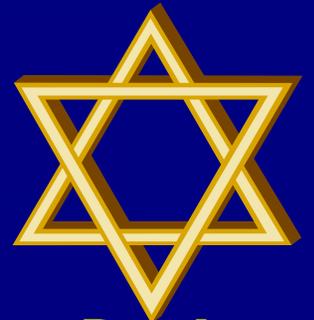




בן-יהודה

Ben-Yehuda

Son of Zion

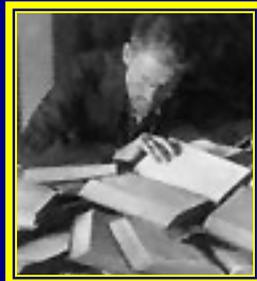
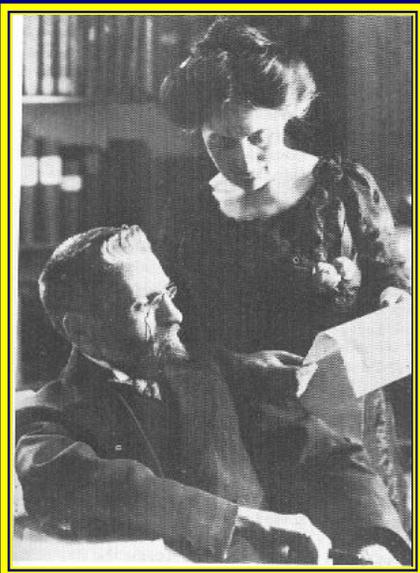


**A Biographical Motion Picture Based on
the Life and Work of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda**

**Written by
Charles Welty**

Registered WGAw

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Ben-Yehuda

Son of Zion

An Original Screenplay
(based on a true story)

Screenplay by
Charles Welty

Hebrew Translation
and Transliteration
by Vivi Brunstein

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Ben-Yehuda: Son of Zion
Written by Charles Welty

Ben-Yehuda is a biographical motion picture based on the life and work of ELIEZER BEN-YEHUDA, the philologist and Zionist whose pioneering work resulted in the revival of Hebrew from a language used only in prayer and Talmudic scholarship into the spoken language of today.

Our story begins in Russia in the late 1850s, where Eliezer is born to a poor family. We see his dedication to the Law and to Language as he moves to private study away from home after the death of his father. We meet the family that shapes his love of the Hebrew language, and the young woman who is to become his future wife, DEBORAH JONAS, and her sister PAULA, who will become Eliezer's wife after Deborah dies.

While a student in Paris, Eliezer Perelman changes his name to Eliezer Ben-Yehuda as his sense of the political realities of Eastern Europe shape his views. He meets TSASHNIKOV, a Polish nobleman who is a correspondent for a Russian newspaper. Tsashnikov introduces Ben-Yehuda to a world of society and free-thinkers. Tsashnikov encourages Ben-Yehuda to voice his ideas about a homeland for the Jews in Hebrew newspapers in Europe.

When Ben-Yehuda is diagnosed with tuberculosis, he decides to move to Israel, where his health, and his work, will be benefited. He asks Deborah to join him as his wife. She agrees.

Upon the young couple's arrival in Israel, a series of adventures greets them. Tsashnikov meets them and, in a bit of sword play, rescues them from the hands of some robbers. They go on to meet their future employer, the publisher of one of the top Hebrew newspapers in Israel.

As the years pass, they have children and see the establishment of the first of the agricultural settlements. Opposition from the local rabbis, as personified in RABBI RAFAEL MEIR, is a constant threat.

Ben-Yehuda overcomes, with tears and toil, the stoning of his son BEN-ZION (and his dog!) by the angry opposition, the death of his wife Deborah, the publication of the first volumes of his pioneering Hebrew dictionary, imprisonment under the Turkish overlords, and the liberation of Jerusalem by General Allenby at the end of World War Two. During the war, Ben-Yehuda and his family are smuggled out of Jerusalem to the United States, where Ben-Zion addresses a Billy Sunday rally, the first evidence of support for a Jewish homeland by Christian America.

Our story ends with the cornerstone being laid for Ben-Yehuda's permanent home on a hillside outside of Jerusalem. He dies before it can be completed, and the impact of his life on Jewish society to this day is summarized as a VOICE-OVER EULOGY.

Ben-Yehuda: Son of Zion

Written by
Charles Welty

ACT ONE

BLACK SCREEN

The SHEMA chant in Hebrew ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is One") ECHOES as the following SUPERED TEXT crawls up the screen, first in HEBREW and then in English:

...then I will return my people to a pure language so that they all may call upon the name of the Lord, serving him with a united will. -- Zephaniah 3:9 (ISV 2.0)

HOLD for a BEAT as the text CRAWLS OUT OF THE SHOT. The SOUND of the SHEMA chant echoes to silence as we...

FADE IN:

1 EXT. LUZHKY STREET (1858) -- DAY

1

TO ESTABLISH. A turbulent, bustling scene as PEOPLE from all walks of life pass by. We see Russian JEWS and PEASANTS, some moving quickly along the crude sidewalks. A number of HORSE-DRAWN WAGONS clutter the street as the DRIVERS make their deliveries. A FLURRY of SNOW FLAKES tells us this is the winter time.

SUPER the PLACE and DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR:

Luzhky, Russia
7 January 1858

LOSE the DATE, but KEEP the PLACE. SUPER a NEW DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR, so we now read:

Luzhky, Russia
21 Tevet 5618

HOLD for a beat, then LOSE SUPER as we MOVE THROUGH THE STREET, capturing the look and feel of days and a culture long gone by. We FRAME TWO JEWISH MEN who are surrounded by a SMALL CROWD. One of the men wears a fur cap on his head. He is a Hassidic tzadik, a very orthodox Jewish man. The other wears a plain green cap. And as the saying goes, when two Jews meet, you have three opinions: the two men are arguing loudly IN YIDDISH. The words "Vilna" and "Warsaw" feature prominently in the babble of the argument. Yiddish, when spoken, has the appropriate English subtitles.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

A NEWCOMER to the crowd addresses TWO JEWISH BYSTANDERS. The bystanders respond in English with Russian-Jewish accents.

NEWCOMER

Why do they argue?

BYSTANDER #1

The Hassid with the fur hat says it is colder in Vilna than in Warsaw.

BYSTANDER #2

And the man with the green cap says it is colder nowhere else in the world than in Warsaw. His father told him.

A THIRD BYSTANDER observes the two bystanders. He nods his head vigorously. A FOURTH BYSTANDER watching all three of them shakes his head solemnly, disagreeing with the third man.

BYSTANDER #1

They have been at it for thirty minutes and we are all freezing. Oy, yoi, yoi! If they do not settle it soon, we shall all die of how cold it is in Luzhky!

NEWCOMER

(in Yiddish, LOUDLY)

Why don't you let Reb Perelman decide which one is right?

The two JEWISH MEN stop their arguing in mid yell. They shrug as only a couple of Jewish men can who don't want to admit that the idea is a good one.

The third bystander looks at the fourth bystander, who wordlessly shrugs his shoulders in approval at the new idea.

The crowd WALLAS their approval and the group hurries off to the home of the local wise man. The bystander comments in a heavily Russian-Jewish accented English to his friend about the newcomer:

BYSTANDER #2

(to Bystander #1)

Who knew? He speaks Yiddish!

IN THE STREET -- MOVING

BEGIN CREDITS. The CROWD gains momentum as the two ARGUING JEWISH MEN continue their argument in Yiddish as they walk.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2) 1

CREDITS CONTINUE as the group moves off the sidewalk and into the street. More and more PEOPLE join the impromptu parade.

2 **INT. LUZHKY BUTCHER SHOP (1858) -- DAY** 2

CONTINUOUS ACTION as CREDITS CONTINUE. TWO WOMEN are arguing in Yiddish with a BUTCHER. LIVE CHICKENS are crowded into a crude wire cage astride a counter. The parade of street people moves past the window. Curious, the two women leave the butcher shop to follow. After a beat, the butcher removes his blood-stained apron, tosses it on to the countertop, and starts to follow them. He stops, turns back, and grabs the live chicken he was showing them. The chicken CLUCKS LOUDLY in protest as he takes it with him. The man calls out after the women as he leaves the shop to follow them. He closes the door behind him, EXITING THE SHOT.

3 **EXT. LUZHKY STREET (1858) -- DAY** 3

CONTINUOUS ACTION as CREDITS CONTINUE. The crowd continues down the street. More PEOPLE join the parade: a BAKER, a YOUNG BOY with his barking DOG, a MAN ON A BICYCLE.

The two arguing Jewish men in the lead continue to argue vociferously in Yiddish about the weather in Warsaw and Vilna as the parade passes a BARBER SHOP.

4 **INT. LUZHKY BARBER SHOP (1858) -- DAY** 4

CONTINUOUS ACTION as CREDITS CONTINUE. Two BARBERS stand by their simple barber chairs. The barbers have just completed servicing TWO BARBERSHOP CUSTOMERS.

REVERSE ANGLE -- THROUGH THE BARBER SHOP WINDOW

A THIRD BARBERSHOP CUSTOMER, seated near the front window, watches the ever-growing parade move down the street as a SHOE-SHINE BOY polishes one of his BOOTS. We SEE the REFLECTION OF THE PARADE in the window as the parade moves down the street. The third customer takes up his coat and EXITS THE SHOT as he follows the parade, wearing one polished boot and one unpolished boot.

BACK TO SCENE, INSIDE THE SHOP

The other two customers look from one to another, then get up out of their barber chairs. They quickly don their coats and out the door they go, EXITING THE SHOT.

The two barbers look at each other quizzically. One of them heads for the door, grabs his coat, and EXITS. The second ad libs a protest, thinks better about it, then pulls a shade down over his front window. He grabs his coat and puts it on

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

as he leaves. He pulls the door shut behind him, EXITING THE SHOT. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

5 INT. LUZHKY STREET (1858) -- DAY

5

CONTINUOUS ACTION as CREDITS CONTINUE. The parade moves NOISILY down the street to the home and business of the Perelman family, which is more of a shack than a grocery shop. The crowd gathers in front of the door to the shop.

6 EXT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1858) -- DAY

6

YEHUDA LEIB PERELMAN steps from the door of his shop. He is middle-aged, with chubby pink cheeks and whiskers befitting a "Reb" -- a Jewish wise man, but without the actual title of a Rabbi. Perelman is dressed in the very common clothes of a poor shopkeeper of his day. He wears steel-rimmed glasses.

Perelman takes a small worn handkerchief from his pocket and coughs once into it. Still holding his handkerchief, he looks up at the crowd, O.S., and his eyes WIDEN at what he sees.

PERELMAN

Oy, yoi, yoi!

PERELMAN'S POV -- AT THE CROWD

We see the CROWD stretched out before him. It is a motley group of at least FIFTY PEOPLE. Standing next to his two women customers, the butcher holds his SQUAWKING CHICKEN. The baker carries a loaf of bread. The young boy stands with his dog next to the man and his bicycle. The two barbers and their customers are there. So is the shoe shine boy. They all stand around the Hassid and the man with the green cap. All eyes are eager, just waiting for the answer. They breathe in unison and their breaths form very noticeable PUFFS that catch Perelman's attention.

BACK TO SCENE

The Hassid speaks in Jewish-accented English.

HASSID

So... we want to know. Which is colder... Vilna, or...?

The man with the green cap interrupts him, placing an emphasis on his choice.

MAN WITH GREEN CAP

Da! Which is colder, Warsaw... or
(deprecating sniff)
...what he said.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

The Hassid looks insulted. Perelman can't believe his ears. He COUGHS a couple of times into the handkerchief, but he does this not just to gain the attention of the crowd. This is the beginning sign of the tuberculosis that will kill him in a few years.

As he tucks his handkerchief back into his pocket, Perelman gestures to quiet the noisy crowd. His breath forms in puffs as he speaks first to the arguing men.

PERELMAN

Neither. Our own village of Luzhky
has won that dubious distinction.

The man with the green cap nudges the Hassid, who then glares at him. They continue to poke each other as Perelman speaks.

PERELMAN (CONT'D)

(to the women and the
butcher)

And take the chicken. It's always
kosher. I know from experience.

As Perelman holds up his hand to stop the impromptu fight between the Hassid and the man with the green cap, the women shrug. The men stop fighting as one of the women reaches for the chicken, but the other woman grabs it from the butcher first. The CHICKEN SQUAWKS in protest. But before an argument can break out between the women, Perelman speaks again, gesturing to calm the crowd.

PERELMAN (CONT'D)

Feygeh has just delivered our fourth
child.

The crowd WALLAS its approval, but Perelman silences them with a gesture.

PERELMAN (CONT'D)

He is a frail child. We did not have
money for a doctor. My wife...
(slight cough)
...is ill. I beg of you, let someone
else settle your arguments today.
Begone, my friends! And pray for our
child.

The crowd honors his request, and turns to depart. The two Jewish men continue their ad lib argument about the weather as they leave with the crowd. The women argue about the chicken as they leave. Without waiting for a reply, Perelman turns and goes back inside, shutting the door behind him.

7 INT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1858) -- DAY

7

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Perelman leans back against the door for a beat, muttering to himself. His breath still forms puffs in the closed room, as there is no heat in his shop.

PERELMAN

Oy... is it not cold enough in Luzhky?

He COUGHS again, then doubles up as a spasm of coughing racks him. He pulls the handkerchief from his pocket, coughing into it for a beat. The spasm subsides, and Perelman moves away from the door.

TRUCK WITH HIM as Perelman moves quickly through the small grocery store to a back room. He passes into the room where ESTHER, a young girl of twelve, is preparing supper at a small stove, and his two sons SHALOM DAVID (eight years old) and CHAIM MEIR (five years old) are writing at a small table. He passes through the room and into a back room.

8 INT. PERELMAN'S SLEEPING AREA (1858) -- DAY

8

CONTINUOUS ACTION. As Perelman enters, he passes a CRIB which, as is customary in those days, HANGS FROM THE CEILING BY ROPES. Over the crib and hanging between the ropes are DOZENS of PIECES OF PAPER, on which are scrawled WORDS from the Torah. They are suspended by chords of RED WOOL to protect the child from the evil eye.

FEYGEH stares at her husband weakly. She is small of stature and has long black hair which she wears in two braids. Her two dark brown, sad eyes are delirious with fever. An older Jewish woman, a MIDWIFE, dressed in the utilitarian clothes of a peasant woman, hovers near by, holding the INFANT ELIEZER in a tightly-wrapped blanket.

FEYGEH

(weakly)

Voices. I hear... voices.

PERELMAN

Feygeh, it is the villagers in the street.

The midwife puts the infant carefully into the hanging crib. She turns to Feygeh and wipes the sweat from her forehead.

FEYGEH

(weakly)

No! I hear the voice...

(MORE)

A look of concern crosses Perelman's face. Feygeh leans forward on one elbow, her voice pitched with fever. Great drops of sweat cover her forehead.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

FEYGEH (CONT'D)

It is the voice of the Evil One. You said he will try to steal our son! Promise me! Promise me you will stay close...

She collapses on the bed. The midwife tucks her in.

FEYGEH (CONT'D)

...until... until the bris.

Perelman reaches over to touch her hot forehead, but her words remind him that under Jewish religious ceremonial law, he cannot do so until the mikveh ceremony is complete.

The midwife ad libs a stern warning protest in Yiddish. He withdraws his hand quickly; almost too quickly.

PERELMAN

While you were sleeping, I cut these out.

His hand plays over the bits of paper, which dance over the hanging crib as he runs his hand through them.

PERELMAN (CONT'D)

Look, Feygeh. I wrote the words from the Torah. And see... the red wool? To protect him from the evil eye. It is our custom.

He turns back to face her.

PERELMAN (CONT'D)

Close your eyes now. Sleep. The Evil One will not be able to harm our child.

NEW ANGLE -- ON THE CRIB, FROM ABOVE

In a SHOT THROUGH THE DANCING PIECES OF PAPER, we SEE the INFANT ELIEZER. He is small, weak, and sickly. The infant shivers in the room, even though he is folded tightly in a blanket. The baby COUGHS.

PERELMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Thus it is written!

BACK TO SCENE

Feygeh lays back on the bed as her husband turns to her. The midwife mops her forehead again.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

FEYGEH

(weakly)

I hear Rachel. Hers is a sweet voice.
Rachel will protect us, won't she,
Leybaleh?

PERELMAN

God will protect us. And God will
help him, Feygeh.

FEYGEH

(weakly)

Our son... he must have a name before
the bris.

PERELMAN

Then let it be "Eliezer" -- God is
my help. Eliezer shall be his name.

(beat, then)

Sleep, my darling.

She closes her eyes. He watches her for a beat, then turns to a plain wooden CHAIR that sits next to the hanging crib and beside the window.

Perelman sits down on the chair. We see the weight of the world in his eyes. He runs his hands through the hanging bits of paper. The baby Eliezer STIRS, then the baby COUGHS once.

PERELMAN (CONT'D)

Sleep now, Eliezer Yitzhak.

Perelman looks out the window. He, too, COUGHS once, then he COUGHS AGAIN, O.S. and we FOLLOW HIS LINE OF SIGHT as the CAMERA BACKS THROUGH THE CLOSED GLASS WINDOW and OUT INTO...

9 **EXT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1858) -- DAY**

9

CONTINUOUS ACTION. CAMERA BACKS OUT THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOW and OUT INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD around the shop. We SEE the Luzhky NEIGHBORHOOD around the Perelman grocery shop.

CGI FX: WINTER DAY turns to SPRING DAY as the SNOW on the WINDOW SILL, on a barren WINDOW BOX PLANTER, and on the STREET below MELTS. We SEE the BLOSSOMS and LEAVES APPEAR as PLANTS GROW in the window box planter.

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then SUPER a DATE: FIVE YEARS LATER.

CAMERA then MOVES IN THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOW at the FRONT OF THE SHOP (and NOT the rear, where we came out) and into...

10 INT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON**10**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. We see ESTHER (18 years old) working in the store, stacking VARIOUS ITEMS on the shelves behind a short counter. [PRODUCTION NOTE: this is NOT a self-serve shop.]

Feygeh, now FIVE MONTHS PREGNANT, is serving a CUSTOMER in the front store room. We can HEAR the O.S. SOUND of YOUNG ELIEZER (5 years old) through the door to the living area as he READS a selection from the Torah.

As WE APPROACH the door, it OPENS for US. We MOVE THROUGH THE DOORWAY and into:

11 INT. PERELMAN'S KITCHEN (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON**11**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. We MOVE INTO the small kitchen area in the back of the shop. At the kitchen table is five-year-old ELIEZER. He is READING ALOUD from a BOUND COPY of the Torah (Pentateuch) in Ashkenazi-accented Hebrew. Perelman is also at the kitchen table, nodding his approval from time to time. Leib Perelman has lost weight. Gone is the pink color in his cheeks. His skin is gray. The man is at death's door and the angels are calling.

CLOSE -- AT THE PENTATEUCH

Eliezer follows the Hebrew text with his index finger, reading it aloud. When he stumbles, we HEAR the O.S. VOICE of his father correcting him.

BACK TO SCENE

Perelman BEGINS TO COUGH as the boy continues to read aloud from the Torah. Perelman stands to leave the kitchen. As he coughs, he gestures to little Eliezer to continue his reading. He STEPS OUT OF THE SHOT and into:

12 INT. PERELMAN'S BEDROOM (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON**12**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Coughing, Perelman steps into the rear bedroom. We SEE the crib folded up into a neat pile of rope on the floor next to the plain wooden chair. A stack of books is on a crude dressing table.

A spasm of coughing accompanies Perelman as he moves to the dressing table and opens it. He pulls out a handkerchief and coughs into it.

The COUGHING SUBSIDES. He starts to turn from the dressing table, only to slump back and gather his face in his hands. His complexion is now ashen, and he begins to cough again, holding his hands over his face. The coughing subsides. He

(CONTINUED)

Ben-Yehuda -- Draft 2009021870 -- ACT ONE 10.

12 CONTINUED: 12

steps over the door and moves weakly back into the kitchen area.

13 INT. PERELMAN'S KITCHEN (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON 13

Eliezer continues to read from the Pentateuch as Perelman staggers weakly to the table. He sits down and weakly gestures to Eliezer, who continues to read.

After a beat, Perelman's cough begins again, now out of control. His hands, which he holds tightly by his mouth, begin to shake as he coughs.

14 INT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON 14

Feygeh dismisses the CUSTOMER. As the customer leaves, she and Esther exchange glances. They HEAR the O.S. COUGHING coming through the closed door.

15 INT. PERELMAN'S KITCHEN (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON 15

Eliezer continues to read as his father coughs. The handkerchief TURNS RED WITH BLOOD as the blood soaks through while Perelman coughs. At this Eliezer stops reading, recoiling in horror.

We SEE a TORRENT OF BLOOD come shooting out of Perelman's throat. It flies past his hands to...

ECU -- THE TORAH

The BLOOD SPILLS ACROSS the page of the Torah that Eliezer has been reading. We HEAR Eliezer's O.S. GASP of HORROR.

BACK TO SCENE

Perelman's eyes are closed as the final cough racks his body. He opens them and, to his horror, sees the page of the Torah covered in his own blood.

Young Eliezer is frozen in horror. Before he can say or do anything, Perelman speaks:

PERELMAN
(weakly)
Eliezer, my son. Clean the Torah.
Make it readable. Don't bring dishonor
to our sacred book.

He coughs once more, and then, with a long gurgling sigh he becomes silent.

The child stares at the blood-soaked page, then at his motionless father, his head between his big arms.

(CONTINUED)

Ben-Yehuda -- Draft 2009021870 -- ACT ONE 11.

15 CONTINUED: 15

CLOSE SHOT -- THE BLOOD-COVERED TORAH AND PERELMAN

Perelman's lifeless eyes stare at the blood-covered Torah.

BACK TO SCENE

Young Eliezer in desperation grabs his shirt sleeve and begins to wipe his father's blood from the Torah, trying to sop up the blood. It's no use -- the blood only smears worse. With a CRY he springs to the door to the front area of the shop and throws it open.

16 **INT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON** 16

AT THE DOOR, CONTINUOUS ACTION. Eliezer calls out:

ELIEZER
Mother! Mother! Come quick!

Feygeh hurries to the door.

17 **INT. PERELMAN'S KITCHEN (1863) -- LATE AFTERNOON** 17

CONTINUOUS ACTION. As Eliezer steps aside, she sees the blood on his shirt. He points to the table where she sees Lieb Yehuda's lifeless form draped over the table.

FEYGEH
Leybaleh?

On her GASP of HORROR we CUT TO:

18 **EXT. LUZHKY HEBREW KHEDER SCHOOL (1863) -- DAY** 18

ESTABLISH the kheder, a one-room building that houses the Hebrew school for children. We hear the SOUND (O.S.) of a CHILD HALTINGLY READING THE PENTATEUCH in Ashkenazi-accented Hebrew. The voice is NOT that of young Eliezer. We see HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES move up and down the street. A HORSE-DRAWN DELIVERY WAGON is parked in front of the kheder.

19 **INT. LUZHKY HEBREW KHEDER SCHOOL (1863) -- DAY** 19

The halting READING of the Torah CONTINUES. We SEE a LONG CRUDE TABLE with simple wooden chairs, around which sit ELIEZER and SEVEN OTHER BOYS. They wear their hair in the orthodox fashion. Each boy also wears the ARBAKANFOS, a type of linen poncho undershirt with fringes on each corner, all a part of outfits befitting young students of the kheder. The place is dingy and sparsely furnished. The word "poverty" comes to mind.

Pacing the room and walking around the table is MR. GROSS, the class's TEACHER. He walks stiffly, like a drill sergeant. He carries a short ruler in his right hand, rimmed with a

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

sharp edge of metal. He slaps the ruler into his left hand, just waiting for an opportunity to use it. The man never smiles as he looks down at his students.

Gross comes to where one of the boys, JOSEPH, is reading aloud from the Pentateuch. He speaks in a stilted, halting manner. Gross glares at the boy as he reads. The stern look becomes even more stern because what he hears does not please him. With each mistake, Gross SNAPS the ruler across the boy's hands and YELLS OUT a correction.

We TRUCK ALONG the ROW OF FACES. We SEE the REACTIONS of the boys to Joseph's torture. The other children are appalled and WINCE at the SOUND (O.S.) of the SLAPS of the RULER.

We finally COME TO REST ON YOUNG ELIEZER, who winces with each slap of the ruler, identifying with Joseph's pain. The torture of Joseph is REFLECTED in the pupils of Eliezer's eyes.

GROSS

Enough! How long does HaShem have to listen to this blasphemy?! I know I won't!

Joseph, in tears, sits quietly, holding his hand, now RED from the repeated blows.

GROSS (CONT'D)

Have we no real students here?

Young Eliezer reacts impassively. He merely blinks once or twice.

Gross opens the copy of the Pentateuch that is on the table to Genesis 1:1 and, with an air of arrogance, places his finger along the text and begins to read. But Gross stumbles over a few of the words as he reads in Ashkenazi-accented Hebrew.

GROSS (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Beresheet barah Elohim, et hashamayim v'et ha'aretz. Ve'ha'aretz hayta tohu va vohu, ve'khoshekh al pney tehom...

(subtitles)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. When the earth was an unformed desolation...

(MORE)

Something catches his attention, O.S.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

INSERT -- CLOSE SHOT -- ELIEZER

Eliezer is mouthing the words to himself, but he is NOT READING THEM. He is reciting from memory under his breath.

BACK TO SCENE

Gross STOPS READING. He walks along the row of students, intimidating them into nothingness as he stares at them from behind. We SEE each one of them shrink in fear from his approach. We finally COME to young Eliezer. Young Eliezer stares straight ahead as Gross approaches him from behind. Young Eliezer's eyes are expressionless.

Gross lays the ruler on Eliezer's right shoulder. Young Eliezer looks slowly over to the ruler.

ELIEZER'S POV -- FROM HIS SHOULDER UP TO MR. GROSS

Young Eliezer's gaze follows the ruler up to the arm and then up the arm to the hate-filled face of Mr. Gross. He addresses the boy by his first name, a sign of disrespect.

GROSS (CONT'D)
Master... Eliezer.

BACK TO SCENE

Young Eliezer sits there, frozen.

GROSS (CONT'D)
The son of the illustrious Yehuda Leib, whom all the world sought for advice rather than come here... for more... learned counsel.

Young Eliezer looks up at him, not intimidated.

GROSS (CONT'D)
Won't you... enlighten us with a reading from the Torah?

Young Eliezer sits quietly for a BEAT as the other boys REACT.

Mr. Gross places his ruler along the spine of Eliezer's book. Young Eliezer looks from the ruler to Mr. Gross. The face of his teacher is hard with hate for the son of a man he despises.

GROSS (CONT'D)
From the beginning, then?

Young Eliezer opens the book to Genesis 1:1.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (3)

19

ECU -- THE HEBREW TEXT

Young Eliezer places his finger along the text and begins to read O.S. in ABSOLUTELY FLAWLESS ASHKENAZI-ACCENTED HEBREW.

