOR. DAY. 82
- Esti and Ronit stand on the right hand side of a long escalator. They are still connected and do not move as other people pass them on their left hand side, hurrying.
- 83 EXT. CENTRAL LONDON STREET. TUBE STATION. DAY 83
- Ronit and Esti walk through the frantic central London CROWD. Esti looks at the people from all over the world. Her Haredi attire doesn't stand out particularly. Ronit takes Esti's hand. Esti allows it. Loves the touch.
- 84 EXT. CENTRAL LONDON. BACK STREET. DAY 84
- Ronit and Esti walk down a street full of advertisements. Tense but happy. Ronit stops and kisses Esti, in the middle of the street, they keep kissing, it's wonderful. They look at each other, with a mixture of fear and excitement. They turn a corner.
- 85 INT. HOTEL. RECEPTION. DAY. 85
- Esti waits nervously next to Ronit as a lift arrives, a BUSINESSMAN walks out. Esti and Ronit walk into the lift. It closes.

86 INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY

86

Ronit and Esti stand in the hotel room. Ronit closes the door behind her. Esti goes to the window and opens it and looks out at the people below, the colours of life. Ronit stands behind her and puts her arms around her and looks outside too. Esti turns to her and they kiss.

Esti takes off her headscarf, then her wig. Her hair is cut short and she looks beautiful to Ronit, strangely modern suddenly. They make love, at last unhindered and uninhibited.

They are sheer chemistry, understanding... and excruciating pleasure.

They whisper urgently between their kisses --

RONIT
I missed you.

ESTI
I missed you...

RONIT
Esti....

ESTI
Ronit.. Ronit.

87 LATER --

87

Esti and Ronit lie on the bed, sated, happy.

ESTI
Feel..

Esti takes Ronit's hands and puts them on Esti's thighs.. They are twitching. Ronit smiles. They look at each other. Esti kisses Ronit's hand.

ESTI (CONT'D)
We smell the same.

Ronit kisses her. They touch each other, it's wonderful.

Ronit runs her hand through Esti's short hair.

Esti smiles, feels post coital sleepy. They caress each other in silence for a few seconds. Then settle into holding each other.

ESTI (CONT'D)

I used to think about you in New York...with your new friends.. I tried to imagine your room..Or us on the subway...I wrote the time zones down and the hours so I knew what time you were awake and asleep.

87A LATER

87A

The room is darker. They have half dozed. Esti switches on a light. Ronit looks at her. Esti gazes at the door.

RONIT

What?

Esti hesitates for a moment.

ESTI

I was thinking of the Rav walking
in on us...

(in Yiddish)

"Oh Hashem, strike me dead!"

His face.

RONIT

Don't.

Ronit doesn't want to think about him. She lights up a cigarette.

ESTI

..What?

Ronit smiles, she is happy. There is a serenity in Esti that wasn't there before and makes her incredibly attractive. Ronit sees it. She touches Esti's skin.

RONIT

I want to take your picture.

ESTI

For the Jewish Messenger?

Esti laughs. Ronit laughs and jumps up from bed, finds her handbag and takes out her camera. She points it at Esti who shakes her head.

RONIT

Look at me.

Esti looks at Ronit and ignites. She looks so beautiful. Esti is half naked and so happy and free. Ronit shoots, CLICK.

88 INT. SYNAGOGUE. SUCCAH. DAY.

88

Dovid and other RABBIS, clipboards in hand, check practical details for the Hespel.

Behind them, two DELIVERY MEN are dropping off crates of wine, while other Rabbis count and sign for them.

YOUNG RABBI

(reads)

...Waldorf salad, three-bean salad,
barley salad, tabbouleh salad,
Moroccan salad.

The Rabbis nod.

YOUNG RABBI (CONT'D)

Fish: Poached salmon, fried fish
balls, sweet and salty. Smoked
salmon, smoked mackerel, smoked
trout...

Dovid is checking the items in his own list.

MRS. SHAPIRO (O.S.)

Rabbi Kuperman?

Everyone looks up. Mrs. Shapiro is standing at the door. Dovid feels exposed.

89 EXT. SYNAGOGUE. SUCCAH. DAY.

89

Dovid comes out to the corridor with Mrs. Shapiro.

DOVID

Mrs. Shapiro.. We're just preparing
for the Hespel.

MRS. SHAPIRO

Forgive me, Rabbi Kuperman. It's
about Rebbetzin Kuperman. Something
has happened.

DOVID

To Esti? Is she hurt?

MRS. SHAPIRO

Nothing like that... Can we go
somewhere? (private)

Dovid senses her enjoying the drama..and won't move.

DOVID

Go on..

Dovid regards her coldly.

MRS. SHAPIRO

Lev and Hinda Berdichter came to see me...

DOVID

And?

MRS. SHAPIRO

Mr. Berdichter and his wife... in the park... They saw Rebbetzin Kuperman and Miss Krushka... in a rather confusing situation....They were.. in each other's arms.. but not chastely.

Dovid doesn't know how to react. Dovid stares at her unsympathetically.

DOVID

It is a great sin to spread false tales Mrs. Shapiro..or listen to them. Thank you.

Dovid walks away from her.

90 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOWNSTAIRS/UPSTAIRS/ATTIC ROOM. 90 NIGHT.

