

THE SONG OF NAMES

Screenplay by
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Adapted from the novel by Norman Lebrecht

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FADE IN

1 **EXT. A CONCERT HALL, LONDON. 7:25 P.M. (NOVEMBER 3, 1951)** 1

As we look down a gentle rain is falling steadily on a carapace of umbrellas, moving like the scales of some gigantic mythical reptile. The reptile turns out to be a well-dressed crowd swirling around the entrance to the hall and funnelling slowly into it; the same rain rolling down posters advertising the event they've all come to see: the debut concert of David Eli Rapoport, 21 year-old virtuoso violinist.

BBC RADIO PRESENTER (V.O.)

It is sometimes said that both the shortest and the longest distance in art is that between the very good and the truly great. It may well be that tonight David Eli Rapoport will cross that divide. Those of us who have been privileged to hear his promotional recording are unanimous in declaring the extraordinary playing of this 21-year-old Polish immigrant music from the gods, the voice of possibly the most naturally gifted violinist of his generation...

Cars are passing, Festival of Britain flags flying from the building. Pasted across its facade are monochrome publicity blow-ups of the lean and Byronic Rapoport and, plastered diagonally across the posters, strip banners reading: "INTERNATIONAL DEBUT PERFORMANCE 7:30 P.M. NOVEMBER 3RD, 1951, with another, smaller strip overplastered: "SOLD OUT - RETURNS ONLY".

Touts are busy in the crowd, selling outrageously priced tickets to those who have come without one; there's a police presence for crowd control - bobbies in glistening rain capes - a phalanx of damp press photographers, a St John's ambulance crew on stand-by.

Limousines are delivering DIGNITARIES to the front steps, chauffeurs and assistants shepherding them inside under umbrellas.

Big event.

CAMERA FINDS 21 YEAR-OLD MARTIN SIMMONDS

standing at the open stage door, anxiously scanning the wet street and checking his watch. After a few moments he goes back inside.

2

INT. LONDON CONCERT HALL, NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) (A'51)

2

Here there's every shade of anxiety. The capacity audience is buzzing with restlessness; the orchestra waits in silence, having long ago finished tuning up.

The BBC RADIO PRESENTER whose voice we've been hearing can be seen in the recording booth, holding on to his audience during the delay in the relaxed filibuster style we associate with Richard Dimbleby at the Coronation [still two years in the future].

BBC RADIO PRESENTER

So great has been the impact of
Rapoport's recording on the world
of classical music that one tends
to forget how little known his name
still is, and that tonight's
concert will be his first on an
international stage...

BACKSTAGE there's a frenzy of activity and a sliding scale of panic: from the irritation of those mildly inconvenienced by the soloist's lateness to the near hysteria of those most affected, chief among them

GILBERT SIMMONDS

Gilbert, the concert's promoter, is a 56 year-old English gentleman-impresario. He's standing with his wife, ENID (52) and Martin's fiancée, 21 year-old HELEN. Their son, Martin, rejoins them as we watch, shaking his head. All are wearing evening dress and all are agitated, though none as much as Gilbert.

GILBERT

He's had an accident. There's no
other explanation-

ENID

We don't know that.

GILBERT

Martin, I'd like you to phone the
hospitals.

MARTIN

I already did, Father. Mr
Sanderson's doing it again now.

ANGLE ON SANDERSON, the theatre manager, talking urgently on the backstage phone.

GILBERT

Has anyone informed the police?

MARTIN

Too soon for that.

GILBERT

How was he this afternoon? Was he all right at rehearsal?

MARTIN

He was fine.

GILBERT

Did he take his violin with him?

MARTIN

He takes it everywhere. He takes it to the loo.

Gilbert shoots his son a disapproving look. Offended by the indelicacy of the comment or by Martin's attitude?

ENID

Gilbert, stop working yourself up into a froth. Perhaps his watch stopped.

GILBERT

A self-winding wristwatch does not stop.

ENID

It does if you drop it.

HELEN

He might've got stuck in traffic.

GILBERT

(to Martin)

Where did he say was he going after the rehearsal?

MARTIN

He didn't.

HELEN

Dovidl does things his own way, Mr Simmonds. He's probably walking. He likes walking in the rain.

GILBERT

With a Gagliano under his arm?

(crossing to stage
entrance)

Have you seen who's out there?

ANGLE ON THE AUDIENCE

Several distinguished-looking men and women waiting.

GILBERT

Peers of the realm, members of
Parliament, *The Times* music critic.
Such people are not kept waiting-

MARTIN

He'll be here. This means as much
to him as it does to you.

GILBERT

Does it really?

MARTIN

I know-

GILBERT

You don't know. I'm not talking
about money.

MARTIN

I know what you're talking about.

GILBERT

He could be lying in a gutter
somewhere - hurt, dead...

ANGE ON AUDITORIUM CLOCK: showing 7:50

BACK TO GILBERT- by now on the edge of tears.

The orchestra conductor is looking his way, tapping his
watch, tilting his head enquiringly. Time to cancel.

GILBERT

They'll have to be told.

MARTIN

Want me to do it?

Gilbert shakes his head. Steps through on to the stage.

GILBERT

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen...
(voice quivering)
It is with great regret that I have
to tell you... the performer you
have come to see is unable to be
here this evening...
(gestures helplessly)
Refunds may be claimed at the box
office.

He hurries offstage, holding back his tears.

A black cab pulls up outside the house and sounds its horn.

Imposing and costly when it was built in the 1920's and owned by the Simmonds family ever since, the house is now run down and in need of repair and repainting. In the double drive sits a single ten-year-old car: an anomaly in this affluent two-car neighbourhood.

4

INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. DAY (S'86)

4

The style inside the house is cultured, if a little shabby: floor-to-ceiling bookshelves in the drawing room, full of mostly hardback volumes; a baby grand loaded with classical sheet music; somewhat old-fashioned furniture; soft furnishings in muted colours.

A suitcase stands in the hall, an overcoat and umbrella draped across it, a briefcase leaning against it.

ANGLE ON KITCHEN

MARTIN SIMMONDS is now in his mid-fifties, his body slim and well kept. HELEN, whose cheek he is kissing in valediction, is still, at the same age, handsome.

HELEN

(a ritual, this)

Take your pills, don't wear the same shirt twice, sell music.

MARTIN

Kiss Emily for me. The minute the baby's born, stick it in front of the piano. You can't start too soon.

HELEN

'It' is a girl, Martin. The scan's showing a girl. Granddaughter, not grand piano. I'll call you if I'm not asleep.

MARTIN

And if the estimate for the roof comes, let me know straight away.

HELEN

Why?

MARTIN

I might have to walk home. Save the train fare.

The taxi's horn sounds again.

5 **EXT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. DAY (S'86)**

5

Martin emerges, coated, carrying suitcase and briefcase, umbrella hooked over his arm. He climbs into the waiting taxi.

6 **EXT. GATESHEAD RAILWAY STATION - PLATFORM. DAY (S'86)**

6

Exiting the station, Martin is taken aback to find at the barrier the city's Lord Mayor, CHARLIE FROGGATT (60+), in full regalia, and his driver.

MARTIN

Charlie Froggatt, look at you in your gold chain. Didn't know this was a civic reception, I'd have worn my ermine underwear.

The driver takes Martin's suitcase. As they walk towards the station exit:

FROGGATT

(Tyneside accent)

Just come from opening a DIY superstore. You'd think they'd do it themselves, wouldn't you?

7 **INT. DAIMLER (TRAVELLING). DAY (S'86)**

7

FROGGATT

So you're still peddling sheet music, I see.

MARTIN

It's a living. Libraries and schools buy it.

FROGGATT

How long you staying?

MARTIN

Just 'til Friday.

FROGGATT

What are you doing tonight?

MARTIN

Hanging myself, I expect.

FROGGATT

How about doing an old friend a favour first?

MARTIN

This old friend got any pull with
the Libraries Committee?

FROGGATT

You do one for me, I'll do one for
you.

MARTIN

That's how the Great War started.
(a beat)
What's the favour?

FROGGATT

Jury service.
(off Martin's reaction)
Competition jury. Tyneside Young
Musician of the Year. It's world
famous.

MARTIN

Not the world I live in.

FROGGATT

Under-18's who've slipped through
the music education net - they
actually play an instrument. You'd
be non-playing Chairman.

MARTIN

You've got to be joking.

FROGGATT

I never joke about Tyneside. You'd
just be a figurehead. Like me.
You're still a name in the music
world, man. Your dad knew
Paderewski, for Chrissake.

MARTIN

I'm not my father, Charlie. And he
didn't judge Paderewski's
musicianship.

FROGGATT

We've got a couple of long-hairs in
for that - Tom Noble and Jenny
Burrows, you know Jenny. You get
the casting vote if they hang.

MARTIN

Forget it, Charlie. I'm here to
sell, not buy.

FROGGATT

These kids are next year's
customers.

(MORE)

FROGGATT (cont'd)
Chairman of the Libraries Committee
happens to be my grandson's
girlfriend's uncle.

MARTIN
Talk about connected!

8 **EXT. GATESHEAD - DAY (S'86)**

8

The limo crossing the Tyne Bridge.

FROGGATT (V.O.)
Pick you up at eight.

9 **INT. COMMUNITY HALL, GATESHEAD. NIGHT (S'86)**

9

A packed hall, an old Steinway grand onstage. Below the stage, seated at a trestle table, the panel of five COMPETITION JUDGES: Martin at their centre, JENNY BURROWS (50) on his left, TOM NOBLE (68) on his right. CHARLIE FROGGATT onstage in his mayoral regalia.

FROGGATT
...and I have every confidence this
year's finalists will maintain the
high musical standard for which
Tyneside is justly famous....

Shouts of approval from the audience.

TOM
(to Martin)
Vienna of the north-east.

FROGGATT
So without further ado, let
competition commence, and may music
speak louder than words.

He sits down to modest applause.

A MONTAGE FOLLOWS, WITH CUTS BETWEEN THE PERFORMERS AND THE JUDGES COMPLETING THEIR MARK SHEETS

The first finalist is a 10 YEAR-OLD GIRL playing the Bach Chaconne for clarinet.

PANNING THE FIVE MARK SHEETS

Home-made, on council-headed notepaper, the mark sheets are divided into three hand-drawn columns headed "TECHNIQUE", "INTERPRETATION" and "MUSICALITY", with a fourth column for totals. The girl's scores out of ten are uniformly in the four-five range. She scores lowest on interpretation.

- AN 11 YEAR-OLD BOY CELLIST playing Kreisler's *Liebesleid* with piano accompaniment. He's good for his age but in no way outstanding. Fives and the odd six.

- THE ADJUDICATORS, starting to look glazed. Jenny glancing at her watch.

- 16 year-old MARIA KORVINSKY, rippling off Beethoven's Bagatelle in G Minor as though warming up.

The audience applause is appropriately mighty.

The judges are smiling now, lavishing nines and tens. Gold found in a midden. Barring a further miracle, they've got their winner.

JENNY
(through applause)
Can we go home now?

MARTIN
One genius, Jenny. Might be two.

JENNY
Aye, well, it *is* Gateshead.

FROGGATT has come back onstage.

FROGGATT
Our final Young Musician hails from South Shields. He's 14 years old and has already toured internationally with the Tyneside Youth Orchestra...

TOM
(aside)
Wales and the Isle of Man.

FROGGATT
...so please put your hands together for Peter Stemp.

PETER STEMPT, a bad acne case, steps onstage and readies himself to play his three-year-old Japanese fiddle.

ANGLE ON ELLEN STEMPT (40), his proud mother, in the front row of the audience.

Then Peter does something very odd. Prior to playing his competition piece the boy reaches into his pocket, pulls out a block of rosin and ritualistically swipes his bow strings with it - first a broad upward sweep, then a matching downward sweep. Finally, before putting the rosin away and tucking the violin back under his chin-

HE TOUCHES THE ROSIN TO HIS LIPS

There are some titters from the audience at the gesture.

CLOSE ON MARTIN

He isn't tittering. His reaction is out of all keeping with what has occurred. It's a reaction of such shock and emotion, so sudden and overwhelming, that it has drained the colour from his face.

TOM
(to Martin)
You all right, man?

Martin doesn't answer. Too stunned to speak.

Peter begins to play the second movement of Tartini's "Devil's Trill" Sonata for solo violin - a difficult piece beyond his skill level, and it shows. But though his musicianship is far from exceptional it's clear that someone, at some time, has taught him some old-fashioned Kreislerian slides and a particular treatment of the rosin that very few teachers would countenance and no violinist in the history of solo performance would ever exhibit in public... save only one.

ANGLE ON PETER STEMP as he plays, sliding inexpertly...

ANGLE ON MARTIN as he listens...

10

INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. DAY (A'39)

10

...and the playing changes, as the Tartini fades and we hear an exuberant Wieniawski violin piece, played by an immeasurably superior violinist.

ANGLE ON DAVID ELI RAPOPORT (DOVIDL), aged 9, as he plays, sliding with arrogant Kreislerian exuberance...

ANGLE ON THE OPEN DOORWAY

where 9 YEAR-OLD MARTIN is watching and listening from the hallway. The emotions on his young face: jealousy and resentment.

The small drawing room audience is composed of GILBERT(44 here); ENID (39); PROFESSOR CARL FLESCH (58) - Hungarian-born soloist and London's most celebrated pre-war violin teacher; and ZYGMUNT RAPOPORT (40), Dovidl's prematurely balding Polish-Jewish father, a Warsaw costume jeweller: not a refugee but with the abandoned worn-down look of one.

Dovidl - black hair shiny as jet, legs stick-thin in calf-length shorts - is playing with the flashy show-off style of a child genius who knows that only time and practice stand between him and his birthright: world-renown as a virtuoso. Flesch and Gilbert are listening pleasurably, nodding, knowing it too.

Martin is two months older than Dovidl. His grey flannel shorts are the right length for London juvenile fashion of the day - the only edge it seems he has on this exotic interloper.

Dovidl finishes the piece. He looks up, awaiting requests for an encore; spots Martin in the doorway, meets his eye briefly, looks away.

GILBERT

Professor Flesch? What do you think?

FLESCH

Too many flourishes.

(to Dovidl)

You are not Kreisler, young man.

DOVIDL

Kreisler is not Rapoport.

A statement of calculated precocity. It brings chuckles.

ZYGMUNT

(to Flesch)

You will teach him? He is genius.

FLESCH

I am sent ten geniuses a month, Pan Rapoport. If your son accepts that he has still something to learn, perhaps I can teach him something. You are staying in London?

ZYGMUNT

No, I go back to Warsaw, to my wife and daughters.... If I can find somebody to take David... I leave him here.

FLESCH

Safer. Given the situation in Poland.

GILBERT

(thoughtful)

Very much so.

ZYGMUNT

Do you know of Jewish family, Mr Simmonds? I can pay a little...

GILBERT

As it happens I do have a family in mind, Mr Rapoport. It isn't Jewish, but it is musical, and will cost you nothing.

(MORE)

GILBERT (cont'd)

I can promise you the tenets of
your religion would be fully
respected, its requirements met in
every regard.

Gilbert looks across at his wife. He almost certainly hasn't consulted her about this considerable commitment, an autocratic decision typical of the man. ENID gives nothing back - neither consent nor refusal, approval nor disapproval.