BACK TO SCENE

We see the words that young Eliezer reads as SUBTITLES in English. As he reads, the instructor's face clouds with more and more anger because the boy reads the Hebrew text much better than the instructor.

YOUNG ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Beresheet barah Elohim, et hashamayim
v'et ha'aretz. Ve'ha'aretz hayta
tohu va vohu, ve'khoshekh al pney
tehom veruakh Elohim merakhefet al
pney hamayim. Va'yomar Elohim yehi
or va'yehi or.

(subtitles)

In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth. When the earth
was an unformed desolation, with the
surface of the ocean depths shrouded
in darkness, and while the Spirit of
God was hovering over the surface of
the waters, God said, "Let there be
light. And there was light."

Mr. Gross places his ruler along Eliezer's right hand. There is nothing but fury in his face. He begins to press down hard on the boy's hand.

ECU -- ELIEZER'S RIGHT HAND

The metal edge bites into the boy's right index finger. The edge cuts the finger and blood is drawn as young Eliezer reads from the book.

YOUNG ELIEZER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Vayare Elohim et haor ki tov vayavdel
Elohim bein haor u'vein hakhoshekh.

(subtitles)

God saw that the light was good; and
God separated the light from the
darkness.

BACK TO SCENE

Young Eliezer ignores the pain as Mr. Gross continues his torture. Young Eliezer continues to read.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (4)

19

YOUNG ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Va'ikrah Elohim laor yom, velakhoshekh
karah laila. Vayhi erev vayhi boker
yom ekhad.

(subtitles)

God called the light "Day," and the
darkness he called "Night." The
twilight and the dawning were day
one.

Blood from young Eliezer's hand flows down to the book. Before the blood can reach the Torah, as he reads, young Eliezer brushes the blood away from the page with his sleeve IN THE SAME MANNER THAT HE DID when his father's blood threatened the Torah. Young Eliezer then closes the book, but KEEPS ON RECITING from memory in flawless Ashkenazi-accented Hebrew.

Mr. Gross digs the ruler deeper into young Eliezer's hand. Defiant, Young Eliezer continues to recite from memory, also in flawless Ashkenazi-accented Hebrew.

YOUNG ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Vayomar Elohim yehi rakhiah betokh
hamaim vayehi mavdil bein maim lamaim.

(subtitles)

Then God said, "Let there be an
expanse between the waters, separating
waters from waters!"

INSERT -- REACTION SHOTS

The other boys begin to notice the torture. HUSHED WHISPERS rush back and forth between the boys. We SEE their various reactions: some wince in pain, some are angry, some are made sick by the sight. And still young Eliezer continues to recite from memory, O.S.

YOUNG ELIEZER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Vaya'as Elohim et harakia vayavdel
bein hamaim asher mitakhat la'rakia
u'vein hamaim asher meal la'rakia
vayhi-khen.

(subtitles)

So God made the expanse, and he
separated the waters that were beneath
the expanse from the waters that
were above the expanse. And so it
was.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (5)

19

BACK TO SCENE

As Eliezer finishes his recitation, he can barely keep back the tears.

YOUNG ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Va'ykra Elohim larakia shamaim vayhi
erev vayhi boker yom sheni.

(subtitles)

God called the expanse "Sky." The
twilight and the dawning were the
second day.

Young Eliezer pauses for a beat, unable to continue. Mr. Gross continues to press the metal edge of the ruler into the boy's hand.

ECU -- YOUNG ELIEZER'S HAND

A long and ugly GASH bleeds profusely.

ANGLE -- THE TORAH

But no blood touches the Torah. At the expense of his own pain, young Eliezer has protected the text from the effects of the torture. Mr. Gross removes the ruler with an impassionate final glance.

Young Eliezer examines his finger under his blood-soaked handkerchief. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then we HEAR the O.S. VOICE of a PHYSICIAN.

PHYSICIAN (O.S.)

It has to come off, Mrs. Perelman.

CUT TO:

20 **EXT. LUZHKY INN (1864) -- NIGHT**

20

TO ESTABLISH a late 19th century inn. HORSE-DRAWN CABS drop off various GUESTS at the inn. This time we HEAR the O.S. VOICE of Feygeh:

FEYGEH

No! Not my son.

21 **INT. LUZHKY INN (1864) -- NIGHT**

21

Feygeh sits next to young Eliezer, who lays feverish on a sofa in the doctor's room at the inn.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

PHYSICIAN

It's been four months, you tell me,
since this "accident" occurred. The
finger, it's dead already. The boy
will die if it is not removed.

Feygeh recoils at the thought of disfiguring her beloved son, but the doctor has made it quite clear. She looks from the physicians's stern face to the face of her ill son.

The doctor peels back the bandage around the boy's hand.

ECU -- YOUNG ELIEZER'S RIGHT HAND

We SEE the SWOLLEN and GANGRENOUS INDEX FINGER of young Eliezer's right hand.

BACK TO SCENE

Hesitant, unsure, Feygeh finally gives in. She reluctantly nods her head as tears stream down her face.

The physician opens a small bottle of ether and pours it into a handkerchief.

PHYSICIAN (CONT'D)

You'll have to hold him. I don't
have a nurse.

She takes the handkerchief, now wet with ether, and places it over the boy's mouth and nose. He struggles for a bit, then falls unconscious.

The physician holds up a wicked-looking SCALPEL near a desk lamp. The scalpel GLEAMS in the light. HOLD FOR A BEAT on the scalpel as we HEAR the O.S. VOICE of young Eliezer's uncle, DAVID WOLFSON:

WOLFSON (O.S.)

You say he can't stay at the school
any longer?

CUT TO:

22 INT. WOLFSON'S STUDY (1868) -- DAY

22

We are in an office befitting an accountant. There is an ENORMOUS DESK with a GREEN-SHADED OIL LAMP and a DARK GREEN LEATHER CHAIR. An imposing BOOKCASE sits behind the desk. The bookcase is filled with LEDGERS. An elaborate KNITTED RUG is in the middle of the room. A FIRE burns in the fireplace.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

SUPER the DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR: 14 May 1868. LOSE the DATE, then SUPER a NEW DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR: 22 Iyar 5628.

Behind the desk sits DAVID WOLFSON, the agent for the landlord for much of the area. He is mid 40's and fairly well dressed, though not opulently. He is sharp with money figures and it shows in his personality. Feygeh sits in a plain chair in front of his desk.

WOLFSON

Why do you come to me?

Wolfson leans back in his opulent desk chair.

FEYGEH

You are our only relative here, Uncle David.

WOLFSON

And your landlord's agent.

A reluctant raise of her eyebrows acknowledges the truth of the statement. There is an awkward beat.

WOLFSON (CONT'D)

I would have preferred... a different arrangement.

Another awkward beat. She knows what he means. The intimate relationship he more than hints at would have been allowed under Jewish law.

FEYGEH

I was promised to another, David.

Another awkward beat, then:

FEYGEH (CONT'D)

My son. He needs an education.

Wolfson sits forward in his chair, all business.

WOLFSON

You have other children. What of them?

FEYGEH

My sons will have trades. Esther, she will marry. My Leybaleh...

WOLFSON

(interrupting)
Yehuda Leib is dead!

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

FEYGEH
 (unfazed by the
 interruption)
 Yehuda Lieb wanted Eliezer to study...
 to become a rabbi.

WOLFSON
 A yeshiva! An expensive dream.
 (beat, then)
 How will you... pay?

His voice trails off. He is looking at her from head to toe,
 practically undressing her with his eyes. And she feels it.
 HOLD FOR A VERY AWKWARD BEAT, then as we HEAR WOLFSON'S VOICE
 (V.O.) we CUT TO:

23 INT. PERELMAN'S BEDROOM (1868) -- LATE AFTERNOON

23

Feygeh and Eliezer, aged 10, pack a beat-up suitcase that is
 antique, even for 1868.

WOLFSON (V.O.)
 Eliezer must maintain his studies
 day and night, to fulfill the hopes
 and expectations that his mother
 has...

FEYGEH (V.O.)
 (interrupting)
 And his father!

WOLFSON (V.O.)
 And his father... have put into him.

24 EXT. PERELMAN'S SHOP (1868) -- MORNING

24

A HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE stands at the curb near the doorway
 to the shop, giving us the impression that the carriage is
 waiting for him. Wolfson's V.O. CONTINUES. All of the Perelman
 children and their mother gather around Eliezer, ad lib
 wishing him their good-byes.

WOLFSON (V.O.)
 He is to study at the Yeshiva here
 in Luzhky. He shall continue in
 studies of the Torah, the Talmud,
 and the commentaries until his
 knowledge of them is perfected.
 (MORE)

A MAN and WOMAN wearing TRAVELING CLOTHES step up to the
 carriage and enter it. The DRIVER SNAPS the reins across
 the back of the horse, and the carriage pulls away from the
 curb.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

WOLFSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I shall not provide transportation.
If he wants to study here, he must
walk. But my home is here. He can
walk it... in about an hour, I should
think.

25 **EXT. LUZHKY ROAD (1868) -- LATE AFTERNOON**

25

The V.O. CONTINUES as Eliezer, aged 10, walks along the road, barely able to carry his suitcase. HORSE-DRAWN COACHES and CARRIAGES pass him by as he walks, even though he tries in vain to stop one of them. No one stops to give the boy a ride.

WOLFSON (V.O.)

The walk should do him some good.
Make him appreciate what he's getting
every time he returns here from a
stay with you. And he won't be far
from home, now will he? He can visit
you as often as you'd like.

26 **EXT. WOLFSON'S HOME -- LATE AFTERNOON**

26

We SEE a single story brick residence. INTO THE SHOT steps young Eliezer as the V.O. continues. He sets his suitcase down to rest as he looks over the Wolfson residence. The home is not opulent, but to Eliezer, it might as well be a palace. He picks up the suitcase and heads for the front door.

WOLFSON (V.O.)

I shall provide a room for him. A
large, comfortable room. He shall
have food, and books...

AT THE FRONT DOOR

He sets the suitcase down. On the door post is a MEZUZAH. He touches the mezuzah. We SEE three fingers and the missing index finger of Eliezer's right hand as he touches the mezuzah in reverence. He then kisses his fingers.

WOLFSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and study. I have only one
condition, upon which I must insist.
He is to have a serious attitude
toward his education. I shall not
allow frivolity of any kind.

(MORE)

Eliezer's touch leaves a BLOODSTAIN on the mezuzah. Startled, Eliezer turns his hand over to look at his palm.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

ECU -- YOUNG ELIEZER'S RIGHT HAND

We SEE bloodied fingers and a blistered palm where he has been carrying his suitcase.

BACK TO SCENE

As the V.O. CONTINUES, Eliezer quickly pulls out a handkerchief and wipes the blood off the mezuzah. He also wipes his lips. He lifts the LARGE DOOR KNOCKER and KNOCKS LOUDLY.

WOLFSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

By the time of his bar mitzvah, he shall go on to the yeshiva. After that, his future is out of my hands.

Eliezer continues to wipe off the mezuzah. He has barely finished his task when the door is opened by a middle-aged SERVANT WOMAN. Eliezer hides his bloodied palm and handkerchief. The servant woman steps aside wordlessly to allow him to enter. The boy enters the house, EXITING THE SHOT and the DOOR CLOSES IN OUR FACE as the V.O. ends.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 **EXT. POLOTZK STREET (1871) -- EVENING**

27

A 13-year-old Eliezer hurries down the street, dodging various PEOPLE and HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES and WAGONS. TRUCK WITH HIM as we SUPER the PLACE and the DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR:

Polotzk, Russia
3 September 1871

LOSE the DATE, but KEEP the PLACE. SUPER a NEW DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR, so we now read:

Polotzk, Russia
17 Elul 5631

Eliezer makes his way toward the home of Rabbi Joseph Blocker. He sees the familiar MEZUZAH on the door post, touches it in honor, then kisses his finger tips as he KNOCKS at the door. We see the name "BLOCKER" in Hebrew letters next to the closed door. The door opens and HADASSAH, the Rabbi's 13-year-old DAUGHTER, lets Eliezer in. He is expected.

28 **INT. RABBI BLOCKER'S PARLOR (1871) -- LATE AFTERNOON**

28

An O.S. VOICE can be heard CHANTING a melody in Hebrew. Hadassa leads Eliezer to a pair of closed POCKET DOORS. She knocks briskly, waits a beat, then pulls the doors open and admits Eliezer to the study.

29 INT. RABBI BLOCKER'S STUDY (1871) -- LATE AFTERNOON

29

Standing outside the room, Hadassah pulls the doors closed after Eliezer ENTERS. He turns to survey the room as the CHANTING CONTINUES. We see a CARVED DESK with an OIL LAMP. Bookshelves are filled with books with HEBREW TITLES. A SMALL SOFA sits in front of a large bay window. A FIREPLACE adorns one wall and a LARGE PERSIAN RUG lies on the floor in front of the desk.

Pacing the rather well appointed room is RABBI JOSEPH BLOCKER, a man of about thirty-five, tall and lean, red of hair and light of eyes, wearing a FINE LINEN SUIT. His face almost glows with inspiration as he chants in a clear and resonant voice the melody of the hymn bidding farewell to the Shabbat. Rabbi Blocker finishes his chant:

RABBI BLOCKER

(in Hebrew)

Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatisbi.
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi.
Bimhera Beyamenu yavo eleinu, im...

(subtitles)

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the
Tishbite, Elijah the Gileadite...
soon he will bring us...

As Blocker chants, Eliezer looks around the room. Blocker gestures to him and Eliezer finishes the chant with him.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

(in Hebrew)

Masiakh Ben David!

(subtitles)

The Messiah, son of
David!

~~Masiakh Ben David!~~

The Messiah, son of David!

Blocker smiles and offers him a large overstuffed leather chair as he takes his seat behind an elaborately carved wooden desk. Eliezer sits down in the chair and realizes there is something wrong with the seat. Blocker says nothing, but he smiles mischievously.

RABBI BLOCKER

Such progress you have made. I hear
nothing but good things from the
yeshiva. So... how is your grammar
coming along?

Eliezer doesn't want to admit the truth as he squirms in the uncomfortable seat.

ELIEZER

I prefer the Torah, Rabbi Blocker.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

RABBI BLOCKER

Indeed? I felt the same way at your age. But language must have structure, or it is meaningless. And your task, my son, is to know that structure until it is second nature to you. HaShem would not have it any other way.

Blocker watches as Eliezer shifts his weight on the chair. Eliezer sees his gaze, then feels under the cushion. Eliezer pulls out a book. Blocker smiles at the discovery.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

A little present for you.

Eliezer looks at the book cover. Puzzled, he opens the book to the title page.

INSERT -- THE TITLE PAGE OF THE BOOK

We SEE a DRAWING of a MAN in mid-19th century clothing and done in a drawing style from that era. He is clearly a castaway on an island. The TITLE is in HEBREW. Eliezer flips through the pages. All of them are in Hebrew. He flips back to the title page.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer reads the title page.

ELIEZER

The author is... Daniel...
 (looks up)
 A good Jewish name.
 (continues to read)
 Defoe. Daniel Defoe?
 (looks up at Blocker)
 I am not familiar with that name.
 (reading again)
 Robinson... Crusoe? What is this?
 This is not a commentary?

Blocker laughs as he stands up and moves to the front of the desk.

RABBI BLOCKER

The tongue of the prophets, my son, was also the language of beggars and fools.
 (sits on the edge of his desk)
 Otherwise, how could the prophets speak to the common people? And how should they write?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

ELIEZER

But... Robinson Crusoe?

Rabbi Blocker nods enthusiastically and takes the copy of Robinson Crusoe in Hebrew from Eliezer like a starving man grabbing a sandwich. Blocker opens it to chapter one and begins to READ ALOUD IN HEBREW from the book. As Rabbi Blocker READS, Eliezer slowly leans back in his chair, listening in amazement and fascination. We see the ENGLISH translation in subtitles as Blocker reads.

RABBI BLOCKER

(in Hebrew)

Noladeti beshnat elef sheshmeot
shloshim ushta'im (1632), be'ir York
lemishpakha tova, im ki lo mibnei
hamakom, ki avi haya nokhri asher ba
mi'Bremen, u'shmo Kroitsner. Ve'ulam
barishona hityashev be'Hal, sham asa
hon bemiskhar ube'azvo et asakav ba
akhrei kehn lashevet be'York...

(subtitles)

I was born in the Year 1632, in the
City of York, of a good Family, tho'
not of that Country, my Father being
a Foreigner of Bremen, who settled
first at Hull: He got a good Estate
by Merchandise, and leaving off his
Trade, lived afterward at York...

(MORE)

There is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR to the study.

INTERCUT -- AT THE DOOR, IN THE HALLWAY

Hadassah waits outside the study.

BACK TO SCENE

Startled, both Eliezer and Blocker look at each other. They have been caught red-handed! Rabbi Blocker SNAPS the book shut and they search frantically for a place to hide the contraband.

Blocker hides the book in an enormous FLOWER VASE. He and Eliezer look at the flowers for a beat. They are badly disarranged by the hidden book. They look at each other quickly for a beat and shake their heads, jointly deciding that it doesn't look quite right.

INTERCUT -- AT THE DOOR, IN THE HALLWAY

Hadassah KNOCKS AGAIN.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (3)

29

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer grabs the book from the vase and turns back to the chair. Rabbi Blocker quickly grabs another book from his desk, a G'marah (that is, an interpretation of the Jewish Law). He sits down on the edge of his desk, and begins reading a passage out loud.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

(reads for a beat in
Hebrew, then)

Come!

(continues reading
out loud)

Hadassah ENTERS as Rabbi Blocker continues to read out loud. She steps up to the Rabbi's desk as Eliezer, behind her back, stuffs the contraband under the cushion in an effort to conceal it. He doesn't quite make it. Rabbi Blocker STOPS READING from the G'marah, looking at her.

HADASSAH

Papa, dinner is served.

Hadassah looks over at Eliezer. She smiles at him. He is, after all, a charming young man. He sits there, uncomfortable, but certainly not because of the pretty girl. She looks down at the cushion. The Robinson Crusoe book peeks out from the cushion. Blocker notices and speaks to distract her.

RABBI BLOCKER

Thank you, Hadassah. What are we
having?

Hadassah speaks directly to Rabbi Blocker. Behind her back, Eliezer pulls the contraband book from the cushion and searches frantically for a place to hide it. He looks around quickly and spots a hiding place -- in plain sight!

HADASSAH

Mama's shabbat meal, like always.

Eliezer stuffs the book between two other books on a bookshelf filled with dozens of leather bound volumes. He turns back quickly as Hadassah finishes speaking to Blocker.

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

I don't know that it has ever varied,
Papa.

Rabbi Blocker nods forlornly in agreement. Hadassah turns her head and smiles at Eliezer.

We SEE the contraband book on the shelf behind Eliezer. Way out of place, the book sticks out like a sore thumb because

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (4)

29

Eliezer has inserted it among an entire shelf of look-alike volumes.

RABBI BLOCKER

Indeed.

Eliezer rolls his eyes as Rabbi Blocker dismisses the girl.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

That will be all, my dear.

Hadassah turns to go. Her eye catches the out of place book. She stares at it for a beat and starts to speak.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

(more formally)

That will be all, Hadassah.

HADASSAH

Yes, father.

Hadassah leaves, closing the double doors behind her, with one last curious glance at Eliezer. Eliezer looks at Rabbi Blocker for a beat, who shrugs his shoulders sheepishly. Eliezer retrieves the book from the bookshelves.

ELIEZER

(flipping through the book)

So... what's wrong with it?

RABBI BLOCKER

Wrong? There's nothing wrong. It's just a book in ivrit! As you can see, I have hundreds of them.

ELIEZER

(tapping the book)

This... this is not a prayer book, Rabbi Blocker.

Rabbi Blocker gives him a very Jewish shrug.

RABBI BLOCKER

One Jew's prayer is another Jew's curse. There are Jews worldwide who would stone you for just having that, let alone reading it.

ELIEZER

My uncle is one of them, I'm afraid.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (5)

29

RABBI BLOCKER

(nodding in sad
agreement)And others would give a fortune for
it. I...

(sighs)

...I am one of them. It shall be our
secret. Just between us.

Eliezer flips through the book again, shaking his head in amazement.

ELIEZER

I have never seen such a thing.(flipping through the
pages)Who would think? Robinson Crusoe...
in Hebrew?

(beat)

Do you think they paid the author
any royalties?

Rabbi Blocker reacts at the absurdity of the thought with LAUGHTER. Eliezer answers his own question.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

No, I suppose not.

RABBI BLOCKER

You... should be a publisher?

Eliezer thinks this over for a beat, then smiles at the absurdity of the thought.

ELIEZER

Is there no modern literature in
Hebrew, then?

RABBI BLOCKER

(thinking about it)

Precious little.

Rabbi Blocker stands and gestures toward the door.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

Dinner is served. Shall we?

Eliezer stands and tucks the book under the seat cushion. Rabbi Blocker nods his approval.

RABBI BLOCKER (CONT'D)

Good place for it. Your uncle David,
he would throw you out of his house...
and the synagogue, too... if he found
out.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (6)

29

Eliezer laughs in agreement. As they EXIT THE SHOT, we WIPE TO:

30 INT. WOLFSON'S STUDY (1873) -- LATE AFTERNOON

30

Three JEWISH MEN stand before Wolfson's desk. The men wear their hair and clothing in the orthodox fashion. SHLOMO, YAAKOV, and DANIEL are all at least 70 years of age, the epitome of stubborn Jewish orthodox beliefs of the late 19th century. Yaakov carries a BLACK CANE with a silver grip.

WOLFSON

You have proof of this?

Shlomo nods, as do the other men.

WOLFSON (CONT'D)

He's been attending Rabbi Blocker's academy now for two years. The boy is all of fifteen.

YAAKOV

More than old enough to know better!
What is he being taught?

The other men WALLA their agreement.

SHLOMO

Every shabbat, he recites from the siddur. But it is not the prayer book he reads from.

WOLFSON

But I have seen him read the prayers!

YAAKOV

Inside his prayer book, he hides the unclean thing! He recites the siddur from memory. But in secret, he reads blasphemy in the synagogue!

Daniel nods solemnly.

SHLOMO

David, clearly he is attending the wrong academy.

WOLFSON

Prove to me that the boy is straying!
I shall punish him severely.

DANIEL

That will take some doing.
(stroking his beard)
I... think I have a way.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

YAAKOV

What? What will you do?

DANIEL

(conspiratorial)

Let us wait until Shabbat.

As the other men consider this for a moment, we CUT TO:

31 **EXT. LUZHKY SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- NIGHT**

31

TO ESTABLISH as a FULL MOON illumines the building. HEAR the O.S. SOUND of a PAGE TURNING. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then it BEGINS TO RAIN. We CUT TO:

32 **INT. LUZHKY SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- NIGHT**

32

A typical synagogue where rows of crude pews are lined up. Eliezer reads by the light of a candle on the side where the men traditionally sit. The place is lit by a number of candles and oil lamps, very fitting for 1873. THUNDER CLAPS are heard and the SOUND of RAIN dancing on the roof and on the windows makes the scene seem even more eerie.

Eliezer turns a page again, absorbed in his reading. We SEE the cover of the book. It's ROBINSON CRUSOE. After a beat, we hear a MUFFLED THUMP ECHO in the synagogue, which is SILENT except for the RAIN. Eliezer looks up. He listens for a beat. Nothing but RAIN.

Eliezer goes back to reading for a bit. WE HEAR the SOUND of the DOOR TO THE SYNAGOGUE BLOWING OPEN with a BANG followed by the SOUND of RUSHING FOOTSTEPS.

Eliezer looks up as a GUST OF WIND blows out his candle. He looks around him. He sees that all the candles are blowing out. With sudden fear, he looks around him, then he looks back toward the now open door of the synagogue. His eyes grow wide with fear as we HEAR the SOUND of the DOOR TO THE SYNAGOGUE BLOWING OPEN with a BANG, followed by the SOUND of RUSHING FOOTSTEPS and the DRIVING RAIN from outside.

ELIEZER'S POV -- TOWARD THE DOOR OF THE SYNAGOGUE

FOUR HOODED FIGURES wearing WHITE SHEETS stream into the room, wet from the rain.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer reacts in horror as the phantasms overturn tables and chairs as they approach and surround him with TERRIBLE WAILING SOUNDS. One by one, each figure points a veiled arm at him and the book that he is reading.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

With a GREAT CRY Eliezer drops his copy of Robinson Crusoe and stumbles over the pew, various tables, and other furnishings in his haste to escape the horrible scene. The hooded figures CONTINUE TO WAIL as Eliezer finally makes his way out of the synagogue and into the rain. CUT TO:

33 EXT. LUZHKY SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- NIGHT

33

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Eliezer runs into the night, slipping on the wet pavement as the WAILING CONTINUES, O.S. Hold for a BEAT as the RAIN STOPS, then CUT BACK TO:

34 INT. LUZHKY SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- NIGHT

34

CONTINUOUS ACTION. The door closes behind Eliezer and the wailing finally stops.

One of the figures removes his hood. It's Daniel, from Wolfson's study. One by one, each of the ghostly figures removes his hood. We see Yaakov, Shlomo, and finally Wolfson himself. Wolfson smiles.

WOLFSON

That ought to solve the problem.

SHLOMO

Let's see what he was reading.

Wolfson reaches for the book.

YAAKOV

Wait!

DANIEL

Don't touch the unclean thing.

Yaakov pokes the Robinson Crusoe book with the tip of his cane. The book falls off the pew and lands open on the floor with its TITLE PAGE and the drawing of the castaway CLEARLY VISIBLE. The four men surround it, staring down at the floor.

ANGLE -- LOOKING UP FROM THE FLOOR

We SEE their REACTIONS as the men gather around the book, their FACES FRAMED IN THE SHOT. In about two seconds, their reactions turn from curiosity to anger to horror to outrage. All four of them give a YELL of OUTRAGE.

BACK TO SCENE

Yaakov smacks the book with his cane, knocking it toward the door. They all rush toward it. Yaakov knocks it again, out into the street and we CUT TO:

35 EXT. LUZHKY SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- NIGHT 35

ON THE STREET. CONTINUOUS ACTION. The book LANDS IN THE GUTTER, illuminated by the ghostly moonlight and splashed by the muddy water. We SEE the TITLE PAGE: Robinson Crusoe (in Hebrew) with the drawing of the castaway.

A late night HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE runs over the title page, further defacing the book. The back wheels of the carriage TEAR IT APART.

SHLOMO

As you said... problem solved.

To say that Wolfson is upset would be an understatement.

WOLFSON

Not quite.

We SEE the book, falling apart and floating away down the street. HOLD for a BEAT on the GUTTER as the book flows down the street, falling apart into unrecognizable gutter trash as it moves along. CUT TO:

36 EXT. WOLFSON'S HOME (1873) -- MORNING 36

TO ESTABLISH. We hear WOLFSON'S ANGRY VOICE (O.S.):

WOLFSON (O.S.)

A rabbi I was bringing up in my house.

A pig I do not need!

37 INT. ELIEZER'S BEDROOM IN WOLFSON'S HOME (1873) -- MORNING 37

Wolfson is at a CHEST OF DRAWERS, removing various items of clothing and tossing them into Eliezer's antique suitcase. He pulls open a drawer and pulls out a TEFILLIN, the miniature wooden box shaped somewhat like a derby hat (and with a similar box-like object worn on the left arm during prayer).