Dovid gets home. All the lights are out. He turns them on as he goes.

DOVID

Esti?

There's no one in the living room.

No one in the kitchen.

Dovid goes upstairs, opens the door of his room: also empty.

He walks into the attic room, nothing. He stands there, looking at Ronit's things.

91 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. LATER. NIGHT. 91

Dovid sits in the living room. He stares at the ritual candle, which is almost finished.

Suddenly the flame starts to flicker and finally the flame dies. Dovid's expression hardly changes; he stares at the plume of white smoke that rises.

92 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOVID & ESTI'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 92

Dovid stands by his bed, undressing into his boxers and vest. Esti comes in and closes the door. They look at each other in silence. Dovid starts to drag his bed towards Esti's, joining them. Esti ignores him pointedly. She sits on her bed with her back to him.

ESTI

Don't..

DOVID

We need to be close Esti. Ronit coming back is nothing. You know that don't you? She'll be gone in a few days and then it will be us again.

ESTI

Dovid..

DOVID

You were infatuated with each other once.. A crush..But this.. Us..

Dovid stands in front of her. Esti finally looks up at him. Dovid kisses her face... but Esti is cold.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Esti?

ESTI

What?

DOVID

Are you here?

She doesn't answer.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Esti..tell me what's going on.

ESTI

Ronit will be gone soon.

DOVID

I'd do anything for you Esti. You know that don't you?

ESTI
Yes... I'm sorry ..

DOVID
For?

ESTI
Anything.. That might hurt you.

He takes this in. Sighs. Gets into bed. He really tries to understand.

DOVID
What's happened between you two?

ESTI
Nothing. Nothing's happened.

Esti resumes changing, mechanically, her back to him. But her face reveals -- she's suffering too.

93 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. BATHROOM. DAY. 93

Esti closes the door. She feels nausea but cannot be sick.

She throws water on her face and looks at herself in the mirror.

Suddenly it dawns on her -- like a bucket of ice water. She puts her hand on her stomach and feels it.

Esti looks terrified.

94 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY. 94

Dovid and Esti sit at the table. Dovid has just finished eating breakfast. Esti takes his plate to the sink. Dovid notices that she hasn't touched her food. He looks at her -- she's rinsing out dishes. With the thought of the pregnancy Esti has a strange new life about her, bolder, more questioning although with an underlying fear.

DOVID
Mrs. Shapiro made a formal
complaint about you and Ronit.

ESTI
What? She came to you?

DOVID
Yes.

Esti looks at him. Then turns back again. Dovid loses his patience, he walks up to her and turns her around.

DOVID (CONT'D)
Esti.. Tell me the truth.

ESTI
What?... I kissed Ronit.

DOVID
You kissed her.

Esti looks at him, he takes this in, is it all of the truth?

ESTI
Yes.

DOVID
You kissed her.

ESTI
I'm sorry.

Dovid suddenly feels the anger of it. He grabs Esti by the wrists.

DOVID
Esti.. What are you doing to us?
You think it's okay to just
bulldoze our life like this?

ESTI
Dovid.. Don't!..I've tried! I have!

DOVID
What do you want? To be hurt again?
Has Ronit asked you to go back with
her? No! She'll go back to her
friends, her men!.. And you? What's
wrong with you, Esti? What is it?
Tell me!

Esti just looks at him. Dovid lets go, frustrated, he walks away from her.

DOVID (CONT'D)
We've always been honest with each
other. We have that at least.

ESTI
Have we though? Have we?

DOVID
Of course we have.

ESTI
I got the message to Ronit about
her father! I wanted her to come
back..

DOVID
No, no... She's taking advantage of
you and you don't see it. You're
blind!

ESTI
No one is taking advantage of
anyone. I wanted it to happen.
And when we were girls It was the
same... I've always wanted it.

DOVID
What did you do yesterday? You and
Ronit?

He stares at Esti, her look tells him.. Everything. Dovid
walks out of the room.

95 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. ATTIC GUEST ROOM LANDING. DAY. 95

Ronit has heard them argue from the landing.

She listens to the door slam and Dovid go outside.

96 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. STAIRS. DAY. 96

Esti remains motionless for a few long seconds, processing
everything. Then she walks up the stairs..

97 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/ STAIRS. MORNING. 97

Esti gets to the top and Ronit is there.

RONIT
You should leave him.

ESTI
And where would I go?

Esti looks at Ronit, a challenge to her, Ronit cannot answer, she can't commit to them.

Esti looks at her, strong but hurt.

ESTI (CONT'D)

When you left.. I wrote and wrote.

RONIT

I wrote back to you.

ESTI

Three postcards. It wasn't enough
Ronit.

RONIT

You don't have to be a victim Esti?
You can do what you want.

ESTI

I'm not a victim..

RONIT

You're unhappy..

ESTI

And you? I look at you and.. you're
just trapped somewhere else, in a
bigger place.. in a different way..

The words resonate with Ronit but she is in denial.

RONIT

I'm not.

ESTI

Really? .. I'm late for school.

Esti stares at her then walks away.

98 I/E. DOVID'S CAR/ HENDON STREETS. DAY 98

Dovid drives slowly. He's troubled, he has never been so
angry before.