Zygmunt is aware how great a commitment this is. It entails, among other things, kosher food, Hebrew lessons, Sabbath observance. If he appears to hesitate, consider where he has come from. Zygmunt cannot conceive of a Gentile Polish paterfamilias making such an offer.

ZYGMUNT

This is English family?

GILBERT

It is.

(a beat)

My own son is David's age. They
would share a bedroom.

ANGLE ON MARTIN

Outrage on his face. The brilliant interloper is to be admitted to residence, it seems, without any family consultation at all.

Zygmunt's eyes are sparkling with tears. He embraces Gilbert, who stands stiffly to receive the embrace, embarrassed by this un-English gesture, not knowing where to put his hands.

Stepping back, Zygmunt reaches into his pocket and pulls from it a velvet-covered ring box. Ceremoniously he presents it to his son, the tears overflowing now. The boy opens the box.

CLOSE ON RING BOX

The inside lid is stamped, in gold leaf lettering: "RAPOPORT WARSZAWA". But there is no ring inside. Only a small amber block of rosin, pristine and gleaming.

Everybody smiles as Dovidl removes the rosin and swipes it experimentally along his bow strings: first with a stylish upward flourish, then with a downward. He touches the rosin to his lips.

Gilbert and Zygmunt applaud. It's a subtle little ritual whose meaning seems to have eluded ENID, the giving of this box: partly a jeweller's joke, partly an expression of hope, partly a father's farewell blessing.

With his ritualistic stroking of the bow Dovidl has improvised a witty variation: taking the rosin for a run, as it were, as though the gift had been a Stradivarius. The kiss on the rosin is for his father, whom he is aware he may never see again. [For Peter Stemp 47 years later it will be a magical ritual entirely without meaning.]

11 **EXT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. DAY (A'39)**

11

His cardboard suitcase at his feet, Zygmunt is about to leave for the bus stop, first leg of his journey back to Poland - to what we now know will be invasion, occupation, ghetto and death camp - and though he doesn't know what he's returning to, Zygmunt seems to intuit it. Hence the passion he puts into his last tearful embrace of the son he may never see again.

To Martin and his parents, watching from the doorstep, this is yet another public display of emotion that makes them uncomfortable. It isn't anti-Semitism, it isn't coldness; it's English reserve.

12 **INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM, GATESHEAD. DAY (S'86)**

12

The day following the competition Martin is lunching with Peter Stemp and his mother, ELLEN (46): a woman of modest means, wearing her best two-piece for the occasion.

On the table is *The Northern Echo*: international and local news with a Tyneside flavour; several column inches given to last night's music competition: picturing a toothy Maria Korvinsky accepting her prize from Mayor Froggatt.

ELLEN

So what's this about? You didn't give Peter the prize, now we're having this posh lunch. Why?

MARTIN

That wasn't my decision.

ELLEN

You'd have made him the winner, then? If it was up to you.

MARTIN

The girl's already there, Mrs Stemp. Peter needs more time... better tuition.

(attempting the casual)
Who's been teaching him?

ELLEN

He gets lessons in school. I can't afford fancy teachers.

MARTIN

We could discuss that.

ELLEN

Know a good cheap one, do you?

MARTIN

Several good, none cheap.

ELLEN

In South Shields?

MARTIN

London.

ELLEN

Just have to sell the yacht, then,
won't I?

MARTIN

I'll find a way to cover Peter's
tuition during his school holidays.
And a family in London he can stay
with.

Ellen looks to Peter. He's nodding. Wants it.

ELLEN

(indicates newspaper)
Why him? Why not what's-her-face?

MARTIN

Her too.

ELLEN

You think Pete's that good, then?

MARTIN

He'll never be a Heifetz. But he
could make a living with an
orchestra. Or teaching.

(to Peter)

Who's been teaching you, Peter?

PETER

School.

MARTIN

And who else? You've had a few tips
off someone.

Peter shrugs.

MARTIN

That thing you do with the
rosin....

PETER

That's for good luck. I can stop.

MARTIN

What's his name? Maybe I know him.

A moment of hesitation, then-

PETER

You don't know him.

MARTIN

I think I might. He used to be a virtuoso. Did he tell you that?

Peter smiling now.

PETER

I don't think so.

MARTIN

DSark hair, about my age?

ELLEN

It's not Pete you want, is it?

A harshness has entered her voice. She's worked it out. The bursary, the promise of a management contract - they're about something other than Peter Stemp.

ELLEN

Come on, Pete. We're going.
(to Martin)
Thanks for the dinner.

Taking Peter by the hand, she pulls him to his feet. They leave the dining room without looking back.

13

INT. MARTIN'S HOTEL ROOM, GATESHEAD. NIGHT (S'86)

13

Martin is perched on his bed, on the phone to Helen.

MARTIN

(to phone)
What are they calling it? Sorry, her.
(winces)
Lovely name. Kiss little Cressida for me, I'll see her Sunday.
(a pause)
Helen...? I think I might have found him.

There's no response. No request to identify the "him". Just silence.

MARTIN

Did you hear what I said?

14 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (SIMULTANEOUS) (S'86)**

14

Helen's in bed, her book set aside to take Martin's call.

HELEN

(to phone, tonelessly)

I heard. Goodnight, Martin.

15 **INT. MARTIN'S BEDROOM, SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (A'39)**

15

This is the first time Martin and Dovidl have been left alone together. Dovidl is in the bedroom doorway with his cheap suitcase between his feet, waiting to be invited in.

DOVIDL

(heavily accented)

I sleep here, yes?

MARTIN

No. I don't want you in my room. I like being on my own.

DOVIDL

Is not your choose.

MARTIN

Wrong, clever. It *is* my "choose". I have to say if it's all right and if it isn't you go back to Poland, and the Germans are going to invade Poland. You'll have to wear a yellow star and get bashed up by brownshirts.

DOVIDL

What is "bashed up", please?

A pause.

MARTIN

You better not snore, that's all.

DOVIDL

What is snore?

Martin does the sound for him. Dovidl pulls a small notebook and pencil from his pocket and records the word.

DOVIDL

If I snore I snore in tune. I am musician. You play?

MARTIN

Piano, a bit.

DOVIDL

Is good for accompanist. Chess?

MARTIN

A bit.

DOVIDL

(grins)

Everything for you is bit. I am
genius. I help you, you will be bit
genius.

MARTIN

Bet I could get you down.

Dovidl's pencil gets busy a second time. Another new word.

DOVIDL

What is "get down", please?

Martin jumps him. Operative definition.

The boys wrestle, grunting and snorting. But eventually it's
the wiry Dovidl who wrestles Martin to the ground and sits
on his chest, pinning his arms.

DOVIDL

Also fight a bit.

MARTIN

(terminal frustration)

Bloody foreigner! You can't even
talk proper English!

DOVIDL

You speak Polish? Russian? Yiddish?
German? Hebrew?

MARTIN

I don't have to. I'm not one of
your lot.

DOVIDL

What is "lot"?

MARTIN

Foreigners. We're *in* England,
stupid.

Dovidl climbs off him, retrieves his notebook; wags it.

DOVIDL

Wait six months.

MARTIN

What's your name, anyway?

DOVIDL

Dovid Eli Rapoport. My family call me Dovidl. You?

MARTIN

Martin L. Simmonds.

DOVIDL

I call you Mottl.

16

INT. GATESHEAD HOTEL BEDROOM. MORNING (S'86)

16

Martin is eating a room-service breakfast at a small wheeled table when there's a tentative knock at the door. He opens to:

PETER STEMP

MARTIN

Peter. Where's your mother?

He checks the corridor. No Ellen. Came alone.

PETER

I'll take you to him.

17

EXT. GATESHEAD. DAY (S'86)

17

They've come by taxi to an underpass entrance: a pedestrian tunnel beneath a busy urban road.

18

EXT/INT. SUBWAY. DAY (S'86)

18

As Martin and Peter descend the steps we'll hear a distant violin playing - with only moderate competence - The Rolling Stones' "Paint it Black".

Martin's face falls. Whoever is playing, it isn't Dovidl.

As they get closer, so does the music. A turn in the tunnel reveals...

A BUSKER

The busker is BILLY, an unkempt grizzly-bearded man in his seventies, wearing a stained raincoat, football socks and dirty plimsolls. He's playing on a cheap fiddle - complete with unwanted echoes off the tiled walls. On the floor at his feet, among the crisp packets and banana skins, is his cap: dotted with a handful of low-value coins.

Though he'd known from the first bow-stroke that this could not be Dovidl, Martin wilts with disappointment.

Billy nods an acknowledgement at Peter but barely glances at Martin as he finishes the piece with a flourish of poorly executed Kreisleresque slides. Then out comes the rosin, followed by that ritualistic up-and-down stroking of the bowstrings with which we're becoming familiar, and the valedictory kiss to the rosin, a magical ritual as meaningless to Billy as it is to Peter.

PETER

This is Mr Simmonds, Billy. He's gonna pay for me to have lessons. In London.

BILLY

(London accent)
What did I tell you?
(to Martin)
Told him he'd get discovered.

MARTIN

He says you've been helping him.

BILLY

(laughs)
Showed him a couple of things.

MARTIN

Where did you learn to play?

BILLY

Taught meself.

Martin takes out his wallet. Extracts a fiver, drops it in the hat.

BILLY

That's very kind of you, sir.

MARTIN

Teach yourself those Kreisler slides, did you, Billy?

Billy's face sets.

BILLY

Who wants to know?

MARTIN

Your best customer.

Billy, Peter and Martin are drinking thick tea from thick, white mugs at a formica-topped table.

BILLY

He never told me his name. It was years ago.

MARTIN

Where did you meet him?

BILLY

London. I used to work the cinema queues up west - when they had cinema queues. I wasn't bad then-

MARTIN

What year?

BILLY

(thinks)

High Noon. When was that?

MARTIN

'52, I think. Go on.

BILLY

So I'm outside the Odeon, yeah, playing the theme music - you know, from the film - and this cheeky little bugger comes up, tells me I could do with some lessons. 'Oh, yeah,' I says. 'Who from?' 'I don't normally give lessons,' he says, only he's saving up for this trip he wants to go on, so how much can I afford to pay him? I told him to get knotted. Don't even know he can play, do I?

MARTIN

I assume he demonstrated.

BILLY

Takes me violin right out me hand. You never heard nothing like it in your life. Magic. Like something off the wireless.

(shakes his head in wonder)

Crowd starts chucking half crowns, ten-bob notes. I give him half. Fair's fair, right?

MARTIN

What did he look like?

BILLY

Like he could do with a square meal.

MARTIN

When was the last time you saw him?

BILLY

Important, is it?

Martin deposits another fiver on the sticky table top.

BILLY

He give me a few lessons. Twice a week for a bit. One day he didn't turn up. Never saw him again. Must've gone on his trip.

MARTIN

Did he say where?

BILLY

Didn't make much sense, like, but that's why I remember it.

Martin waits. Billy waits. Another fiver goes down.

BILLY

Said he was going home to play for the Ashes. That's cricket, innit? When England plays Australia.

(Martin nods)

Didn't make sense 'cos he didn't sound like an Aussie. 'Who're you, then?' I says. 'Don bleeding Bradman?'

MARTIN

His exact words?

Billy's brow furrows with the effort of recall.

BILLY

Something about a song. Going home - to play a song.

(a beat)

For the ashes.

ON MARTIN

This doesn't mean anything to us but it contains a world of meaning for Martin.

A family dinner is being eaten in silence as everybody listens to the evening news on the wireless. It's a Friday night and for Dovidl's benefit there are Sabbath candles on the table and a loaf of *chala* wrapped in a white cloth.

We should note that Dovidl's dinner plate contains different food from the others', mostly vegetables.

The news is all about the German *Blitzkrieg* of Poland: the bombing of Warsaw, the collapse of the Polish army. The Phoney War is a few days old.

Dovidl's face reflects his struggle to contain his emotion. He's learning to be English.

GILBERT

I'm sure your family will be all right, David.

ENID

Have you written home, David?

DOVIDL

I am writing letter.

GILBERT

Good lad.

DOVIDL

You permit I make more letter now?

GILBERT

Permission granted, old chap.

As Dovidl prepares to leave the table-

MARTIN

He hasn't finished his dinner.

GILBERT

Special dispensation. Go and finish your letter, David.

Dovidl slides off his seat and leaves the room.

MARTIN

It's not fair.

GILBERT

What isn't?

MARTIN

All this. No bacon allowed in the house, no milk puddings, special food for the genius, and he doesn't even have to eat it.

ENID

If you'd like to take over preparing David's food you may have a say in whether he eats it.

MARTIN

And he's a liar. He stopped writing
two weeks ago.

ENID

It isn't very nice, Martin, to tell
tales on a friend.

MARTIN

My friends don't wet the bed.

The Simmonds adults exchange a look.

GILBERT

Considering the position his family
is in, I'd say wetting the bed is
the least we can expect from him.

ENID

(to Martin)

Why don't you go and see if you can
cheer him up.

MARTIN

Didn't look all that down to me.

GILBERT

That's a wicked thing to say! Go to
your room!

MARTIN

Not my room, is it.

He goes.

21

INT. LANDING/THE BOYS' BEDROOM. NIGHT (A'39)

21

Through the partly open door we catch Dovidl looking at a photograph and crying. It's a sepia studio portrait of the Rapoport family taken in Warsaw in 1937: Dovidl's father and mother standing side by side; in front of them, Dovidl aged seven between his two sisters: Pessia (9) and Malkeh (5). Pessia has her arm around Dovidl's shoulders; Dovidl's arm is around Malkeh's. All five are solemn and unsmiling, in the portrait style of the time.

As Martin enters Dovidl slides the photo under his pillow. Martin doesn't see it. Trying to recover his equilibrium, Dovidl blows his nose.

DOVIDL

I have cold.

A sudden unexpected shaft of compassion pierces Martin's juvenile soul.

MARTIN

They'll be all right. We'll smash the Jerries up for you. No-one stands up to the British Army.

DOVIDL

You are child.

MARTIN

Play you a game of chess if you want.

DOVIDL

Chess with you takes my mind two minutes.

MARTIN

(a grin)

Three. I feel lucky.

22

EXT. HAMPSTEAD. DAY (A'39)

22

The two boys are freewheeling down a hill on their bikes, playing "chicken".

Martin is the first to swerve - avoiding a horse-drawn milk float. Dovidl sails on, misses the float by inches, and in passing swipes a pint. Riding no-hands, he pierces the top with his finger while still on the move and swigs from the bottle.

It's Martin who gets nabbed by the milkman - momentarily caught by his coat - before he breaks away and pedals madly down the hill after Dovidl, who has disappeared from view.

MILKMAN

Thieving little bleeders!

23

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. DAY (A'39)

23

Martin finds Dovidl waiting in their private spot on the Heath: beneath a large tree, overlooking the Ponds. Eating a Kit Kat [N.B. *Wartime issue: blue wrapper, dark chocolate, price 3d*].

Grinning in triumph, Dovidl offers Martin a finger of Kit Kat.

MARTIN

Thought you said these weren't kosher.

DOVIDL

You rabbi now?

MARTIN

Where'd you get it?

DOVIDL

Your pocket.