WOLFSON

Take your tefillin. You will need them! You will need to pray the rest of your life for eternal forgiveness!

On Eliezer's crestfallen expression, we CUT TO:

38 EXT. WOLFSON'S HOME (1873) -- MORNING 38

AT THE FRONT DOOR. The door opens and Eliezer's SUITCASE comes FLYING OUT of the door.

The suitcase LANDS on the flagstone in front of the doorway. A beat later, Eliezer STUMBLES over the suitcase, obviously

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

having been thrown out of the house. He lands literally on his butt, his glasses falling askew.

WOLFSON

And don't think your mother will
take you in!

We HEAR the DOOR SLAM CLOSED behind him.

Eliezer sits there for a beat. He adjusts his glasses and then slowly gets up. He looks back at the door, starts to say something, but realizes that it won't do any good. With a tear in his eye, he picks up his suitcase and walks slowly away.

39 **EXT. LUZHKY ROAD (1873) -- LATE AFTERNOON**

39

Young Eliezer comes to a fork in the road. One goes toward the village, the other goes off into the distance. A crude SIGN tells us it's the way to Glubokiah. He looks toward Luzhky for a beat, then turns and begins the long walk to Glubokiah. As he walks into the distance, we:

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

HEAR BIRDS CHIRPING as we FADE IN:

40 EXT. GLUBOKIAH SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- MORNING 40

We HEAR O.S. the SOUND of the Jewish shammash, a morning call to prayer. A number of JEWISH MEN are moving down the street and toward the synagogue. One MAN in particular catches our attention. He is a well-dressed businessman, about 40 years of age. He carries a WALKING STICK. This is SHLOMO JONAS. Like the other people from the street, Jonas opens the unlocked door of the synagogue and enters, EXITING THE SHOT. CUT TO:

41 INT. GLUBOKIAH SYNAGOGUE (1873) -- MORNING 41

CONTINUOUS ACTION. A group of PEOPLE are clustered around the first bench inside the door. They whisper quietly to each other as Jonas steps INTO THE SHOT. One man, the ELDERLY CARETAKER of the synagogue, is scratching his head.

JONAS

Well, well. What have we here?

CARETAKER

It's a boy, Shlomo. And he's asleep.

Jonas looks down at the boy.

JONAS' POV -- AT THE BENCH

Eliezer lies sleeping on the bare wooden bench. He wears the LONG FROCK COAT of the rabbinical student. A long blond curl hangs down over his travel-stained (and tear-stained) cheeks.

REACTION SHOT -- CLOSE ON JONAS

We see kindness in his eyes for the wayfaring youngster.

BACK TO SCENE

Some of the PEOPLE CLUCK their disapproval and turn away. But not Jonas.

JONAS

I can see that. But what's his name?
You are the caretaker here, no? How did he get in?

CARETAKER

The synagogue door is never locked,
even at night.

(MORE)

The caretaker stares at the sleeping boy.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

I shall leave him to you.

With a shake of his head, the caretaker turns and shuffles away. Jonas reaches over and shakes the sleeping boy's shoulder. Eliezer opens his eyes slowly, focuses, then sits up suddenly with a GASP, wiping the sleep from his eyes. He looks around, getting his bearings. As Jonas speaks, young Eliezer COUGHS slightly.

JONAS

Shalom and good morning, young man.
You are a stranger amongst us. What
brings you to Glubokiah?

(looks him over for a
beat)

By the looks of you, you've been
traveling... and a long way, too.

Jonas taps Eliezer's suitcase with his walking stick. Eliezer is reluctant to say anything. His STOMACH GROWL does the speaking for him.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Well, we must start somewhere. I am
Shlomo Naftaly Hirtz Jonas. I run a
local business here. I would like to
be a friend to you.

(beat, no reaction)

I have a wife and six children. Four
girls and two boys. Would you like
to meet them?

Another STOMACH GROWL answers the question.

JONAS (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a "yes". Come!

He gestures toward the interior. They move inside as we
DISSOLVE TO:

42 EXT. GLUBOKIAH STREET (1873) -- LATER**42**

As Jonas and Eliezer walk AWAY FROM CAMERA with their backs toward us, Jonas speaks. He carries his walking stick and Eliezer's suitcase.

JONAS

What was your name again?

We HEAR another STOMACH GROWL, but this time Eliezer answers.

ELIEZER

Eliezer, sir. Eliezer Perelman.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

JONAS

Tell me about yourself, Eliezer
Perelman.

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

43 EXT. JONAS HOME (1873) -- MORNING

43

A large three-story brick home adjacent to a small DISTILLERY, which sits in a courtyard of the small estate. Jonas and Eliezer approach ON FOOT, walking from the synagogue. Jonas still carries Eliezer's suitcase.

Eliezer has to tilt his head to see to the top of the enormous house. His mouth GAPES in amazement. Jonas CHUCKLES at Eliezer's expression of wonder.

JONAS

It's home. Come.

They walk to the front entrance, EXITING THE SHOT.

44 INT. JONAS PARLOR (1873) -- MORNING

44

TO ESTABLISH. We SEE beautiful OIL PAINTINGS in heavy gold frames hanging on the walls. Jonas and Eliezer ENTER, coming from the street. Eliezer looks around him in wonder at the opulent home. Jonas escorts Eliezer to the study, which opens off the main parlor through a pair of double pocket doors.

45 INT. JONAS STUDY (1873) -- MORNING

45

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Jonas escorts Eliezer into the room.

JONAS

Please wait here, my young friend. I
shall return presently.

As Jonas EXITS, we ESTABLISH the study. No walls can be seen, because they are covered by BOOKCASES that stretch to the ceiling. FLOWER POTS line the window sills, which include a large BAY WINDOW. A LARGE MAHOGANY DESK, upholstered CHAIRS and a SOFA covered in brocade complete the decor. The bookcase is so enormous that a LADDER is attached to a rail that runs along the top of the bookcases. Eliezer looks in awe at the marvelously appointed study, and then speaks under his breath:

ELIEZER

Heaven could not be more beautiful.

Eliezer goes over to the bookcase and pulls out one of the books, expecting it to be in Hebrew. A puzzled look comes over his face.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

INSERT -- THE BOOK

The book is in GERMAN.

BACK TO SCENE

He closes the book and replaces it in the bookcase. Eliezer steps over to another bookcase. He pulls down another book and opens it. Another look of puzzlement crosses his face.

INSERT -- THE SECOND BOOK

This book is in FRENCH. The author is SPINOZA.

BACK TO SCENE

Shaking his head, he flips through the second book as Jonas ENTERS. He sees the puzzled look on Eliezer's face.

JONAS

These are all books of Jewish learning, written by many great and wise men, Eliezer. That one... is by Spinoza.

Jonas steps over to the bookcase and pulls down another book. He hands it to Eliezer, who flips through it with another puzzled look.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Here's another. It's called Phadon. It's by Moses Mendelsson. He was a philosopher. They called him the "German Plato".

On Eliezer's look of puzzlement, Jonas LAUGHS good-naturedly.

JONAS (CONT'D)

My dear Eliezer, there is much more to life than the Rabbinate, and more to the Rabbinate than the Torah and Talmud!

He takes the book from Eliezer and puts it back on the shelf.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Yes, I know. French, German, English, Russian, Hebrew. So much to learn.

(MORE)

The SOUND of GIGGLES interrupts the scene.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

AT THE DOOR

PAULA, four years old, the youngest of the Jonas daughters, peeks out from behind the pocket doors. Beside her stands MRS. RIVKAH JONAS.

JONAS (CONT'D)

But for now, let me introduce you to my family. This is my wife, Rivkah. And this...

(takes Paula into his arms)

...this is Paula, my youngest.

Paula reaches up and pulls a lock of Eliezer's long curls. He gently extricates himself from the grasp and acknowledges the mistress of the house with a slight bow.

ELIEZER

Mrs. Jonas...

Rivkah acknowledges the bow with a nod and a quick wink to her husband, who smiles approvingly.

JONAS

My other children are about their chores. But Deborah... she will be your teacher.

RIVKAH

Welcome to our home. You must be starving. Jonas, the books will wait. Breakfast will not. Come, Eliezer.

ELIEZER

Deborah?

Before he can move, Jonas' eldest daughter DEBORAH steps into the doorway and a lovelier vision of young womanhood cannot be found this side of heaven. She is eighteen years old with long flowing red hair. In height, she is taller than Eliezer by at least three inches.

Eliezer is transfixed by her beauty as he looks her over from head to toe. This will be his teacher?! She offers him her hand.

CLOSE -- DEBORAH'S HAND

as Eliezer notices the softness of her skin, the pink complexion, and the firmness of her handshake.

DEBORAH

Welcome to our home.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (3)

45

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer BLUSHES as he take her hand, then releases it.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(to Jonas, teasing
Eliezer)

What language shall I teach, papa?
French? German? Shall I... drill him
in Russian, perhaps?

Eliezer's eyes grow wide. Jonas laughs at his expression.

JONAS

All of them. But start with French.

The four of them exit the study and we CUT TO:

46 INT. JONAS KITCHEN (1873) -- MORNING

46

CONTINUOUS ACTION. The family takes its place around the table. Eliezer whispers something we cannot hear to Jonas. He points him down the hallway. Eliezer excuses himself ad lib.

RIVKAH

How long will Eliezer be staying,
Shlomo?

Rivkah puts the last of the breakfast on the table.

JONAS

Until he is situated in the gymnasium.

Jonas, Deborah and Rivkah take their seats. Deborah REACTS as Eliezer returns. His face and hands are clean and his hair is freshly combed.

DEBORAH

He will most certainly be situated...
after I have taught him French.

Eliezer sits down silently as Deborah takes some bread from a basket on the table.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(tearing the bread)

And German.

(tearing it again)

And Russian.

Eliezer watches sheepishly as everyone takes some bread from a basket on the table. Eliezer reaches over, takes the bread, and recites the short Hamotzi blessing.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheynu melek
 ha'olam hamotzi lekhem min ha'arets.

(no subtitles)

Blessed are you, HaShem, our God,
 King of the Universe, who brings
 forth bread out of the earth.

The ladies shoot Jonas a look as Eliezer prays.

JONAS

(whispering)

A worthy custom... one he is obviously
 used to.

Even if they are not. Eliezer finishes his prayer. He looks
 up at Jonas with expectation.

Jonas is clue-less for a beat, then understands. He gestures
 to his family. The other family members close with a Hebrew
 "Amen" somewhat awkwardly.

Eliezer smiles. The other family members then bite into their
 bread. Eliezer covers his mouth and, turning his head, COUGHS
 twice.

Rivkah gives him a motherly look of concern as we DISSOLVE
 TO:

A WALL CALENDAR -- 1873

CGI FX: The WALL CALENDAR tells us the year is 1873. MUSIC
 UP as we segue into a SERIES OF DISSOLVES (MOS) to show the
 time passing. The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now
 1874.

47 INT. JONAS STUDY (1874) -- MORNING

47

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Deborah is instructing Eliezer in
 the finer points of French grammar. We SEE an EASEL with a
 SMALL BLACKBOARD on which is written the conjugation of a
 regular French verb. Deborah points to the conjugation as
 Eliezer repeats the words out loud, even though we cannot
 hear what they are saying. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE
 TO:

48 INT. JONAS DISTILLERY (1874) -- DAY

48

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Jonas is showing Eliezer through
 the distillery. Some OLDER BOYS, clearly Deborah's older
 brothers, are packing bottles into wooden crates, cushioning
 them with STRAW. One of the boys hammers one of the boxes
 shut. Eliezer watches him as Deborah checks off the inventory
 on a clipboard. Eliezer turns and COUGHS a couple of times.

(CONTINUED)

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48 CONTINUED: 48

Deborah notices this with concern. We HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

49 INT. JONAS STUDY (1874) -- DAY 49

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Deborah is on an ornate ladder, reaching up for a book. Eliezer stands underneath the ladder, looking up at her figure as she reaches for the book. He quickly looks away, then looks back.

CGI FX: The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now 1875 as we DISSOLVE TO:

50 INT. JONAS STUDY (1875) -- DAY 50

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Eliezer is reading the BOOK BY SPINOZA from SCENE 45 in French. He turns a page as we DISSOLVE TO:

51 INT. JONAS STUDY (1875) -- LATE AFTERNOON 51

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. We SEE the same EASEL and BLACKBOARD as in SCENE 47, but this time with the conjugation of a GERMAN VERB. Deborah once again points to the conjugation as Eliezer repeats the words out loud, even though we cannot hear what they are saying. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

52 INT. JONAS DINING ROOM (1875) -- MORNING 52

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Jonas drops a newspaper on the morning table. It's in GERMAN. Deborah reaches for it, but Eliezer grabs it first. Jonas settles the argument by handing a different newspaper to Eliezer. Deborah takes the German newspaper. Eliezer looks at his newspaper.

INSERT -- ELIEZER'S NEWSPAPER

It's the Russki Mir, a Russian newspaper. HOLD FOR A BEAT so we can see the lead article. It has a by-line that reads (in Russian) "Paris: V. Tchachnikov". (Tchachnikov is the Polish nobleman and correspondent we will meet in Scene 64.)

BACK TO SCENE

Surprised, he looks up. Jonas laughs. Deborah switches newspapers with Eliezer. He takes the German newspaper, Deborah takes the Russian newspaper.

Rivkah offers all three of them a BAGEL from a basket. They both grab the same bagel. He relents, letting her have her choice. She is surprised and, somewhat thoughtfully, she takes it from him. Paula notices this.

CGI FX: The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now 1876 as we DISSOLVE TO:

53 INT. JONAS DISTILLERY (1876) -- DAY 53

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. The same BOYS as before, now several years older, are packing bottles into wooden crates, cushioning them with STRAW. Again, one of the boys hammers one of the boxes shut. Eliezer stands next to them with the sleeves of his shirt rolled up. He checks off the inventory on a clipboard by himself. Deborah and Jonas are not present. As he marks on his checklist, he COUGHS once. He then pulls out a handkerchief and COUGHS a few more times. The young man stops packing bottles while Eliezer coughs. We HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

54 INT. JONAS SITTING ROOM (1876) -- LATE MORNING 54

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. We see the same EASEL and BLACKBOARD again, this time with the conjugation of an ENGLISH verb, As before, Eliezer repeats as Deborah reads the words, pointing at them with her pointer. This time, he grabs the pointer from her and completes the repetition before she can do so. After a beat, she shrugs her shoulders approvingly. DISSOLVE TO:

55 INT. JONAS STUDY (1876) -- DAY 55

Jonas and Deborah are playing chess as Eliezer, in the b.g., flips through a book with a Hebrew title. A series of quick moves, and it's all over. Deborah pushes her king on its side. Checkmate. Eliezer laughs. Jonas smiles. Deborah shrugs. DISSOLVE TO:

56 INT. JONAS SITTING ROOM (1876) -- EVENING 56

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. By the GAS LIGHT, Eliezer plays with Paula, now EIGHT YEARS OLD. She is playing a game of CAT'S CRADLE with him. Eliezer is bored, but he puts up with it.

Deborah sits on a settee, knitting a shawl as Rivkah watches her. She points out an error in the stitches. Deborah corrects them, embarrassed to make an error in front of Eliezer.

Deborah watches Eliezer play with Paula. She likes what she sees.

Paula pauses as Eliezer holds the cat's cradle. She looks over at her mother and Deborah. When they are not looking, she leans forward and pecks Eliezer on the cheek with a kiss. Paula laughs at his embarrassment. Eliezer releases the string and the cat's cradle collapses.

But Deborah has seen the innocent kiss. She glances over at Eliezer and Paula. Her expression betrays no emotion, but she knits her next stitch a bit more firmly. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. JONAS STUDY (1876) -- AFTERNOON**57**

MUSIC OUT as we END MOS MONTAGE and ZOOM IN on Eliezer, now eighteen years old. He is putting a book back into the bookcase. He stands on the ladder that runs along the bookcases. This is not the child who first came to the Jonas household. He is now a YOUNG MAN. Eliezer wears a nice European suit. When he finally descends from the ladder, we SEE a NEW SUITCASE next to the desk. As he picks up the suitcase, we HEAR the INDISTINCT O.S. SOUNDS of PIANO PLAYING and an ARGUMENT. Both sounds come from the sitting room. The VOICES are those of Paula and Deborah.

PAULA (O.S.)

No, it's me.

DEBORAH (O.S.)

Don't be silly! You're only ten. I'm nearly twice your age.

Intrigued, Eliezer steps out of the study, EXITING THE SHOT.

58 INT. JONAS SITTING ROOM (1876) -- AFTERNOON**58**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Suitcase in hand, Eliezer steps over to the door. As he sets his suitcase down quietly on the floor beside the doorway, he sees Deborah and Paula at a GRAND PIANO. Deborah has been instructing Paula, who sits on the piano bench. She stops her playing and POUNDS a GROUP OF KEYS once, making a terrible sound.

PAULA

You're an old maid! He's going to marry me!

Deborah sputters at the ridiculousness of the thought.

DEBORAH

(laughing)

Play!

Eliezer, amused, withdraws before they can see him.

PAULA

I'll show you. He will. One day.

DEBORAH

Play! One day, he will marry. But he will be my prince.

Eliezer's eyebrows rise at this thought. Taken aback, he stumbles backward over his suitcase.

The NOISE startles the two girls. Paula turns to the doorway to the sitting room, horrified and embarrassed.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

The two girls see Eliezer in the doorway, regaining his balance. He begins to COUGH, first one cough, then two more. He takes a handkerchief from his pocket and coughs into it.

Deborah is more amused than embarrassed. Horrified, Paula runs out of the room, rushing past Eliezer, who grabs her arm as she heads out of the room.

Eliezer tucks his handkerchief into his pocket and turns to look back to make certain Deborah cannot hear or see him. He kneels down and whispers into Paula's ear.

CLOSE -- AS ELIEZER WHISPER'S INTO PAULA'S EAR

ELIEZER

You know I'll always love you, Paula.

He kisses her gently on the cheek, just like she did to him earlier in our story.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

Always.

Her horror turns slowly to joy, but she shakes herself loose, and turns quickly away. He straightens up and turns to the sitting room. He picks up his suitcase and steps into the study. Deborah follows him.

59 INT. JONAS STUDY (1876) -- AFTERNOON

59

Eliezer moves to the desk and sets the suitcase down. He turns to face Deborah. She moves close, then reaches up to straighten his tie.

DEBORAH

Eliezer, does it mean nothing to you that this is the last day?

ELIEZER

Thanks to you, Deborah, I can say "this is the last day" in five different languages.

She continues to straighten the tie. It is, of course, perfectly straight.

DEBORAH

There are things I wish you would say in any language.

ELIEZER

I should say how grateful I am... to all of you. I say it now. I shall never stop saying it.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

She steps back, looking at him.

DEBORAH

But Eliezer, isn't there anything...
personal that you wish to say while
we are... alone... this last time.

Eliezer blushes and turns toward the window, his back to her.

ELIEZER

You know I am going to miss you,
Deborah.

Exasperated, she spins him around and takes his face in her hands. She looks deeply into his eyes.

DEBORAH

Miss me? Miss me! A poor word in any
language for the feelings which I am
going to have.

She drops her hands and turns away for a beat.

ELIEZER

Deborah...

DEBORAH

My life ends, in a way, when you go
off to Paris. I...

She turns back to face him, resolute.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I love you, Eliezer. There. I have
said it.

Eliezer is speechless as he listens.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

And in your own strange way, I think
you love me. Promise me one thing.

ELIEZER

What?

DEBORAH

Promise me... that you will always
remember me!

ELIEZER

(in Yiddish)
I promise.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2)

59

DEBORAH

No, Eliezer. I would like to hear you say it in Hebrew, the sacred language. It is a sacred oath we are taking.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ani mavtiakh...

DEBORAH

I shall say the words with you and someday...

Deborah stops, realizing that Eliezer has made his promise to her, but before Deborah can respond, she is interrupted by her mother, who ENTERS as only an intruding clue-less Jewish mother can.

RIVKAH

Come... come! Eliezer must have food before starting off for Paris. And your valise! Father keeps taking out clothes and putting in books. I take out the books and put in clothes. But before I forget, promise me, Eliezer.

On the word "promise," Deborah's eyebrow rises. Eliezer humors Rivkah as Deborah EXITS.

ELIEZER

I have made a promise to Father Jonas. And just now I made a promise to Deborah. I make one to you. What is your promise?

RIVKAH

It is your cough, Eliezer. If it gets worse, you must see a doctor in Paris.

(she hands him a card)

ELIEZER

(looks at it, then pockets the card)

I promise, Imma Jonas.

He kisses her gently on the cheek, like he did with Paula. She turns away with an almost girlish giggle and EXITS as Deborah returns with a KNITTED SHAWL which she carries behind her back.

DEBORAH

Close your eyes.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3)

59

ELIEZER

Why?

DEBORAH

(playfully)

Because I said so?

He hesitates. She approaches.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It will be quite
painless.

Eliezer hesitates for another BEAT. There is a twinkle in Deborah's eyes. He closes his eyes and puckers his lips, expecting a kiss that never comes.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I'm not going to kiss you.

Eliezer's eyes open for a beat, then he sheepishly closes them again.

ELIEZER

Darn.

She laughs as she steps close and wraps the shawl around his neck. He keeps his eyes closed while she smooths the shawl.

DEBORAH

(softly)

I knitted it myself.

He stands there, his eyes closed, as he feels her smoothing down the shawl.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(softly)

It's to keep you from coughing.

And still his eyes are closed. He drinks in her touch for a BEAT, then Deborah watches him, amused. His hand reaches up to the shawl, touching it, as she smooths it. Their hands meet. His eyes are still closed.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(softly)

And to help you remember your promise
to me.

Then Deborah playfully slaps his shoulder.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(not softly)

You can open your eyes now, Eliezer!

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (4)

59

He opens his eyes and gasps at the elegant workmanship in the shawl.

ELIEZER

Today, Deborah. Today. Promise me
you'll wait until I return.

The look in her eyes says she will wait.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the happy couple, then CUT TO:

60 **EXT. PARIS STREET (1878) -- DAY**

60

TO ESTABLISH a bustling metropolitan street. [PRODUCTION NOTE: the Eiffel Tower is NOT in the b.g., as it won't be built until 1889.] In the f.g. a STREET VENDOR sells newspapers with a FRENCH HEADLINE. SUPER the PLACE and DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR:

Paris
7 April 1878

LOSE the DATE, but KEEP the PLACE. SUPER a NEW DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR so we now read:

Paris
4 Nisan 5638

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER. The street vendor hawks the headline: WAR IN EUROPE.

PARISIAN VENDOR

(in French)

Guerre! Guerre dans venir de l'Europe.
Tsar pour lutter des tabourets pour
la nouvelle Bulgarie!

(subtitles)

War! War in Europe coming. Czar to
fight Ottomans for a new Bulgaria!

CROWDS of PEOPLE swamp the vendor, who passes out newspapers to everyone. As he pockets the money, Eliezer steps INTO THE SHOT. He wears the shawl that Deborah made for him, now two years worse for wear. He COUGHS roughly a couple of times. Like the medical students of our day, he carries a STETHOSCOPE in his breast pocket. Eliezer takes a newspaper from the vendor and hands him a coin.

As he turns away, some of the YOUNG MEN in the crowd in the b.g. argue vociferously in French about the headlines. A shoving match ensues between the two sides.

Eliezer scans the headline for a beat as the shoving match takes places in the b.g., then COUGHS again into a handkerchief.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

INSERT -- THE HANDKERCHIEF

It's RED with BLOOD.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer turns and heads down the bustling street, leaving the shoving match to conclude on its own as he flips through his newspaper. TRUCK WITH HIM. Eliezer heads toward a fashionable medical office. As he walks toward the medical office, something in a store window next to him catches his eye. He takes a quick look toward the doctor's office, then pauses to examine the store display more closely.

ELIEZER'S POV -- A DISPLAY OF BOOKS

We SEE an elaborately printed sign on a brass easel. The sign reads in French:

New from George Eliot
Daniel Deronda

But it is the STAR OF DAVID on the sign that catches his attention.

ELIEZER (O.S.)
What is this?

BACK TO SCENE

Still carrying his newspaper, Eliezer steps into the shop. IN A SHOT THROUGH THE WINDOW we SEE Eliezer speak with a BOOKSTORE CLERK, who reaches into the display and removes a copy of the novel from the stack of books. The clerk hands the copy of *Daniel Deronda* to Eliezer, who flips through it for a moment. The clerk gestures to the counter, where Eliezer will make his purchase. Eliezer nods with enthusiasm, and Eliezer and the clerk step OUT OF THE SHOT. WE ZOOM IN and HOLD on the display of books with its sign.

ON THE STREET -- LATER

Eliezer EXITS the bookstore, carrying his new book. He discards his newspaper in a nearby trash can. TRUCK WITH HIM as Eliezer heads toward a fashionable medical office. The name "DR. CHARLES NETTER" is outlined in dark green letters that are bordered in gold on the glass window. HOLD FOR A BEAT on the window.

IN A SHOT THROUGH THE WINDOW we SEE Eliezer approach a CAGED RECEPTION WINDOW inside the small office. He RINGS a SMALL BELL. The cage opens and DR. NETTER comes INTO VIEW. Eliezer SPEAKS SOMETHING WE CANNOT HEAR and shows him his handkerchief. Amidst the STREET SOUNDS we HEAR the MUFFLED SOUNDS of Eliezer's COUGH as a new coughing spell overtakes

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2)

60

him. Dr. Netter gestures to a doorway. Still coughing, Eliezer steps over to the door and enters, EXITING THE SHOT. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

61 EXT. STUDENT ROOMS, PARIS (1878) -- EVENING

61

TO ESTABLISH. It's one of those multistory, low-cost housing buildings for students at the University. DUSK has fallen over the city, and the LIGHTS cast a dying glow on the windows of the building. We HEAR the O.S. SOUNDS of ELIEZER'S COUGHING, then CUT TO:

62 INT. ELIEZER'S ROOM IN PARIS (1878) -- EVENING

62

Eliezer is seated at a desk which is covered with blank writing paper. He has just finished reading his copy of "Daniel Deronda" and there is a fire in his eyes. Surrounding him are a few bookcases made up of stacks of bricks and rough wooden shelves. Even today, college students on a budget do the same thing. The bookcases are lined with medical books and some other books with HEBREW TITLES. An OIL LAMP casts its warm glow on the crude makeshift desk over which Eliezer is slumped.

Eliezer snaps the book shut and pushes it aside as a SPASM of COUGHING begins to convulse him. He pushes his pencil and paper aside and stands away from the desk. The coughing quickly subsides. He CLEARS HIS THROAT and fills a GLASS with some FRENCH WINE. He takes a sip, then turns back to the desk.

Eliezer sits down at the desk again and picks up his pencil. He begins to COUGH again. The tuberculosis that will plague him for the rest of his life interrupts his work. He stands again and the cough immediately subsides. He quickly takes another sip of wine. He sits down at the desk a second time.