Dovid stops at a red light. He switches the radio on.
Classical music. He turns it up loud.

Beside Dovid he sees a cherry picker machine with two men on
it in high viz jackets placing the eruv lines up on high with
thick thread and poles to mark the eruv. It used to be so
important but it seems irrelevant now.

99 OMITTED 99

100 I/E. DOVID'S CAR/ HARTOG'S HOUSE. DAY

100

Dovid slams the door of his car. He walks towards Hartog's house. He'd rather not be there. He sighs and knocks at the door.

101 INT. GIRLS' SCHOOL. CLASSROOM. MORNING. 101

Esti sits at her desk, completely lost in thought, while all the 12 year old GIRLS wait for her next exercise. SARA raises her hand.

SARA
Mrs. Kupermann?.. Mrs. Kuperman?

Esti glances at Sara.

SARA (CONT'D)
We've all finished.

Esti nods, perturbed.

ESTI
Excuse me Sara.. Excuse me girls.

She gets up and walks out.

102 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOVID & ESTI'S BEDROOM. DAY. 102

Ronit hovers on the threshold of Dovid and Esti's bedroom. She walks in, feeling like a trespasser. She sees the two beds. She sees Esti's shoes next to her bed and her tights hanging on the end. She sees a pile of books next to Dovid's bed. On the top is "Day by Day" by Rav Shlomo Krushka. "Thoughts on Life and Faith." Ronit picks it up and looks at the photo of her father on the back.

103 INT. HARTOG'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 103

The WIVES have prepared a feast. The GUESTS are enjoying the food and drinks, including Kirschbaum and the CHOIR. There are some suitcases stacked near the wall.

Dovid shakes hands with one of the choir. The Hendon Rabbis stand around the choir who talk quietly of the Rav, we cannot hear them. One of the choir nods and feels the pain of the Rav's passing; he starts to sing under his breath. Another of the choir moves his head to the rhythm of the song and joins in and so does another couple. They are singing gently together for hope.

Dovid enjoys the singing but Kirschbaum puts his hand on Dovid's shoulder and leads him to a door. He shows him in.

104 INT. HARTOG'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY

104

Hartog, Goldfarb, Rigler and the other Rabbis of the Board turn to look at Dovid. Kirschbaum closes the door.

HARTOG

Dovid, please, have a seat.

Dovid remains standing.

HARTOG (CONT'D)

There have been rumors Dovid.

KIRSCHBAUM

About your wife.

GOLDFARB

The community respects and admires you.

Dovid tries to keep his head.

HARTOG

We have found a highly recommended seminary for Esti in Israel.

KIRSCHBAUM

It provides time for reflection, for turning to Hashem... and Esti can spend some time with her parents there?

Dovid is outraged.

DOVID

Did you just say that?.. That you want to send my wife away?

HARTOG

Temporarily.

GOLDFARB

For her own good.

DOVID

Esti is not going anywhere..I decide where my wife goes.

A heavy silence that no one dares break. Hartog looks sternly at Dovid.

HARTOG

Dovid..Ronit Krushka will not be endured at the Hespel. Please convey that to her.

DOVID

I will not be dictated to Moshe! Ronit Krushka is the Rav's only child.

HARTOG

And do you think he would want a non believer to be present at his hesped?

DOVID

I do yes.. But only Hashem and the Rav know the answer to that.

HARTOG

You want to protect the woman who is shaming you and your wife?

DOVID

There is only shame where shame is felt. And I feel none. We will welcome Ronit with grace. She is in mourning for the Rav.

HARTOG

Dovid.. Her presence will not be tolerated. And your behaviour is not befitting to this week of mourning!

DOVID

You think I'm not in mourning? That I do not grieve?

Dovid, bereft, angry, looks at them all and walks out of the room.

105 INT. GREENBERGS' CAFE AND BAKERY. DAY.

105

Ronit sits with a coffee and two cakes and upon a plate by the main window. She looks at "their table", now being used by strangers. The queue of cakes is three very frum women in dark clothes. More orthodox costumers surround Ronit, who cannot eat and simply stares out of the window, isolated.

106 INT. SYNAGOGUE. OFFICE CORRIDOR/PRIVATE ROOM. DUSK.

106

Dovid picks up some keys from an office and walks through a corridor and unlocks a door. Then down another corridor and he unlocks a second door. Then a third into a small and amazing library. It is full of rare hebraic texts. On a table are some plastic cups and a full bottle of malt whiskey. He pours a glass and starts to drink it. He looks at the books, puts his finger along the spines of these precious texts.

107 INT. SYNAGOGUE. PRIVATE ROOM. NIGHT. 107

Dovid sits on the floor. He is bereft, confused and profoundly sad.

108 EXT. HENDON STREET. NIGHT. 108

Dovid, half drunk, steps out of his car, which is still running and pees into the bushes. The relief is great. It seems to him that all of life is constraint and then relief for a few seconds.

109 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 109

Ronit walks in and finds Esti preparing dinner, with her back turned.

Esti senses Ronit and stops chopping. Ronit takes off her coat and puts her bag down.

Esti turns around... They look at each other, their eyes full of unanswered questions.

ESTI
How are you?

Ronit shrugs.

RONIT
Okay. You?

ESTI
I'm .. Fine.