He proffers the milk bottle. Martin takes a swig.

DOVIDL

We make good team, yes?

Embarrassed by Dovidl's open acknowledgement of what in a London boy's world should remain implicit, Martin sprays him with milk. Dovidl responds by jumping on him playfully. They wrestle standing up for a few moments, then both boys step back to face one another and go by tacit agreement into their **slow motion boxers routine**.

This consists of each delivering in turn a slo-mo punch which the other has the option either to dodge in slow motion or to receive as a simulated blow, rocking back under the pretended impact with appropriate facial grimaces.

24

INT. HALLWAY, PROFESSOR FLESCH'S STUDIO. DAY (WINTER 1940) 24

Dovidl has come for his violin lesson, accompanied by GILBERT. On the landing outside Flesch's studio they meet JOZEF WECHSLER (18) about to descend. He's carrying a very old violin case, housing the virtuoso's badge of office: a very old violin.

JOZEF

Professor Flesch isn't here. I've been waiting an hour.

GILBERT

Do you know where he is?

JOZEF

Back in Hungary, probably. He thinks the Waffen SS are coming over London Bridge.

His glance, finding Dovidl, takes in his leatherette-covered violin case, doubtless containing a cheap violin.

JOZEF

(to Gilbert, with an inclination of the head)
Jozef Wechsler. Of Warsaw. You will have heard of me.

GILBERT

Gilbert Simmonds. I believe Professor Flesch has mentioned you.

Dovidl's look is one of undisguised envy. Wechsler, already an international name at eighteen and with the arrogance of a young god, is who he wants to be - preferably tomorrow.

DOVIDL

(to Jozef)

Dovid Eli Rapoport. Also of Warsaw.
Professor Flesch has spoken of you
to me also.

JOZEF

He hasn't spoken of you.

(to Gilbert)

Your boy will need to find a new
teacher. You know Dr Steiner of
Leipzig?

GILBERT

I know of him.

JOZEF

He has played Mozart with Einstein.
He is in London now.

DOVIDL

I learn physics, I go Einstein.

GILBERT

Mr Wechsler isn't recommending
Einstein as a violin teacher,
David.

DOVIDL

I practise alone.

JOZEF

And from whom will you learn
humility?

DOVIDL

Not from you.

With a sad shake of the head, Jozef leaves.

25

INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. DAY (W'40)

25

Having returned home, Gilbert and Dovidl enter the living
room to find Martin practising at the piano.

GILBERT

(to Dovidl)

Actually, Steiner's not a bad idea.

DOVIDL

I do not need teacher. Only to
practise.

GILBERT

Who will make sure you don't skip
the tricky bits when your fingers
are hurting?

Martin swings around on the piano stool.

MARTIN

How about me?

DOVIDL

Hah. Boy of ten.

MARTIN

Older than you.

DOVIDL

Fifty-five days older...
(calculating)
...one point five-one percent. One-
and-six out of a fiver. Small
change.

MARTIN

That's six Kit Kats-

GILBERT

Boys! Please. It's a very mature
undertaking.

MARTIN

I'm more mature than he is.

DOVIDL

Hah.

This initiates another ritual. Momentarily forgetting his
father's presence, Martin jumps off the stool and launches
into the slow motion boxers routine.

GILBERT

Boys, if you've finished
demonstrating your maturity -

They stop.

GILBERT(CONT'D)

(to Martin)

Suppose some difficulty were to
arise that I needed to know about,
and your friend asked you to keep
it from me. Wouldn't that be a
conflict of loyalties?

MARTIN

My loyalty's to you, Father.

Gilbert puts his arms around both boys' shoulders.

GILBERT

We'll give it a go.

26

INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. DAY (S'86)

26

Returning from Gateshead, Martin lugs his suitcase into the house. He finds Helen in the living room, marking school essays and too absorbed to hear him enter. He crosses to her, kisses the nape of her neck.

MARTIN

I might've been a burglar.

HELEN

With his own key?

MARTIN

Locksmith by trade.
How's Emily?

HELEN

Blooming.

MARTIN

And little Isolde? What was it?

HELEN

Cressida. Can't read, write or play
a note but she knows her name.
You'll see her tomorrow.

A pause. Silence.

HELEN

How was your trip?

MARTIN

I made back the train fare.

A longer pause.

HELEN

So? What did you find?

MARTIN

Dovidl was still in London in 1952.

HELEN

There's a hot trail for you.

MARTIN

It means whatever his reason for not turning up, it wasn't because he was dead. We never knew that for sure before.

HELEN

Just because he was alive thirty-odd years ago doesn't mean he is now.

MARTIN

He's our age. Why wouldn't he be?

HELEN

This going to be your new hobby, Martin? Finding David after half a lifetime so he can spit in your eye again?

MARTIN

If you'd lost a brother-

HELEN

(cutting in)

He wasn't your brother.

MARTIN

He felt like a brother.

HELEN

And what do *I* feel like?

MARTIN

What?

HELEN

To you.

MARTIN

This isn't a competition.

HELEN

Everything's a competition. Read your Darwin.

MARTIN

Helen, I'm tired, I'm hungry, I need a bath and I don't want to have this conversation.

HELEN

Then we'll have it later, when you're fed and rested.

MARTIN

No, you can do it solo - both parts. I'll be the audience.

He turns to leave.

HELEN

Where did he go in 1952?

MARTIN

I thought you weren't interested.

HELEN

(shrugs)

Historical curiosity.

MARTIN

Poland. He went to Poland.

He goes out and closes the door behind him. Helen remains in her chair but does not resume her marking.

26A **EXT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. EARLY EVENING (A'40)**

26A

Blast tape on the windows of houses. A car passes with its headlights shaded. A military lorry drops Gilbert at the house.

27 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. EARLY EVENING (CONTINUOUS) (A'40)**

27

Same room as Scenes 25 and 26, same piano, but with the furnishings of the period; complete with taped windows and not-yet-drawn blackout curtains. No lights are on and the room is gloomy.

Barely able to see his music, Martin is at the piano, accompanying Dovidl; playing chords to which Dovidl is practising his staccato technique.

Suddenly Dovidl stops playing. Martin carries on for a moment or two before he registers this. Then he, too, stops; swivels on the stool to face Dovidl.

MARTIN

I didn't say you could stop.

DOVIDL

My neck is hurting.

[N.B. Dovidl's English is already far less heavily accented.]

MARTIN

It's supposed to.

He swivels back to the keyboard.

DOVIDL

I have done enough.

Martin swivels back to Dovidl.

MARTIN

I decide when you've done enough.

Dovidl picks up his violin case.

MARTIN

I'll tell him, Dov. I mean it.

DOVIDL

Tittle-tattle.

MARTIN

Baby.

Gilbert enters the room, wearing an ARP armband (Air Raid Precaution - a warden).

GILBERT

Sorry to interrupt, boys.

He crosses to the window, closes the blackout curtains, switches on the light.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Now you can see what you're doing.

Silence from the boys.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

How are your Hebrew lessons going David? Happy with Mr Rosenthal's teaching? I know you were getting along well with Mr. Cohen.

DOVIDL

(proudly)

He joined up. R.A.F.

GILBERT

Yes, I know. Important that you keep on with your religious studies. I promised your father.

As Gilbert turns away;

DOVIDL

They do not say Hebrew words same as in Poland, Mr. Simmonds

GILBERT

Then...

He's about to recommend that Dovidl learn the British style of pronunciation, but in that instant realises that the European style may soon cease to exist.

GILBERT

Say them the way you were taught in
Poland.

DOVIDL

Thank you, Mr Simmonds.

GILBERT

(to Martin)

How's the violin coming along?

Martin exchanges a look with Dovidl. If he's going to rat him
out, this is the moment. It's a long moment.

MARTIN

All right.

GILBERT

What's he working on?

DOVIDL

Staccato, Mr Simmonds.

GILBERT

Good, good.

(indicating window)

Well, you may as well keep at it
till Herr Hitler's *Götterdämmerung*
starts up.

He goes out.

MARTIN

You owe me one.

DOVIDL

How you make that out?

MARTIN

I could've told him. I didn't.

DOVIDL

View from the piano stool. Here is
standing view: *I* know you should
tell him. *I* know you did not. *He*
does not know it.

But as Martin begins to play THE AIR RAID SIREN starts up. A
moment later the electricity fails and the lights go off.

28

EXT. AIR RAID SHELTER ENTRANCE. SAME NIGHT (A'40)

28

The promised *Götterdämmerung*. Bombs falling, the flash of
incendiaries, searchlights and tracer illuminating the sky.

Gilbert, Enid, Martin and Dovidl are descending the steps
into the shelter: Enid and Martin lugging blankets, thermos
flasks, sandwiches; Dovidl carrying only his violin case.

Dovidl stops to look up at the light show in the sky.

MARTIN

You want to get killed?

DOVIDL

Is not my destiny. It would have
been like this - Warsaw would have
been like this.

MARTIN

Couldn't have been worse. Come on.

Dovidl doesn't move.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Look, if we're okay they probably are too. Your mum and dad, your sisters. They'd have had the sense to go to the shelters.

DOVIDL

Look how beautiful it is.

MARTIN

It's not art, Dovidl. It's bloody life and death.

DOVIDL

So is art.

A lone figure approaches, also heading for shelter: JOZEF WECHSLER (now nearly 20), carrying only his cased violin.

Martin nudges Dovidl. Look who it is.

DOVIDL

(to Martin)

So what? You want plaque? "Jozef Wechsler cowered here, 1940."?

Jozef passes without acknowledging them.

DOVIDL

(to Jozef: attempting
inclusiveness)

Hampstead Shelter Orchestra.

JOZEF

What instrument do you play?

Having delivered this majestic put-down, Wechsler surges regally past a Dovidl too stunned to reply.

29

INT. AIR RAID SHELTER. NIGHT (A'40)

29

Jozef has settled among the crowd, camped as far as possible from the Simmondses.

As Martin, Gilbert and Enid busy themselves spreading blankets and pillows, Dovidl removes his modest little violin from its case. He strokes the bowstrings with his block of Warsaw rosin, kisses the rosin, then casually begins to play a jaunty classical piece.

Gilbert's face displays pride; Jozef is trying to show amused indifference. But it seems there's only so much a genius can stand. Unable to resist, Jozef at last takes up his own venerable instrument and joins in, merging seamlessly with Dovidl. There is no apparent disparity in skill between these two performers and what at first seems a co-operative exercise soon grows savagely competitive-

-as Jozef switches suddenly to a more demanding piece-

-and Dovidl matches him effortlessly, bar for bar, finesse for finesse-

-and Dovidl switches to a notoriously tricky Paganini caprice-

-and Jozef meets the challenge unerringly.

Both of them smiling.

Jozef thinking: 'This kid's not half bad.'

30 **EXT WARSAW AIRPORT. DAY (S'86)**

30

A British Airways plane is about to land...

...Martin exits the terminal and climbs into a taxi

31 **EXT. WARSAW. DAY (S'86)**

31

Martin's taxi on its way from the airport to the city centre.

ANGLE FROM TAXI - MARTIN'S POV: 1986 WARSAW CITYSCAPE

This is a Warsaw far removed from the pre-war city Dovidl would have known as a boy but not much different from the one he visited in 1953, except that *Solidarnosc* flags and hoardings proliferate along the roadside and on the facades of buildings.

The TAXI DRIVER is a man in his seventies. The car radio is playing softly in the background.

*
*

MARTIN
Does Warsaw have a Musicians'
Union?

*
*
*

WARSAW TAXI DRIVER
No English.

*
*

MARTIN
Un-i-on. Music?

*
*

WARSAW TAXI DRIVER
Nie rozumiem.

*
*

The driver turns up the volume on his radio.

*

ON MARTIN

*

The search isn't going to be as easy as he thought.

*

*

32 **EXT. HAMPSTEAD STREET. DAY (S'43)**

32

More than two years after the Blitz, London has taken an unexpected overnight pasting from the Luftwaffe. The boys are standing on the rim of a smoking bomb site, holding their bikes, peering into the rubble.

MARTIN

Thought we had the Blitz two years ago.

DOVIDL

This is a footnote.

(a beat)

Look, there's a body.

ANGLE - an arm protruding from behind a half-demolished wall.

Martin follows Dovidl as he picks his way over the rubble towards it. He stoops to retrieve something shiny. He holds it up for Martin to see. A silver bracelet.

MARTIN

Has it got a name on it?

Dovidl shakes his head. Pockets the bracelet.

He moves out of sight behind the wall, which has a carpeted staircase still intact against it.

Martin pulls a Kit Kat bar from his pocket; unwraps it and takes a bite, surveying the wreckage as he munches. A moment or two passes, then Dovidl reappears, a purse in his hand.

MARTIN

(horrified)

What are you doing!?

DOVIDL

It's Mrs Harris. She's on my paper round. The face is gone but I recognise the purse.

He opens the purse, and with a triumphant yell extracts a pound note.

DOVIDL

Treasure of the Mummy's Tomb!

MARTIN

(appalled)

Do you know what you get for robbing the dead?

DOVIDL

Pound notes.

MARTIN

A firing squad.

Dovidl makes his way over to where Martin is standing and passes him without pausing, flapping the banknote.

DOVIDL

Eighty Kit Kats, Mott.

MARTIN

(calling after him)

It isn't yours!

DOVIDL

I don't mind sharing.

Reaching the street, he mounts his bike and pedals away.

33

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. DAY (LATER) (S'43)

33

They've repaired to their private spot on the Heath to smoke cigarettes and drink brown ale from bottles. Dovidl is setting out on the grass an array of raunchy playing cards, each depicting a nude woman in a saucy pose.

DOVIDL

Who do you fancy? The ace of clubs has the best tits, the four of diamonds is the best bum.

MARTIN

Your *bar mitzvah's* in ten days, Dov. You're supposed to be a man. Looking at pictures of naked women doesn't make you a man.

DOVIDL

Neither does watching Shirley Smith undress through binoculars.

MARTIN

That was a scientific experiment.

DOVIDL

In what? Team wanking? Anyway, you don't look like a man.

MARTIN

Neither do you.

DOVIDL

More than you.

MARTIN

Bollocks.

DOVIDL

That too.

MARTIN

Being a man doesn't mean that, does it?

DOVIDL

What are you now, a Talmud scholar? What does it mean, O wise one?

MARTIN

Among other things, respecting the dead.

DOVIDL

Why? Because they're dead? Out of interest, are they supposed to know they're being respected?

MARTIN

Their loved ones know.

DOVIDL

Mrs Harris didn't have any loved ones. No-one's going to miss her. Mind you, she made good fishcakes. I'll miss her fishcakes.

MARTIN

(truly appalled)

Is that all she meant to you?

DOVIDL

What else?

MARTIN

This was a human person, Dov. She probably went to bed last night planning to... I don't know, make fishcakes, and she ends up dead in the rubble of her house. Don't you feel *anything*?

Dovidl turns to look at him.

DOVIDL

Do you know how many people died last night, Mottl? I don't just mean in London. Across Occupied Europe. Shot, bayoneted, blown up, starved, burnt alive, hung-

MARTIN

That's not the point.

DOVIDL

Tens of thousands. And no-one even knows their names. So tell me, little man from NW3, which ones do I have to "feel" for? All of them or just the ones I trip over the morning after?