Eliezer immediately starts coughing again. He stands up. The coughing stops. He sits down again. The coughing starts.

With a CRY OF ANGER, he swallows the last of his wine and then gathers the wine glass, his manuscript and pencil, and the wine bottle and tosses them on to his bed. Eliezer grabs some books from the shelf, still coughing, and tosses armfuls of books on the bed until the shelf is empty.

Eliezer grabs the now empty bookshelves and re-arranges his desk, adding two feet of height with the shelves. He sets the oil lamp in place.

Finished, Eliezer stands in front of his new "stand up" desk and pantomimes writing. The height is perfect. He turns to the bed and grabs his manuscript and pencil, leaving the books that now lack shelf space on his bed.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

Eliezer turns back to the desk and begins to address an envelope. We SEE the hand-written ARTICLE on the desk. It is entirely in Hebrew. He addresses the envelope in Roman letters to "Hamaggid" in Warsaw. Eliezer stuffs the article into the envelope, and then dribbles a few drops of BLOOD RED SEALING WAX onto the flap of the envelope.

INSERT -- THE SEALING WAX

as Eliezer pushes a heavy metal seal into the wax. He withdraws it and we see a STAR OF DAVID has been pressed into the red wax. HOLD FOR A BEAT on the SEAL, then

DISSOLVE TO:

63 **EXT. RUSSIAN READING ROOM, PARIS (1878) -- EVENING**

63

Ben-Yehuda is walking along the street, which is lit by rows of GAS LIGHTS. He wears the shawl that Deborah gave him. He is heading with purpose to a Russian reading room. A number of RUSSIAN JEWISH MEN of various modes of dress are entering and leaving the reading room as Eliezer approaches. He steps inside, just one of many visitors that evening.

64 **INT. RUSSIAN READING ROOM, PARIS (1878) -- EVENING**

64

CONTINUOUS ACTION. A small BELL attached to the door RINGS as Eliezer ENTERS. He moves quickly to the back of the room. TRUCK WITH HIM and ESTABLISH THE ROOM: large, with a dozen or so small tables with LIT OIL LAMPS and plain wooden chairs for reading. Most of the guests are poor.

Eliezer looks over a stack of newspapers and grabs a RUSSIAN LANGUAGE PAPER. He presses a coin into the hand of the ATTENDANT, and then moves quickly to a small table for two. Eliezer sits down alone, tossing part of the paper on to an additional nearby chair so no one else will disturb him. He COUGHS ONCE. As he sits down, he COUGHS AGAIN.

The other PEOPLE look at him, disturbed. Eliezer ignores them, adjusts the oil lamp and begins to read. What he sees shocks him.

INSERT -- ELIEZER'S POV -- THE RUSSIAN HEADLINES

We see the Cyrillic text of the "RUSSKI MIR" newspaper. CGI FX: DISSOLVE TO ENGLISH text: WAR IN BULGARIA!

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer reacts with concern. We HEAR the TINKLE of the BELL on the entry door. Eliezer looks up.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Standing in the doorway in all his regal splendor is TCHACHNIKOV, who appears to be a Russian nobleman, 35 years old and dressed in the best of European fashion. His aristocratic dignity is somewhat softened by a Western European refinement. He wears a monocle and carries a silver tipped PANANG LAWYER, a type of walking cane which conceals a hidden sword that will come in handy later in our story. A gold chain holds a pocket watch, which he examines briefly.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer stares at the nobleman over the edge of his newspaper.

WITH TCHACHNIKOV

Tchachnikov snaps his pocket watch shut and then places it into a pocket in his vest. We FOLLOW TCHACHNIKOV as he moves to the news table. Still holding his walking stick, Tchachnikov picks up a copy of "RUSSKI MIR" and leafs through it a couple of times. He looks up, aware that he is being observed. He sees Eliezer.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer gets up, reaches over to the second chair, and removes the newspaper that he has discarded. He sits back down in his own chair. His upraised and quizzical eyebrows do the asking.

Tchachnikov, still holding his newspaper, steps over to the table as Eliezer rises. Tchachnikov glides to a halt, drops the tip of his walking stick to the floor with a LOUD TAP, SNAPS his heels together in a Russian nobleman's salute, and bows slightly.

TCHACHNIKOV

My name is Tchachnikov. You are...
 (looking him over
 through his monocle)
 ...not like the others here.
 (beat, then)
 Most refreshing.

To Eliezer's astonishment, Tchachnikov ignores the chair that Eliezer has cleared.

ELIEZER

Eliezer Perelman. I am...

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: (2)

64

TCHACHNIKOV

A student, by the looks of you. But
with promise, if I am a judge of
men, and...

(slowly, looking him
over)

...I think I am.

(then)

You shall come with me!

A demand, not a request. Tchachnikov BOUNCES the walking stick on the floor once. As it rises, he snatches it, turns on his heel without waiting for an answer, and steps smartly away. Eyebrows raised, Eliezer gathers his newspaper and follows without questioning.

WIPE TO:

65 INT. CAFÉ DE LA SOURCE, PARIS (1878) -- EVENING

65

GASLIT elegance in a Parisian 19th century stylish restaurant. Everyone is dressed formally. Even the WAITERS wear tuxedos. A small CHAMBER ORCHESTRA plays CHAMBER MUSIC of the period behind a velvet rope.

Seated at a small booth are Tchachnikov and Eliezer. The remains of a decidedly non-kosher shrimp seafood meal are before them. All that is left are the brandy snifters and an ashtray. Tchachnikov has lifted his brandy snifter and is saluting Eliezer.

TCHACHNIKOV

To freedom, my Jewish friend. May it
never be...

ELIEZER

Illusive, sir?

TCHACHNIKOV

An interesting choice of words, coming
from a Jew.

They clink their snifters. Tchachnikov takes a drink as Eliezer comments. Eliezer does not drink the brandy, he merely swirls it in his glass.

ELIEZER

A dangerous choice of words, coming
from a Russian nobleman.

TCHACHNIKOV

(finishing his drink)

Polish, sir! Polish. And we shall
never be conquered. Subjugated for a
time, perhaps. But conquered? Never!

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

Tchachnikov slices off the end of an expensive cigar as Eliezer responds. Tchachnikov does the same for Eliezer and hands the cigar to him. As Tchachnikov takes a match from a small silver matchbox on the table, he sniffs along the edge of the cigar, taking in the aroma.

ELIEZER

I do believe you already have been.

Eliezer awkwardly sniffs the cigar offered to him, but then puts the cigar down. Tchachnikov notices.

TCHACHNIKOV

(sniffing the cigar)

Horses and cannon... they can never defeat the heart, sir. We Poles... we must...

(searching for a word)

...adapt. As you Jews have. Light your cigar.

Tchachnikov offers him a match. Eliezer hesitates, but not just about the cigar. He leaves it on the table, but fingers it as he speaks.

ELIEZER

What do you mean, as we Jews have?

Eliezer's hand moves away from the cigar. Tchachnikov pushes the cigar over to him.

TCHACHNIKOV

What? It's not kosher?

Eliezer shakes his head and we see a slight smile.

ELIEZER

When I was younger, I was more... strict... about those things.

Tchachnikov lights his own cigar, puffing it while he speaks until the cigar is lit.

TCHACHNIKOV

What am I? A Jew? No.

(puffing)

I am a Paris correspondent. And for what?

(puffing)

For the largest newspaper in Russia, that's what. And my editor?

(puffing)

He is a Jew! And I am a "conquered" Pole. That is adaptation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

65

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)
 (shakes the match out)
 And you, my dear Eliezer Perelman,
 what are you? A dispersed Jew in a
 Gentile world... the very epitome of
 adaptation.

Tchachnikov tosses the spent match onto his plate. Eliezer
 considers this as Tchachnikov rolls the cigar in his
 fingertips for a beat.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)
 And my cigar... what is it?

Eliezer shrugs as Tchachnikov notes that the cigar is not
 yet fully lit. He strikes another match and lights it again.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)
 (resumes puffing)
 It is a symbol, sir! A symbol of
 what, you ask.

He puffs a bit more, waiting for the question. Tchachnikov
 does not wait for him to bite.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)
 (puffing)
 Freedom.

On this, Eliezer's eyebrows raise in more than mocking doubt.
 Once again, Tchachnikov tosses the spent match onto his plate.
 This time, the cigar stays lit.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)
 No, no, no, no... my dear Jewish
 friend! Consider the cigar, sir.
 What can we say about it? What does
 it tell us about life? About society?
 About... freedom?!

ELIEZER
 That it is... not kosher?

Tchachnikov laughs good heartedly at Eliezer's joke.

TCHACHNIKOV
 As if you, with your shrimp dinner,
 really cared about what's kosher or
 not kosher! What does "kosher" mean
 to you, a Russian Jew living in Paris
 and studying to be... what?
 (exaggerated Jewish
 accent)
 ...a Jewish doctor?
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (3)

65

Eliezer acquiesces with a shrug.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

A judge of men, did I not say?

(beat)

So... perhaps this cigar is not kosher. So what? Were your laws not written three thousand years ago?

ELIEZER

It's... tradition.

TCHACHNIKOV

Tradition is good. Jew or Gentile, it's all that separates us from the savages. Look there!

AT A TABLE, we see a young couple enjoying ICE CREAM, a new treat for its day.

TCHACHNIKOV (O.S.) (CONT'D)

See? Some new fangled dessert... "iced" cream.

BACK TO SCENE

Tchachnikov continues to puff on his cigar as he gestures toward the young couple.

TCHACHNIKOV (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Is "iced" cream kosher, Eliezer Perelman?

ELIEZER

(shrugs)

I don't know. I assume...

TCHACHNIKOV

(interrupting)

Exactly. You assume. Did Moses enjoy "iced" cream? I think not. Does that mean it's not kosher?

ELIEZER

(shrugs again)

I have not followed the kosher traditions since my youth.

TCHACHNIKOV

(impatient)

So you said. And you are still a youth! But Moses... would Moses have enjoyed a... fine cigar?

(MORE)

Tchachnikov pushes the cigar over to Eliezer.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (4)

65

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

So who is to say that "iced" cream,
or this fine cigar, is not kosher
just because it is not in your Torah?
(shakes his head,
holds up the cigar)

A fine cigar is not just a symbol of
freedom, sir! A fine cigar is freedom!
And so is this brandy. And the sooner
you learn that, my friend, the sooner
you will begin to be free yourself!

ELIEZER

So for you, compromise is freedom.

It's more of a statement than a question. Tchachnikov puffs
on his cigar, thinking it over.

TCHACHNIKOV

Adaptation is freedom. Not compromise.

ELIEZER

What is freedom, Tchachnikov, for
the Poles? Your homeland has been
invaded.

TCHACHNIKOV

And conquered.
(embittered)
And enslaved.
(takes a drink)
Yet Tchachnikov survives.

ELIEZER

Tchachnikov survives, yes. But does
Tchachnikov live?
(beat)
And the Bulgarians? They demand their
own homeland now. They survive, but
do they live? A war has begun over
this, Tchachnikov.

TCHACHNIKOV

(considers his cigar)
The bane of Europe. One people demand
a homeland. Another people say "No!"
Polish. Bulgarian. Russian. They
fight. They die. Tchachnikov...
survives. Like you Hebrews.

ELIEZER

What do "we Hebrews" have to look
forward to? Our traditions? Please!
We have no homeland. We survive, but
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (5)

65

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

we do not live! We are fifty different languages in fifty different lands.

TCHACHNIKOV

You speak of tradition. Is that not enough? Is life not enough?

ELIEZER

What is life with no homeland? What is a homeland with no language? Is tradition enough?! I should say not!

Tchachnikov smiles. He drinks a long draught of brandy from his snifter. After a beat:

TCHACHNIKOV

(shaking a finger at him)

You... you, my friend. You should be a writer. No! Better yet. A publisher.

Eliezer starts to object at the ridiculous thought.

ELIEZER

(scoffing)

A publisher!

TCHACHNIKOV

No, I mean it. God knows... I should know. I've had my fill of publishers. Arrogant bastards, all of them! They can start wars. Or end them. You want a Jewish homeland? It's not guns you need. It's words! Words that give shape and form to ideas.

ELIEZER

Do you not think that I know that? I have written my first challenge!

TCHACHNIKOV

And why am I not surprised? You submitted it then?

ELIEZER

(sheepish)

I...

TCHACHNIKOV

To whom?

ELIEZER

Hamaggid... "The Teller."
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (6)

65

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 (OFF Tchachnikov's
 puzzled look)
 It's a... Hebrew publication.

TCHACHNIKOV
 (puffing his cigar)
 What? Where?

ELIEZER
 Warsaw.

Tchachnikov expresses his disdain through a cloud of smoke.

TCHACHNIKOV
 Paris, Eliezer! Paris! Or Vienna.
 That's what matters. Not... Warsaw.
 (beat, then quietly)
 He'll not run it.

ELIEZER
 He will. I have hope.

TCHACHNIKOV
 (shakes his head)
 Precious little else. But I know
 publishers.

Eliezer watches him for a beat.

ELIEZER
 It's enough... for now.

Eliezer then drinks from his own brandy snifter.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 Very well, Tchachnikov. On the brandy,
 we can agree.
 (he drinks, then hefts
 the cigar)
 On the freedom, we can agree.

Eliezer raises his snifter to Tchachnikov, who CLINKS it
 with his own to salute the end of the debate. He sniffs the
 cigar, then COUGHS.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 On the cigar... my health shall have
 to say "No."

TCHACHNIKOV
 (flicking the ash off
 on to a plate)
 A pity.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (7)

65

ELIEZER
(sniffing the cigar)
But the heart... the heart is there.

Eliezer hands the cigar back to Tchachnikov, who places it carefully in his cigar case.

TCHACHNIKOV
The spirit is willing, but the flesh
is weak.

Eliezer reacts to the New Testament quotation.

ELIEZER
Your messiah. Not mine.

TCHACHNIKOV
Touché.

ELIEZER
(lifting his brandy
snifter)
And yes, I have read your New
Testament.

Tchachnikov smiles as he puts the cigar case into his breast pocket.

TCHACHNIKOV
For another day.

ELIEZER
Ken... and a better day!

TCHACHNIKOV
(lifts snifter again)
Then the brandy... the brandy shall
do your health good.
(in Polish)
Na Zdrowic!

ELIEZER
L'khaim!

TCHACHNIKOV
(laughs, nods his
agreement, then
mispronounces it)
L'Kaim!

They CLINK their glasses together. As they both toss back their heads and drink the brandy down, we WIPE TO:

66 INT. JONAS STUDY (1880) -- DAY**66**

Deborah sits in a bay window reading a letter from Eliezer. We HEAR the VOICE of ELIEZER (V.O.) as Deborah reads.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

Dear Deborah. Life has become exciting for me in Paris. Through the kind offices of my new Polish friend Tschachnikov, I have been meeting many important people these two years. I have been entertained in some of the great homes of Paris.

She turns the page as we DIGITALLY "PAGE TURN" OUR IMAGE TO:

67 INT. SALON OF STATELY PARISIAN RESIDENCE (1879) -- NIGHT**67**

MUSIC UP. We are in an elaborate salon, fit for a king. The finest of PARISIAN SOCIETY mingle, all wearing FORMAL DRESS and drinking champagne. As we TRUCK THROUGH THE CROWD, the conversations are a BABBLE of unrecognizable sound under the MUSIC. CAMERA FRAMES various Parisian celebrities, including LEON GAMBETTA (age 42), who presses the flesh like a politician; VICTOR HUGO, the blustery French writer (age 78); and the graceful SARAH BERNHARDT (age 36) as Eliezer's V.O. CONTINUES.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

These are the meeting places of Leon Gambetta, the famous French statesman; Victor Hugo, the author, and Sarah Bernhardt... who could forget her?

Tshashnikov salutes Eliezer with his champagne glass as he introduces him to Bernhardt. OUR PAGE TURNS DIGITALLY, and we SEE:

68 INT. JONAS STUDY (1880) -- AFTERNOON**68**

Deborah is reading the letter, and Eliezer's V.O. CONTINUES. As she reads, her brow wrinkles with concern and her clenched fist rises to her lips.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

I looked up Dr. Netter, the founder of the Mikveh Israel colony in Eretz Israel. He says I have tuberculosis. My lungs are badly affected, Deborah. Dr. Netter has ordered me to stop my studies. I am to head for Algiers within the week. Yet something compels me to stay. I have not heard from Hamaggid. Until I know what HaShem

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 shall do with my article, I wonder
 but that the Catholic idea of
 purgatory may have some merit.

Deborah relaxes a bit at the strange humor, smiling. We HEAR the O.S. SOUNDS of MUFFLED COUGHING. She shakes her head as we HEAR the O.S. SOUND OF BANGING ON A DOOR, then the O.S. VOICE of TCHACHNIKOV:

TCHACHNIKOV (O.S.)
 Perelman! Eliezer Perelman! Open the
 door!

CUT TO:

69 INT. HALLWAY OF ELIEZER'S ROOM IN PARIS (1880) -- MORNING

69

Tchachnikov is POUNDING on the door. We hear the MUFFLED SOUNDS of COUGHING. With Tchachnikov is the CONCIERGE of the building, who holds an enormous RING OF KEYS and speaks in a French accent.

CONCIERGE
 For days notre triste jeune homme
 has been so nervous he neither eats
 nor sleeps.

TCHACHNIKOV
 Your "sad young man"?

Tchachnikov POUNDS on the door again as the concierge searches for the key on his key ring.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)
 It is I. Tchachnikov!

CONCIERGE
 He comes to my desk every few hours
 asking "Has a letter come?"

Then a LOCK TURNS. The concierge shrugs as Tchachnikov dismisses him with a wave of thanks. The concierge shuffles away down the hall, EXITING THE SHOT.

The door opens a crack. Eliezer appears at the door, looking like death warmed over. Tchachnikov pushes his way into the room and SHUTS THE DOOR IN OUR FACE. CUT TO:

70 INT. ELIEZER'S ROOM IN PARIS (1880) -- MORNING

70

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Tchachnikov steps over to the window, and throws it open, letting in fresh air and light.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

Eliezer waves Tchachnikov to a chair as he leans on his desk, coughing. Tchachnikov takes his arm in concern. Eliezer waves him off, and turns aside to cough. Something O.S. catches Tchachnikov's attention. He cranes his head to read it.

INSERT -- THE LETTER AND ENVELOPE

We READ the following inscription: "We find the article signed Ben Yehuda not good enough for publication."

BACK TO SCENE

As Eliezer's cough subsides, Tchachnikov picks up the letter.

TCHACHNIKOV

One thing I do not understand. This letter is addressed to you, but it concerns an article written by some "Ben Yehuda."

ELIEZER

There is no mistake. It is my article which is not good enough for them.

TCHACHNIKOV

You have taken a new name?

ELIEZER

(ignoring him)

The article I worked on for two months.

TCHACHNIKOV

What? You are like Abraham, you should change your name?

(shakes his head)

You Hebrews... you are always changing your names.

Eliezer ignores Tchachnikov's attempt at levity. Eliezer continues to cough.

ELIEZER

I must admit it now. I am finished. The world is against me. God is against me.

TCHACHNIKOV

(arches an eyebrow)

Really?

ELIEZER

(coughing)

God gave me this disease!

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

70

TCHACHNIKOV

Did he now?

ELIEZER

And the world now gives me a negative answer to my plan!

TCHACHNIKOV

A strange "world" we live in, where the destiny of an idea is controlled by one man.

Tchachnikov pulls a bulky envelope from his pocket. Eliezer looks at him, puzzled by both the remark and the envelope.

ELIEZER

What is that?

Tchachnikov holds up the envelope.

TCHACHNIKOV

God... doing your work for you.

Another look of puzzlement, followed by anger, crosses Eliezer's face.

ELIEZER

Tchachnikov... please don't mock me.

Tchachnikov spins him around, angry. He speaks right in his face.

TCHACHNIKOV

Do you really think a homeland for the Jews is about you... and your ideas? Do you really think you're the only Jew in the world who asks these questions?

(angry beat, then)

Do you?!

Tchachnikov releases him after a beat.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

This "work" of yours... from God is it? Let me ask you... can your God be beaten by some little publisher in... Warsaw?

(sputtering laugh)

He's not much of a God, then, is he?

Eliezer considers this for a beat.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

Now who is mocking who?

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (3)

70

Eliezer just stares at him for a beat, then he breaks the tension:

ELIEZER

Whom.

Tchachnikov REACTS as a puzzled look crosses his face.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

Who is mocking whom? It's... bad grammar.

Tchachnikov just stares at him, like he's crazy. He throws his arms up in a gesture of amazement.

TCHACHNIKOV

Writers!

Tchachnikov tears open the envelope. He rips some pages from it and shoves them into Eliezer's hands.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

Very well, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. Here's a complete list of every Hebrew periodical on the continent.

ELIEZER

(grabs the list, reads it for a beat)

What is this?

TCHACHNIKOV

Now... you're going to send copies of your article to every newspaper on this list. Let the world see if the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can beat some small-minded publisher in...

(with contempt)

...Warsaw.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on Eliezer as he looks in wonder at the list. His eyes light up as he reads one of the names.

ELIEZER

Perhaps there is a large-minded publisher in Europe. I shall start with "The Dawn".

TCHACHNIKOV

You shall start now! You shall be the Garibaldi of the Hebrews!

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (4)

70

ELIEZER
 (smiles at the
 misunderstanding)
 No... "The Dawn"... Hashakhar. It's
 the name of a Hebrew newspaper... in
 Vienna.

On Tchachnikov's smile of understanding, we DISSOLVE TO:

71 INT. PARIS LIBRARY (1880) -- DAY

71

MUSIC UP and BEGIN VOICE-OVER as we ESTABLISH an enormous library. The WINDOWS are BRIGHT and SUNNY as PEOPLE IN THE STREET move back and forth about their business. GASLIGHTS on the wall are extinguished.

MUSIC CONTINUES. Eliezer sits at a table, surrounded by stacks of books with French, German, and English titles. Various LIBRARY PATRONS also read at some of the tables. On Eliezer's table are dozens of blank sheets of writing paper. Eliezer is writing on one of the sheets in Hebrew. We PULL IN to FRAME ELIEZER as he writes.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 My dearest Deborah. My task is
 daunting. The dean of Hebrew authors,
 Moshe Lilienblum, writing in "The
 Voice" says that Hebrew's time has
 passed. It no longer has a purpose
 in Jewish life. But he is wrong. He
must be wrong!

DISSOLVE TO:

72 INT. PARIS LIBRARY (1880) -- AFTERNOON

72

MUSIC CONTINUES. SIMILAR POSITION as before and the CAMERA PULLS BACK. In the b.g. we SEE the WINDOWS, now DARKER as RAIN begins to pour. Umbrellas appear among the PEOPLE passing by. And still Eliezer writes. Many of the blank pages are now filled with hand-written Hebrew. This is Eliezer's "Burning Question" essay.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 I have found a newspaper... "The
 Dawn"... published in Hebrew. Peretz
 Smolenskin has written an article
 that has fired me, Deborah, not
 because of what he says, but because
 of what he does not say. He asks,
 "Are the Jews a nation, or merely a
 people of one religion?" He claims a
 people can exist without a land of
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

72

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 its own. But this seems unacceptable
 to me.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 INT. PARIS LIBRARY (1880) -- LATE AFTERNOON

73

MUSIC CONTINUES. A LIBRARIAN is lighting the GASLIGHTS in the room. The outside windows are getting darker. Only a few LIBRARY PATRONS remain in the room, reading newspapers. And still Eliezer writes. Most of the blank papers are now filled with Hebrew writing.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 Consider the Czar's support for the Bulgarians. If, in truth, each and every nation is entitled to defend its nationality and protect itself from extinction, then logically we, the Hebrews, also must have that same right. Why should our lot be less than that of all the others? Why should we not become a nation in our deserted country, which even now mourns its lost children, driven away two thousand years ago? Why should we not do as all nations, big and small, and protect our nationality against extinction?

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. PARIS LIBRARY (1880) -- EVENING

74

MUSIC CONTINUES. All the GASLIGHTS are now lit. Only Eliezer remains.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 It is a worthy question, is it not? If we care... you and I... that the name of Israel should not disappear from this earth, we must create a center for the whole of our people, like a heart from which blood runs into the arteries of the whole. Only the settlement of Eretz Israel can serve this purpose.

He pauses for a beat, reviewing what he has written. He smiles, then gathers his papers and EXITS THE SHOT. CUT TO:

75 INT. JONAS STUDY (1880) -- AFTERNOON

75

MUSIC CONTINUES. Deborah sits in the bay window, reading the letter from Eliezer. His V.O. CONTINUES as Paula ENTERS and curls up beside her in the bay window seat. Paula is now THIRTEEN YEARS OLD. She has the budding curves of a young woman.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

I propose the establishment of a society, whose purpose it shall be to buy land in the Land of Israel and to be involved in all things required for agricultural resettlement. Let us give this land to our fellow nationals who already live there, and to those who wish to go and settle there.

Deborah sits up, amazed at what she is reading.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This, then, in my Burning Question, as I have entitled my own article. And Hashakhar, a Hebrew paper in Vienna, has agreed to publish it! I have written it under my own name... but it's a new name, Deborah.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on her reaction, then CUT TO:

76 INT. PARIS POST OFFICE (1880) -- DAY

76

Eliezer stands in a line of PARISIAN POSTAL CUSTOMERS and, as the VOICE-OVER CONTINUES, he gradually reaches the POSTAL CLERK. Eliezer carries a stack of IDENTICAL SHIPPING ENVELOPES, each carrying a copy of his manuscript.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

And yet not a new name. My father's name was Lieb, Yiddish for "Yehuda" -- which means "Judea" in Hebrew. And so I am now Ben-Yehuda, Son of Lieb, Son of Judea and a son of Zion.

Eliezer places the stack of envelopes on the counter. The postal clerk cancels the stamps with a large HAND STAMP.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Let the return to Israel begin! And let it begin with me! I shall leave Paris within the month, as my health will not survive another year in Europe.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

He takes out a different smaller envelope and places it on the counter.

ECU -- THE SMALLER ENVELOPE

We SEE that the envelope is ADDRESSED to Shlomo Jonas, NOT to Deborah. HOLD FOR A BEAT as Eliezer's V.O. continues.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I shall make my home in the East. In my home, only Hebrew will be spoken.

BACK TO SCENE

The postal clerk cancels the stamps.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In my home, young people... people like us... shall build a new nation out of the dust.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the envelope and its ADDRESSEE, then MATCH CUT TO:

77 INT. JONAS STUDY (1880) -- AFTERNOON

77

THE ADDRESSEE on the envelope. CAMERA PULLS BACK and we SEE that the envelope has been torn open. It lies in the hands of Shlomo Jonas. Beneath the envelope is the opened letter.

Jonas takes a seat next to Deborah, who is reading a book in the seat of the bay window. He is very reluctant to speak.

JONAS

I... I have received a letter from Eliezer.

She puts the book down.

DEBORAH

How strange. I have not heard from him in months.

(sees the letter in his hands)

Why would he write to you?

(then, joyful)

He's asked for my hand!? Oh, papa, he promised to marry me...