The front door opens. They both go quiet. Dovid is coming in. He is not drunk but sort of fevered, still holding his whiskey.

ESTI (CONT'D)
Dovid.. Do you want some dinner?

Dovid tries to sober up.

DOVID
.. Yes.. Yes let's eat something.

He does not sit down at the table but just stands and looks at the three place settings. He places the whiskey on the table. He pours out three whiskeys and raises one for himself and to the women.

DOVID (CONT'D)

L'chaim!

110

INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

110

Ronit and Dovid sit at the table. Esti serves some pasta. She sits with them. Dovid prays with his eyes closed, Ronit and Esti watch him, nervous.

DOVID

*...Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech
Haolam, borai minai mezonot.*

Dovid opens his eyes and looks at them.

They start to eat, in silence... only the sound of the CUTLERY against the plates, the three of them trapped in an impossible situation.

Dovid notices that Esti can't eat, about to crack from the pressure. He is quietly raging but abstracted through the drink and the situation.

DOVID (CONT'D.. TO ESTI) (CONT'D)

You're not eating..

ESTI

No..

RONIT

I've booked a flight back. I'll be leaving tonight.

DOVID

Oh.. Good.. That's good..

Esti is wracked by the situation and by her being pregnant.

RONIT

I hope that the hespel goes well..

DOVID

It will.. Now it will. And you Esti?.. What will you do?

ESTI

Dovid... It's so.. complicated..

DOVID (TO ESTI)

Please.. try.. Try to explain it to me..

ESTI

I can't.

DOVID

Ah..

RONIT
I'm going to pack.

DOVID
The complication was your coming here Ronit.. It would have been much simpler if you'd stayed at home. You've ignored us for years...You should have continued to do that.

ESTI
Excuse me..

Esti gets up and leaves the table and goes upstairs. Dovid stares at Ronit.

DOVID
What will you do when you go back?

RONIT
I'm sorry.. That I've hurt you.

Dovid shakes his head, puts his head in his hands.

111 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. HALLYWAY/LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 111

The house is in shadows, completely silent. Ronit's large suitcase is there and her holdall. Esti walks down the stairs with a large package in her hand, wrapped. She puts it into Ronit's holdall. She hears Ronit on the stair now and watches her walk down to her.

ESTI
Ronit?.. You're leaving again?

Ronit looks at her: "Yes". Esti nods, defiantly.

ESTI (CONT'D)
..It's easier to leave....

RONIT
Esti..

Ronit is devastated, she touches Esti's face. She invites Esti to kiss her but Esti simply looks at her. Ronit retreats, takes her bags and steps outside.

111A EXT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE 111A

The DOOR SLAMS behind her, devastating.

- 112 EXT. HIGH STREET. NIGHT 112
Shaken, Ronit walks down a street pulling her large suitcase and holdall.
She hails a lone taxi.
- 113 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DOVID & ESTI'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 113
Esti looks over at Dovid, fast asleep in his bed.
- 114 EXT. HENDON UNDERPASS. NIGHT. 114
Esti walks through a tiled underpass, lit brutally.
- 115 INT. NIGHT BUS. NIGHT. 115
Esti sits on the top deck of a night bus. All manner of NIGHTHAWKS are on it, CLUBBERS and CLEANERS and tired people. Esti is both fascinated and nervous.
- 116 EXT. ALL NIGHT PHARMACY. NIGHT 116
Everything is shut except for the 24 hour Pharmacy. There is not a soul about. We see Esti through the window, searching the aisles then taking a product.
- 117 INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT 117
Esti sits on the hotel bed which she and Ronit shared. She has nothing except the paper bag from the pharmacy. A glass of water next to her bed. She looks at the bag, ready to open it. She looks lonely and conflicted. She stands up and begins to pray. She rocks a little with it.
- 118 EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT. WAITING AREA. DAWN 118
Ronit tries to sleep on some fixed chairs, she is deeply uncomfortable and the airport is deserted bar a few WORKERS. One FEMALE CLEANER, Polish, 50s, pushes an industrial vacuum cleaner around, it makes a loud noise and Ronit wakes with it.

119 INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT. CHECK IN DESK. DAWN

119

Ronit stands in line to check-in her large suitcase at the counter. Her mobile RINGS.

RONIT
Hello? ... Dovid..? ..What? No she's
not with me..

Ronit listens for a moment. She gets upset.

RONIT (CONT'D)
When did you last see her?...
She'll be back..

SOMEBODY behind her nudges her. It's Ronit's turn.

RONIT (CONT'D)
I have to go now. I'll call you
when I've gone through security.

She hangs up and goes to the counter.

120 INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT. SECURITY CHECK. DAWN

120

Ronit puts her carry-on wheelie bag and holdall in the X-ray machine. She goes through the metal detector.

The AGENT checking the monitor calls her.

AGENT
Is this your bag?

Ronit sees, IN THE X-RAY MONITOR -- the thin metal shape of the candlesticks in negative colors.

AGENT (CONT'D)
Is that metal?

RONIT
.. Yes.

The image hits her.

RONIT (CONT'D)
They're candlesticks.. They're not
mine.

AGENT
They belong to someone else?

Ronit speaks almost to herself.

RONIT
They're my mother's...

AGENT
Your mother? Is she travelling?