34

INT. SYNAGOGUE. DAY (S'43)

34

DISCOVER GILBERT AND MARTIN

Sitting together at the back, wearing skullcaps for respect but as out of place as Hottentots at a Greek wedding. They're attracting curious looks from the regular congregation (this being the synagogue Dovidl regularly attends), none of whom have seen them here before.

CAMERA FINDS ENID, alone in the women's section, even more isolated.

ON DOVIDL

Wearing a dark blue suit and embroidered silk *kippah*, the *bar mitzvah* boy is at the *bimah*, fluently reciting his Hebrew Torah portion.

DOVIDL

(...)Lay yisyatzev ish
bifneychem: pakhd'khem
umayraakhem yiten Adonay
Elaykhekhem al penay khol
hooretz asher tidrekhi vah,
kaasher diber lokhem.

DOVIDL

(...) No man shall stand up
to you: the LORD your God
will put the dread and the
fear of you over the whole
land in which you set foot,
as He promised you.

The Torah is covered.

DOVIDL

Borikh atoh Adonay, Elayheyni
melekh hoaylom, asher nosan
loni tayras emes v'khayei
aylom nota b'saykheni.

DOVIDL

We praise You, Eternal God,
Sovereign of the Universe:
You have given us a Torah of
truth, implanting within us
eternal life.

Borikh ato Adonai nayseyn
hatayroh.

We praise You, O God, Giver
of the Torah.

CONGREGATION

Shekoyach!

CONGREGATION

May your force grow!

35 **EXT. FRYDERYK CHOPIN UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC. DAY (S'86)** 35

A 'modern' concrete structure in central Warsaw, built in the
sixties.

36 **INT. FRYDERYK CHOPIN UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC. DAY (S'86)** 36

Photographs of prominent Polish musicians decorate the walls,
several violinists among them. Away down the corridor a
chamber orchestra can be heard practising.

Martin arrives at the door to an administrative office.
Inside he finds a middle-aged female RECEPTIONIST.

MARTIN

Dobry dzien, Pani.

No response. Obviously doesn't speak her own language.

MARTIN

Do you speak English?

The receptionist tilts her head. A tentative yes, possibly.

MARTIN

I'm looking for a violinist - David Eli Rapoport. He isn't one of your graduates but he might have performed here in the 'fifties...

36A **INT. ARCHIVE, F. CHOPIN UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC. DAY (S'86)** 36A

A secretary produces a heavy bound volume and plops it down in front of Martin.

INSERT LIST OF NAMES as Martin scans it.

Hundreds of names and dates of graduation. Many names ending in -SKI and -ISCZ. Radivicz... Rakowicz... Razinsky. No Rapoports.

MARTIN

These are all graduates of the school. Isn't there a record of musicians who've played here?

SECRETARY

For record store you go
Śródmieście.

MARTIN

I don't mean a recording. A written record.

He taps the book sharply in demonstration. The secretary responds by closing the book with a snap. His tap seen as a violation.

ON MARTIN

Although he didn't expect instant success, his expression shows his disappointment. He realizes it's a hopeless task without at least a working knowledge of Polish.

MARTIN

Thank you. *Dziekuje Ci.*

He turns and leaves.

37 **INT./EXT. BAILEY'S OF BROADWICK STREET. NIGHT (S'43)** 37

Gilbert arrives by taxi with the two boys outside one of London's most venerable musical instrument sellers.

38 **INT. BAILEY'S. NIGHT (S'43)** 38

He is greeted warmly by ADRIAN BAILEY (57) as a valued customer of long standing. Dismissing Martin with a glance, Bailey contemplates Dovidl appraisingly.

BAILEY

How old is the boy ?

DOVIDL

The boy's thirteen.

GILBERT

A man, Mr Bailey - in David's culture.

Taking Dovidl's left hand in both his own, Bailey flexes Dovidl's fingers.

BAILEY

Good fingers.

(to Gilbert)

Do you have a luthier in mind?

GILBERT

Nothing outrageously expensive, Mr Bailey. But a good one.

BAILEY

Let's leave the Strads to the millionaires. I have something special for him.

Bailey smiles, then disappears into a back room.

Martin is scowling.

A few moments of awkward silence pass before Bailey returns holding a worn violin case and a bow. He sets the case down and extracts the instrument.

At the sight of it Dovidl's eyes gleam with avarice.

BAILEY

This is a Nicolo Gagliano *filio*.

He hands bow and violin to Dovidl, who receives them with the reverence due a holy relic.

BAILEY (CONT.)

The son of Alessandro Gagliano made this instrument in 1735, the year of his father's death. Many think it was a tribute violin.

(to Dovidl)

And your father-

MARTIN

Foster father.

Gilbert glares at his son.

BAILEY
...does not have to be Rothschild
to afford it.

GILBERT
Happy *bar mitzvah*, David.

DOVIDL
Thank you, sir.

MARTIN
Where's mine?

Forced laughter from the two men. If Gilbert is aware how cruel he's being to his natural son he isn't showing it.

But Dovidl is too distracted to spare a thought for Martin. He's examining the instrument with a lustful eye.

Taking the ring box from his pocket, he extracts his block of rosin, swipes the bowstrings with it - once up, once down - then kisses the rosin. Bailey shoots Gilbert an enquiring look but no explanation is offered.

Dovidl has tucked the Gagliano under his chin and is testing its range and resonance, playing short snatches of music in various styles and in rapid succession.

A smile of pleasure extends across Bailey's face.

BAILEY
(to Gilbert)
See how she responds. It will be a
happy marriage.

39

INT. WARSAW HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT (S'86)

39

Martin is working the Warsaw phone book, calling any possible source he can think of. It's another hopeless task, limited by his rudimentary Polish, the poor English of his interlocutors and scratchy phone connections.

MARTIN
(to phone)
Rapoport. R-A-P-O-P-O-R-T. He would
have been here from about the early
1950's. I don't know how long-
(interrupted)
Of course. Thank you anyway, *Pani*.

TIME CUT

SAME SCENE, PERHAPS AN HOUR LATER

Another phone call.

MARTIN
(to phone, frustrated)
No, I'm asking for your *enquiry*
rates...
(listens)
Money. *Pieniadze*. Do you charge by
the assignment or by the hour?
(listens in frustration)
I'm sorry to have troubled you. I'm
afraid I need someone who speaks
fluent English.

Fluent Polish comes down the line.

MARTIN
(to himself)
Q.E.D.

Putting down the phone, he crosses to the window and stands
looking out at the city.

A train passing in the near distance triggers a memory...

40

INT. LONDON RAILWAY TERMINUS. DAY (W'47)

40

GILBERT descends from the boat train with an ENSEMBLE OF
MUSICIANS, their luggage and instrument cases plastered with
Polish and other European travel stickers. Returning from a
two-week cultural tour of post-war Russian-occupied Poland.

Waiting at the platform entrance are MARTIN and DOVIDL, both
now seventeen. Martin is still a pink-faced adolescent;
Dovidl, already man-shaped, has a pronounced beard shadow and
the stricken, grief-rimmed eyes of an unconfirmed orphan.
Those eyes searching Gilbert for news.

GILBERT
I'm sorry, David. I tried very
hard, you must believe me.

DOVIDL
Are you sure you went to the right
address? Dzielna 21?

GILBERT
Your apartment - the tenement your
family lived in... no longer
exists, I'm afraid.

Dovidl's face. Gilbert places a sympathetic hand on his
shoulder.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
Not the worst news, David.
Definitely not the worst.
(to Martin)
Can you manage the cases?

ANGLE ON WARSAW STICKER ON SUITCASE as Martin lifts it.

41 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (W'47)**

41

Same day. At dinner: Gilbert, Enid, Martin, Dovidl.

GILBERT

(to Enid)

David's family definitely survived the Ghetto. We know that much. They were deported before the Uprising in '43.

ENID

Deported where?

A pause. He hates even the word.

GILBERT

Treblinka.

Dovidl has already been told this but the terrible name shocks him anew.

DOVIDL

They're dead, Mrs Simmonds.

GILBERT

No, David! That is *not* something we may assume. There was a mass revolt. Hundreds escaped. Hundreds. I will not give up the search and you must not give up hope. There are any number of places they could be - one of the DP camps, Russia, possibly-

DOVIDL

Why did you take Jozef Wechsler to Poland and not me? I play as well as he does.

GILBERT

You're not ready yet.

DOVIDL

I could've looked for myself. I speak Polish.

GILBERT

So does Jozef, and what it got him *was* the worst news - confirmed by the Polish authorities. The other reason I didn't take you is that I'm responsible for you in a way I am not for Jozef.

(MORE)

GILBERT (cont'd)

You're both Polish citizens -
something we must rectify, by the
way. They could have kept you
there. Witness what happened to
poor Jozef.

ENID

What happened to him?

GILBERT

His entire family's gone. The Poles
have kept him.

(a beat)

In an asylum.

42

INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (SAME EVENING) (W'47)

42

A search is underway for Dovidl. Gilbert comes in from the
garden, his face fretted with concern.

GILBERT

He's not in the shed. Did he say
anything?

MARTIN

Just said he wanted to be alone.

(a beat)

He took his violin.

ENID

Is he likely to do anything silly?

MARTIN

Yes, Mother. Run away and join a
band.

GILBERT

For God's sake, Martin! His entire
family's almost certainly been
wiped out! Show some compassion.

MARTIN

You mean the way he would, in my
position?

GILBERT

I don't doubt it for a moment. He's
been like a brother to you.

MARTIN

And a son to you.

GILBERT

If there's some secret place you
boys have I've no need to know
where it is. Just go there and find
him.

Martin goes out without a word.

ENID

David isn't the suicidal type.

GILBERT

All artists are the suicidal type.

43

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. NIGHT (SAME NIGHT) (W'47)

43

We find Martin and Dovidl sitting under a tree in their
private place on the margin of Hampstead Ponds: Martin
smoking a cigarette, Dovidl a pipe.

The sepia family portrait we saw in Scene 21 is lying beside
Dovidl on the grass. The Gagliano, out of its case, hangs
bizarrely from a branch by the loose end of one its strings.

MARTIN

My father thinks you've topped
yourself.

Dovidl smiles.

DOVIDL

Against my religion.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Prodigal quasi-son wanted home,
Dov.

DOVIDL

Goody. Quasi-fatted calf for din-
dins.

MARTIN

You really are a cold bastard, you
know that?

He flops down beside his friend.

DOVIDL

(indicating the violin)
It's that thing I'm killing: the
varnished tyrant. I'm glad you
came. Murder needs witnesses.

Noticing the photograph, Martin picks it up and studies it.

INSERT PHOTOGRAPH

MARTIN
(of the photo)
Why haven't I seen this?

DOVIDL
It's how I've kept them safe.
Hiding them. From everyone.

MARTIN
I'm not everyone.

Martin picks it up, studies it.

MARTIN
Which one's Malkeh?

Dovidl points.

DOVIDL
She's five there. Pessia was nine.

MARTIN
What was it like? That life?

DOVIDL
Still Life with Jews. Boys playing
football, old men praying, ritual
baths for the women. Malkeh was too
young for that so she would stay
home - I'd play her a lullaby at
bedtime. My father would wander the
streets - every day, Mottl, imagine
- every evening except the sabbath -
selling his jewellery, pieces he
made while the rest of us were
asleep. Just so we could eat.
Sometimes we didn't...

Emotion catches him by the throat.

MARTIN
It's only presumption of death. Why
your rabbi won't let you say
kiddish, right?

Dovidl manages a smile.

DOVIDL
Kiddush is the blessing over wine.
I can still say that. This is the
Kaddish:
(closes his eyes)
(MORE)

DOVIDL (cont'd)

*Yisgadal v'yisgadash sh'mai
rabah...*

MARTIN

Don't, Dov. Not if you're not
supposed to.

DOVIDL

Do you think I'd go mad if I knew
for certain? Strip off and run
naked through the streets like
Wechsler, waving my violin.
"Israelites to your bows! The
Philistines are upon us!"

MARTIN

I don't think he did that.

DOVIDL

Can't see it working in Hampstead.

MARTIN

Wechsler started out half barmy.

DOVIDL

And I'm not?

MARTIN

You've got *me*.

DOVIDL

A stabilising influence.

MARTIN

Ordinary and boring.

DOVIDL

Good for leaning on. Like this
tree.

MARTIN

Nice to know I'm good for
something.

DOVIDL

Stop fishing for compliments,
Mottl. This is my life crisis, not
yours.

MARTIN

Hey, how about a joint life crisis?
Joint suicide note. We don't have
to do it, just drive my father
nuts.

Dovidl laughs.

DOVIDL

Do you think he'll ever recover?

MARTIN

Who?

DOVIDL

Wechsler. Will he stay mad for ever, do you think? What do they do to lunatics in Poland, I wonder? Ice cold baths? Heap ashes on your head? It's a place of ashes, Mottl. It'd be exactly the right treatment.

44 **INT. ASYLUM, WARSAW. DAY (S'86)**

44

Nothing much has changed here since the place was built in the 1920s. Martin makes his way along a corridor of glossy brown tiled walls and shiny linoleum floors to a receptionist's window, where he shows a piece of paper bearing Jozef Wechsler's name to a MALE RECEPTIONIST. After staring at the name for long seconds the receptionist points along the corridor.

45 **INT. ASYLUM VISITING ROOM. DAY (S'86)**

45

Martin has been directed to a small, bare room with an iron grille over its single high window and walls covered in faded, yellowed paint more than sixty years old.

JOZEF WECHSLER (now 65) is wheeled in by a NURSE almost as old as the asylum itself. She positions him under the window.

Haggard and sallow, looking nearer eighty, Jozef is rocking rhythmically to and fro in his wheelchair, as though in mockery of Jewish prayer; his long, once-nimble fingers fiddling compulsively with the buttons of his striped pyjamas. Nobody here has thought to avoid the cruel irony of those stripes upon a Jewish patient bereaved into madness by the Holocaust.

Martin has brought grapes. Handing them to the nurse, he pulls up a hard, upright chair and seats himself by Jozef. The nurse remains standing.

MARTIN

Jozef? Do you remember me?
Martin Simmonds? From London?

No response from Jozef.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

David Rapoport was my foster brother.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You and he played together during
an air raid - in Hampstead.

(no reaction from Jozef)

You came here with my father on a
concert tour after the war.

Jozef seems entirely unaware of his presence.

Martin appeals silently to the nurse for help.

NURSE

You are friend from *Pan Wechsler*?

MARTIN

I knew him in London, before...
Before. Does he understand me?

NURSE

Sometimes he remembers.

(to Jozef)

Your friend has come far for to see
you, Jozef.

Jozef, still rocking back and forth, says nothing.

MARTIN

(to nurse)

Don't you have any pyjamas that
aren't striped?

NURSE

Pyjamas...?

MARTIN

They look like... Never mind.

NURSE

You are good friend?

MARTIN

Friend of a friend. I was
wondering... if someone we knew in
London ever visited him. Another
violinist.

(a beat)

David Rapoport?

NURSE

Jozef has not much visitor. His
family is dead.

(a beat)

Just only the woman.

MARTIN

Woman?

NURSE

June 15 woman. She comes one day
every year. June 15.
(disapprovingly)
Not his wife.