She reaches for the letter. He keeps it from her at first. Her expression changes from joy to suspicion. He can barely bring himself to say the words.

JONAS

He's sick, Deborah.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

DEBORAH

No...

JONAS

He says... his health has failed.

DEBORAH

(tears forming)

He promised me.

(shakes head in denial)

JONAS

He says he has the consumption.

DEBORAH

(still in denial)

If he is sick, he will recover. I shall go to him... and then...

JONAS

(after a beat)

He's dying, Deborah.

Jonas' grief for his daughter shows in the unsteady hand that holds the letter up for his daughter to take.

DEBORAH

(tears, then a whisper)

No...

She takes the letter and begins to read. HOLD ON HER TEARS as we hear ELIEZER'S VOICE-OVER as she reads:

ELIEZER (V.O.)

Dr. Netter informs me that I have tuberculosis. I shall not have long to live and I must leave for a drier climate if I am to survive. I made a promise, sir, to marry Deborah, but I find I have no choice but to terminate my promise to your daughter.

Deborah GASPS as Eliezer continues to read.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She is still very much in my heart, but I can no longer offer her anything. I cannot promise her a home and a family.

(MORE)

She looks up in tears at her father. He shakes his head, unsure of what to say. She continues to read:

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The doctor says if Deborah marries me, she may fall victim to this cursed illness as well. Please, sir, act as my messenger. Convince your dear daughter that she must forget me and find another, more worthy man to love and marry. She is better off without me.

She cries softly. Jonas takes her in his arms. A long hug. He takes the letter from her hand.

JONAS

It's over.

DEBORAH

(after a beat)

No.

She wipes the tears from her eyes. There is determination there.

JONAS

But you read...

DEBORAH

He needs me.

JONAS

(reading the letter)

"She is better off without me."

(beat, then)

Are these the words of a lover calling?

DEBORAH

(turning to him)

Yes! Oh, yes! How can you miss it?

She turns to leave.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I shall go to him.

(beat, then)

I must pack now.

She leaves the study. Jonas thinks this over. He sighs. We HEAR the O.S. SOUND of a GRANDFATHER CLOCK as it STRIKES the ELEVENTH HOUR and we CUT TO:

78 INT. JONAS PARLOR (1880) -- NIGHT

78

Along one wall are a stack of STEAMER TRUNKS. Deborah comes down the winding stairway to the parlor. She carries a piece

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

of luggage which she deposits on the stack. The GRANDFATHER CLOCK continues to strike the ELEVENTH HOUR. Deborah moves through the parlor and into...

79 INT. JONAS STUDY (1880) -- NIGHT

79

Jonas is seated at the chess board, which is all set for a game of chess. It's really an invitation. She crosses over to him. She smiles down at him.

DEBORAH

Papa, this will be the last night
under your roof.

A not-quite-tear-filled shrug from Jonas. His baby is grown up. His wordless eyes say it all.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I wish you to do one last favor for
me.

He looks up at her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Play a last game of chess with me...
before we go to bed.

He looks at the chess board. Jonas looks up at Deborah again. He picks up a pawn. He wipes a tear from his eye as he holds the pawn. He sets it down in the classic opening position. An arched eyebrow is his only response.

An arched eyebrow is her only response, too. She sits down and the game begins.

INTERCUT: A SERIES OF CHESS MOVES

as they play. They speak things to one another that we cannot hear.

THE CLOCK STRIKES ONE O'CLOCK

MORE CHESS MOVES

Jonas has lost more pieces than Deborah. More father-daughter talk between them, but still we cannot hear. He is being insistent, but so is she.

MORE CHESS MOVES

Only a few pieces left. He is beginning to look defeated, and not just from the chess game. It's clearly a battle of wits about her future, not just about a chess game.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

THE CLOCK STRIKES THREE O'CLOCK

It's down to a rook, a pawn and a king for Jonas. Deborah still has a knight, a bishop, her queen, both rooks and two pawns. Jonas' king is cornered. There's no way out.

He touches his king and then topples it on to the chess board. The game of chess and love is over. Deborah wins on both counts.

We HEAR the CLOCK STRIKE FOUR O'CLOCK. As she hugs her father we PULL BACK to SEE PAULA, watching them from the stairs. She wears pajamas and her long hair is brushed out. There is a tear in her eye.

PAULA

(a whisper)

But he's my prince.

We HOLD FOR A BEAT, then FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

80 EXT. JAFFA PORT (1881) -- AFTERNOON**80**

ESTABLISH the bustling port city of Jaffa. We are on the deck of a late 19th century steamship. As we are now in the Land of Israel, we SUPER the PLACE and DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR:

Port of Jaffa
21 Tishri 5642

LOSE the DATE, but KEEP the PLACE. SUPER a NEW DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR, so we now read:

Port of Jaffa
14 October 1881

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER. INTO THE SHOT steps Eliezer and his new wife. He wears European clothes, topped by a blue beret. She wears the fashionable dress of a European lady. A colorful and expensive JEWELLED BROACH hangs from her pretty neck.

ELIEZER

And so it begins... our great
adventure!

DEBORAH

Will there be no one to greet us?

ELIEZER

Homesick already?
(broad gesture)
This is our home now. And Tchachnikov
has promised to meet us in Jerusalem.
From there he goes to see his editor,
in Russia.

DEBORAH

More than a little out of the way, I
should think.

ELIEZER

D'vorah sheli, he has been a loyal
friend. Who do you think helped pay
for this trip?

As they step to the side railing, PASSENGERS of all nationalities and languages flock to the railing. We follow their gaze out to see --

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

THE SHORELINE

The afternoon sun bathes the port. Small houses crop out from the hills. The tall MINARETS of a mosque can be seen rising above the rooftops of the city. And the sea is filled with a dozen SMALL ROWBOATS in which dark-skinned ARABS, bare to the waist, approach the steamship. These are the water-taxis that will take the passengers to shore.

BACK TO SCENE

Deborah looks up at Eliezer, somewhat intimidated. He smiles reassuringly as CREWMEN accept the ropes from the boats.

81 INT. JAFFA WATER TAXI -- LATER

81

Eliezer and Deborah sit in the rowboat with three enormous STEAMER TRUNKS. Two YOUNG ARAB BOAT HANDLERS, chanting verses from the Qur'an, row the boat quickly to shore. Eliezer looks forward to the landing with eager anticipation. He points to the skyline of the city.

ELIEZER

The edge of the Orient! A different world! Look... the rounded domes of the mosques!

Deborah looks out at the city, which we SEE in the distance.

82 EXT. JAFFA SHORE (1881) -- AFTERNOON

82

The rowboat pulls to shore, just one among many of the rowboats from the steamship. The Arab boat handlers jump out, guiding the small rowboat onto the sand. Eliezer stands, and turns to his wife.

ELIEZER

D'vorah sheli, from this day forward, only Hebrew shall be heard in our home. Our house shall be where the tongue of the prophets is once again at home.

Eliezer steps on to the sand and offers his hand to Deborah. She takes it with pride, and as she steps onto the shore, Eliezer lifts her out like a bridegroom carrying his bride across the threshold. He sets her gently on the sand as she laughs with joy. The boat handlers lift the steamer trunks out of the rowboat and we WIPE TO:

83 INT. JAFFA HOTEL (1881) -- AFTERNOON

83

This is the smallest of the small hotels in Jaffa. Two of the three steamer trunks are on the floor in front of the desk. At the FRONT DESK is the MANAGER of the hotel, a small

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

Jewish man. The manager looks Eliezer and Deborah over with curiosity as a YOUNG ARAB deposits the third steamer trunk on the floor in front of the front desk. Eliezer slips a coin into the young man's hand.

YOUNG MAN

(in Arabic)

Shukran. Salaam...

DEBORAH

Eliezer... what if the people we meet do not speak Hebrew?

ELIEZER

For them, we speak what they speak. But not in our home! There... only Ivrit. But I shall encourage every Jew I meet to speak Ivrit... wherever I can.

The young man pockets the coin and EXITS THE SHOT as Eliezer and Deborah step over to the front desk. The manager speaks to them first in Hebrew, then in English.

MANAGER

(in Hebrew)

Shalom.

(in English)

Good evening. Welcome to the Jaffa Hotel.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Shalom v'erev tov. Anu mekhpsim
Kirkara bikhdei lehagia
le'Yerushalaim.

(subtitles)

Shalom and good evening. We are looking for a coach to Jerusalem.

A look of absolute surprise crosses the face of the Manager.

MANAGER

You speak Hebrew! I did not expect a reply.

ELIEZER

For Ben-Yehuda, Hebrew is my tongue...
(indicates his wife)
...our tongue... from the hour we arrived.

MANAGER

Ben-Yehuda? Not... Eliezer Ben-Yehuda?

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (2)

83

ELIEZER

I am Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, and this is my wife, Deborah. You... know of me?

The manager hurries from around to the front of his desk. He clasps Eliezer's hand and shakes it with the vigor of meeting a long lost relative. As he does so, Eliezer and Deborah exchange glances of amazement.

MANAGER

I have read your articles in the Jerusalem papers!

DEBORAH

Here? You are published... here?

MANAGER

And what Jew in Eretz Israel has not heard of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda?

(to Deborah)

Your husband is debated in all the newspapers here.

(conspiratorial)

They say you intend to raise children... speaking only Hebrew.

But who could think of such a thing?!

Deborah shoots her husband a look as the manager CLAPS his hands twice. A young ARAB BOY appears from nowhere.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

(to the boy, in Arabic)

That telegram I told you about... see that it's sent... now!

The manager tosses the Arab boy a coin. The boy runs off to complete his errand. The manager turns to Eliezer and Deborah.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

I have just sent a telegram to Israel Dov Frumkin. He is the editor of our only paper. It's called HaKhavatzet. He will meet you in Jerusalem.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Madua eynkha m'daber Ivrit?

(no subtitles)

Why do you not speak Hebrew?

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (3)

83

MANAGER

(in English)

We only pray in Hebrew, Ben-Yehuda.
But truthfully, my friend, I find
your Hebrew...

(hesitates)

...difficult to understand.

ELIEZER

Hebrew... is Hebrew.

MANAGER

You speak with... how do you call
it... an accent. It is... difficult
for me.

ELIEZER

Ah... the Ashkenazi of Eastern Europe.

MANAGER

I learned the Sephardic Hebrew from
the Jews of Spain. It is the more
common here, but no one really speaks
it.

ELIEZER

(to Deborah)

And yet the Sephardic sounds more
natural, somehow. I had this
discussion with Tchachnikov. Sephardic
it is.

(to the manager)

I shall study the differences... and
I shall master them!

MANAGER

(thoughtfully)

I believe you will.

(then)

But you will find that our land is
the crossroads of the world. French
and Turkish... especially Turkish...
will do you well here. And German...
and English... and Yiddish, and...

The laughter of Eliezer and Deborah interrupts him.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

And Arabic!

Smiling, he CLAPS his hands twice again, and calls out in
Arabic. Two YOUNG ARAB BOYS step quickly into view. The
manager gestures to the three steamer trunks and speaks a
stream of Arabic. The two boys immediately pick up one of
the trunks and carry it to the front door of the hotel.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (4)

83

Eliezer reaches for the quaint quill-tipped pen to sign the guest register.

ELIEZER

Thank you. We will need a coach for our trip to Jerusalem in the morning.

MANAGER

(laughing)

No, Ben-Yehuda. Alas, you will not be staying with us even one night. Your "coach" leaves in less than an hour.

DEBORAH

Khaviví, at night? Must we travel at night?

MANAGER

(laughs)

It is much too dangerous to travel at night. You will rest at Bab-el-wad. It's a small inn where travelers such as yourselves will spend the night. You will arrive in Jerusalem at dawn.

ELIEZER

I suppose only foreigners would even consider a trip up to Jerusalem in the heat of the day.

MANAGER

And you, my dear Ben-Yehudas, are no longer foreigners.

The manager escorts them toward the front door of the hotel and OUT OF THE SHOT. HOLD FOR A BEAT as we hear the O.S. SOUNDS of a WHIP and HORSES HOOFBEATS. CUT TO:

84 EXT. JAFFA ROAD TO JERUSALEM (1881) -- NIGHT

84

The "cool" of the night is still hot. A FULL MOON casts its ghostly glow over the road. It's almost as bright as day. Eliezer and Deborah ride in their coach with two other PASSENGERS. The "coach" is not much more than a large wooden box on wheels, open to the air. They sit on one of the two plain wooden benches with their backs to the driver as the three emaciated horses pull the cart up the winding road towards Jerusalem.

At the reins is HAYIM JACOB, who speaks to Eliezer in French. From time to time, Hayim and Eliezer and the other passengers wipe sweat from their faces. Deborah rests with her head on

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

Eliezer's shoulder, not really sleeping. Hayim faces forward, driving. Eliezer and Deborah face the toward the rear.

ELIEZER

(in French)

So... where did you learn your French?

HAYIM

(in French)

At the Mikveh Israel.

(in English)

They taught me English there, too.

ELIEZER

Really? There is a physician in Paris... Dr. Charles Netter... isn't that his school?

HAYIM

Yes. He started it. You know him?

Eliezer coughs.

ELIEZER

We are of some... passing acquaintance, yes.

(beat, then)

Atah medaber 'ivrit?

Hayim gives him no response.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

They did not teach Hebrew at the Mikveh Israel?

Hayim CRACKS the reins and pulls the primitive coach off the road at the foot of a hill.

HAYIM

Of course. I say my prayers.

(in Hebrew)

Barukh HaShem...

ELIEZER

(interrupting him)

No, no, no. I mean can you actually use Hebrew? To speak to me?

(searching for the words)

To... make love to your wife? To... curse your enemies?

(gestures to the horses)

To... speak to your horses?

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (2)

84

HAYIM

(laughs)

To my horses? What... are they going to say the Shma?!

(shakes his head)

No one speaks Hebrew anymore. And certainly not around here. French, Turkish, English maybe... a little Yiddish...

Hayim pulls the coach to a stop and steps down from the driver's seat.

ELIEZER

(sighs)

We have a long way to go.

As Deborah awakes, Eliezer wears a determined look, not phased by the problem ahead of him.

HAYIM

It's only 24 kilometers uphill from here to Jerusalem.

Eliezer just shakes his head: he has spoken of the progress of the Hebrew language, not the trip to Jerusalem.

HAYIM (CONT'D)

All the men out! You must push the cart over the next rise. The horses will never make it!

Hayim speaks LOUDLY to the other passengers. He looks at Eliezer's slight frame, and shrugs with sympathy.

HAYIM (CONT'D)

Sorry, my friend. No exceptions.

Eliezer gets out of the wagon with the other men. Deborah steps down, too.

HAYIM (CONT'D)

Mrs. Ben-Yehuda. I did not mean...

DEBORAH

What my husband endures, I shall endure.

She puts her shoulder to the wagon. Taken aback, the men do not respond at first. Eliezer joins her as she speaks to the other men.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Well? Come on!

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (3)

84

Together they begin to push the wagon up the hill as Hayim cracks a whip above the heads of the horses.

HAYIM

Welcome to the land of Israel!

HOLD FOR A BEAT as they push the wagon over the rise, then DISSOLVE TO:

85 EXT. JAFFA ROAD TO JERUSALEM (1881) -- DAWN

85

We SEE the SKYLINE OF 1880'S JERUSALEM outlined in the VERY EARLY LIGHT OF DAWN. The sun casts a pink and purple hue over the city, augmented by the blossoms of the WHITE and PURPLE CYCLAMEN FLOWERS that cover the hillsides. Absolutely gorgeous. The Dome of the Rock is one of the most prominent buildings that we see. [PRODUCTION NOTE: the Dome of the Rock is covered with lead, NOT gold. Gold leaf was not added to the dome until much later.]

We HEAR the O.S. SOUND of the HORSES' HOOFBEATS and the JINGLE of the HARNESS. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

86 EXT. JAFFA GATE (1882) -- DAWN

86

Hayim Jacob's coach deposits Eliezer and Deborah, now dusty from the ride, and one other ARAB PASSENGER at the famous Jaffa gate in the ancient wall that surrounds the city of Jerusalem. The Arab man helps pull the steamer trunks from the wagon. He grabs his own BAG and a WALKING STICK and steps over to the closed gate. Deborah stares up to the top of the gate.

DEBORAH

How... picturesque!

DEBORAH'S POV -- UP TO THE TOP OF THE GATE

The gate towers above her. It is closed and locked. No one can possibly get in.

ELIEZER (O.S.)

And you know what goes with "picturesque."

BACK TO SCENE

She still stares at the gate that towers above her. After a beat, puzzlement replaces amazement.

DEBORAH

Khaviví, how shall we get in?

But Eliezer is transfixed by what he sees.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

86

ELIEZER

The City of David! Jerusalem the
Eternal! Just think of it, D'vorah
sheli!

Just then the Arab passenger stoops very low and, pushing his bag and walking stick in front of him, slips through a small opening in the larger closed gate. Eliezer and Deborah watch with amazement. Resigned, Deborah moves forward.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

No! We shall not enter the Holy City
like animals. I shall not enter with
bent back!

DEBORAH

But then how are we to get in?

ELIEZER

I don't know how! What am I supposed
to do, D'vorah sheli? Just stand
here like one of the prophets of old
and shout...

(in Hebrew)

"Ftakh et HaShaar beShem Elohim!"?

(no subtitles)

"Open in the name of the Living God!"?

CGI FX: Just then with a LOUD CREAK OF HINGES, the gates slowly begin to open to the light of day. The dawn's rays color the massive gates and, as the morning's light illumines the narrow city streets inside, Eliezer and Deborah, dumbfounded, take in their first view of the city. Their first miracle, and they are going to need plenty of them.

REACTION -- ELIEZER

Eliezer's eyes widen as he sees his beloved city for the first time.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

Magnificent!

REACTION -- DEBORAH

Deborah's eyes widen as the gates to her husband's beloved city open for them for the first time. Her eyebrow arches as she observes with wry Jewish humor.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ha'ita tsarikh le'shanot et shimkha
le'Moshe!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

86

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (subtitles)
 Perhaps you should have changed your
 first name, also... to Moses!

BACK TO SCENE

The gates swing open and Eliezer and Deborah take their first steps into the City of David.

[PRODUCTION NOTE: From the time he sets foot in Jerusalem, unless otherwise indicated, when Eliezer is alone and speaking to his wife, all dialog between Eliezer and his wife is in Hebrew, except for dialog with or in front of non-family members. English dialog is for subtitles.]

87 INT. JERUSALEM STREET (1881) -- MORNING

87

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Eliezer and Deborah look around them at the City of David.

ELIEZER	DEBORAH
(in Hebrew)	(in Hebrew)
Ir David!	Ir shel ashpah!
(subtitles)	(subtitles)
The City of David!	A city of... garbage!

CAMERA (ON CRANE) BEGINS TO RISE and we SEE the absolute squalor of 19th century Jerusalem. ARAB PEASANTS and TURKISH MEN clutter its narrow streets, which are crowded with pack animals and every imaginable poverty. The Arab men wear the traditional THOBE, a white robe which is accented by a camel hair BISHT CLOAK and a GHUTRA, a checkered head scarf held in place by a black IGAAL. Each of Turkish men wears a RED FEZ with his traditional garb. The Arab women wear their black ABAYA CLOAKS with a black gauze SHAYLA to cover their heads.

We hear a CACOPHONY of SOUNDS: CHURCH BELLS from the monasteries, the MUEZZIN calling the Moslems to prayer, the BRAYING of DONKEYS, the NEIGHS of HORSES, the BARKING OF DOGS, the CRIES of MERCHANTS and the YELLS of CHILDREN as they scamper through the streets.

An ARAB WOMAN (wearing her shayla) empties a CHAMBER PAN from an upper window, where it splashes into the street. A DOG licks up the filthy water which drains down the center of the stone-paved street. The dog then runs over to a wall and urinates against it.

As Deborah looks around her at the filth, a CROWD of YOUNG STREET ARABS approach and clamor for their attention. They are dressed in little more than RAGS. Eliezer shoos all of them away except for two of them. He points to the steamer trunks which lie just outside the gate. The two boys nod in agreement and run away to fetch a cart.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

We SEE DINGY HUTS, dilapidated wooden shops with DIRTY CLOTH hung over holes in the wall in place of doors. A ONE-LEGGED BEGGAR with one-eye hops down the street using a crude wooden CRUTCH. A WOMAN sits at a doorway, holding a naked little girl in her lap, begging for money. A COBBLER sits in an open doorway, stitching a shoe so worn out that it looks like a piece of Swiss cheese. Poverty and disease are everywhere.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Hayedaber HaShem mehamakom haze?

(subtitles)

Can God speak from such a place as this?

The Arab boys return with an ANCIENT WOODEN CART pulled by a SCRAWNY DONKEY. They load the steamer trunks on the cart and follow Eliezer and Deborah as they make their way through the crowd.

Deborah sniffs and reaches into Eliezer's coat pocket. She pulls out his HANDKERCHIEF and holds it to her nose as they make their way through the streets.

As they walk, the ARAB MEN look at them suspiciously. Occasionally an ARAB WOMAN carrying a BASKET on her head follows a step or two behind her ARAB HUSBAND. Some of the men ad lib a sullen Arabic "Good Morning" to Eliezer. All of the men ignore his wife, speaking only to Eliezer, who responds with a cheerful "Good Morning" in Hebrew. This, of course, draws even more suspicion. As they walk:

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew, sarcastic)

Z'o ir Ha'Elohim...

(subtitles)

The city of God....

ELIEZER

(disappointed, in Hebrew)

Shmona-me'ot shanim shel hashpa'ah Muslemit.

(subtitles)

Eight hundred years of Muslim influence.

DEBORAH

Alpaim shanim shel ashpah.

(subtitles)

A two thousand year old garbage heap.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2)

87

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Yeldey yeladeinu yiru ma she'mea
shanim shel hashpa'a Ivrit ykholelu
lamakom haze.

(subtitles)

Our children's children will see
what a hundred years of Hebrew
influence will bring.

As he speaks, a filthy PICKPOCKET stumbles against Eliezer as he and Deborah make their way through the crowd. Eliezer quickly pats himself down. His coin purse has been lifted! Alarmed, he looks around quickly. He sees the pickpocket.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Atzor! Ganav!

(no subtitles)

Stop! Thief!

No reaction in the crowd. Deborah REACTS with a GASP. The pickpocket begins to move away.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in German)

Dieb!

(subtitles)

Thief!

Once again, no reaction in the crowd.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in French)

Vous! Donnez-moi mon argent!

(subtitles)

You! Give me my money!

He bravely steps forward, only to be confronted by the pickpocket and his ARAB SWORDSMAN cohort. Holding Eliezer's small leather BAG OF COINS in his left hand, the pickpocket pulls a long DAGGER from his belt with his right hand. The swordsman pulls a CURVED SWORD.

Deborah CRIES OUT with alarm.

The two robbers move to either side of him. He is surrounded and the situation looks grim. The swordsman steps forward to strike.

ANGLE -- ON DEBORAH

As she CRIES OUT, a long, thin, BLACK CANE drops into her arms. She grasps it reflexively, but quizzically. She looks at it for a beat, then looks...

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (3)

87

BACK TO SCENE

Out of nowhere, a LONG, THIN SWORD BLADE deflects the swordman's thrust, spins the sword in a loop, disengages it from the robber's hand and sends it flying... right into...

ANGLE -- ON TCHACHNIKOV

...Tchachnikov's upraised left hand! He stands there grimly, dressed to the nine's as always, not a hair out of place, his regal CAPE flowing behind him. His PANANG LAWYER SWORD is now unsheathed from its hidden scabbard in the cane that Deborah now holds. The blade GLINTS lethally in the morning sun as he speaks to the robber that holds the dagger.

TCHACHNIKOV

This is Jerusalem, my friend.
(emphasizing each
word)

Thou... shalt... not... steal!

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer recovers his wits.

ELIEZER

Tchachnikov!

Tchachnikov bows a very regal salute to Eliezer and tips his cap to Deborah as the robber with the dagger leaps forward.

TCHACHNIKOV

(to Deborah)

Ma'am...

(MORE)

Tchachnikov intercepts him and knocks the dagger out of his hand with the sword he has just liberated. The blow knocks the robber off balance. He drops the bag of coins. Tchachnikov kicks him in the butt, sending him sprawling into his fellow robber.

Tchachnikov pushes the sword into the dirt, snaps off the blade with his heavy boot, and throws the remains of the sword off onto one of the nearby roofs. Tchachnikov then slowly advances toward the two robbers, circling his sword as he moves forward. The robbers rush off into the crowd, who have stopped to stare at this all-too-common spectacle. After a beat, the crowd continues on its way. Life is normal again, but not for our two naive new-comers.

Tchachnikov flips the bag of coins from the ground with the point of his sword. Tchachnikov catches it deftly with his left hand, as smoothly as he did with the robber's sword. Tchachnikov tosses the bag of coins to Eliezer, who catches it somewhat awkwardly. Eliezer tucks it inside his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (4)

87

Deborah stares at their rescuer, dumbfounded. Tchachnikov snaps his heels together in one of his nobleman salutes. He bows his head gracefully.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

At your service, Mrs. Ben-Yehuda.

(to Eliezer)

Hello, my friend.

(gestures to the cane

that Deborah holds)

May I?

Deborah hands the cane to Tchachnikov and he neatly inserts his sword into it. His Panang Lawyer is now once again a walking stick, the sword neatly concealed inside. Tchachnikov bounces his walking stick once on the ground, catches it on the rebound (as he did in the reading room in Paris), and turns to Eliezer.

TCHACHNIKOV (CONT'D)

(mischievous smile)

Making friends with the locals, are we?

ELIEZER

Tchachnikov, you are a delight!

TCHACHNIKOV

And a very present help in times of trouble.

(laughs good-heartedly)

I, too, have read your Tanach, Ben-Yehuda.

With a slight bow, Eliezer acknowledges the reprise of their conversation in the Café de la Source in Paris.

ELIEZER

Say, Tchachnikov... what is the meaning of this little red hat with the tassel that all the men here seem to be wearing?

TCHACHNIKOV

Ah, yes! You see my friend, Jerusalem is ruled by the Ottoman Empire. All of its subjects feel -- how do you say it? -- morally obligated to wear the fez as a symbol of respect for their Turkish rulers.

ELIEZER

Ah!

(then)

You will dine with us, Tchachnikov?

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (5)

87

DEBORAH

Yes, Tchachnikov! You must!

TCHACHNIKOV

Alas, I cannot. My editor calls me to Moscow. I cannot wait another day. I have my story: the Ben-Yehudas are safely ensconced in their new home in Jerusalem. And this little adventure...

(holds up his walking stick)

...shall never see the printed page. Who would believe it? Shalom, my friends!

He clicks his heels together again and, with a swirl of his cape, Tchachnikov turns on his heel and strides toward the city gate. As he leaves, an entourage of YOUNG ARAB MEN carry a half-dozen TRUNKS and VARIOUS PIECES OF LUGGAGE. Astonished, Eliezer and Deborah watch Tchachnikov leave.

With a joyful look between them, they turn to go and bump into...