Ronit is suddenly hit by the fact that she has no parents.

RONIT
No... no she died.

AGENT
You can't take them with you.

Another AGENT unwraps and hands the candlesticks to the first AGENT. Ronit stares at them.

RONIT
And my father died.

AGENT
You can't take them on the plane.
You'll have to leave them here.

RONIT
I ... I can't.

The whole of the last week hits Ronit and she is paralyzed by it. Ronit feels like an abandoned child.

RONIT (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry ..I thought I
could leave them behind.. but I
can't.. I can't.

AGENT
Are you alright?

RONIT
Yes.. No..

Ronit cannot move for a moment.. Other PEOPLE are having to walk past her.

AGENT
Do you want some water?

RONIT
No. I just need to go back.

The Agent waits for her to come to. Another Agent comes around from behind with a plastic chair for her. .

AGENT
Alright?

Ronit sits down carefully in the chair, disorientated.

RONIT
I can't leave. I can't get on the plane.

The Agent, puzzled, gets onto his walkie talkie. Ronit waits.

121 EXT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. DAY. 121

Ronit gets out of a cab with her luggage. Dovid is leaving the house, going to look for Esti.

DOVID
She's gone Ronit. She's left me.

RONIT
She won't have just disappeared..
Wait..

Ronit goes up to the house and puts her luggage inside. Dovid gets into his car. Ronit comes down and tries to open the passenger door but he has locked it. She taps the window. He unlocks it. Ronit gets in and they drive away.

122 OMITTED. 122

123 I/E. DOVID'S CAR. DAY

123

Ronit and Dovid ride in his car.

DOVID
Did you want this to happen?
Between you two?

RONIT
I didn't think about it.

DOVID
Exactly! And now?

Ronit doesn't know what to say.

DOVID (CONT'D)
You have a choice Ronit.. Your
being here is destroying us.

RONIT
Your marriage existed for years
before I arrived Dovid, I only just
got here.

123A EXT. RAV'S HOUSE. DAY

123A

They get to the Rav's house, get out of the car.

The front door is locked. Dovid unlocks it with a key from
his large ring of keys..

124 INT. RAV'S HOUSE. HALLWAY/ LIVING ROOM DAY 124

The house is completely empty, ready for the renovations to begin.

Dovid runs upstairs.

DOVID (O.S.)
Esti...! Esti?

It hits Ronit to see the house like that -- her childhood home and all that remained of her father, cleared away, gone.

Dovid returns to the living room. Ronit looks at the empty walls.

125 INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY. 125

Esti lies motionless on the bed. The paper bag is on the floor. She is in the deepest of sleeps and deathly pale.

125A INT/EXT. DOVID'S CAR. STREET NEAR PARK. DAY 125A

Dovid and Ronit drive along in silence.

RONIT
Try the park.

DOVID
I can't live without her Ronit.
She's my soul mate - my B'shert

Ronit nods, perhaps she cannot either, Dovid sense this and is angry, perhaps Ronit has come back to win her?

RONIT
I know.

125B INT/EXT. DOVID'S CAR. STREET NEAR PARK. 125B

Dovid waits in the car. Takes one of Ronit's cigarettes. Then gets out the car and starts smoking, looking around, in a slightly paralyzed state.

126 EXT. PARK. HENDON. DUSK 126

Ronit walks in the park. The winter sun is setting. There's no one in sight.

Ronit gets to the tree where she and Esti held hands. She looks at some bushes nearby. She can almost sense Esti hiding there..

127 I/E. DOVID'S CAR/ HENDON STREETS. NIGHT.

127

Ronit and Dovid drive around in his car, silent, worried.

DOVID

You think you understand but you don't.... I have always accepted that Esti can only love me in a certain way.

RONIT

And you think that's honest? To live like that.

DOVID

It's decent.

Darkness has fallen.

128 OMITTED. 128

129 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. THE HALLWAY. NIGHT. 129

Dovid and Ronit are taking off their coats. Dovid walks to the base of the stairs.

DOVID

Esti?!

Nothing.

DOVID (CONT'D)

I wished she never contacted you.

RONIT

She did the right thing. My father died... And you weren't even going to tell me.

DOVID

Can you see why I didn't, I was protecting my wife.

RONIT

You're a good man Dovid but you're not protecting her.

DOVID

Yes I am, I am protecting Esti from herself. The healthy relationship is between a man and a woman. It's human to have immoral thoughts. To act on them is an Aveira.

RONIT

So if we're sick why does it feel so good between me and Esti?

DOVID

Damn you, Ronit, I'm her husband. She's my wife!

The phone rings. Dovid grabs it, hopeful, but it's not Esti.

DOVID (CONT'D)

Hello?... Yes I'll be at the rehearsal. Shortly.

He puts the phone down.

DOVID (CONT'D)
They're all at the synagogue.

RONIT
Wonderful...

DOVID
You think you understand but you don't.... I have always accepted that Esti can only love me in a certain way.

RONIT
And you think that's honest? To live like that.

DOVID
She's my soul mate - my B'shert. And you're trying to tempt her away. Did you want this to happen? Between you two?

RONIT
I don't know.

DOVID
You gave it no thought! Exactly! The same as before!.. And now?

Ronit doesn't know what to say.