46 **EXT. WARSAW APARTMENT BLOCKS. DAY (S'86)**

46

We're in an area of post-war apartment blocks in pale colours, with a few green verges. Could be anywhere.

47 **INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY (S'86)**

47

Entering one of the buildings, Martin climbs five flights of iron-banistered stairs to the fifth floor. This time we might think he's close, the elusive Dovidl perhaps only a few steps away...

He rings a doorbell. Waits.

The door is opened - though only partially - by a tall, slender woman with high cheekbones, blue eyes, a small, straight nose and short blonde hair: recruiting poster for the mature Aryan matron. ANNA WOZNIAK, 50 but looking younger.

MARTIN

Pani Wozniak? Anna Wozniak?

A nod, slightly suspicious. Despite *Solidarnosc* and the thaw it has already begun to bring, the secret police are still active in 1986; they come in all guises.

MARTIN

Do you speak English?

Another nod.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I'm told you might be able to help me...

48 **INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT. DAY (S'86)**

48

Like the Simmonds house, this is the living space of a cultured person on a strict budget: many books, few furnishings.

ANNA

I hardly know *Pan Wechsler*. I visit him as a duty.

MARTIN

One day a year. June 15th.

ANNA

Yes.

MARTIN

Mind if I ask why?

ANNA

Why do you want to know?

MARTIN

I'm trying to find someone who knew him in London. Another violinist. David Rapoport.

Anna's reaction tells Martin he's struck gold.

MARTIN

You know him?

ANNA

(realization)

You are Martin!

48A **INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT. DAY - LATER (S'86)**

48A

CLOSE ON a framed portrait of Pope John Paul II hanging on a wall and a simple wooden crucifix fixed above it.

Martin is looking at them as Anna returns to the room with a coffee tray.

ANNA

David came the year your queen was coronated. I lived then on Dzielna, where he grew up. It is how we met.

MARTIN

How long did he stay in Warsaw?

ANNA

A few months. He was not allowed a visa for very long.

MARTIN

Any idea where he went after that?

ANNA

This he did not tell me.

Though Anna is more forthcoming now that she knows who Martin is, we sense that she's not yet entirely trusting.

She sees that he's looking at the crucifix.

ANNA

They are allowed in private homes.
I took them down when David was
with me.

There's an implication of intimacy in "with me" that Martin
doesn't acknowledge.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It would not have pleased him to
see them, I think.

MARTIN

No, he's not a big fan of religion.

ANNA

Your friend is a soul... on pause.
Is there a word for that?

Martin shakes his head, unsure what she means.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Believing one thing, another thing,
nothing - all at the same time?

MARTIN

Agnostic?

She shakes her head.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Ambivalent?

ANNA

Yes. David was ambivalent.

49

EXT. NORTH LONDON STREETS. EARLY MORNING (S'47)

49

The boys are walking to the synagogue early on a summer's
morning. Dovidl carrying a velvet prayer bag.

MARTIN

What's this thing I'm supposed to
witness?

DOVIDL

A ceremony.

MARTIN

Not another *bar mitzvah*!?

DOVIDL

Not quite.

MARTIN

Bit early to raise one of those
quorum thingies.

DOVIDL

This doesn't need a *minyan*. Just a witness.

MARTIN

Nice to count for once.

DOVIDL

Probably not to God, Mottl. Only to me.

MARTIN

Do you think He knows where your family is? God.

DOVIDL

Oh, He knows, He just won't say. Would Jesus if you asked him?

Martin smiles.

MARTIN

Why? Thinking of converting?

DOVIDL

Jews can't convert.

MARTIN

Disraeli did.

DOVIDL

Disraeli was baptised. Wetting his head didn't wash the Jew out of him. Or out of Jesus. Ethnicity isn't soluble in water, Mottl. Religion - well, that's a coat. When it gets too hot you can take it off.

They arrive at the synagogue and enter.

50

INT. SYNAGOGUE. EARLY MORNING (S'47)

50

Empty pews, unoccupied *bimah*, a few stragglers leaving after the *Shacharit* service. The red glow of the Eternal Light over the Ark signifies the continuing presence of God.

MARTIN

You just lost your *minyan*.

DOVIDL

No, this is perfect.

(indicating the Eternal
Light)

He's here. The ceremony's for Him.

He pulls from his prayer bag a striped silk *tallith*, which he drapes about his neck, and the embroidered *kippah* he wore at his *bar mitzvah*, which he places on his head.

DOVIDL (CONT'D)

(to Martin)

Listen and don't interrupt.

(intoning, to the Eternal
Light)

Hear, O Israel and the God of
Israel. On this nineteenth day of
Sivan in the year 5707, in London,
in the presence of Martin Simmonds,
also of London I, David Eli
Rapoport, son of Zygmunt and Esther
Rapoport of Warsaw, do freely and
of my own will renounce the faith
of my forefathers...

MARTIN

What are you doing?

DOVIDL

Converting. Be quiet.

MARTIN

To what?

DOVIDL

Nothing.

(continuing his ceremony)

I do most solemnly renounce and
repudiate, now and for ever, in the
name of the surviving, the reviled
and discredited faith of the
perished: the faith of Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob...

MARTIN

This isn't funny, Dov-

DOVIDL

... the accursed faith of the
despised, the mocked, the
persecuted, the slaughtered; the
faith abandoned by Jesus. Thus do I
renounce the Torah and Talmud. Thus
do I divorce myself from the
community of Israel...

Dipping into his bag, he extracts a knife. With the prayer
shawl still around his neck, he begins to cut it into pieces.

Martin has stepped back in horror. Though not himself a practising Christian, he knows the momentousness of self-excommunication.

MARTIN
YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

DOVIDL
...And, as I separate this garment,
so do I separate myself, now and
for all time, from the beliefs,
practices, traditions, rituals and
obligations of Zion.

The *tallith* has drifted from his neck in tatters. Pulling the skull cap from his head, Dovidl cuts it in half and drops the pieces at his feet.

DOVIDL (CONT'D)
Amen.

His footsteps resonate on the tiled floor as he leaves.
Martin stares silently after him.

51 **EXT. BALCONY OF ANNA'S APARTMENT, WARSAW. DUSK (S'86)** 51

Anna has brought Martin on to the balcony of her apartment.

ANGLE: THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOOD

A reconstructed square of post-war apartment blocks built on the site of the razed ghetto: a site as displaced in time as that of any ancient battlefield, this one echoless by design.

MARTIN
If this is where the Ghetto was,
where are the ruins?

ANNA
Where the past belongs. Under the
ground.

MARTIN
So he just left, didn't say where
he was going?

ANNA
Must we have these interrogations,
Martin, like a Sherlock Holmes
story?

MARTIN
It's why I'm here.
(a beat)
Where was he staying? Didn't he
come to say goodbye?

Long pause.

ANNA

For his first days, in a pension -
not a very good one.

MARTIN

Where after that?

ANNA

With me.

52

INT. WARSAW BISTRO. NIGHT (S'86)

52

Over dinner, vodka flowing freely-

MARTIN

He used you. You know that.

ANNA

Martin, I loved your friend. It's how you live with people you don't always like. By loving them.

MARTIN

Loving Dovidl's a mistake.

ANNA

We don't choose who to love.

MARTIN

(anger building)

Trusting him's a mistake. You can't trust them.

ANNA

Them?

MARTIN

Artists. They die, they disappear, they leave you. They don't understand love or loyalty.

ANNA

You must stop looking for him, Martin. It would not be good to find him.

MARTIN

For him or me?

ANNA

Both. If he wanted to be found
don't you think he would have come
to you long ago?

The anger that has been building in Martin bursts out.

MARTIN

We thought he was dead! My father
gave up on life when he
disappeared! Had a stroke two
months later. It killed him.

ANNA

David told me of your friendship.
Not how it ended.

Reaching across the table, Anna covers Martin's hand with her
own.

ANNA (CONT'D)

He is the soloist. We are the
accompanists. He took our light. We
have none of our own.

MARTIN

I don't accept that.

ANNA

Yes. You do.
(a beat)
We use each other.

53 **EXT. ANNA'S APARTMENT BLOCK. NIGHT (S'86)**

53

Re-establishing.

54 **INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT (S'86)**

54

DISCOVER MARTIN in bed with Anna. Post-coital. For him it's
as though he has performed the act under some irresistible
compulsion. Anna senses it.

ANNA

You have never done this before?
Been unfaithful to your wife?

MARTIN

No.

ANNA

How does it feel?

MARTIN

Like betrayal.

He turns his head to look at her. Is this why she lured him into her bed? To show him the obverse face of betrayal? She reads the question in his eyes.

MARTIN

Where did he go when he left
Poland, Anna?

ANNA

Again this? I told you, he did not
say.

MARTIN

I don't believe you.

He points at a crucifix over the bed.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Swear on that.

ANNA

Oh, Martin, that cross has heard
more lies than... Goebbels'
bathroom mirror.

MARTIN

Swear anyway.

ANNA

I swear on the holy cross he did
not tell me where he went.

MARTIN

Why do you visit Wechsler?

ANNA

I told you this also. I go in place
of David.

MARTIN

How often did he go?

ANNA

Once only. To play for him the
Song. June 15th, 1953. He never
went again.

MARTIN

What song?

ANNA

Martin, it's why David came to
Poland. To play the music where the
ashes are. It was his obsession.

MARTIN

Tell me.

ANNA

There is nothing to tell. I was not permitted to hear it. He sent me from the room when he played for Jozef. The only other time I was made to wait in the car... when I took him to Treblinka.

55 **INT./EXT. ANNA'S CAR/TREBLINKA. DAY (S'86)**

55

Anna's Polski Fiat passes a small roadside *kapliczka* [Catholic monument] as they approach Treblinka.

56 **EXT. TREBLINKA - SYMBOLIC CEMETERY ENTRANCE. DAY (S'86)**

56

Anna drives in and stops by a sculpture representing railway tracks at the entrance to the symbolic cemetery. Beyond the memorials the forest can be seen encroaching at the perimeter: still raw, undressed, startled by discovery.

Anna shuts off the engine.

ANNA

This is where I waited. None of this was here. Only fields, some railway tracks.

MARTIN

Did he tell you about his family? Pessia would have been fifteen, Malkeh ten or eleven. They never appeared on any lists. We encouraged him to keep hoping. Maybe we shouldn't have.

ANNA

He never spoke of them. To David Jews were not Poles. I am a Pole, I live where he lived, I stole his life. To him I am one of the persecutors.

MARTIN

You were just a child then.

ANNA

You don't have to be guilty to *feel* guilty.

56A **EXT. TREBLINKA - THE SYMBOLIC CEMETERY. DAY (S'86)** 56A

DISCOVER MARTIN AND ANNA walking through the symbolic cemetery: a garden of stone slabs of various sizes, each one representing an annihilated Jewish community.

Neither Anna nor Martin speaks as they wander among the stones, reading the names of villages, towns, cities; here only the dead do the talking. Martin stops by the largest stone of all, inscribed "WARSZAWA", contemplates it in silence...

57 **INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL. DAY (S'86)** 57

As they approach the airport terminal in Anna's Fiat Polski-

ANNA

The morning after, he was gone. He left behind everything.

MARTIN

What's everything?

ANNA

Me. Poland. His past. You.
(a beat)
The violin.

MARTIN

Wait a minute. He left the Gagliano?

Anna's Polski pulls up outside the terminal.

ANNA

I found it after he went - I couldn't believe he did that on purpose. Something so precious. I went in a taxi to the airport to return it.

(a beat)

He told me to sell it.

MARTIN

And send him the money?

ANNA

The money I was to keep.

MARTIN

Did you?

ANNA

It was not mine to sell.

MARTIN

His either.

ANNA

That is why he took it back.

Retrieving his bag from the back seat, Martin opens the passenger door. Unsure how to conduct the valediction.

MARTIN

So... I suppose this is goodbye.

ANNA

I never lied to you, Martin. He never told me where he was going.

(moment of decision)

When I was giving him the violin a flight was called. Suddenly he was in a hurry.

(a beat)

The flight was to New York.

ON MARTIN: a surge of excitement pulsing through him; a trail thirty-three years cold but still a trail.

MARTIN

(kissing her)

Thank you.

ANNA

God bless you, Martin. I would say I hope you find him... but I hope you do not.

Martin closes the car door, heads into the terminal.

57A **OMITTED**

57A

58 **OMITTED**

58

59 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (S'86)**

59

Martin returns from his travels to a house in semi-darkness. The hall light is on but Helen isn't in the living room, nor in the kitchen...

MARTIN
(calling)
Helen?

No answer.

He climbs the stairs and enters the bedroom, where he finds Helen in bed, reading. Her eyes flick up, then back to the book.

MARTIN
What're you reading?

She shows him the cover. *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* by Kahn and Green [published 1985].

MARTIN
Don't tell me the ending.

Ignored by Helen, Martin busies himself unpacking his suitcase, removing his jacket etc.

MARTIN
No, I didn't find him. Thanks for asking.

No response.

MARTIN
I know where he went after Poland.

Still nothing back from Helen.

MARTIN (CONTD.)
New York.

HELEN
Next stage of the 'Great Quest'?

Martin seats himself on the bed.

MARTIN
You don't care if I find him, do you?

Helen shrugs.

MARTIN
Why? You used to like him.

HELEN
(raising the book)
I used to like pony stories.

MARTIN
He was fun to be around.

HELEN

Oh, yes. Charismatic genius and all that. Except geniuses aren't very good at being human.

MARTIN

I know his faults, okay. I've known them a lot longer than you have.

HELEN

Then why waste your time on him? Our time.

MARTIN

I may be all he's got.

HELEN

I'm all you've got.

It takes a moment for the import of this to register.

MARTIN

He's not a fucking rival, love.

Now she looks up, meets his eye.

HELEN

He was from the day I met him.

JAUNTY JEWISH BAND MUSIC OVER - the Hora Nayeem, played with some unusual strings riffs-

60

INT. DANCE HALL, LONDON. NIGHT (MAY, 1948)

60

ON DOVIDL the source of the riffs.

Having joined the band for the length of the song, he is seated cross-legged on the floor in front of the cellist, bowing the strings while the cellist does the fingering: a party trick which is drawing loud applause from everyone in the hall.

HELEN and MARTIN (both 18 here) are watching this: Helen with fascination. She hasn't met Dovidl yet.

The occasion is a celebratory dance: the hall hung with Israeli flags, portraits of Ben-Gurion, a banner declaring the date (May 14th, 1948) and proclaiming the birth of the State of Israel.

In one corner a recruitment stand has been set up, a couple of tanned *sabras* in khaki shirts enjoining North Londoners to enlist in the new army, to fight the massed Arab hordes preparing to destroy their infant nation. "ISRAEL NEEDS YOU!" reads the sign.

The song ends and Dovidl makes his way through the crowd to Martin, the band now playing *Bublitschki*.

DOVIDL

Thanks for coming, Mottl.

(eyeing Helen)

Ah, the much-advertised Helen. No interest in Israel, I assume, but Mottl's here for me, so you're here for him, yes?

HELEN

A dance is a dance.

MARTIN

(to Helen)

My brother: Dov the Apostate. Not soluble in water.