A TURKISH CONSTABLE. Eliezer and Deborah quickly lose their smiles as they survey this unsmiling, colorful character. In his constable's UNIFORM, RED FEZ, SWORD and SIDEARM, he stands much larger than life. He is clean-shaven, save for an enormous moustache. He stares unemotionally at the Ben-Yehudas, saying nothing. They back off from this intimidating man. The constable never follows them, but we just know that we will see him in the future.

Eliezer and Deborah turn to go in the other direction and run into another surprise: TWO JEWISH YOUNG MEN, dressed in the conservative orthodox Jewish style. Their hair is cut in the orthodox fashion, with curls at the temple. The elder of the two, YITZAK, looks quickly at his companion, and then speaks first.

YITZAK

Are you Ben-Yehuda?

(looks him over critically)

Yes, you must be him.

ELIEZER

I am Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.

YITZAK

They said you would come! We are to take you to Mr. Israel Frumkin. Come! Follow us!

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (6)

87

Without saying another word, the two men turn and lead them through the streets. The Arab boys with the Ben-Yehuda's cart of luggage accompany them at a distance.

DEBORAH

They did not even look at me.

(she looks around at
the crowd)

No one looks at me. Why is that?

ELIEZER

We must become acquainted with many new things. They are extremely pious Jews. They have a belief that it is wrong for a man to look at a woman in public. And the Muslims... they will not let a woman go out in public unless she is accompanied by a male relative.

She shudders at the thought.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Khaviví, lema hekhnasnu et atsmenu?

(subtitles)

Khaviví, what have we gotten ourselves into?

OFF ELIEZER'S BEGRUDGING ASSENT, we HOLD FOR A BEAT as they walk AWAY FROM CAMERA. We FOLLOW THEM though the WINDING STREETS of Jerusalem TOWARD:

88 EXT. HAKHAVATZELET OFFICE (1881) -- MORNING

88

CONTINUOUS ACTION. The young men lead Eliezer and Deborah to the door of a small newspaper office. The name in Hebrew lettering -- HaKhavatzelet -- greets us as Eliezer and Deborah enter the office. The younger of the two men waits for the Arab boys, who deposit the steamer trunks outside the door as we CUT TO:

89 INT. HAKHAVATZELET OFFICE (1881) -- MORNING

89

ISRAEL DOV FRUMKIN, aged mid-40's, is a grizzled Jewish editor. His newspaper, really not much more than a pamphlet, is the premier weekly news publication in Jerusalem. But he is militant, stubborn, and undaunted. At a nearby table, his WIFE lays out some plates and silverware. Israel rises from his desk, steps from behind it, and greets Eliezer and Deborah. He speaks at first to Eliezer.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

ISRAEL

So... you are the esteemed Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. I have read all your articles. Most impressive!

Israel shakes hands with Eliezer as Deborah casts a quick glance at Eliezer. She is pleased to hear of Eliezer's fame. Israel continues, speaking to both of them.

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

My wife and I have been waiting to meet you. Please... sit down!

He gestures to a table where a simple breakfast has been laid out. MRS. FRUMKIN holds out a chair for Deborah and hands her a plain KERCHIEF. She pours some coffee from a DALLAH into the ornately decorated coffee cups.

Israel turns to Yitzak and with a curt wordless gesture, asks Yitzak to wait for them. Yitzak steps back and sits down on a nearby chair that faces a typesetting table.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Efshar ledaber be'Ivrit, bevakasha?

(no subtitles)

May we speak Hebrew please?

ISRAEL

(in English, very sarcastic)

Hebrew is a dead language, Ben-Yehuda.

ELIEZER

I am alive. My wife, Deborah... she is alive.

(to Deborah)

D'vorah sheli, allow me to introduce Mr. Israel Dov Frumkin, editor of Hakhavatzelet.

(to Israel)

We both speak Hebrew and therefore, sir, Hebrew is alive.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Zehu kavod lehakir et Adoni.

(subtitle)

It is an honor to meet you.

ISRAEL

(reluctantly, but mispronouncing it)

Tudah.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2)

89

A look of dissatisfaction crosses Israel's face. He is clearly not accustomed to speaking Hebrew. Eliezer corrects him softly, looking up at him with a glance.

ELIEZER

Today.

But Israel continues to reply in English.

ISRAEL

You are new arrivals, yes? You will need some form of employment. I shall value your services, Ben-Yehuda.

Israel looks at Deborah for a moment, noting the kerchief that his wife wears, and the kerchief that she has placed on the table beside Deborah. Before Eliezer can respond about his not using Hebrew:

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

Deborah, here in Jerusalem, there is a... custom.

MRS. FRUMKIN

Deborah, let me show you.

She deftly ties the kerchief for Deborah, showing her how it's done. Embarrassed, Deborah relents. Eliezer is perturbed about them using English.

DEBORAH

Today.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Yesh lanu harbe lilmod, Adon Frumkin.

(then, in English for
Frumkin)

We have much to learn, Mr. Frumkin.

ISRAEL

And so you shall, Ben-Yehuda, as my assistant editor. The pay is not much, but it is all I can afford at the moment. If we can increase circulation, then I can increase your... reward.

DEBORAH

Khaviví, employed! And on the first day!

Eliezer and Deborah each take a sip of the Turkish coffee. They both grimace from the strong brew. Israel laughs.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (3)

89

ISRAEL

Turkish coffee... the finest in the East. You will get used to it, my friends.

(then, to Eliezer)

Your past work justifies the position. Besides, as soon as the holidays are over, I will be gone for six months to Russia, Austria, and the rest of Europe. A sales tour, you understand. I hope to sell subscriptions to new readers. While I am gone, you will be completely in charge. Agreed?

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ken!

ISRAEL

(in English)

Now as to policy...

ELIEZER

(interrupting)

After I published my first article in Hashakhar, I realized that we must all, traditionalists and Hassidim, unite to recapture Israel's land and language.

(drinks his coffee)

For years I have not practiced the customs and traditions, but I realize that here in Jerusalem, I must be a completely committed Jew.

Israel nods his approval.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

I propose to take the yoke of all the mitsvot... to keep a kosher home... to attend a synagogue... to observe "shabbatot ve'khagim."

ISRAEL

(to Deborah)

And what do you think of all of this, my dear?

She thinks about how to respond to all of this, then begins hotly:

DEBORAH

Truthfully, I think that many of these traditions are old fash...

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (4)

89

She stops, and looks to her husband, who completes her thought out of respect for his wife and for his host.

ELIEZER

We think that many of these traditions are out-dated and have nothing to do with Torah or with Judaism. Let me be frank on that. But until we have our sovereignty, let me assure you that I will not cause any embarrassment on the issue of religion... not in print, and not by my personal behavior.

ISRAEL

It is decided. There's only two more things you must know. First... our numbers. We are thirty thousand Jews...

DEBORAH

In Jerusalem?

MRS. FRUMKIN

No, my dear... in the whole land!

ISRAEL

And only about half that live here in the city. The rest are scattered.

ELIEZER

We really do have a long way to go. And the second?

ISRAEL

The authorities... the Ottoman empire is very much in control here. Even this newspaper, small as it is, is published by imperial permit. Rest assured, our enemies, and they are many, will use any excuse to see that our permit is suspended. It's happened to me once before. It was months before I could continue. You may even be arrested.

(MORE)

INSERT -- THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW, INTO THE STREET

A furtive **ROBED FIGURE** with his face masked by a scarf tosses a brick through the front window of the HaKhavatzelet office. We HEAR DEBORAH'S SCREAM, O.S., together with the O.S. SOUNDS of their CHAIRS SUDDENLY SCRAPING ALONG THE BARE FLOORS. The masked assailant quickly runs **OUT OF FRAME**, lost in the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (5)

89

BACK TO SCENE

Israel steps over to the front door, throws it open, and rushes outside. Eliezer and Deborah, now risen from their chairs, exchange astonished glances. Israel gestures to Yitzak.

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

Find him!

Yitzak races out into the street and is lost in the crowd. Israel turns back to Eliezer and Deborah. His wife stops and picks up the brick, to which a MESSAGE has been tied in crude string. She unwraps the message and tosses the brick out the window as if the whole experience is all in a day's work. She hands the message to Israel, who steps back to the table, scanning the message. He wads it up and sets it on the table. Deborah reaches for the message and unfolds it.

ELIEZER

Such a welcome! Who are they? Arabs?

ISRAEL

A thousand pardons, Ben-Yehuda. I think not. It's our campaign against the khalukka. They will stop at nothing!

DEBORAH

Khalukka?

ISRAEL

Our old Yishuv...
 (to Deborah)
 ...that's the Hebrew community here in Palestine...
 (to both of them)
 ...is nearly totally dependent on philanthropists from abroad.

ELIEZER

Baron von Rothschild?

DEBORAH

(reading the note)
 This message... it's in Yiddish. Mr. Frumkin, this man... was a Jew!

She passes the note to Eliezer, who looks at it quizzically.

ISRAEL

(to Deborah)
 More than likely, and orthodox, too.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (6)

89

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

(to Eliezer)

Especially von Rothschild. But the
distribution of money is corrupt.

The ARCH of Eliezer's eyebrow tells us he has read the
message. He wads the note in a little ball and sets it on
the table as he speaks.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Kanita lekha oivim.

(subtitles)

You have made some enemies.

It is more of a statement than a question. Still perturbed
about using Hebrew:

ISRAEL

Must you persist?

Eliezer smiles, but Israel continues in English.

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

Let me count them... between the
orthodox hassid, of which I have
been numbered and then alienated,
the socialists, and the Arabs, I
have few friends at all. I have been
declared kherem -- a heretic -- once.
And they will excommunicate me again.

DEBORAH

(outraged)

Kherem! They... shun you? Is this
still done today?

ISRAEL

(to Deborah)

I assure you, Mrs. Yehuda, the old
ways die hard in Jerusalem.

(to Eliezer)

This you will find out, mark my words!

(ironic smile, then

finally in Hebrew)

Brukhim habaim, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda,
leir David!

(subtitles)

Welcome, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, to the
City of David!

Eliezer COUGHS several times in reaction to this strange
prophecy. After a beat, Deborah COUGHS ONCE. They look at
her, concerned.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (7)

89

DEBORAH
 (an excuse)
 It's the heat...

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

90 INT. JERUSALEM SYNAGOGUE (1881) -- DAY**90**

A CANTOR sings a JEWISH PRAYER as we survey this very orthodox synagogue. Rows of JEWISH MEN, in traditional dress, each wearing a PRAYER SHAWL and a YARMULKE, line the bench seats.

Into the SHOT steps a YOUNG MAN, his face hidden behind his traditional cap because his back is toward us. He surveys the room and, violating a sacred protocol, steps quickly over to one man in particular, Ashkenazi RABBI RAFAEL MEIR, mid 60's, tall, classic Jewish profile, with a full graying beard. Meir wears a black suit and a fur hat and leans on an elaborate carved SILVER CANE. Yitzak whispers a message into Meir's ear. As he speaks, Meir's eyes grow hard.

The young man straightens up after delivering his message and we RECOGNIZE Yitzak, the young man who greeted the Ben-Yehudas at the city gate. Meir stamps his cane in anger on the floor. He dismisses Yitzak with an impatient wave, and then leans over to address AVI, a small, bookish little bureaucrat with horn-rimmed glasses.

MEIR
 Convene the council immediately.

AVI
 But the Shabbat...

MEIR
 (impatient anger)
 Immediately! At my home.

HOLD FOR A BEAT as the cantor's prayer ends, then CUT TO:

91 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA'S APARTMENT (1881) -- DAY**91**

ESTABLISH a two-storied building. The LANDLADY, a grizzled old SEPHARDIC WOMAN, begrudgingly lets Eliezer and Deborah enter the courtyard. Deborah is BARE-HEADED. The landlady wears a scarf over her head. TRUCK WITH THEM as they enter. We see the courtyard is angle-deep in debris. We can HEAR the O.S. MUFFLED SOUND of WAILING as she leads them through the courtyard.

LANDLADY
 Two rooms. Upstairs.
 (she eyes them
 suspiciously)
 You can pay?

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

91

DEBORAH

Upstairs?

Deborah eyes the building. We FOLLOW HER GAZE, looking around the courtyard. Eliezer, puzzled, asks her:

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Heikhan hamadregot?

The old lady does not respond. He begrudging repeats the question in English, and then speaks in Hebrew.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

Where are the stairs? Heikhan
hamadregot?

She points not to stairs, but to a ROPE LADDER. HOLD FOR A BEAT ON THEIR REACTIONS, then CUT TO:

92 INT. BEN-YEHUDA'S APARTMENT (1881) -- MOMENTS LATER**92**

ESTABLISH a two-room apartment dusty and darkened. The MUFFLED SOUNDS of WAILING CONTINUE as they look around their new home. A domed ceiling in the Arab style arches over their heads. There is no furniture in the rooms. The floors are of bare stone. A primitive stove sits beside one wall. The walls of the room are of dirty plaster. Dusty SHAFTS OF LIGHT peep in through the TWO SHUTTERED WINDOWS.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Tzarikh lenakot v'lesader.

(subtitles)

Needs some work.

Deborah laughs, then cups her ear.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ma ze hara'ash haze?

(no subtitles)

What's that sound?

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, indicating
the windows)

Ze megiah mipo.

(no subtitles)

It's coming from over here.

He steps over to a window which is covered from the outside with a shutter. He pushes it open to REVEAL:

93 EXT. WAILING WALL (1881) -- CONTINUOUS 93

The Ben-Yehuda's apartment looks out over the famous WAILING WALL. Groups of ORTHODOX MEN stand before the wall. Some are praying. Others are crying out for their lost nation. Others are stuffing papers into the cracks and crevices of the wall. All wear YARMULKES on their heads. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then BACK TO:

94 INT. BEN-YEHUDA'S APARTMENT (1881) -- CONTINUOUS 94

Eliezer shakes his head.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Nu, D'vorah sheli... ma at omeret?

(subtitles)

Well, D'vorah sheli... what do you think?

She steps over to the open doorway and shouts down to the landlady.

DEBORAH

We'll take it.

The landlady rubs the finger and thumb of her right hand together. Eliezer pulls a GOLD COIN from his coin bag.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, to Deborah)

Matbea zahav ekhad vemeat matbeat

kesef. Ze kol ma shenotar lanu.

(subtitles)

One Gold Louis and a little silver.

That's all we have left.

Eliezer tosses the coin down to the landlady. She deftly catches it and examines it closely. She bites into it, exposing a GAP between her upper and lower teeth. Satisfied, she raises an index finger.

LANDLADY

One month. Next month... same.

She turns and trudges away.

Eliezer surveys their new home. It's not much; in fact, it's less than that. He shrugs his shoulders. She moves close and embraces her husband. They kiss. She pulls away and then looks around.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ani etapel b'bait. Akhshav lekh,
"Assistant Editor" Ben-Yehuda. Yesh
li avodah!

(subtitles)

I shall make it a home. Now go,
Assistant Editor Ben-Yehuda. I have
work to do!

He starts down the rope ladder, then hesitates.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Aval harehitim... keitzad neshalem?

(subtitles)

But the furniture... how will we
pay...?

She points out the open doorway to the rope ladder.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ani edag leze.

(points)

Akhshav lekh!

(subtitles)

Let me worry about that...

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ani eshlakh et habakhurim im

Ha'argazim.

(subtitles)

I'll send the boys with our luggage.

Eliezer reluctantly leaves as she points again, almost too
eager to have him go. Eliezer disappears down the ladder.

Deborah runs her hands over her eyes, exhausted. She sighs
and then unfastens her jeweled broach. She speaks to herself
in English.

DEBORAH

Where's the nearest pawn shop, I
wonder?

She then COUGHS a couple of times. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then
DISSOLVE TO:

95 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA'S APARTMENT COURTYARD (1881) -- AFTERNOON

95

In the b.g. the two Arab boys are pulling up the second of
the three steamer trunks to the apartment. One of the steamer
trunks has already been raised to the second floor. The third

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

trunk remains in the courtyard. The boys continue to move the second, and then the third trunk, up to the second floor as Deborah speaks to the landlady.

DEBORAH

Pardon me. Where is the market?

LANDLADY

(pointing)

Down this street three blocks, left two blocks, right five blocks...

DEBORAH

Is there no place... closer? Where does one go to buy bread?

She laughs.

LANDLADY

One does not buy bread, child. One bakes bread!

A look of shock comes over Deborah's less-than-domestic face.

DEBORAH

But I do not know how to bake bread.

A look of shock comes over the landlady's very domestic face.

LANDLADY

Oy, veh!

(rolls up her sleeves)

Well... you shall have to learn.

She gestures to Deborah, inviting her into her own little apartment. She holds up a scarf for Deborah.

LANDLADY (CONT'D)

But first...

Deborah smiles half-heartedly. She takes the scarf and ties it over her luxurious reddish-blond hair. CUT TO:

96 **EXT. HAKHAVATZELET OFFICE (1882) -- DAY**

96

SUPER THE DATE: SIX MONTHS LATER. Up to the door steps NISSIM BEKHAR, mid-30's, neatly trimmed beard. Bekhar is dressed in very fashionable European clothes. He carries a walking cane. LOSE SUPER. He knocks on the door with it, peers through the long-since repaired front window, then opens the door and steps inside the office. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

97 INT. HAKHAVATZELET OFFICE (1882) -- DAY

97

At the typesetting tray is Eliezer, who is manually setting the Hebrew type for the next press run. No longer dressed as a European, he wears the LONG, DARK BROWN ROBE of the religiously observant Sephardic Jew. A RED FEZ adorns his head and he sports a FULL BEARD and EARLOCKS. Eliezer looks up at Mr. Bekhar as he stands, waiting for Eliezer's attention. Bekhar speaks English with a French accent.

ELIEZER

Ken?

BEKHAR

My name is Nissim Bekhar. I have just arrived from Constantinople.

Eliezer offers him a chair. Bekhar sits and gathers his traveling cloak around him.

BEKHAR (CONT'D)

Thank you.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Efshar ledeber be'Ivrit?

Bekhar's blank stare answers the question for him. Yehuda SIGHS.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

I am Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the editor of Hakhavatzelet while Mr. Frumkin is away.

BEKHAR

I have been sent by the Alliance Israelite Universelle to establish a school here in Jerusalem.

ELIEZER

Ah, the Alliance. I know of it. And what can I do for you, Mr. Bekhar?

BEKHAR

Ah, yes, what can you do for me, Ben-Yehuda? I would like you to be my Hebrew teacher.

ELIEZER

(pleased but taken
aback)

That would be... difficult. You see, I have my particular methods, and...

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

BEKHAR

I know! I have read all your articles.
That is why I come to you.

ELIEZER

I do not understand.

BEKHAR

I am to be the principal of this new
school, not a teacher. I can run it
as I please. And you can teach as
you please, the way you please.

ELIEZER

But I teach Hebrew in Hebrew. I do
not allow any other language in my
classroom.

BEKHAR

Most radical.

(beat, then)

I like it! You start next week. Your
salary will be fifty francs a month.

ELIEZER

Fifty francs!

BEKHAR

I know! It is never enough. But I
have no budget for a Hebrew teacher.
The Alliance will not allow it.

ELIEZER

Then how...?

BEKHAR

(laughs)

I cut the salary of two of my religion
teachers by 25 francs. They will
complain, but...

Bekhar shrugs with a smile, and notices a small WOODEN BOX
on the table. It is filled with little white cards.

BEKHAR (CONT'D)

What's this?

ELIEZER

Words. Hundreds of them.

Eliezer pushes the box over to him. Bekhar pulls out one of
the cards and examines it.

BEKHAR

Words?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

97

ELIEZER

How can I expect a people to speak a language if there are no modern words?

(beat)

Just think for a moment... of a "bicycle". How would you call a "bicycle" in Hebrew?

BEKHAR

I would suppose... "biciklet"?

ELIEZER

No! We must build the language, not... bastardize it.

On Bekhar's puzzled reaction, Eliezer continues.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

A "bicycle" has two wheels, ken?

(on Bekhar's blank stare)

Ken... yes?

BEKHAR

(smile of understanding)

Ken.

ELIEZER

There you have it... offnayim, from the word for "wheel" and the word for "two" -- a "bicycle" is offnayim. And so forth.

BEKHAR

Ken! Marvelous! But will the people use your new words?

ELIEZER

They will have no choice.

He holds up a prior edition of his newspaper.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

See? I print a word list every week. And I use the new words in my column. The lists are helping me with the best idea I have had yet!

BEKHAR

And that is?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (3)

97

ELIEZER

(triumphant, in Hebrew)

A dictionary! A dictionary of the Hebrew language. Like no one has ever thought of. It will take years...

BEKHAR

And in the meantime?

ELIEZER

I publish my column, and I teach your class.

BEKHAR

Then we have a deal?

ELIEZER

Ken! I accept. And we shall start...

(subtle smile)

...with the principal!

(he stands)

The money will come in handy. My wife Deborah and I... we will soon have another mouth to feed!

Bekhar stands. They shake hands to seal the agreement.

BEKHAR

Ah, the great experiment I have read so much about! The first Jewish child in two thousand years to speak only Hebrew. A noble goal, but is it possible? Will he not have some... disadvantages?

ELIEZER

You will not be the last to ask, Mr. Bekhar. But we will show you. Just wait! In a year, sir, you shall speak Hebrew like Abraham!

Eliezer smiles confidently. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

98 INT. RAFAEL MEIR'S HOME (1882) -- DAY

98

ESTABLISH a large, immaculately clean home. Two GUARDS, each wearing a uniform and carrying a long sword, stand at either side of the ornately carved TALL WOODEN DOOR that stretches from floor to ceiling. The guards are definitely NOT SMILING.

The floors are covered in expensive and colorful ORIENTAL RUGS. A row of WHITE COUCHES is filled with a dozen RABBIS and OTHER LEADERS of the Sephardic movement in Jerusalem. At the center stands Meir, who listens to one of the Rabbis speak to the group solemnly.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

RABBI #1

Everyday, more and more people heed this khalutzim's words. The newspaper he prints lies about us and how we distribute the khalukka.

MEIR

He seeks to unite what cannot be united.

RABBI #2

What if he leaves Hakhavatzelet and starts his own newspaper?

MEIR

Two troublemaking publishers! We cannot not allow that!

RABBI #2

But there is no common language even between the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim. And we Ashkenazim... we cannot even agree on a language among ourselves. Perhaps he has a point...?

MEIR

Everyone in Europe speaks Yiddish. It is enough! This Ben-Yehuda seeks to speak what cannot be spoken. He blasphemes the holy tongue of the prophets.

All the men WALLA their agreement with cries of "Blasphemy!"

RABBI #1

We must isolate this Ben-Yehuda. Stop him before he goes any farther.

RABBI #2

But how? He is making friends quickly.

MEIR

Friends can be turned.

RABBI #1

His family! That's where he is most vulnerable.

RABBI #3

We'll tell our wives to shun his wife.

RABBI #2

And his children.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

98

RABBI #3

He has no children!

MEIR

Not yet. But there is talk... and we already know that he intends to raise his son to speak only Hebrew.

RABBI #3

Perhaps HaShem will have mercy, and give him only ignorant daughters.

A round of RAUCOUS LAUGHTER echoes in the room. Meir holds up his hand and the room goes silent.

MEIR

He will hang himself with his own editorials. And his precious settlers, they will have trouble with the Arabs, rest assured of that. But report his words to the police. The authorities and the Arabs... they will do the rest.

The men WALLA their agreement. HOLD FOR A BEAT on the severe face of Meir, then FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

99 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA'S APARTMENT COURTYARD (1882) -- NIGHT 99

Eliezer paces the courtyard with his friend and fellow scholar, Nissim Bekhar, who now speaks Hebrew. In spite of the late hour, Eliezer is dressed in his DARK BROWN CLOAK and RED FEZ. SUPER the DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR: 15 Av 5642.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Lama ze lokeakh kol kakh harbe zman?

(subtitles)

What is taking so long?

He glances anxiously up to the apartment.

ANGLE -- UP AT THE SECOND FLOOR DOORWAY

We SEE the SOFT GLOW of the light from within and we HEAR the CHATTER of HEBREW and YIDDISH.

LOSE the DATE, then SUPER a NEW DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR, so we now read: 31 July 1882. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER.

BACK TO SCENE

Bekhar calmly watches his friend pace nervously. He smiles, pulls out his pocket watch, and looks at it for a beat.

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Khamesh Baboker.

(subtitles)

Five in the morning.

(he closes the watch;

then, in Hebrew)

Kol Ha'avot mitnahagim kakh. Gam ani hitnahagti kakh.

(subtitles)

All new fathers are like this. I was, too.

Bekhar puts the watch back into his vest pocket.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Aval briuta shel Dvorah... hi mishtaelet kaet. Briuta ra'a kim'at

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

kesheli. Ha'herayon shela haya kashe meod.

(subtitles)

But Deborah's health... she coughs now. Her health has been almost as bad as mine. And carrying this baby has been very difficult.

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Ben-Yehuda, ata garua mi'isha zkena.

(subtitles)

You are worse than an old woman.

(beat; then, in Hebrew)

Hagoyim hayu metzi'im lekha cigar akhshav.

(subtitles)

The goyim... they would offer you a cigar about now.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, to himself)

Akh, Tchachnikov! Heikhan ata keshe'ani zakuk lekha?

(subtitles)

Tchachnikov! Where are you when I need you?

(to Bekhar, in Hebrew)

Haiti me'ashen cigar ka'et!

Lamrot Briuti.

(subtitles)

I'd take it, too! In spite of my health!

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Minhagim muzarim lagoon. Meashnim lifne'y, meashnim akharei... Ma yesh betabak she...?

(subtitles)

Strange customs, the goyim. They smoke before... they smoke after. What is there about tobacco that...?

ELIEZER

(interrupting, in Hebrew)

Nissim, hem meashnim cigar le'akhar huledet hayeled. Lo lifne'y.

(subtitles)

They give you the cigar after the child is born. Not before.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED: (2)

99

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Mimatai ata mumkhe begoyim?

(subtitles)

Since when are you an expert on
goyim?

Eliezer cries out with frustration. The CRY of a NEWBORN causes him to look anxiously up to the doorway.

INSERT -- THE DOORWAY

A YIDDISH MIDWIFE sticks her head out the doorway.

MIDWIFE

(in Yiddish)

You have a son!

BACK TO SCENE

Horrified at the use of Yiddish in his home, Eliezer hurriedly climbs the rope ladder to his little apartment. CAMERA RISES AS ELIEZER CLIMBS until he enters the doorway.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, shouting
as he climbs)Rak be'Ivrit. Ani rotze shehayeled
ishma rak Ivrit.

(subtitles)

Hebrew only! I wish him to hear only
Hebrew!

Eliezer pushes his way past the protesting midwife.

DOWN ON THE GROUND

Bekhar raises his arms to protest the intrusion, but then drops them to his side, slapping his thighs. There's nothing he can do to stop him. He calls out:

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Ben-Yehuda! Ishti medaberet Ivrit.

Hi nimtset ita.

(subtitles)

My wife speaks Hebrew! She's with
her!

CUT TO:

100 INT. BEN-YEHUDA'S APARTMENT (1882) -- NIGHT

100

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Eliezer ENTERS and steps quickly to the bedside where Deborah lies weakly in the bed, breathing

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

heavily. Ignoring the Mikveh restrictions, he reaches to take her hand. A SECOND MIDWIFE begins to protest in Yiddish ad lib.