DOVID (CONT'D)
You have a choice Ronit.. Your being here is destroying us.

RONIT
Then your marriage had problems, I only just got here.

The phone RINGS again. Dovid picks up, listens.

DOVID
I said I was coming!

He hangs up.

Dovid looks at Ronit, rage present and not far from violence.

Suddenly, floorboards CREAK. Dovid and Ronit turn --

Esti walks down the stairs. She's been there the whole time and has heard everything.

DOVID (CONT'D)
Esti. Where have you been?

Esti looks strangely serene.

ESTI
I want you to give me my freedom.

DOVID
What? Esti... Come here.

Esti walks over to him, oddly calm. He puts his arms around her.

DOVID (CONT'D)
I was terrified..

ESTI
I didn't mean for you to worry..
I'm pregnant.

Silence. Ronit and Dovid are astonished with the news. Dovid breathes.. He wants to cry with the brilliant news which will solve all the problems. He feels her stomach.

DOVID
A child then. We'll have a child.
Hashem is looking over us.

Dovid is quietly jubilant, relieved. Esti holds her nerve.

ESTI
I don't think that we should be
together anymore.

DOVID
Hashem has given us a life to
protect Esti. Together. This is his
wish.

ESTI
No.

Dovid is suddenly afraid, seeing how calm Esti is.

ESTI (CONT'D)
I was born in this community. I had
no choice. I want my child to be
free to decide ...

Esti holds his gaze, with quiet determination. Dovid realizes how serious she is.

DOVID
Esti! We've waited so long for
this!

ESTI
Please.. give me my freedom.

The phone RINGS again. Dovid ignores the ringing, desperate.

DOVID
And Hashem?

ESTI
Hashem made me this way. If He
wishes to punish me, that is His
right. But it is my right to
disobey.

Dovid hangs the phone up.

DOVID
No..

RONIT
Dovid..

DOVID
Stay out of it.

RONIT
I can't... you and Esti are my only
family.

Dovid is speechless. He gets up and goes out the front door,
overwhelmed.

Esti goes after him. Ronit is too shocked to react.

130 EXT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

130

Esti comes out in time to see Dovid opening the door of his car.

ESTI

Dovid!

He turns -- deeply hurt. It's almost more than Esti can bear. She stops dead, suddenly crushed by guilt, and watches Dovid get in and drive away.

Ronit comes outside and finds Esti on the verge of tears.

ESTI (CONT'D)

It's all he ever wanted. He's watched everyone else and never once complained. He so wants a child.

Ronit holds her.

ESTI (CONT'D)
 Our one time to be joyful and I
 killed him...

Esti stares after Dovid's absence. Ronit looks at her,
 excluded.

131 EXT. HENDON STREETS. NIGHT. 131

Ronit and Esti walk, a little intimidated, in the river of
 PEOPLE who are going to the hesped.

ESTI
 It's all he ever wanted. He's
 watched everyone else and never
 once complained. He so wants a
 child.

Ronit holds her.

ESTI (CONT'D)
 Our one time to be joyful and I
 killed him...

Ronit sees Fruma, who looks down at the ground. Ronit crosses
 to her.

RONIT
 Fruma. I'm not trying to upset
 anyone. I need to honour my father.

Fruma nods, she has heard the rumours and cannot ignore them
 and walks away from Ronit.

132 EXT. SYNAGOGUE. NIGHT 132

Ronit and Esti get to the synagogue. Everybody's going in,
 the hesped is starting.

Esti sees Dovid's car parked outside, but no sign of him. She
 goes in.

Ronit looks at the temple for a moment... she can't go inside.
 Esti sees her outside. Waits for her.

Ronit steels herself and then follows Esti inside.

133 INT. SYNAGOGUE - FOYER -- NIGHT 133

Esti looks around the foyer -- MEN filing into the hall,
 WOMEN heading upstairs.

She sees Dovid walking towards the far door of the hall, with Hartog and Goldfarb.

ESTI

Dovid!

He doesn't hear her. Esti tries to reach him, but the line of staring MEN makes it impossible. Esti confronts him. The Men disapprove. Esti takes his arm and they walk to a quiet corridor.

ESTI (CONT'D)

Dovid...

DOVID

Esti.. please tell me you've
changed your mind.

ESTI

No.. But I want you to be in our
child's life.

A Rabbi waves Dovid over and he puts up a hand to say he
can't come over.

ESTI (CONT'D)

Go. And speak. I've always been
very proud.. to be your wife.

Dovid reluctantly leaves Esti alone.

Esti rejoins Ronit and they walk up the wooden stairs towards
the Women's Section.

134

INT. SYNAGOGUE. WOMEN'S SECTION. NIGHT

134

Ronit and Esti walk down the centre aisle towards the empty
front row, oblivious to the looks some Women give them. They
sit, apart from the others.

The Hall waits in silence. Ronit and Esti see..

DOWNSTAIRS --

Next to the podium, there's a large PHOTO OF RAV SHLOMOH BEN
DOVID KRUSHKA, with his beard and his hat... and a kind light
shining in his eyes.

The Beth El Cantor Choir take the podium, in two rows. Their
Conductor gives the signal and they start chanting a soulful
and melodious funeral prayer.