DOVIDL

(indicating recruiters)

Shall I join up and shed blood for Israel, Mottl? The baby's one day old and already bashing up its neighbours, *keyneynahora*.

MARTIN

I think they're only taking Jews, Dov.

DOVIDL

There goes our reputation for draft-dodging.

(to Helen)

But they do take women. One up on God.

HELEN

If you're an apostate how come you're celebrating a Jewish state?

DOVIDL

They give great parties. Never missed one yet.

HELEN

When was the last one?

DOVIDL

516 B.C.

Dovidl offers his hand. Helen takes it, allows herself to be led onto the dance floor.

Martin is left abandoned.

61

INT. TAXI. NIGHT (MAY, 1948)

61

Dovidl is lolling drunkenly against Helen in the back seat, eyes closed.

MARTIN

Sorry about this. We can dump him
and go back if you want.

HELEN

No, it's okay. Drop me off first.

(a beat)

I haven't seen him at lectures. Is
he in our year?

MARTIN

He isn't at UCL. Trinity,
Cambridge, reading Maths.

HELEN

(pulls a face)

Maths!

MARTIN

Music plus chess equals maths.
Simmonds' Equation.

Helen's eyebrows go up. Dovidl's being a science major makes him doubly exotic. She brushes a stray lock of hair out of Dovidl's eyes, which open at her touch.

DOVIDL

Dead and gone to heaven. "*L'amor
che muove il sole e l'altre
stelle.*"

HELEN

Am I supposed to be impressed?

DOVIDL

You kidding? Maths *and* Dante?

Helen laughs.

The taxi pulls up outside a terraced house.

Helen climbs out.

HELEN

Nice meeting you, Dovidl.

She closes the taxi door and is gone.

As the taxi moves off-

MARTIN

What do you think?

DOVIDL
(eyes still closed)
Impregnable fortress. Best of
British luck with that one,
brother.

61A **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE, DINING ROOM. NIGHT (S'86)**

61A

Alone in the house, Helen is working her way through a box of memorabilia.

We'll see, among other things: the programme for Dovidl's aborted 1951 debut concert; a faded newspaper clipping from the following day, headlined: "VIOLINIST MISSING", 21-year-old Dovidl pictured; and, most prominent, the sleeve to the promotional recording referred to in Scene 1: featuring Dovidl's rendering of the BACH PARTITAS, which we'll hear playing over.

Helen's face is registering a complex emotional cocktail that's tricky to read: transportation, nostalgia, dislike, regret... and something else...

62 **INT. LONDON CONCERT HALL. AFTERNOON (A'51)**

62

The orchestra is packing up its instruments, preparing to leave after the final acoustic rehearsal. Dovidl casing his Gagliano.

MARTIN
You should lock that in the
dressing room. It'll be safe there.

DOVIDL
Did Ulysses lock away his bow?

MARTIN
If it was pissing down in Ithaca,
absolutely.
(nervous)
How do you feel? Are you nervous
about tonight? I'm not nervous. How
do you think the rehearsal went?

Dovidl grins. "Nervous" isn't in his lexicon.

DOVIDL
How did it sound?

MARTIN
Great. Terrific. Magic.

DOVIDL
It was crap.

MARTIN

Good crap, though.

DOVIDL

Great rehearsal, crap performance.
Crap rehearsal, great performance.

MARTIN

What are you going to do now?
(checks watch)
You've got... four and a half
hours.

DOVIDL

Get drunk.

MARTIN

Oh, so droll. International debut
of David Eli Rapoport: tiddly
fiddly-comedian. Isaac Stern meets
Vic Oliver. Know what you ought to
do? Seriously? Relax. I mean
totally.

(as Edward G. Robinson)

Take my advice, kid. Get yourself
laid.

DOVIDL

That what you're going to do?

MARTIN

Me? I'm doing haircut and manicure.
Pull out my hair in handfuls, bite
my nails to the quick.

DOVIDL

(a smile)

See you in the trenches.

He wanders off. Martin watches him go.

63

INT. YELLOW CAB, MANHATTAN. DAY (S'86)

63

A yellow cab in traffic. Martin in the back seat, studying a
list of auction houses and specialist dealers in classical
stringed instruments. Several names have already been crossed
off. The next on the list is "FEINMAN BROTHERS".

64

EXT. FEINMAN BROTHERS, MANHATTAN. DAY (S'86)

64

Martin enters a shop in a lower Manhattan side street:
"FEINMAN BROTHERS: STRING INSTRUMENT SALES, RESTORATIONS,
VALUATIONS".

65

INT. FEINMAN BROTHERS. CONTINUOUS (S'86)

65

The old man who emerges at the sound of the shop's bell is a Manhattan counterpart of Mr Bailey, only at least 20 years older.

FEINMAN

Can I help you?

MARTIN

I'm looking for a Gagliano violin.

Feinman smiles.

FEINMAN

Father, son or grandson? Alessandro or one of the Nicolos?

MARTIN

Nicolo Filio. Made in 1735.

FEINMAN

(another smile)

Ah, my English-sounding friend, you are hunting dodos. I know of only two listed Nicolo Filios made in '35. Neither has changed hands in living memory...

MARTIN

This one may not be listed.

FEINMAN

Then it's a fake.

MARTIN

It was bought in London. Bailey's of Broadwick Street.

FEINMAN

My father - *olav hasholem* - used to do business with Adrian Bailey. Fakes he didn't sell.

MARTIN

Has anyone ever tried to sell you a 1735 Gagliano?

FEINMAN

You're looking for the instrument or the owner?

MARTIN

Both.

FEINMAN

When they come up for sale they go to the larger auction houses.

MARTIN

This one hasn't.

Feinman examines his memory.

FEINMAN

Maybe four or five years back a woman phoned, wanted a valuation. But that might have been a Nicolo II - I'm not sure. She spoke to my brother Herschel.

MARTIN

Did she give a name?

FEINMAN

An address. Herschel told her, "Bring it in, we'll look."

MARTIN

Did she?

FEINMAN

She wanted he should *schlep* out to Brooklyn with it. Had to be this particular day, this particular time - I don't think the husband knew she was selling.

MARTIN

So he didn't go?

FEINMAN

To a man my age, Herschel's age, time also is a Gagliano.

MARTIN

Would your brother remember where in Brooklyn?

FEINMAN

Herschel passed away last year, *olav hasholem*.

MARTIN

My sympathies.

FEINMAN

Crown Heights somewhere. If it's important, I could maybe find the address....

66 **INT. YELLOW CAB (TRAVELLING), CROWN HEIGHTS. DUSK (S'86)** 66

A strengthening gale is blowing as Martin rides through the suburban streets of Crown Heights in a yellow cab, past shops bearing Hebrew and Yiddish lettering, bearded, long-coated men clutching their wide-brimmed hats and fedoras against the wind as they go to and from the *yeshiva* on Eastern Parkway.

It's the last place in America Martin would expect to find the apostate Dovidl. Plainly it's the wrong Gagliano, unless its owner bought it from Dovidl...

The cab pulls up outside a house.

67 **EXT. CROWN HEIGHTS HOUSE. DUSK (S'86)** 67

Martin waits in the wind until the door is opened by a *prematurely worn-out-looking woman in her early forties (BROCHE)*. A seven year-old boy, *ZYGMUNT (JUNIOR)*, dressed in ultra-orthodox style, *peeps from behind her legs*. *
*
*
*

The light thrown from the interior reveals a *mezuzah* on the doorpost. *
*

MARTIN

Sorry to bother you but I was given *this address...* *
*

Taking in Martin's appearance - not ultra-orthodox, therefore someone to be suspicious of - she manoeuvres the boy protectively behind her. *
*
*

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I'm looking for a violin... *

BROCHE

Gay holen deyn tate.

BROCHE

Go fetch your father.

The boy dashes *back* into the house, calling- *

ZYGMUNT (JR.)

Tatti!

MARTIN

...a Gagliano-

He breaks off as the man of the house appears, the boy behind him, clutching his legs. Following them are a girl of six and another a year younger, crowding to see who the stranger is at the door.

The man is Martin's age, his hair and beard still thick and black, the beard framing a face still handsome, a jawline not in the least jowly. He wears the long black coat of an ultra-orthodox Jew and, beneath it, a collarless white shirt. But he's instantly recognisable.

DOVIDL

You took your time, Mottl.

MARTIN'S REACTION

He's hardly able to believe that this is Dovidl, yet so constrained is he by the circumstances of the encounter that he's unable to react freely. All he can do is shake his head in wonder.

DOVIDL

As you see: I took off the coat, I
put it back on.

So saying, he pulls a long black coat from a hook by the door and shrugs into it as he steps outside, closing the door behind him, shutting Martin away from his life.

68 **INT. DOVIDL'S CAMPER (TRAVELLING). NIGHT (S'86)**

68

It's a battered old camper and there's silence inside it, disturbed only by engine and wind noise as, driven by Dovidl with Martin beside him, it rattles through the streets of Brooklyn.

In Martin's face we'll see thirty-five years of pent-up anger, perplexity and frustration waiting for expression; in Dovidl's face as he drives there is nothing readable.

Eventually Dovidl pulls in at a lonely parking spot overlooking the East River.

69 **EXT. EAST RIVER OVERLOOK. NIGHT (S'86)**

69

On a night like this Dovidl's is the only vehicle in the parking area.

70 **INT. DOVIDL'S CAMPER. NIGHT (S'86)**

70

Dovidl sets the hand brake and cuts the motor. The silence is disturbed now only by the wind and the ticking of the cooling engine. Dovidl turns finally to face Martin...

...and receives, full force in his face, A FLURRY OF REPEATED HARD BLOWS which split his lip and draw blood from his mouth and nose.

Dovidl makes no attempt to dodge the blows or shield himself from them.

He just sits there and receives them as his due. Though this is a far cry from their old slow-motion boxers ritual, the moment should echo it darkly.

Breathing hard, Martin finally sinks back in the passenger seat. Dovidl dabs at his bleeding face with his sleeve.

With a shake of the head Martin pulls from his pocket a neatly folded clean pocket handkerchief. Brushing Dovidl's hand aside, he takes over the dabbing with this.

After a few moments Dovidl appropriates the handkerchief and continues wiping his own blood, but in doing so notices that Martin's knuckles are bleeding too. Abandoning his own injuries, he wraps the handkerchief around Martin's hand instead. Blood brotherhood. No words spoken. Until-

DOVIDL

Say it, Mottl. Say what's on **your**
mind. It'll make you feel better.

*
*

MARTIN

You've no fucking idea. **Do you?** Why
did you do it?

*

DOVIDL

I'm not sure you'd understand.

*

MARTIN

I didn't expect it to be you.
Tonight, when I came about the
violin. You were the last person in
the world I expected to find.

DOVIDL

When I abandoned the Holy One it
took Him four years to find me.
It's taken you thirty-five.
(a smile)
Not bad.

*

MARTIN

God didn't punish you. I will.

DOVIDL

So will He, in time, blessed be His
name.

MARTIN

My father put everything he had
into you, you ungrateful bastard.
Hebrew lessons, bacon-less
breakfasts, pudding-less dinners,
bar mitzvah, fucking Gagliano...
(MORE)

MARTIN (cont'd)
 and that concert - he didn't even
 insure it, didn't think he needed
 to. He treated you like his
 favourite **fucking** son - for twelve
 years - and you buggered off
 without a word. He thought you were
 dead! He lost everything that
 night. **Two months later, he died**
 with your name on his lips.

*

*

This revelation shocks Dovidl into silence. He opens the
 driver's door and steps out into the gale to process it.

MARTIN'S POV - DOVIDL BATTERED BY THE WIND, COAT TAILS FLYING

Dovidl re-enters.

DOVIDL
 Do you remember what you said the
 last time I saw you? "Get laid,"
 you said.

OVER SCENE 71

*

DOVIDL (V.O.)
 So I did. But in my eagerness I'd
 come out without cab fare. I had to
 go back by bus...

*

*

*

*

71 **EXT. TERRACED HOUSE, NORTH LONDON. DAY (A'51)**

71

Carrying his violin case, Dovidl waits by a suburban bus stop
 in a leafy street of terraced houses. Rain still falling.

DOVIDL (V.O.)
 So I did. But in my eagerness I'd
 come out without cab fare. I had to
 go back by bus...

A bus arrives. Dovidl boards. The bus moves off.

72 **INT. LONDON BUS. DAY (A'51)**

72

Dovidl climbs to the upper deck. He slumps into a seat,
 cradles the violin case in his lap, closes his eyes...

73 **EXT./INT. BUS. DAY (A'51)**

73

The driver leaves the bus, thinking all his passengers have
 departed. It's one of several buses lined up empty in the
 street where their route terminates.

Dovidl wakes on the top deck of the empty bus. He makes his
 way down the winding staircase and into the street, where
 it's raining heavily.

74

EXT. STOKE NEWINGTON HIGH STREET. DAY (A'51)

74

The street is adjacent to Stoke Newington Market. Stallholders are covering their goods and packing up early, all too busy to be approached for directions. Dovidl wanders past in the rain, carrying his cased Gagliano, no idea where he is, except that it's a Jewish neighbourhood - past barrels of pickled cucumbers, marble slabs of herring - transported by sights, sounds and smells reminiscent of the Warsaw of his childhood.

He turns a corner... and finds himself at a dead end: a railway embankment. Hopelessly lost.

But there's a shop on a corner: Frumkin's.

75

INT. FRUMKIN'S. DAY (A'51)

75

One either side of a marble counter the shop's proprietor, FRUMKIN (55) - a tubular man in a soiled apron - is deep in argument with KATZENBERG (60), a black-bearded, black-coated customer. Their argument, Talmudic in character, is being conducted in Yiddish (subtitled).

KATZENBERG
Nisht dus meynt di Gemore.

KATZENBERG
That isn't what the text means-

FRUMKIN
Oh, ihr hat gehat a perzenlekhe taytsh fin Eybishter?

FRUMKIN
Oh, you've had a personal reading from the Holy One?

Dovidl addresses them in Yiddish.

DOVIDL
Entshuldigtz az ikh brekh inter-

DOVIDL
I'm sorry to interrupt-

The two men glance up at him. White shirt and tie, three-piece suit. Lost goy, obviously. But how come he speaks their language?

DOVIDL
Ihr kent efsher zugn wi bin ikh...

DOVIDL
If you could tell me where I am...

FRUMKIN
Fin wi zeynt ihr?

FRUMKIN
Where are you from?

DOVIDL
Hampstead.

.

KATZENBERG
Fin der heym?

KATZENBERG
Originally.

DOVIDL
Warshe.

KATZENBERG
Ayer mishpokhe?

DOVIDL
Oykh fin Warshe.

KATZENBERG
Ikh bin fin Siedlice.

DOVIDL
Farn krig?

KATZENBERG
Far dem, in mitn, nokh dem.
Der Ghetto, Treblinka, yetzt
doo.

Dovidl's face is registering wonder and disbelief.

DOVIDL
Ihr hat Treblinka ibergelebt!

KATZENBERG
Eynige habn ibergelebt. Eyer
mishpokhe zeynen geharget
geworn?

DOVIDL
Ya. Ikh meyn ... ikh weiss
nisht ...ikh weiss az zey
zeynen geven in Treblinka
ober inz keynmohl nisht...
()
Ihr hat zey gekent? Zygmunt
Rapoport? Esther? Pessia?
Malkeh? Hat ihr gekent eynem
fin zey?