ELIEZER
(sharply, in Hebrew)
Rak be'Ivrit!
(no subtitles)
In Hebrew only!

But neither of the two midwives speak Hebrew. The third woman does; it is BEKHAR'S WIFE.

BEKHAR'S WIFE
(in Hebrew)
Hamikve, Ben-Yehuda!

Eliezer throws up his hands in frustration. He dutifully steps away from the bed.

DEBORAH
(in Hebrew, weakly)
Ani... ani beser, khaviví. Bnenu...
(no subtitles)
I... I am fine, khaviví. Our son...

She points weakly to a CRIB that HANGS FROM THE CEILING BY ROPES. It's IDENTICAL to the crib from Scene 8. In it lies their INFANT SON. Eliezer turns to the hanging crib, just like his father did in Scene 8. Like father, like son.

ELIEZER
(in Hebrew)
Milim. Ani etle milim
(subtitles)
Words. I shall hang words...

DEBORAH
(interrupting weakly,
in Hebrew,)
Ein lanu a'in hara'a, khaviví. Yesh li
otkha.
(subtitles)
There is no evil eye, khaviví. I
have you.

ELIEZER
(in Hebrew)
Lo... hu ilmad milim khadashot...
Be'Ivrit. Ani etle otam kakh bnenu
ir'e otam.
(subtitles)
No. He must learn new words... in
Hebrew. I shall hang them so our
child can see them.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: (2)

100

DEBORAH
 (weakly, in Hebrew)
 Shmo, khaviví.
 (subtitles)
 His name, khaviví.

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Hu kmo aviv, ben Zion. Shmo ikare
 "Ben-Zion Ben-Yehuda."
 (subtitles)
 He is like his father, a son of Zion.
 He shall be "Ben-Zion Ben-Yehuda."

DEBORAH
 (weakly, in Hebrew)
 Kakh hu ikare.
 (subtitles)
 And so shall he be called.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the happy couple. WE HEAR the O.S. SOUNDS of HORSE HOOFBEATS and TACK and BRIDLES, then CUT TO:

101 EXT. ROAD TO RISHON LEZION SETTLEMENT (1882) -- DAY

101

Eliezer and the ENTOURAGE OF SETTLERS ride on horses and on donkeys along a winding, dusty road. Nothing but SAND DUNES can be seen for miles.

We HEAR the V.O. of ELIEZER to his wife from the previous scene as ACTION CONTINUES, below.

Eliezer rides beside the GUIDE, who offers him a canteen in the desert heat. He tips the canteen to his lips, but the canteen is empty.

The guide shrugs his disappointment.

The CRIES of their COMPANIONS make both of them forget their thirst. And it's a RAUCOUS WELCOME.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 (in Hebrew)
 D'vorah sheli, od yom huledet khashuv, kmu huledet Ben-Zion. Hityashvut khadasha nolda hayom. Hakhalutzim kor'im la Rishon Le-Zion mitokh Yeshayahu, perek men, alef, pasuk esrim vesheva. Ani esa lesham beod shavua o shvua'im.
 (subtitles)

Another birth, as important as Ben-Zion, a settlement. They call it "The First of Zion" from Isaiah 41:27. I can make the trip in a week or two.

DEBORAH (V.O.)
 (weakly)
 Ben-Zion...

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 (in Hebrew)
 Ishto shel Nissim ta'azor lakh.
 (subtitles)
 Nissim's wife will help you.

102 EXT. RISHON LEZION SETTLEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

102

It's nothing more than a half-dozen Bedouin tents. The other SETTLERS gallop toward the tents with various CRIES of enthusiasm.

Eliezer's excitement is like a kid in a candy shop. The lead guide turns to Eliezer with pride.

GUIDE
 (in Hebrew)
 Hine admateinu! Hayeshuv shelanu!
 (subtitles)
 There is our land! Our village!

He whips his mount forward. Eliezer stays behind for a beat.

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Nifla!
 (no subtitles)
 Wonderful!

He digs his heels into his mount's side, and moves boldly forward with a WHOOP!

103 EXT. RISHON LEZION SETTLEMENT (1882) -- DAY

103

The group of six Bedouin style tents are clustered together. Off to one side we see a slight mound, on top of which stands a SOLITARY TREE. All around the encampment are sand dunes as far as the eye can see. In front of the main tent is a small fire pit, over which KHANNA, a young woman, is stirring a pot. She pours some vegetables into what looks like a stew.

A YOUNG MAN leads the horses into one of the tents, which serves as a stable for the horses and mules. Another YOUNG WOMAN joins him, leading the animals into the tent. She wears pants, not a dress.

Eliezer walks his mounts up to what appears to be the main meeting tent. A dozen or so YOUNG SETTLERS, none of them over the age of 25, surround them, crying out their welcomes in English, French and Russian.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Be'Ivrit, bevakasha. Hinkhem yeldim
shel Eretz Israel akhshav. Azavtem
et beitzhem bagola. Alekhem ledaber
besafa khadasha bebeitkhem hakahdash.

(subtitles)

In Hebrew, please. You are children
of Israel now. You have left your
lands behind. You must take a new
tongue in your home, too.

MOSHE, one of the young men, steps forward and extends his
hand.

MOSHE

(in Hebrew)

Shalom, Ben-Yehuda. Ani Moshe.

(no subtitles)

Shalom, Ben-Yehuda. I'm Moshe.

Moshe gestures to the young woman at the fire.

MOSHE (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Zohi ishti, Khanna.

(subtitles)

This is my wife, Khanna.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Isha!

(subtitles)

A woman!

KHANNA

(stirring the pot)

Shalom...

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew,
interrupting)

Khanna, efshar lekabel me'at mayim?

(subtitles)

May I have some water?

The settlers look from one to another for a BEAT, then they
laugh out loud, good-naturedly. Eliezer is confused.

ZVI

(in Hebrew)

Slikha... pashut...

(subtitles)

I'm sorry... it's just that... well...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (2)

103

KHANNA

(in Hebrew)

Od lo khafarnu be'er.

(subtitles)

We haven't dug a well yet.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ein mayim? Keitzad atem mevashlim
nazid?

(subtitles)

No water? Then what do you put in
the stew?

MOSHE

(in Hebrew)

Bo! Ar'ekha.

(subtitles)

Come! I'll show you.

KHANNA

(in Hebrew)

Yeshnam shalosh nashim khan.

Ve'akh'yotai megiot mi'Bulgaria.

(subtitles)

There are three women here. And my
sisters are coming from Bulgaria!

ZIPPORAH, one of the women from the stable tent, calls out
as she joins the group.

ZIPPORAH

(in halting Hebrew)

Ve'akhoti megi'a mi'Britania.

(then in English)

...within the month.

(subtitles)

My sister arrives from Britain...

(in English)

She shrugs, not knowing the words. Eliezer completes the
sentence for her, correcting her Hebrew.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Mi'Britania, beod khodesh.

(no subtitles)

From Britain, within the month.

ZIPPORAH

(in flawless Hebrew)

Mi'Britania, beod khodesh.

Eliezer smiles. Zvi puts his arm around Zipporah.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (3)

103

ZVI
 (in Hebrew)
 Zohi Tzipporah, ishti.
 (subtitles)
 And this is Zipporah, my wife.

Moshe and Khanna hold the tent entryway open for the distinguished guests from Jerusalem.

MOSHE
 (in Hebrew)
 Ein tipat mayim bekhoh hayeshuv.
 (subtitles)
 There is not a drop of water in the whole settlement.

The group of enthusiastic settlers pass into the interior of the tent with the enthusiasm of revelers.

104 INT. RISHON LEZION TENT (1882) -- DAY**104**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Moshe stands beside a large STEAMER TRUNK. He opens it TO REVEAL that it is filled with STRAW and BOTTLES OF FRENCH WINE. Moshe grabs a bottle and uncorks it.

MOSHE
 (in Hebrew)
 Ad she'ihaye lanu mayin, anu mevashlim
 nezid veshotim lekhayei hatz lakhateinu
 ...im ya'in!
 (subtitles)
 Until then, we make our stew, and we toast our success... with wine!

We see a surprisingly well-furnished tent. It is in the Bedouin style, but a few traces of European styling are present. Some large shipping trunks are arranged along one of the tent walls. At the center of the tent, a low table is surrounded by dozens of large pillows. The settlers take their seats on the tent floor, propping themselves up on various pillows. It could almost be an old-style seder service.

Moshe pulls a bottle from the trunk. He passes one to Eliezer, who reads the label.

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Tzarfat.
 (no subtitles)
 From France.
 (shrugs; then, in Hebrew)
 Yom yavo venakhim ya'in mishelanu.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 (subtitles)
 One day, we shall bottle our own!

Moshe and Hanna pass a bottle to each of the settlers at the table. Eliezer glances quickly around the table, looking for glasses. There are none. Using their teeth, each of the settlers pulls the cork from his or her bottle, evidently a common ritual. Eliezer pulls the cork from his bottle with his teeth and proffers a toast.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Lehatkhalot khadashot! L'khaim!
 (subtitles)
 To new beginnings! L'khaim!

CLOSE -- THE NECKS OF SIX WINE BOTTLES

as they CLINK together in unison.

SETTLERS (O.S.)
 (together)
 L'khaim!

DISSOLVE TO:

A WALL CALENDAR -- 1882

CGI FX: The WALL CALENDAR tells us the year is 1882. MUSIC UP as we segue into a SERIES OF DISSOLVES (MOS) to show the time passing, just like we did in Scenes 47-58. The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now 1883.

105 **EXT. NISSIM BEKHAR'S SCHOOL -- DAY**

105

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. A group of TEEN-AGE BOYS stand outside the window, peering inside. Eliezer stands in front of a group of a DOZEN young boys. He writes Hebrew characters by hand on a chalkboard. He looks up and sees the boys outside. He gestures to them. They all leave, except for one. The boy stays. Eliezer smiles and waves to him, encouraging the boy to come inside. The boy nods and steps OUT OF THE SHOT. DISSOLVE TO:

106 **EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1883) -- AFTERNOON**

106

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Eliezer and Deborah walk down the narrow street. She carries her ONE YEAR OLD son, Ben-Zion. They are dressed in the Sephardic style. A GROUP OF ORTHODOX MEN, dressed in the orthodox style, confront them as they walk. Angry words are exchanged. An EGG breaks on Eliezer's shoulder, then another breaks on his face. The same for Deborah, as she tries to shield her son. They turn and hurry away. DISSOLVE TO:

107 INT. HAKHAVATZELET OFFICE (1883) -- DAY 107

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Israel Dov Frumkin returns from a trip, carrying a SUITCASE and wearing TRAVELING CLOTHES. He holds a COPY of his newspaper in his hand. He is ANGRY. Words erupt between him and Eliezer. Eliezer gathers his wooden BOX OF WORDS and leaves for good.

CGI FX: The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now 1884 as we DISSOLVE TO:

108 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1884) -- DAY 108

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. A NEW HOME for the Ben-Yehuda family. Nissim Bekhar and various other MEN help move the Ben-Yehuda furniture, such as it is, into their NEW HOME. They step inside.

109 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1884) -- DAY 109

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. In one of the rooms, Eliezer watches as the men set up his stand-up desk. In the distance, Deborah steps outside to a SMALL GARDEN in the back, which she eyes carefully. She sees potential. DISSOLVE TO:

110 INT. NISSIM BEKHAR'S SCHOOL (1884) -- DAY 110

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. The same YOUNG MAN from Scene 103 is in class. Eliezer is teaching from the blackboard. He gestures to the boys. They start to run, but the young man raises his arm to them, imploring them to stay. Most run away, but two more remain. Eliezer looks over to the young man. He shrugs. Eliezer beckons to the two boys outside. They nod and MOVE OUT OF THE FRAME. DISSOLVE TO:

111 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1884) -- NIGHT 111

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. By the light of an OIL LAMP, Eliezer works on his dictionary as Deborah plays with Ben-Zion, now TWO YEARS OLD and walking with the awkward steps of a toddler. She speaks to the boy, but he only looks at her, mutely. She is disappointed.

Eliezer's small study is filled with BOOKCASES and a long table covered in HAND-WRITTEN NOTES. Eliezer fills out a WORD CARD and tries to stuff it into his WORD BOX, but it won't fit. He throws up his hands in desperation.

Deborah looks over at him in sympathy. She points to Ben-Zion. Eliezer speaks to Ben-Zion, holding out his arms to him. The toddler just looks at him, not responding to his father's requests in Hebrew. The infant sits down. On Eliezer's DISAPPOINTED REACTION...

(CONTINUED)

Ben-Yehuda -- Draft 2009021870 -- ACT FOUR 118.

111 CONTINUED: 111

CGI FX: The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now 1885 as we DISSOLVE TO:

112 INT. NISSIM BEKHAR'S SCHOOL -- MORNING 112

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. The classroom is now FILLED with TEEN-AGED BOYS. They recite a Hebrew grammar as Eliezer teaches them. Eliezer nods in approval as he listens to their recitations.

113 EXT. JERUSALEM SYNAGOGUE -- MORNING 113

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. It's the Sabbath and Eliezer and Deborah try to enter the synagogue. They are turned away by ANGRY ASHKENAZI MEN. Angry words are spoken, but we cannot hear them. DISSOLVE TO:

114 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1885) -- DAY 114

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Eliezer greets a YOUNG JEWISH COUPLE. He introduces them to the OWNER of the house, an older ARAB MAN. They NEGOTIATE in words we cannot hear. The young man offers him a BAG OF COINS. The old man holds up his hand, refusing. The young man pours out some gold coins into his own outstretched hand. The old man cannot resist. They strike hands and the deal is made. Eliezer congratulates the young couple as the old man hands a paper to the young couple. They enter their new home.

CGI FX: The CALENDAR PEELS OFF another year. It's now 1886 as we DISSOLVE TO:

115 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1886) -- AFTERNOON 115

TO ESTABLISH. MUSIC OUT as we ZOOM IN through the window and into...

116 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1886) -- AFTERNOON 116

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Deborah sits on the floor, playing with FOUR-YEAR-OLD Ben-Zion. She holds a PILLOW in her lap. She throws a small RED WOODEN BALL to Ben-Zion.

DEBORAH
(in Hebrew)
Tavi li et hakadur.
(subtitles)
Get the ball.
(MORE)

She points. He runs to get it. He keeps it, smiling and laughing.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Kadima. Tavi li et hakadur.
 (subtitles)
 Come. Bring me the ball.

He does not respond. She asks him again, more concerned.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Bo lepo, Ben-Zion. Bo lepo...
 (subtitles)
 Come here, Ben-Zion.

He awkwardly tosses the ball to her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Lo. Al tizrok et hakadur.
 (subtitles)
 No, don't throw the ball.

She tosses it back to him. It lands on the floor. He bends down and picks it up. He begins to chew it.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Lo, al til'as oto. Tavi li oto.
 (subtitles)
 No, don't eat it. Bring it here.

He continues to chew it.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Lo!

He continues to chew the ball, giggling at him. She shakes her head, then looks at him thoughtfully.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Lo!
 (beat, then in Hebrew)
 Matai tilmad ledaber, Ben-Zion?
 (subtitles)
 Are you ever going to speak, Ben-Zion?

He continues to chew the ball. She shakes her head again.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Lo?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED: (2)

116

The little boy yawns. He drops the ball and walks over to her. He curls up in her lap.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Daber ela'i, Ben-Zion. Daber ela'i.

(subtitles)

Speak to me, Ben-Zion. Speak to me,
son.

He smiles and closes his eyes. She sighs. She begins to rock him. As she rocks, TEARS FORM in her eyes. She begins to sing the RUSSIAN LULLABY "On the Waves of the Blue Ocean" by Lermontov to her son. HOLD FOR A BEAT as she sings. CAMERA PULLS BACK and FLOATS OUT THE WINDOW to...

117 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1886) -- AFTERNOON

117

CONTINUOUS ACTION. We SEE Ben-Yehuda walking purposefully down the street, heading for home. He still wears the clothing of a Sephardic Jew, including the dark robe and red fez and the full beard. Eliezer carries a stack of newly printed copies of his newspaper, Hatzvi. The SOUND of DEBORAH'S SINGING reaches his ears. He repeats the lullaby, singing to himself for a beat, until he recognizes the voice.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, horrified)

D'vorah... Lo!

He runs up to the door of his house and crosses the threshold into...

118 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1886) -- AFTERNOON

118

Eliezer turns to SEE Deborah, singing in Russian to four-year-old Ben-Zion.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, horrified)

Hayim at gam medaberet im hayeled be
'Rusit?

(subtitles)

Do you also speak to the boy in
Russian?

Eliezer rushes inside. He is angry.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Lo! D'vorah! Anu heskanmu shenedar
Ivrit!

(subtitles)

No! Deborah, we agreed!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

Deborah looks up, and stops singing. As she sets her son's sleeping head down on the pillow, she tries to get up. Eliezer offers her his hand. Deborah takes his hand angrily, but he does not notice her anger. She rises.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Rak Ivrit!

(no subtitles)

Hebrew only!

Rising from the floor, we now SEE the TEARS on her cheek and an ANGRY GLINT in her eye. As Deborah swings up from the floor, her hand moves across quickly and catches Eliezer on the side of his face. Her ANGRY SLAP ECHOES in the room.

Eliezer reels back from the blow with the imprint of her hand across his cheek. He sees her tears for the first time. Too late for apologies, Deborah loses it. Turning an angry and tearful face to Eliezer, she refuses to speak in Hebrew.

DEBORAH

(in English, yelling)

Hebrew?! Nobody's speaking Hebrew!

We're the only ones! Not in the synagogue -- not that you would even know anymore. They don't let us in!

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

D'vorah!

DEBORAH

(in English, tears flowing)

Not in the marketplace...

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Anu heskamnu...

(subtitles)

We agreed...

DEBORAH

(in English)

No! You don't know what it's like, Eliezer! It's bad enough when people pass you on the street. They ignore you. The women... even they won't talk to me.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ani yodea shkashe...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2)

118

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(subtitles)

I know it's difficult...

DEBORAH

(in English)

It's impossible! He's four years old, Eliezer. Look at him!

(sniffs)

It's not working! They say our son is an idiot. He'll never talk! He's cursed, Eliezer!

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Lo!

DEBORAH

(in English)

Our son is cursed! God is against us! Everyone is against us! They're right, Eliezer! All of them! They're all right!**ANGLE -- ON BEN-ZION**

...as the argument awakens him. He sees them arguing. Terrified, the little boy begins to CRY.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer takes Deborah by the shoulders, too roughly.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, yelling)

Lo! Zehu sheker! Ben-Zion lo mekual!

Bni yedaber! Zehu sheker!

(subtitles)

It's a lie! Ben-Zion is not cursed!

My son will talk! It's a lie!

She begins to strike him, pushing him back as she pounds her fists on his chest. The years of frustration take its toll.

DEBORAH

(in English, tears flowing, screaming now)

My son is mute! He can't speak! He won't speak! God won't let him!

He takes her arms roughly, trying to stop her from hitting him.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (3)

118

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, yelling)

Lo! Ze lo nakhon!

(subtitles)

It's not true!

DEBORAH

(in English, tears
flowing, screaming)No! It is true! It's your fault!You're his father! You've made my
son a mute!

ELIEZER

(hands to his ears,
yelling)

Lo! Lo! Lo!

ANGLE -- AT THE FLOOR LEVEL, LOOKING UP AT HIS PARENTS

Terrified, the little boy grabs his father's pants legs.

BEN-ZION

(in tears, terrified)

Abba! Abba! Lo! Lo!

Eliezer immediately stop shouting. The two parents slowly look down to their son, a look of amazement on their tear-stained faces as their four-year-old son speaks for the first time, and in Hebrew!

BACK TO SCENE

Ben-Zion continues to cry, tears flowing.

BEN-ZION (CONT'D)

(in tears)

Abba... abba! Lo! Lo!

Eliezer and Deborah sink to the floor, all anger gone. The argument evaporates as they embrace their son. Eliezer is now in tears, joyful tears. Deborah continues to cry, but they are tears of joy as the little boy continues to sob.

ELIEZER

Ben-Zion! Ben-Zion!

(to Deborah, in Hebrew)

Ani mitstaer...

(no subtitles)

I'm sorry...

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Lo, khaviví. Tsadakta...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (4)

118

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(subtitles)

You were right...

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Haiti nokshe midai. Hitakashti yoter
midai. Aval hakshivi...

(subtitles)

I was too harsh. I pushed him too
hard. But listen...

BEN-ZION

(crying)

Abba... abba...

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew, through
the tears)

Ben-Zion, mi ani?

(subtitles)

Who am I?

BEN-ZION

Imma! Imma!

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ken, ken! Ani imma. Ve'mi ze?

(no subtitles)

Yes, yes! And who's this?

Deborah points to Eliezer.

BEN-ZION

Abba!

The tears are gone now. She holds up the ball.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ma ze, Ben-Zion? Ma ze?

(subtitles)

What's this, Ben-Zion? What's this?

BEN-ZION

(in Hebrew)

Kadur!

(no subtitle)

Ball!

Giddy as a schoolgirl, she tosses the ball a few feet away.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (5)

118

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Lekh tavi et hakadur, Ben Zion! Tavi
oto le'abba!

(subtitles)

Go get the ball, Ben-Zion! Bring it
to daddy!

Ben-Zion runs over, picks it up and brings it back to Eliezer.

BEN-ZION

(in Hebrew)

Kadur!

They take him into their arms. And the tears of joy flow
again.

BEN-ZION (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Kadur! Imma! Abba!

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the touching scene, then:

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

119 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1889) -- DAY**119**ESTABLISH the back yard of the Ben-Yehuda home. SUPER THE
DATE: THREE YEARS LATER.Ben-Zion, now seven years old, plays alone in the backyard
of the Ben-Yehuda home. He HEARS the SOUND OF CHILDREN PLAYING
ROUGHLY outside the stone wall that surrounds the backyard.
He steps over to the wall and, standing on his toes, looks
over to see...**120 EXT. JERUSALEM ALLEY (1889) -- DAY****120**A group of ORTHODOX BOYS, all about Ben-Zion's age and dressed
in the particular garb of young orthodox boys, are taunting
a small MONGREL DOG, ad libbing in English. The little dog
cowers in terror as the boys throw sticks at him.Horrorified, Ben-Zion gathers some stones and stuffs them into
his cap. He sets his little cap full of stones on the wall,
then scrambles over the top.**ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL, IN THE ALLEY**Ben-Zion leaps over the wall and grabs his stones. He throws
them with deadly accuracy at the legs of the attackers. With
CRIES of PAIN, several rocks hit their marks. Ben-Zion bluffs
them, confronting the BIGGEST of the BULLIES.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

BULLY
 (in Yiddish)
 Smerl nahr!

But the boys run away, shouting taunts and threats over their shoulders at Ben-Zion as they run. AFTER A BEAT, he turns to the little dog. It cowers in a corner, trembling. Ben-Zion gets down on his knees.

BEN-ZION
 (in Hebrew)
 Bo... ani lo efga bekha lera'a.
 (subtitles)
 Come on... I won't hurt you.

The little dog continues to cower. Ben-Zion extends his hand to him. The little dog shrinks back into the corner again. Ben-Zion scratches the little dog's ears. He begins to pet the little dog's head. After a beat, the dog relaxes a little. He pets his neck, and then his body. Ben-Zion finally offers him the back of his hand. The little dog licks it. Ben-Zion laughs.

BEN-ZION (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Ze medagdeg!
 (no subtitles)
 That tickles!

He picks the dogs up and hugs him. The little dog licks Ben-Zion's face. The relationship is sealed! He calls out to his mother...

BEN-ZION (CONT'D)
 Imma!

CUT TO:

121 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1889) -- EVENING

121

The little dog plays in a corner with Ben-Zion as Eliezer and Deborah have a hurried, whispered conversation that somehow Ben-Zion can hear. Ben-Zion is playing fetch with a stick. Two NEW BEN-YEHUDA CHILDREN play on the floor: YEMIMA, a girl aged three, and AVIKHA'YIL, a boy aged two. Deborah is weaker than we have seen her, frail and pale. She nurses a fourth child ATARA, an infant girl.

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Anu lo yekholim lehisha'er im hakelev!
 Bim'yukhad hakelev haze...
 (subtitles)
 We can't keep a dog! Especially this one...

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

Ben-Zion tosses the stick. The dog runs to the corner of the room and picks up the stick in its mouth. The dog waits.

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Khaviví, madua lo? Le'Ben Zion ein khaverim. Af yeled lo medaber ito...

(subtitles)

Why not? Ben-Zion has no friends.
None of the other children will talk to him...

Deborah puts the infant down into a CRIB made of ropes suspended from the ceiling. It's the same crib we have seen twice before now.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Sh-h-h, Atara. Shni.

(subtitles)

Atara. Sleep now.

She turns to her husband as Ben-Zion calls for his dog.

BEN-ZION

Bo! Bo mi'yad, Mahir!

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ma... Hu kol-kakh mahir, she'Ben-Zion kara lo "Mahir"? Hu kore lo lavo elav! Hakelev medaber Ivrit? Hu nove'akh be'Ivrit?

(subtitles)

What? He's so fast, Ben-Zion calls him "Fast"? He calls him to come!
The dog speaks Hebrew, does he? He barks in Hebrew?

The dog runs to Ben-Zion. He drops the stick into his lap. Ben-Zion tosses the stick behind a sofa. He points.

BEN-ZION

(in Hebrew)

Lekh timtsa makel!

(subtitles)

Go find the stick!

DEBORAH

(in Hebrew)

Ze megokhakh.

(subtitles)

That's ridiculous.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: (2)

121

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Kamuvan sheze megokhakh; kelev lo me
daber...

(subtitles)

Of course it's ridiculous; a dog
doesn't speak...

(turns his head to
see the dog)

Ivrit...

His voice trails off as he sees the dog and Ben-Zion playing.
The dog runs behind the sofa and retrieves the stick.

BEN-ZION

(in Hebrew)

Kelev tov! Bo lepo. Kadima! Ten il
et hamakel.

(no subtitles)

Good dog! Bring it here. Come on!
Bring me the stick.

The dog dutifully brings the stick back to Ben-Zion.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew,, amazed)

Hu mevin Ivrit. Hakelev mevin...
Ivrit!

(subtitles)

He knows Hebrew! The dog
understands... Hebrew!

BEN-ZION

(in Hebrew)

Limadeti oto Ivrit, abba. Ani yakhol
lehisha'er ito?

(subtitles)

I've been teaching him, Abba. May I
keep him?

A mischievous smile plays across Deborah's face.

YEMIMA

Bo, Mahir!

The dog hurries over to the little girl and sits down beside
her. The dog looks up at Eliezer. It's now three to one, and
the "one" has already lost. He just doesn't know it yet.

AVIKHA'YIL

Bo!

Eliezer throws up his hands.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: (3)

121

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Yemima, Avikha'yil...