BETH EL CHOIR

(sing)

*Al molay rachamim,
shochayn bam'romim,
ham-tzay m'nucha n'chona
al kanfay Hash'china...*

IN THE WOMEN'S SECTION --

Ronit finds herself deeply touched by the music, the temple.

BETH EL CHOIR (CONT'D)
...b'ma-alot k'doshim ut-horim
k'zo-har haraki-a mazhirim,
et nishmat Shloimoh ben Dovid...

Ronit hears her father's name and something clicks in her. She gazes at his photograph.

Esti looks around the hall downstairs and finally spots -- Dovid, sitting in one of the front rows.

BETH EL CHOIR (CONT'D)
...she-halach l-olama,
ba-avur shenodvu tz'dakah
b'ad hazkarat nishmata.

DOWNSTAIRS --

Dovid looks like he needs air. He loosens his tie, then tightens it back up. He notices that Hartog and Goldfarb, sitting in his row, are looking at him with concern.

BETH EL CHOIR (CONT'D)
B'Gan Ayden t'hay m'nuchata;
la-chayn Ba-al Harachamim...

Dovid can't take it. He suddenly stands up and heads out.

IN THE WOMEN'S SECTION --

Esti sees Dovid walking down the side aisle towards the exit.

BETH EL CHOIR (CONT'D)
...yas-tire-ha b'sayter k'nafav
l'olamim,
v'yitz-ror bitz-ror hacha-yim et
nishmatah,...

Esti turns to Ronit, and sees that she's touched by the music, looking at the photo. Esti can't help feeling moved.

BETH EL CHOIR (CONT'D)
...Ado-nay Hu na-chalatah, v'tanu-ach
b'shalom al mishkavah.
V'nomar: Amayn.

Ronit joins the Hall in replying a heartfelt:

HALL
 Amen.

A tear rolls down Ronit's face. Esti squeezes her hand in support. Ronit looks at her, whispers.

RONIT
Be with me.

ESTI
What?

RONIT
Come to New York. Have the baby.
And be with me.

Esti looks at her, shocked, excited, confused. She holds Ronit's hand tight as she looks back to the front. Other Women look at them and their hand holding. Ronit looks forward again. Esti holds Ronit's hand so tight.

DOWNSTAIRS --

Hartog takes the podium.

HARTOG
Rav Krushka's departure leaves us facing a void, bewildered. Today, we take comfort in knowing that his legacy will be preserved and carried through to the next generations.

135 INT. SYNAGOGUE. FOYER. NIGHT 135

Dovid stands outside the door to the hall, in the deserted foyer. He's pale and out of breath.

HARTOG (O.S.)
I call upon a new voice, Rav Krushka's closest disciple, spiritual son and successor, Rabbi Dovid Kuperman.

Dovid doesn't move.

136 INT. SYNAGOGUE. WOMEN'S SECTION. NIGHT 136

Esti and Ronit wait for Dovid to appear. Esti's fists are white with tension.

DOWNSTAIRS --

Hartog looks around... nothing. Then he looks up, and sees Ronit and Esti in the women's section. He takes it in.

HARTOG
Rabbi Kuperman?

Nothing. People start looking around.

Dovid stands inside the door. He looks at the hall for a few seconds... He takes a deep breath, gathering his strength, and starts for the podium, down one of the side aisles.

IN THE WOMEN'S SECTION --

Ronit and Esti watch Dovid approaching the podium. Hartog steps down.

DOWNSTAIRS --

Dovid steps up to the podium. He looks at the crowd for a moment, the faces he knows so well, but doesn't see Esti and Ronit yet.

He takes a deep breath and starts to deliver, rather mechanically, the speech he memorized.

DOVID
Rav Krushka often spoke about the
duty of the teacher, the duty...

He loses his train of thought and cannot speak for a moment.

DOVID (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I can't.....

He can't go through with the official speech. He looks for something truthful to say. He sees Ronit.

DOVID (CONT'D)
The Rav's only daughter Ronit
Krushka is here with us today.

He indicates Ronit, looks at her then back to the gathering. The Elders are annoyed.

DOVID (CONT'D)
The Rav's final words to us.....

Dovid stops, not knowing where he's going.

DOVID (CONT'D)
..Why did he choose to discuss the
idea of choice? .. And .. Freedom.
There is nothing so.. tender..
(MORE)

DOVID (CONT'D)
 or truthful.. as the true feeling
 of .. Being free.

He looks at the hall, tense. Everybody's listening.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 Free.. To choose.

He hesitates, he looks up at the women's section and sees --
 Esti is looking at him, with deep love.

And seeing her triggers something in him. He looks at Esti
 and Ronit with love beyond blame.

He knows what he must do.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 The Rav was a giant of Torah. But
 it wasn't a giant that we saw
 collapse that day, but a man.

His words start raising some eyebrows, but he speaks with
 captivating honesty.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 He talked of the angels.. and the
 desires of the beasts. With his
 last breath, the Rav reminded us of
 this: we are free to choose.

He looks up at Esti.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 You are free.

Esti understands, moved. Ronit is also deeply touched.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 (to all)
 You are free.

His passion has captured the synagogue. Dovid remains silent
 for a few moments.

DOVID (CONT'D)
 I cannot accept the honour or
 position that is offered to me. I
 do not have sufficient...
 understanding. Please forgive me.