KATZENBERG
Nein, tit mir leyd,
yingerman.
()
Ihr wilt wissn?

Dovidl nods. Above all things it's what he wants. But how...?

FRUMKIN
(to Katzenberg)
Nemtz ehm.

Dovidl frowns. Take him where?

KATZENBERG
Kimtz.

DOVIDL
Warsaw.

KATZENBERG
Your family?

DOVIDL
Also Warsaw.

KATZENBERG
I'm from Siedlice.

DOVIDL
Before the war?

KATZENBERG
Before, during, after. The
Ghetto, Treblinka, now here.

DOVIDL
You survived Treblinka!

KATZENBERG
Some did. Your family
perished?

DOVIDL
Yes. I mean... I don't
know... I know they were in
Treblinka but we never...
(eagerly)
Did you know them? Zygmunt
Rapoport? Esther? Pessia?
Malkeh? Did you know any of
them?

KATZENBERG
No. I'm sorry, my young
friend.
(a long beat)
Do you want to know?

FRUMKIN
(to Katzenberg)
Take him.

KATZENBERG
Come.

Dovidl glances at his watch. He has a concert to prepare for. Has he time for this, whatever it is? But the decision is made for him. Stretching his arm around Dovidl's shoulders, Katzenberg leads him out into the street.

76 **EXT. YOUNG REBBE'S SYNAGOGUE. DAY (A'51)**

76

An alley leads them to what appears from the outside to be an ordinary residential house, somewhat run-down; but as Katzenberg and Dovidl enter, both saturated from the rain-

77 **INT. YOUNG REBBE'S SYNAGOGUE. DAY (A'51)**

77

-we see that the ground-floor partition walls have been removed to create a large, low-ceilinged prayer hall, furnished like a synagogue and consecrated as one, supported by steel beams and pillars. Around twenty men and youths (no women) are swaying in prayer.

Katzenberg strides to the *bimah* and slaps his hand loudly on the lectern.

KATZENBERG
Inz habmir do a Rapoport fin
Warshe!

KATZENBERG
*We have a Rapoport from
Warsaw!*

Instantly the praying stops. A smooth-cheeked BOY of thirteen slips out of the room.

ON DOVIDL, understanding none of this. He looks to Katzenberg for an explanation but receives none.

Almost immediately the boy returns. With him is a bearded man in his thirties: THE YOUNG REBBE.

Though twice this man's age, Katzenberg inclines his head respectfully in his presence.

KATZENBERG
Rebbe, dus iz Dovid Eli
Rapoport. Fin Warshe. Er
willt wissn.

KATZENBERG
*Rebbe, this is Dovid Eli
Rapoport. From Warsaw. He
wants to know.*

The Young Rebbe nods. Shaking Dovidl's hand-

YOUNG REBBE
Sholem aleikhem, Dovid.

YOUNG REBBE
Shalom aleikhem, Dovid.

DOVIDL
Ikh will nisht stern eynker
davenen.

DOVIDL
*I don't want to disturb
your...*

YOUNG REBBE
Bitte, zetzt aykh.

YOUNG REBBE
Please, take a seat.

He gestures. Dovidl and Katzenberg seat themselves. The entire congregation now strikes an attitude of attention. Prayer books are closed, backs straightened.

The Young Rebbe climbs the steps to an elevated *bimah*, on which there is a lectern, and on the lectern, alongside the Torah, a large privately-bound book the size of a ledger.

Katzenberg speaks softly to Dovidl in Yiddish while the Rebbe opens the ledger and reverently begins turning its pages....

KATZENBERG

Dovid, in inzer kehilah siz inzer shpetzieler tafkid, wus der Alter Rebbe hat inz gegeben, tzi haltn, di Memorbukh far Treblinka. S'zeynen nisht geven shriftliche zichroynos, di nemen fin di toyte nor gehalten gevorn dorkh di mentshen. In wayl s'zeynen gewen azoyfil toyte, in dos leben fin di wus woltn gedarft denken is gewen azoy shwakh, tzen eltere zeynen geworn oysgeklibn als a Minyan fin Zikorn, in beoyftragt tzi oyfhaltn di nemen far eybig. Nor drey fin di tzen habn ibergelebt.

KATZENBERG

David, among our community it is our special duty, given to us by the Alte Rebbe in Treblinka, to keep the Book of Remembrance. No exact records survive of the camp's dead and this the Alte Rebbe predicted; so he had their names committed to memory. And since there were so many, and the lives of those tasked to remember were so fragile, ten elders were chosen as a Minyan of Remembrance. Only three of the ten survived.

Having found his place, the Young Rebbe is smoothing down a double page of the Book of Remembrance.

KATZENBERG

Shpeter m'hat upgeshribn di nemen. Ober, natirlekh, di liste is nisht a complete. Oyb di nemen fin ayer tayere keroyvim zeynen nishtu, dus maynt nisht az zey hobn ibergelebt.

KATZENBERG

Later the names were written down. But the record is incomplete. If the names of your loved ones are not found here it will not necessarily mean they survived.

David nods, impatient now for the mere chance of knowing after a decade of ignorance and speculation.

The Rebbe begins to chant a recitation.

What he chants - a musical theme based on traditional laments - is *The Song of Names*, in Yiddish, as it was originally remembered: a partial list of the dead of Treblinka.

The melody should be so soulful, so powerful, so immediately arresting that at first audition it will burn itself indelibly into the memory of all who hear it.

YOUNG REBBE

Rapoport ay Rapoport ay Rapoport...

CONGREGATION

Ay Rapoport.

YOUNG REBBE

*Rapoport Avrum, fin Varsheh;
Rapoport Berel un Chayeh-Soroh, fin
Kutne, mit kinder Yossl, Yechiel un
Leah...*

CONGREGATION

*(in Hebrew)**Yehi zikhrom borikh!*

YOUNG REBBE

*Rapoport, Chaim-Dovid, Rapoport
Shua-Chaim, fin Zychlin; Rapoport
Yerachmiel, mizinke Elke, mit
kleyner Shloime, mit Shneyur-Zalmen
un mit Rivke...*

CONGREGATION

*(in Hebrew)**Yehi zikhrom borikh!*

YOUNG REBBE

*Rapoport Anya, fin Varsheh;
Rapoport Bella, mit kinder, mit
Reuben un Rifke; fin Varsheh:
Rapoport Zygmunt, wayb Esther, mit
tochter Pessia, mit tochter
Malkeh...*

CONGREGATION

*(in Hebrew)**Yehi zikhrom borikh!*

Looking up, seeing Dovidl's face, the Rebbe halts his song.

ON DOVIDL

his eyes awash. Here, for the first time, in this most unlikely of settings, a place to which he has come seemingly by accident, he has heard at last the names of his family included in the roll of the dead; confirmed what until now was only a supposition. He has closure. Nothing in his life will ever be the same again.

Katzenberg's arm once more enfolds the grieving Dovidl as he weeps, unashamed, among these strangers of his tribe.

Here it's Martin's eyes that have filled.

Lashed by gusts of wind, the camper rocks on its springs, back and forth as though itself *dovening*. A week-old newspaper flies against the windscreen and briefly plasters itself across it before taking wing again, the past momentarily obliterating the present.

DOVIDL

They set the names to music to make them easier to remember. This is oral tradition, Mottl. It gave us the Torah, passed down mouth to ear for a hundred generations. It's the chain I cannot break.

(a beat)

The two little girls you saw at my house were named for my sisters: Malkeh and Pessia. My son I named for his grandfather, Zygmunt. On *Yom HaShoah* each year I say *Kaddish* for them.

(a pause)

Do you know what one of the worst fears was for those in the camps? It wasn't dying. It was dying with their entire family. Leaving no-one behind to say *Kaddish* for their souls.

A long silence follows.

MARTIN

I'm glad it brought you peace. It doesn't explain why you *never wrote, never phoned, never sent a message...* Why did you cut us out of your life? In all those years did you ever give any of us a thought?

*
*
*
*

DOVIDL

Often.

MARTIN

Then I don't understand.

DOVIDL

I wouldn't expect you to.

More silence.

MARTIN

How long did this Song take?

DOVIDL

The complete version? Five days.
They do it in shifts - five rabbis -
once a year. I've only heard that
done once. So many names, Mottl....
(a beat)
Afterwards I sat *shiva*...

OVER SCENE 79

DOVIDL (V.O.)

...the full week - no half measures
among the ultra-orthodox. No
washing, no shaving, no diversions.
Just prayers.

*
*
*
*
*

79

INT. YOUNG REBBE'S SYNAGOGUE. DAY (A'51)

79

First the Young Rebbe leans over Dovidl and with a knife cuts
the lapel of his jacket.

DOVIDL (V.O.)

...the full week - no half measures
among the ultra-orthodox. No
washing, no shaving, no diversions.
Just prayers.

Then Dovidl receives a blessing from the congregation.

CONGREGATION

Ha mokaym yenakhem eskhem
besokh shar avaleh Tzion
virusholayim.

CONGREGATION

*May the Eternal console you
among all the mourners of
Zion and Jerusalem.*

80

INT. DOVIDL'S CAMPER. NIGHT (S'86)

80

MARTIN

You could have deferred that. I
would have sat with you.

Dovidl turns his head to look at Martin. Another wild gust
rocks the vehicle.

DOVIDL

A concert no longer seemed
important.

*

ANGLE - THE CAMPER, relentlessly assaulted by the gale.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(his tone has softened)
You were still in London a year
later.

*

DOVIDL

My life had changed. The Almighty
had remembered my family. I'd
abandoned Him, He hadn't abandoned
me.

(MORE)

DOVIDL (cont'd)

In return I made Him a promise: I would compose a violin version of the Song of Names and play it at Treblinka. Then I would devote the rest of my life to His worship.

*

(smiles)

If I had come back - what would you have done?

MARTIN

I don't know...

*

DOVIDL

(nods)

Of course. I owe you a violin.

MARTIN

You owe me a concert.

*

DOVIDL

I'm not a bright new discovery any more, Mottl. I doubt anybody remembers me. When I play now it's always in an empty room. No audience but God.

MARTIN

People still remember your recording.

DOVIDL

Then let that be my memorial.

MARTIN

Not enough for me.

*

DOVIDL

It'll have to be.

MARTIN

That's not enough. You owe me a concert. If you disappear again I'll find you.

*

*

*

DOVIDL

Good luck with that.

Dovidl restarts the engine and backs out of the parking area.

*

ANGLE - The camper drives off.

80A **INT. CROWN HEIGHTS HOUSE. NIGHT (S'86)**

80A

We find Dovidl alone, sitting silent and motionless in a darkened room in the middle of the night: the Gagliano in his lap. Thinking. Remembering. Calculating his moral obligation as once he calculated the number of Kit Kats in a fiver.

He walks off camera...

*

DOVIDL'S VOICE
Martin Simmonds.

*

*

...and comes back, the phone in his hand.

*

DOVIDL
I have two conditions...

*

*

80B **INT. MANHATTAN HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT (S'86)**

80B

Early hours of the morning and still dark. The shrill ringing of the beside phone wakes Martin from sleep. Blindly he stretches out his hand, pulls the receiver off its cradle and presses it to his ear. He hears:

DOVIDL'S VOICE
(from phone)
I have two conditions...

FADE TO BLACK

81 **EXT. LONDON ESTABLISHING SHOT. MORNING (A'86)**

81

NOT Big Ben, NOT Westminster Bridge, NOT Tower Bridge!

81A **EXT. LONDON HOTEL. MORNING (A'86)**

81A

A black cab deposits Dovidl outside the hotel.

81B **INT. LONDON HOTEL. MORNING (A'86)**

81B

Dovidl registering at the desk.

DESK CLERK
Welcome to London, sir.

TITLE: "MONTHS LATER"

81C **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (A'86)**

81C

Helen and Martin are dressing to go out to dinner.

HELEN

How do you know he'll be there?

MARTIN

He's changed, Helen.

HELEN

Nobody changes. Least of all him.

MARTIN

He's got his religion back.

HELEN

He's the same selfish asshole he always was. In a black coat.

(a beat)

Can he still play?

MARTIN

He says so. That's *his* risk.

HELEN

What's he risking?

No reply from Martin.

HELEN

This is exactly what your father did. You'll spend every penny we've got, he won't turn up, you'll have a stroke, you'll die, he won't even come to the funeral.

Again Martin declines to respond.

82 **EXT. KOSHER RESTAURANT, LONDON. NIGHT (A'86)**

82

TO ESTABLISH

83 **INT. KOSHER RESTAURANT. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) (A'86)**

83

CAMERA FINDS Martin and Helen at a table set for three, eating breadsticks and drinking mineral water. Waiting. Helen seems distinctly nervous, looking at her watch.

HELEN

It's now ten to eight.

MARTIN

In artistic circles that isn't even late for lunch.

HELEN

Has he told you the programme yet?

Martin shakes his head.

MARTIN

One of his conditions.

HELEN

Probably show tunes. Rusty virtuoso plays the best of Broadway.

MARTIN

For that he wouldn't need to
rehearse.

HELEN

You've seen him rehearsing?

MARTIN

He won't let me in the room.
That was his other condition. He
knows my father's watching. He
thinks God's watching.

HELEN

Same old audience. Everyone he's
let down before.

MARTIN

It gives him the illusion of
control-

HELEN

Newsflash, Martin. If the
illusion's good enough only the
magician can tell it isn't the real
thing.

MARTIN

I can tell.

DOVIDL has entered. As always now, in ultra-orthodox dress.

DOVIDL

Martin. Helen. You've aged well.

Under strict orthodox rules he may not touch a woman who is
not his wife, so there's no kiss, no handshake. Helen's look
is unwelcoming, guarded. She doesn't answer. Dovidl smiles.
He seats himself, picks up the menu, starts to peruse it.

MARTIN

That's it? After 35 years? Hello-
Helen-what's-for-dinner?

HELEN

He's hungry. He's been rehearsing
silence all day.

Dovidl smiles at her over the menu.

MARTIN

Everything okay? Hotel all right?

DOVIDL

Adequate.

MARTIN

Dov, I know we agreed you select the programme, but as the organizer of this concert I need to confirm some things.

DOVIDL

Such as?

HELEN

That it won't include "Doh a deer, a female deer."

DOVIDL

That isn't in the programme.

No response from Dovidl. Helen's look to Martin says: "What did I tell you?"

MARTIN

Dovidl, if you make a fool of me I'll kill you.

HELEN

(to Dovidl)

Or I will. That's not an idle threat, by the way.

Dovidl smiles again. Taps the menu.

DOVIDL

None of this is kosher.

HELEN

It's a kosher restaurant.

DOVIDL

To them, not to me.

MARTIN

Okay, just tell me how long it'll be. The programme.

Dovidl sets down the menu, picks up the wine list.

DOVIDL

How long was the original?

MARTIN

That what you're doing? The '51 programme? The Bruch and the Partitas?

DOVIDL

Isn't it what you wanted?

MARTIN
(surprised but delighted)
Well, yes, but... No, no, that's
great.

HELEN
Does it matter? Look at him. He
isn't going to be there. Are you,
David?