The room stands still.

Dovid steps off the podium... and heads quietly to the door.
Hartog is in shock.

IN THE WOMEN'S SECTION --

Esti and Ronit stand up and head for the exit.

137 INT. SYNAGOGUE. STAIRS/FOYER. NIGHT 137

Ronit follows Esti down the stairs to the foyer.

Esti stops for a moment.

ESTI

Ronit..

Ronit stops too.

ESTI (CONT'D)

I can't come with you.

Ronit takes a moment, but understands.

RONIT

I know.

Esti walks on and is the first one outside the door. Ronit follows.

138 EXT. SYNAGOGUE. NIGHT 138

Ronit comes out and sees --

Dovid standing in the middle of the empty street. Esti approaches him. She hugs him tight.

Ronit watches, moved.

Dovid sees her... and opens one arm to include her.

Ronit joins them, and the three melt into an awkward but heartfelt embrace: Family.

139 EXT. PARK. HENDON. DAWN 139

At first light -- the tree where Ronit and Esti held hands, surrounded by mist.

The tennis court looks incredibly cold, uninhabited.

140 EXT. HENDON STREET. DAWN 140
The thread of the eruv. Wind...

140A EXT. DOVID'S HOUSE. DAWN. 140A
The house is quiet.

141 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. ATTIC GUEST ROOM. DAWN. 141
Ronit lies in bed. It is dawn and some light comes through
the window. She watches the dust motes in the air. She hasn't
slept much.

142 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LANDING. DAWN.

142

Ronit is dressed and packs her carry on, her candlesticks, last bits of clothes. Walks down the stairs trying not to make any noise with her bags, but the floorboards CREAK.

As Ronit walks, Dovid opens his bedroom door, still half-asleep. Ronit stops for a moment to look at him.

DOVID

Shalom.

RONIT

Shalom Dovid.

Ronit walks to him and puts her hand on Dovid's arm, he accepts the touch.

Ronit walks down the stairs.

143 INT. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/ HALLWAY. DAWN.

143

Downstairs in the living room, Esti sits up on the couch where she has relocated herself. Her hair is natural, no wig or scarf.

RONIT

Morning.

ESTI

Good morning..

They feel self-conscious with Dovid nearby. They hear a CAR pull up outside. Dovid goes back to his room, leaves them to be alone. The cab honks.

Ronit crosses to Esti and perches near to her.

ESTI (CONT'D)

When the Rav was dying he took my hand and he looked into my eyes and he said "Ronit". He thought I was you. He was thinking of you.

Ronit takes this in.

Ronit and Esti look at each other in silence.. everything unsaid. Ronit heads to the door. Esti looks at her with sadness.

ESTI (CONT'D)

"May you live a long life!"

Ronit smiles at her and steps out.

144 E/I. DOVID & ESTI'S HOUSE/ TAXI. DAWN

144

Ronit closes the door and walks to a taxi, waiting in the misty street.

The DRIVER gets out when he sees her coming. He takes her luggage and puts it in the trunk.

CAB DRIVER
Heathrow is it?

RONIT
Yes.

They get in.

CAB DRIVER
Which terminal?

RONIT
Five.. thanks.

The taxi starts. Just as it's pulling away...

ESTI (O.S.)
Ronit!

Ronit turns and sees Esti rushing towards the cab.

ESTI (CONT'D)
Wait!

The cab stops. Esti opens the door, gets inside, and gives Ronit a long kiss on the mouth... she's radiant. Ronit wants to cry.

RONIT
You'll be a brilliant mother.
Brave. Beautiful. Don't let anyone hurt her.

ESTI
I won't.

RONIT
Will you call me?... Tell me where you are.

ESTI
Yes.. Yes..I will.

Esti gets out quick, shuts the door. Their eyes connect.

The taxi drives away. Ronit looks back at Esti, until they turn the corner.

145 INT. CAB. HENDON/CEMETERY STREET. DAWN. 145

Ronit watches the streets disappear and now she sees the cemetery wall as they drive past it.

RONIT

Sorry.. Sorry could we just stop here for five minutes? Thanks..

146 EXT. CEMETERY. CAR PARK. DAWN 146

The cab stops. Ronit gets out. And walks towards the ENTRANCE.

147 EXT. CEMETERY. DAWN 147

Ronit walks in the cemetery, deserted at that hour. She holds her camera.

The gravestones are surrounded by mist, lit by the first rays of sunlight.

Ronit walks through the graves. Focused, alive, feeling.

She gets to her father's grave. Feels the earth a touch.

She looks at the sky. She points at the grave, focuses...
CLICK.

Ronit lowers the camera. Her face is lost in emotion, still gazing at the grave.

148 INT. YELLOW CAB. NEW YORK. DAY. 148

Ronit sits at the back of a cab. She looks through the window at the skyline and lots of wires in a beautiful pattern as the cab crosses a bridge. An OLD AFRICAN AMERICAN CAB DRIVER catches her eye. He is playing some fantastic drums music. Ronit stares towards the Babylon of New York across the bridge.

CABBIE

You want the music down?

RONIT

No. No. Turn it up.

The cabbie turns up the music. Ronit is full of life as she stares at the expanse of iron and sky above her, the water below and the humming city beyond.

THE END.