Now Dovidl produces from his pocket and unfolds the 1951
concert programme. Slides it across the table to Martin.
Helen cranes to see.

INSERT 1951 PROGRAMME

BRUCH VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1 IN G MINOR

INTERVAL

BACH: VIOLIN PARTITAS NUMBERS 1 AND 2

MARTIN
This *is* the '51 programme!

DOVIDL
(without looking up)
The wines aren't kosher either.

84 ***EXT. CONCERT HALL, LONDON. DAY (A'86)***

84

The same concert hall we saw in earlier scenes. Martin
approaching the building on foot.

85 ***INT. CONCERT HALL. DAY (A'86)***

85

In the dark interior he finds the doors to the rehearsal room
closed, guarded by a SECURITY MAN. A notice on the door
reads: "REHEARSAL IN PROGRESS. STRICTLY NO ADMITTANCE".

Recognising Martin from previous attempts, the security guy
shakes his head.

SECURITY MAN
Sorry, Mr Simmonds.

MARTIN
Can't I just put my ear to the
door?

SECURITY MAN
Won't help. It's soundproof.

Martin puts his ear to the door. Shrugs. Nothing audible.

MARTIN
Have you heard him playing?

SECURITY MAN
Like I said, soundproof.

The door opens. Dovidl comes out carrying his violin case.

DOVIDL
(to Martin)
Still warm. Want to feel?

As he passes Martin-

MARTIN
(emotional)
Dov...

Dovidl turns.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
You won't let me down, will you?

DOVIDL
No, Mottl. I won't let you down.

86 **EXT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT (A'86)**

86

Outside crowds swarm and jostle on the sidewalk, as they did thirty-six years ago. History in the remaking. This concert, too, according to the posted notices, is a sell-out.

87 **INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT (A'86)**

87

The hallways are so thronged they're almost impassable as the audience makes its way into the hall's auditorium. As in 1951, notables can be seen in the balcony, anticipating the long-delayed debut of David Eli Rapoport.

ON MARTIN AND HELEN

waiting out the last minutes backstage. Martin, like his father before him, is in a state of mounting anxiety verging on panic. Helen seems almost to be relishing what is looking increasingly like another Dovidl no-show.

MARTIN
I told him half-six.

HELEN
And I told you to put a guard on him.

MARTIN

Virtuoso violinist handcuffed to
thug. Make a great cartoon.

88 **INT. DOVIDL'S HOUSE, CROWN HEIGHTS. DAY (A'86)** 88

BROCHE packing, among other things, Dovidl's Warsaw family photograph into a suitcase; the three children of his new family packing smaller suitcases of their own. Cardboard boxes are strewn around the floor and on surfaces.

88A **INT. DOVIDL'S LONDON HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT (A'1986)** 88A

Here Dovidl's suitcase is already packed and waiting. He's sitting at the desk, writing a letter...

89 **INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT (CONTINUATION OF SC.87)(A'86)** 89

VARIOUS ANGLES:

THE AUDITORIUM - buzzing with expectation-

THE ORCHESTRA TUNING UP, not for the first time-

THE STAGE MANAGER - checking his watch against the hall clock-

MARTIN

It's the same fucking nightmare!
Where the hell is he?

HELEN

If I had to guess? Thirty thousand
feet over our heads. On his way to
join a Tibetan monastery.

MARTIN

I made him swear on the Torah.

Helen rolls her eyes, as if to say "What do Jews do instead of crossing their fingers?"

MARTIN is wiping the sweat from his face with an already sodden handkerchief, tears of frustration starting to gleam in his eyes. How could he have been such a fool?

And then, like an apparition...

...DOVIDL is there, in the wings with them.

Tonight he's wearing a dark suit, a discreet skullcap on the back of his head, Gagliano and bow in his hand. *Comme il faut.*

DOVIDL

Did you think I wasn't coming?

He doesn't wait for a response but strides on to the stage to clamorous applause. He bows to the audience.

DOVIDL

Good evening. I'm sorry to be late.
I hope you didn't mind waiting
thirty-five years.

Relieved audience laughter.

Dovidl nods to the conductor. The orchestra begins its introduction...

ON MARTIN: with the programme in his hand, holding his breath. Nightmare visions of disaster are crowding his brain - visions of some popular tin-ear monstrosity being played for ironical effect.

But then his eyes close, his breath is expelled with relief as he hears the opening notes of the Bruch, as advertised.

MARTIN

Thank you, God.

90 **INT. 1951 LONDON CONCERT HALL. NIGHT (A'51)**

90

ON GILBERT after his cancellation announcement, shamed and broken; a ruined man financially, professionally and emotionally; the auditorium empty.

91 **INT. 1986 CONCERT HALL. NIGHT (CONTINUATION OF SC.89) (A'86)**

91

ON DOVIDL

playing the final notes of the Bruch. He has performed to a high professional standard... yet there's something missing in his playing, and that something is feeling, the personal engagement of the artist's soul which distinguishes the very good from the truly great.

HELEN

(grudgingly)

He can still play. I'll give him that.

MARTIN

Yeah, he was good.

Dovidl is bowing to the audience, leaving the stage to appreciative but not overwhelming applause. The audience begins to flow out in the direction of the lobby.

DOVIDL
(to Martin)
Well?

MARTIN
Good. It was good.

DOVIDL
It was crap.

MARTIN
Good crap, though.

Dovidl smiles.

DOVIDL
Wait fifteen minutes.

He disappears to his dressing room.

HELEN
Is it me, or isn't he being just a
little too compliant?

Martin nods his agreement. A similar sense of foreboding has gripped him too: a fear that Dovidl's uncharacteristic compliance so far may have been a magician's misdirection, presaging some outrageous act of rebellion still to come. And since the concert's second half is scheduled to be a solo performance without orchestra, Dovidl will have all the latitude he needs to go rogue.

ANGLE ON THE STAGE - being cleared of chairs and music stands.

ANGLE ON BACKSTAGE CORRIDORS AND DRESSING ROOMS

The orchestra musicians leaving for the night, packing away their instruments, putting on their coats...

92

INT. CONCERT HALL AUDITORIUM. NIGHT (A'86)

92

The second half of the concert is about to commence. The audience has returned and is waiting expectantly, clearing its collective throat. Unaccompanied solo performances are the acid test: nobody to cover the violinist's mistakes.

ANGLE ON MARTIN AND HELEN

standing now at the back of the hall. All the tension we saw in them before the concert has returned in the last fifteen minutes.

Now Dovidl makes his second entrance. Wearing this time, to the amusement of all, the long black coat and fedora of ultra-orthodox uniform.

Something's coming, and it isn't Bach. We know what it is, what it has to be. We've known it for some while.

As Dovidl waits for the embarrassed titters to die away we'll witness for the last time that now-familiar ritual: the long upward sweep of the rosin, the long downward sweep, and finally the blessing of his lips.

Setting his bow gently to the Gagliano - the gesture of a lover - Dovidl opens with a single note so pure and mournful, so protracted, so tender, that even in this initial stroking of the instrument we realize that the first half of the concert wasn't misdirection at all, it was foreplay. This, though they don't know it yet, is what the audience came for.

Many of them are checking their programmes, puzzled, as is Martin, not to be hearing Bach.

ON MARTIN AND HELEN

They exchange a look. Uh-oh.

And now, for the first time, we'll hear David Eli Rapoport's solo violin version of *The Song of Names*, composed in 1952 in London in fidelity to his vow: a complex, exquisitely harmonized arrangement of the simple sung melody that changed his life.

It should be at once unbearably soulful, immediately memorable and technically stunning; a masterwork of nuance and colour and shadow; a description in music of a People's suffering, delivered via the ear to the blood.

At first we'll hear only the single voice of the Gagliano, playing the original sung melody...

93 **INT. WARSAW ASYLUM. DAY (S'53)**

93

...and then a second violin enters in harmony - playing a variation on the melody - as we see DOVIDL (23) play *The Song of Names* for JOZEF WECHSLER (32 here but looking fifty).

Outside the room Anna can be seen listening to Dovidl's playing.

94 **EXT. TREBLINKA. DAY (S'53)**

94

Yet another variation as the voice of a third violin joins the other two while Dovidl "plays for the ashes" in the barren field that covers his family's bones.

IN SHOT, in the background, by the original railway tracks as yet devoid of symbolic representation, Anna waits in her car [not the Polski; probably a Trabant].

95 **INT. YOUNG REBBE'S SYNAGOGUE (SYNAGOGUE). DAY (S'51)** 95

Finally the trio of violins come together, now heard to choir accompaniment as they merge into a single piece, in perfect harmony with the sung melody in the Stoke Newington synagogue.

Here we reprise the scene of Dovidl's epiphany - the Young Rebbe chanting the names to the same melody, the congregation responding.

96 **INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT (A'86)** 96

BACK TO SCENE

CU DOVIDL

as he finishes playing *The Song of Names* in public for the first and only time.

He draws out the final perfect melancholy note as long as possible, before fading slowly to silence.

Then nothing.

THE AUDIENCE - stunned into a silence of their own.

MARTIN - moved beyond the capacity to move.

When, seconds later, the audience recovers itself, their applause lifts the roof.

Dovidl bows low. Then leaves the stage. There will be no encore. There will be no return.

The rest is coda.

97 **INT. DRESSING ROOM. NIGHT (A'86)** 97

Martin has come with Helen to Dovidl's dressing room, the door of which stands ajar.

They step inside. Nobody here, no sign of occupancy. Just a discarded suit over the back of a chair, on its seat the cased Gagliano, and on the violin case-

AN ENVELOPE ADDRESSED TO MARTIN.

Glittering on the floor inside the threshold are THE SHATTERED REMAINS OF A BLOCK OF ROSIN.

Helen's eyes go to the envelope, Martin's to the scattering of bright yellow shards.

DOVIDL'S VOICE (V.O.)

My dearest Mottl, you'll remember how I was forbidden to say *Kaddish* for my family until their deaths were confirmed and the anguish this caused me. It saddened me more than I can say to learn from you that my disappearance had caused that same anguish in your father. Above all things I want you to be spared it...

98 **INT. HOTEL LOBBY. NIGHT (A'86)**

98

Martin has come to the hotel to confirm that Dovidl is no longer there. The receptionist is confirming it, showing Martin the duplicate of Dovidl's check-out invoice.

DOVIDL'S VOICE (V.O.)

...Two months ago, when you found me, I told you I no longer lived a life you would recognise. I no longer thought of myself as an individual, which an artist is required to be. I chose instead to submerge myself within a community of faith...

99 **EXT. DOVIDL'S HOUSE, BROOKLYN. MORNING (A'86)**

99

We'll recognise it from Sc. 67. A phone is ringing inside.

DOVIDL'S VOICE (V.O.)

...It's a social organism we borrow from nature: a body sharing a common history, common values and a common memory, to which the price of admission is the surrender of self...

100 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE, MARTIN'S HOME OFFICE. DAY ('86)**

100

Martin is phoning from his home office. The single American ring tone in his ears.

DOVIDL'S VOICE (V.O.)

...It's the most enduring of families, impossible to extinguish. We take care of one another in ways that natural families cannot...

101 **INT. CROWN HEIGHTS HOUSE. MORNING (A'86)**

101

The phone is on the floor, ringing out in an empty house.
Dovidl's family has moved out.

INTERCUT WITH

Martin hanging up the phone.

DOVIDL'S VOICE

...What you did, Mottl, was return
to me my individuality. You thrust
it back into my hands like an
unwanted gift. I consider all debts
paid today. You have made me free
and for that I thank you. But from
the depths of my soul I must ask
you not to find me again. You must
think of me now as dead and act
accordingly...

102 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. NIGHT (A'86)**

102

Martin is re-reading Dovidl's letter, probably for the tenth
time; Helen is looking out of the window.

DOVIDL'S VOICE (V.O.)

...May the Holy One bless you and
keep you and your family always in
His sight. Your affectionate
brother, Dovidl.

HELEN

Let him go, Martin.

MARTIN

How am I supposed to think of him
as dead when I know he isn't?

HELEN

Trust the text. He's given you
permission. Probably the only
selfless thing he's ever done.

Martin shaking his head. Refusing to accept it.

HELEN

That prayer Jews say for the dead?

MARTIN

Kaddish.

HELEN

Say that.

MARTIN

I can't. I'm not Jewish, I'm not
his brother, and he isn't dead.

A long silence follows. Helen has only one card left to play.

HELEN

That day he didn't show up?

He turns to look at her. She remains staring out of the window.

HELEN (CONT'D)

When you left him, after the rehearsal? Nobody knew where he went?

Martin makes no response but recalls it clearly.

HELEN

I'm where he went.

MARTIN'S REACTION

There isn't one; at least nothing discernible. He never knew of a romantic liaison between Helen and Dovidl; but neither has he told Helen that he slept with Anna in Poland. This revelation balances the scales. It assuages both his guilt and hers and it's enough to dispel the myth of Dovidl.

Helen reaches out and takes his hand.

HELEN

You're a better man than he was,
Martin. You always were.

103 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE. NIGHT (A'86)**

103

Hours later, Helen is sleeping as Martin climbs out of bed.

MARTIN (V.O.)

*Yitgadal v'yitqadash sh'mai
rabah...*

WIDENING TO:

104 **INT. SIMMONDS HOUSE, MARTIN'S HOME OFFICE. NIGHT (A'86)**

104

CAMERA FINDS THE CASED GAGLIANO...

...PANS TO MARTIN

Wearing a dressing gown over his pyjamas, he has come here from his bed in the small hours. From a copy of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* he extracts a postcard-sized card printed with transliterated characters of the mourner's *Kaddish* - the kind Reform synagogues issue to congregation members who have no Hebrew.

From it he reads aloud the ancient Aramaic prayer. His reading, marked by mispronunciations and mistaken cadences, is coloured by a spectrum of emotions: love, anger, above all overwhelming sadness; his voice breaks as he assigns Dovidl his desired place among the dead, laying him finally to rest.

[THOUGH WE WON'T HEAR ALL OF IT, THE FULL PRAYER READS:

MARTIN

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba.
B'alma di v'ra chirutei,
v'yamlich malchutei, b'chayeichon
uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit
Yisrael, baagala uviz'man kariv.
V'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach
l'alam ul'almei almay.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar
v'yitromam v'yitnasei,
v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal
sh'mei d'kud'sha b'rich hu,
l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata,
tushb'chata v'nechemata,
daamiran b'alma. V'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,
v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael.
V'imru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav,
Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu,
v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.

MARTIN

*Magnified and sanctified be God's
great name throughout the world
that God created and governs by
divine will. May the Kingdom of
God be established during your
lifetime, and during your days,
and during the days of all the
house of Israel, yea speedily and
in the near future, and let us
say, Amen.*

*Exalted, glorified and honored be
the name of the blessed Holy One
whose glory is beyond all
blessings, hymns and praises that
people render, and let us say,
Amen.*

*May great peace emanate from
Heaven with good life for us and
for all Israel, and let us say,
Amen.*

*May the One who makes peace in the
heavens, make peace for us and for
all Israel, and let us say, Amen.]*

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

On the sound track, initially overlapping Martin's prayer, then gradually displacing it, we'll hear the fully orchestrated version of *The Song of Names*, which will continue to play until

CREDITS END