Eliezer gets down on his knees to hug his two toddlers.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Mi haya ma'amin? Bebait shemedabrim
 bo Ivrit, kelev shemevin Ivrit
 nish'ar. Mishpakhat Ben-Yehuda
 mekabelet bevrakha kol ekhad
 shemedaber Ivrit... Afilu Kelev.

(subtitles)
 Who knew? In a Hebrew speaking home,
 if the dog knows Hebrew, the dog
 stays. The Ben-Yehuda family welcomes
 anyone who speaks Hebrew... even a
 dog.

Deborah laughs, the family hugs, and the dog yips and dances around them. Deborah COUGHS as they rejoice. Eliezer looks up with concern at Deborah as she coughs. He pulls out his handkerchief absentmindedly and gives it to her, not knowing the seriousness of her illness. She coughs a couple of times into it as the children rejoice with the dog. She pulls the handkerchief from her mouth and looks at it.

INSERT -- DEBORAH'S HANDKERCHIEF

It's RED with blood.

BACK TO SCENE

She folds the handkerchief into her hand, hiding it from her husband as the children and Eliezer play with Mahir. Eliezer glances at her with a look of concern. She just smiles weakly at him. HOLD FOR A BEAT on her uneasy response, then FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

122 EXT. RAFAEL MEIR'S HOME (1890) -- EVENING**122**

ESTABLISH the MASSIVE HOUSE as we SUPER the DATE in the HEBREW Calendar: 2 Iyar 5650. LOSE the DATE. We HEAR the VOICE (O.S.) of Rafael Meir:

MEIR (O.S.)

Let us hear the charges.

SUPER a NEW DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR, so we now read 22 April 1890. We HEAR the response:

RABBI #1 (O.S.)

It has been seven years now since the khalutzim started Rishon Lezion.

HOLD FOR A BEAT, LOSE SUPER, then CUT TO:

123 INT. RAFAEL MEIR'S HOME (1890) -- EVENING**123**

As before in Scene 96, the two GUARDS in uniform and wearing swords are standing guard with impassionate faces. The council of Rabbis and holy men of Jerusalem meets to declare kherem against Ben-Yehuda. The rabbi CONTINUES.

RABBI #1

Ben-Yehuda is telling the settlements that they can ignore the shmitah! Here is the proof!

He passes a copy of Hatzvi to one of the men. They each, in turn, glance at the paper and pass it on to Meir.

RABBI #2

The seventh year, the land must lie fallow. He defies the Council!

RABBI #3

And he has started what he calls Va'ad HaLashon Ha'Ivrit to make Hebrew the common tongue of everyone!

RABBI #1

And he hosts young people by the dozens... and women... in his home! They call themselves the Biluyim. They say it's from the Bible...

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

RABBI #2
 (nodding, reciting
 from memory)
 "Beit Ya'acov leku venelekha."

RABBI #3
 Isaiah chapter 2, verse 5. Sons of
 Jacob, come, let us go!

RABBI #1
 Sons of Baalzevuv, you mean!

The room ERUPTS in complaints and vigorous CRIES from the assembled LEADERS. Once again, Meir holds up his hand and the complaints die out. He nods to a YOUNG SCRIBE, who picks up a pen and prepares to write. Meir recites his proclamation with a solemn and deep voice.

MEIR
 So let it be written: The publication Hatzvi is hereby exposed as a tool of heretics and is therefor put into kherem, as is the building where the paper is edited, and the house where it is printed.

CUT TO:

124 EXT. JERUSALEM SYNAGOGUE (1890) -- EVENING

124

Meir's VOICE continues (V.O.) as Eliezer and Ben-Zion walk through the streets of Jerusalem.

MEIR (V.O.)
 Any person associated with the paper Hatzvi is severed from the community of Israel. As for Ben-Yehuda, you came into our midst, a foreigner. You put on a long robe and a prayer shawl to deceive us!

125 EXT. JERUSALEM SYNAGOGUE (1890) -- EVENING

125

Eliezer and Ben-Zion approach the synagogue. TWO ELDERLY JEWISH MEN angrily turn them away from the synagogue.

MEIR (V.O.)
 You grew a beard and attended synagogue, but you did not succeed in your diabolical plan.

126 INT. JERUSALEM SYNAGOGUE (1890) -- EVENING

126

A RABBI lights a BLACK CANDLE. He reads the BILL OF EXCOMMUNICATION to the CONGREGATION as the V.O. CONTINUES.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

126

MEIR (V.O.)

We knew you from the very start! You are a heretic! Let it be known among all the sons of Israel, that all who associate with him shall be known as his allies, and will suffer a similar fate!

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the black candle as it burns, then CUT TO:

127 **EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1890) -- DAY**

127

We are near the marketplace, an area filled with PEOPLE, both merchants and shoppers, Arab, Jewish, and Christian. Through the crowd moves Ben-Zion, now EIGHT YEARS OLD, with his dog Mahir, who scampers happily alongside him, exploring the various displays in the open marketplace. As he walks, an old ARAB VENDOR greets him with a smile and a "Salaam" and presses some DRIED DATES into his hand. Ben-Zion greets him with a cheerful "Shalom" and thanks him with a courteous bow. He moves away, chomping on his dates, and turns a corner to find...

A GROUP OF BOYS

They are dressed in the orthodox style, wearing ringlets and caps befitting of their class. These are the same boys that were tormenting the dog in Scene 116, but this time they carry stones, not just sticks. They intimidate Ben-Zion into a corner, surrounding him.

BULLY

(pointing)

There he is!

BULLY #2

And his dog, the one he named after our Rabbi!

They throw their rocks, hitting the dog. It YELPS in pain. Ben-Zion moves in front of the dog to protect him. Undaunted, they take their sticks and begin to beat him. His CRIES go unheeded as they show no mercy.

BEN-ZION'S POV

CGI FX: one of the boys raises his arm and FLINGS A STONE DIRECTLY AT CAMERA.

BACK TO SCENE

Ben-Zion lies on his back. BLOOD stains his forehead and shirt. We HEAR the dog's YELPS go silent, O.S. as we see just the FEET and KNEES of his assailants. After a beat, the

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

cowards leave. We ZOOM IN on Ben-Zion. FLIES land on his face and in the blood. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then we HEAR HEAVY FOOTSTEPS COMING CLOSER. A pair of BLACK SHINY BOOTS steps INTO THE SHOT.

The MAN wearing the boots kneels down INTO THE SHOT and we SEE... the TURKISH CONSTABLE from Scene 85. His impassionate face softens. He picks up the boy. Ben-Zion's MOAN tells us the boy still lives. The constable STEPS OUT OF THE SHOT, carrying the boy. As he moves away, we see the body of the dog. It lies curled against the wall, stoned to death. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CROSS FADE TO:

128 INT. HATZVI OFFICE (1890) -- AFTERNOON**128**

SUPER the DATE: SIX MONTHS LATER. Eliezer is at work on his editorial, typesetting the article by hand. Eliezer no longer wears the clothing of a Sephardic Jew. His clothing is now distinctly European. Gone are his full beard and earlocks. A VAN DYKE beard replaces Eliezer's full beard. We HEAR a BELL RING on the front door as we LOSE the DATE. The FIGURE of Nissim Bekhar fills the door frame.

BEKHAR

Ben-Yehuda...

Eliezer looks up for a beat, then goes back to work.

BEKHAR (CONT'D)

(notes the beard,
then in Hebrew)

Ben-Yehuda! Hazakan? Habgadim?

(subtitles)

Your beard? The clothes?

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, without
looking up)

Hayehudim makhrimim oti. Al-ken ani
makhrim otam.

(subtitles)

The Jews have rejected me. I have
rejected them.

Bekhar is taken aback, then down to business. He gestures quickly as Ben-Yehuda works on his typesetting, looking down at the type case over his glasses.

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Ben-Yehuda! Bo!

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Et bgadeihem bekhof ofen. Ani ohev
et zkani.

(subtitles)

Well, their clothes, anyway. And I
like my beard.

Eliezer looks up, realizes he has forgotten something.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Ma habe'aya? Ma hapa'am?

(subtitles)

What's wrong? Is it time?

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Ken!

Eliezer turns from the typesetting table and grabs his coat.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Akh Immi... hi megiya hayom.

(subtitles)

But my mother... she's due to arrive
today.

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Hi kvar po. Hevrakhnu ota betokh...
sac tapuhkei adama.

(subtitles)

She has already arrived! We had to
smuggle her in... in a potato sack!

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, putting
on his coat)

Hi le'olam lo tislakh il.

(subtitles)

She will never forgive me.

BEKHAR

(in Hebrew)

Shnei bikurim beyom ekhad! Feygeh
mashgikha al Shlomit, bitkha she'akh
nolda!

(subtitles)

Two new arrivals in one day! Even
now, Feygeh is watching Shlomit,
your newborn daughter!

(MORE)

Bekhar holds out a special prize to Eliezer.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED: (2)

128

BEKHAR (CONT'D)
 (beat; then, in Hebrew)
 Hatirste le'ashen cigar?
 (no subtitles)
 Would you like a cigar?

Eliezer thinks about it as he straightens his collar.

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Bat... Ata ve'minhagey hagoyim. Salek
 et ze.
 (subtitles)
 A daughter! You and your goyim
 customs. Put that away.

Beat, as Nissim taunts him with the cigar. Eliezer shrugs and takes the cigar from him.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Kadima!
 (subtitles)
 Let's go!

WIPE TO:

129 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1889) -- AFTERNOON

129

Feygeh, now in her late 60's, paces the room, cooing and holding the newborn SHLOMIT.

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew)
 Immi...
 (no subtitles)
 Mother...

Eliezer and Nissim ENTER. Eliezer embraces his elderly mother. He senses something is wrong. He steps back, looking at her. The PAIN in her eyes says it all. Her eyes direct her son to the rear bedroom. She speaks to him in English.

FEYGEH
 Eliezer! D'vorah... You did not tell
 me she has the tuberculosis!

Out of the bedroom steps DR. MAZIAH, mid 50's, dressed in a business suit. He carries the bag of a medical professional. Eliezer speaks to him in English because Dr. Maziah does not speak Hebrew at this point in time.

ELIEZER
 Who called for the doctor? We cannot
 afford...

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

FEYGEH

I called him. The midwives... they say you are in kherem. They will not help D'vorah. What is this kherem? And the doctor, he has been paid.

Eliezer turns to Dr. Maziah. Maziah's look is less than encouraging.

MAZIAH

There is nothing I can do. It's too late. The baby, the tuberculosis. Your wife... she is just too weak.

With a CRY of DISTRESS, Eliezer rushes into the room. Deborah lies on the bed. She is dying.

DEBORAH

(weakly, in Hebrew)
Nasikh sheli...
(subtitles)
My... prince.

ELIEZER

Sh-h-h.

DEBORAH

(weakly, in Hebrew)
Ata tsarikh... likhtov.
(subtitles)
You must write...

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)
Ani amshikh likhtov, D'vorah sheli.
Ani amshikh et hamilon...
(subtitles)
I will, D'vorah sheli. The dictionary will continue...

Deborah shakes her head weakly. He does not understand that she does not refer to his essays or his dictionary.

DEBORAH

(weakly, in Hebrew)
Lo... Le'Paula... Hi tsrikha...
(subtitles)
To Paula... She must...

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)
Akhotekh, Paula? Ma Paula tsrikha?
(subtitles)
Your sister, Paula? Paula must... what?

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED: (2)

129

DEBORAH
 (weakly, in Hebrew,
 almost a whisper now)
 Lavo...
 (subtitles)
 Come...

Deborah dies.

ELIEZER
 (a whisper)
 D'vorah... D'vorah sheli.

Tears flowing, Eliezer looks up at Feygeh, who looks at him in tears as she holds Shlomit.

FEYGEH
 (in English)
 She sent her a letter... last week.
 I... I don't know what she told her.

We HOLD FOR A BEAT on their sadness as we HEAR a MOURNFUL KADESH and the SOUND OF THUNDER (O.S.). We hear the SOUND of RAIN, O.S. and then we CUT TO:

130 EXT. MOUNT OF OLIVES GRAVE SITE (1891) -- DAY

130

It's RAINING. The KADESH CONTINUES. Eliezer stands before a HEADSTONE with three SMALLER HEADSTONES as the RAIN pours off his UMBRELLA and around the headstones. Ben-Zion, now 10 years old, stands beside him. With Eliezer is Nissim Bekhar, who stands silently with his own umbrella.

We SEE Deborah's name, and the names of three of his children, ENGRAVED IN HEBREW on the headstones.

Eliezer stands silently in the RAIN, just looking at the graves. We HEAR the V.O. of Paula, Deborah's sister, as she reads a letter to him in English. Paula has changed her name to HEMDA. She speaks in English.

HEMDA (V.O.)
 My dear Eliezer... I am so very sorry to hear of the loss of Avikha'yil, Atara and Shlomit from the recent influenza epidemic. Coming on top of your recent loss of D'vorah, your wife and my sister, these seem almost too much to bear. Please believe that at the end of this long tunnel, there must be a bright light shining for you.

131 INT. JONAS SITTING ROOM (1892) -- MORNING 131

Paula, now known as HEMDA to Eliezer, sits at a small desk, writing her letter. She is now a beautiful young lady of 21 years of age. Her V.O. CONTINUES as she writes.

HEMDA (V.O.)

I am sure that soon your mourning will turn to celebrating, your sadness to joy. Forgive me for not writing this letter in Hebrew, but I have only just begun my studies at the University, where I have joined the Sons of Israel. Please write to me soon. Lovingly yours, Hemda.

HOLD FOR A BEAT as the rain falls. CUT TO:

132 EXT. RAFAEL MEIR'S HOME (1894) -- NIGHT 132

It's RAINING here, too. Horse-drawn CARRIAGES deposit the RABBIS and HOLY MEN who have come to meet a third time about the heretic who still plagues the land of Israel. We hear the voice of RABBI #1, O.S.

RABBI #1 (O.S.)

HaShem has cursed him. Ben-Yehuda's health is failing. His wife is dead.

133 INT. RAFAEL MEIR'S HOME (1894) -- NIGHT 133

As before in Scene 96 and Scene 119, the two GUARDS in uniform and wearing swords are standing guard with impassionate faces. The council of Rabbis and holy men of Jerusalem are meeting once again to seal the fate of Ben-Yehuda. The three RABBIS are gathered around RAFAEL MEIR.

RABBI #2

And three of his children, too.

RABBI #3

Soon we will be rid of Ben-Yehuda and his heretical ideas forever.

Meir holds the latest edition of Hatzvi.

MEIR

We cannot wait. Even now he spews more lies about our khalukka.

RABBI #1

Our income is down.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

RABBI #2

And the khalutzim continue to come.
The Turkish authorities cannot stop
them.

RABBI #3

Ben-Yehuda and his followers... they
smuggle the khalutzim in. They say
his mother came in... in a sack of
potatoes!

MEIR

If Ben-Yehuda goes on like this,
everyone will be following the
heretic. Soon we shall lose our place
and our nation.

Meir tosses the copy of Hatzvi to the floor in front of the
three rabbis. The action brings an idea to the mind of Rabbi
#1.

RABBI #1

But... if there were no Hatzvi...

RABBI #2

Yes! Yes... the man is so proud of
his work. "Words, words, words!"
He's always saying that.

RABBI #3

We must let his own words trap him.

MEIR

(grim smile)

Excellent. Find something in his own
words that we... no, the authorities
can use. The Turkish police will
hang Ben-Yehuda for us.

All are agreed! Meir's LAUGHTER and the LAUGHTER of the others
in the room ECHOES as we CUT TO:

134 EXT. RAFAEL MEIR'S HOME (1894) -- NIGHT**134**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Still the RAIN COMES DOWN and the LAUGHTER
ECHOES in the night. ON A FLASH of LIGHTNING, we FLASH CUT
TO:

135 INT. JONAS STUDY (1894) -- DAY**135**

Hemda writes like the woman she is, a woman determined to
reach her goal. She VOICES her letter as she writes.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

135

HEMDA

November 27th, 1894. My dearest Eliezer. Please forgive me for being so bold, but I can no longer wait for events to happen in their own due course. You are now a widower, and you have two little children who need the attention and guidance that only a mother can give them.

136 INT. HATZVI OFFICE (1894) -- DAY

136

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Eliezer is reading her letter leisurely as he munches on a sandwich. The WORD CARDS for his dictionary are scattered around him in haphazard order. The place is a mess. It definitely needs a woman's touch.

HEMDA (V.O.)

You are very busy with your newspaper and your dictionary project and cannot spend much time with them either. I feel that you should get married again, and soon.

He laughs as he reads the letter. They comment TOGETHER in English.

ELIEZER

Who would marry a man like me...?

His voice trails off as Hemda's voice continues.

HEMDA (V.O.)

You may ask, who will marry a man like me, a tubercular man with little means and two young children?

Eliezer sits up at this and takes notices.

HEMDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I will! I have a natural love for your children, for they are my sister's children, and kin to me, too. So, dear Eliezer, I am offering myself to you, and I await your reply. Shelkha be'ahava. Hemda.

Eliezer's reaction: he drops the sandwich, he runs his hand through his thinning hair, and laughs out loud. After a beat, he smiles, then responds in English, translating her Hebrew for our audience.

ELIEZER

Lovingly yours, Hemda...
(MORE)

He holds the amazing letter in his hands, chuckling quietly to himself. But then... a look of sadness crosses his face, then a look of hope, then... hey, why not?

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

I accept!

(smiles to himself)

But... don't you think I should have
done the asking?

(then)

Oy.... what will mother say?

137 EXT. JAFFA PORT (1894) -- AFTERNOON**137**

TO ESTABLISH. One thing has changed since the day when Eliezer and Deborah arrived: Hemda is being brought to shore by a primitive steam-driven WATER TAXI. As the boat touches the shore, Eliezer and Eliezer's CHILDREN are waiting to greet her. He is excited to see her. The children are reluctant. But they are just one family among dozens waiting to greet their new arrivals. He looks around, trying to spot Hemda in the crowd.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ata ro'e ota?

(subtitles)

Can you see her?

ITAMAR

(in Hebrew)

Eineni yodea keitzad hi nir'et.

(subtitles)

I don't know what she looks like.

Eliezer spots her first. She is wearing the latest in European fashion for 1894.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Hine, Sham!

(subtitles)

There!

Eliezer pushes through the crowd to the boat. Itamar and the other other children follow him.

AT THE WATER TAXI

Eliezer offers his hand formally to Hemda. She smiles coyly and takes it.

HEMDA

(in Hebrew)

Ko rishmi. Kakh mekabl'im et hakala?

(subtitles)

So formal. Is his how you greet your
bride?

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

137

Eliezer lifts her from the boat as he did with Deborah when they first touched the shore. Beside them the ARAB BOAT HANDLERS unload her LUGGAGE and STEAMER TRUNKS.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Bitti, brukha haba'a le'eretz Israel.

(subtitles)

Bitti, welcome to the land of Israel.

As she sets her foot on the shore for the first time, the children approach. They are quiet and reserved. She looks up at Eliezer. He begins the introduction.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Bitti, zeho bkhori, Itamar. Zohi imkha hakhadasha. Ve'elu hem...

(subtitles)

This is my first-born, Itamar. This is your new mother. And this is...

HEMDA

(in Hebrew)

Lo!

(to Eliezer)

Rak rega, ahuvi.

(subtitles)

One moment, my beloved.

She sits down on one of the steamer trunks. She holds out her hands.

HEMDA (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Eini imkha. Leolam lo ekakh et mekoma, ve'lo enase lakakhat et mekoma.

Einakha tzarikh likro li "imma", kra li...

(subtitles)

I am not your mother. I can never replace her in your eyes. And I will not try. So, please, don't call me "imma". Call me...

She looks up at Eliezer, searching for a word. She makes one up.

HEMDA (CONT'D)

... "amma".

Eliezer rolls his eyes at the attempt.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED: (2)

137

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Ein zo mila.

(subtitles)

That's not a word.

HEMDA

(in Hebrew)

Ata yotser milim kol hazman. "Abba"
ze abba. "Imma" ze imma. Ani "amma"
bishvilam -- lo imma velo abba. Yesh
lekha mila yoter tova?

(subtitles)

You make up words all the time. "Abba"
is father. "Imma" is mother. "Amma"
is what I am to them -- neither father
nor mother. You have a better word?

ELIEZER

(smiles, shakes his
head)

Lo!

HEMDA

(in Hebrew)

Ata ro'e? Anu tsrikhim la'avod
beyakhad al hamilon.

(subtitles)

See? We shall work your dictionary
together.

Hemda turns to embrace the children.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Kakh ye'ase! Tikar'ii "Amma".

(subtitles)

It shall do! "Amma" it is.

The children embrace her with cries of "Amma!" WE HEAR the
O.S. SOUND of GLASS BREAKING, a CROWD SHOUTS "MAZEL TOV"
O.S. and we HEAR JEWISH WEDDING MUSIC. HOLD FOR A BEAT on
Eliezer as he smiles at the reaction of the children to his
new wife. He COUGHS a COUPLE of times, then we CUT TO:

138 EXT. HATZVI OFFICE (1894) -- DAY**138**

The evidence of the RAIN from the night before lies in puddles
in the street. THROUGH THE WINDOW, we SEE Eliezer at work at
his stand-up desk inside the office. Hemda is with him,
sorting WORD CARDS at the editor's desk. We HEAR O.S. the
SOUND of MARCHING BOOTS.

139 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1894) -- DAY**139**

TRACKING SHOT along the muddy street. The MARCHING BOOTS are REFLECTED in the PUDDLES OF WATER as we TRACK ALONG THE STREET.

140 INT. HATZVI OFFICE (1894) -- DAY**140**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Eliezer is typesetting his newspaper by hand. Hemda sits next to him at the editor's desk, sorting the word cards. We HEAR a WHISTLE being blown O.S., the SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS MARCHING, and the TURKISH POLICE burst through the door. At the head of the GROUP OF TURKISH POLICEMEN is the CONSTABLE from Scene 85 and Scene 123. He speaks in English.

CONSTABLE

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda?

ELIEZER

Ani Ben-Yehuda.

(off the constable's
blank stare)

I am Ben-Yehuda.

CONSTABLE

Hatzvi is shut down indefinitely.
Your permit has been revoked.

ELIEZER

Revoked... but why?

CONSTABLE

You are charged with inciting
rebellion against the Emperor. You
are the Emperor's prisoner. You will
come with me. Now!

With a nod to his MEN, two of the OFFICERS handcuff Eliezer. As they do, one of the policemen brushes against the stacks of word cards. They fall to the floor, a hopeless mess. Hemda CRIES OUT.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Bitti, hamilon!

(subtitles)

The dictionary, bitti!

CONSTABLE

(to his men)

Take him!

HEMDA

Eliezer!

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

ELIEZER
 (in Hebrew, to Hemda)
 At khayevet limsto motsi la'or.
 (subtitles)
 You must find a publisher for us!

The policemen forcefully remove Eliezer from the office. He calls out over his shoulder to her as they take him away.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)
 (in Hebrew)
 Berlin! S'ii le'Berlin!
 Langenscheidt... hotsa'at sfarim
 la'or. Havtikhi li!
 (subtitles)
 Berlin! You must go to Berlin!
 Langenscheidt... the publishing firm!
 Promise me!

They pull him from the office.

141 EXT. HATZVI OFFICE (1894) -- DAY**141**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. The constable looks around at the curious onlookers. He nods his head very slightly in recognition. We SEE the THREE RABBIS from Meir's home as they take Eliezer off to jail.

As the constable leaves with his prisoner, we PAN to REST on NISSIM BEKHAR as Hemda joins him, in tears. His face reflects a mixture of anger and shock. Bekhar sees the three rabbis. He recognizes the cause of the problem.

BEKHAR
 Meir...

HOLD FOR A BEAT on BEKHAR, then DISSOLVE TO:

142 EXT. LANGENSCHIEDT OFFICE IN BERLIN (1894) -- DAY**142**

MOS OVER MUSIC. TO ESTABLISH. Hemda, dressed in traveling clothes, steps INTO THE SHOT. She carries a large PACKAGE wrapped in heavy brown paper and tied with string.

We hear the V.O. words in English of Eliezer, as he reads from one of his essays on unity.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
 We are sick, and we refuse to
 recognize the source of our malady.

Hemda approaches the office door and steps inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

143 INT. JERUSALEM SYNAGOGUE (1894) -- EVENING 143

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Nissim works tirelessly, speaking to a group of JEWISH MEN in words we CANNOT HEAR. Whatever he is saying, it is controversial.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

It is the fragmentation of our people into parties at all the wrong times.

DISSOLVE TO:

144 INT. LANGENSCHIEDT OFFICE IN BERLIN (1894) -- DAY 144

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Hemda argues with an EDITOR. We cannot hear what she is saying, but she is obviously enthusiastic. She unwraps her package and places the dictionary manuscript on the desk.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

Every time war came upon us, if we were united, our enemies were not capable of harming us, and every time we split into opposing parties, we were subjugated and beaten.

DISSOLVE TO:

145 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1894) -- DAY 145

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Itamar (now in his MID-TEENS) is arguing with a group of TEENAGERS. They ridicule him, but he continues.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

We have gone through two thousand years of suffering, persecution, and exile.

DISSOLVE TO:

146 INT. LANGENSCHIEDT OFFICE IN BERLIN (1894) -- AFTERNOON 146

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. The editor has been joined by a senior PUBLISHER. They listen to Hemda. After a beat, the publisher extends his hand to her. They shake hands and the deal is settled.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

We have gone through deportation, murder and plunder, all because we were split into small and powerless groups, and still we have not learned our lesson.

(CONTINUED)

Ben-Yehuda -- Draft 2009021870 -- ACT FIVE 147.

146 CONTINUED: 146

Hemda breathes a sigh of relief and we DISSOLVE TO:

147 INT. RUSSIAN READING ROOM, PARIS (1895) -- MORNING 147

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. Tchachnikov, FIFTEEN YEARS OLDER than we last saw him, reads the morning "London Times" paper. A look of concern is on his face.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
But what is this one point on which
all of us can unite?

INSERT -- THE HEADLINE ON A SMALL STORY

"Zionist to be Released"

BACK TO SCENE

as the V.O. CONTINUES. Tchachnikov shakes his head, then turns to another story.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What is the matter that all of us,
orthodox and enlightened, Khasidim
and opponents of Khasidim, nationals
of one land or another...

DISSOLVE TO:

148 INT. PARIS BOOK STORE (1895) -- DAY 148

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. In the b.g. we now see the Eiffel Tower, which was built just six years before. It's the same bookstore where Eliezer bought his copy of *Daniel Deronda*. The same BOOKSTORE CLERK, now 17 years older, places copies of the first volume of Eliezer's dictionary onto a bookstore shelf.

ELIEZER (V.O.)
...can work together in order to
achieve the deliverance of the whole
nation, and the preservation of our
people?

DISSOLVE TO:

149 EXT. TURKISH PRISON IN JERUSALEM (1895) -- DAY 149

MOS OVER MUSIC CONTINUES. The massive wooden doors open and Eliezer walks out slowly. SUPER THE DATE: ONE YEAR LATER. His health is crippled, and he walks with a limp. He is surrounded by the crowd as his VOICE-OVER demonstrates the heart and soul of a man with an idea and a commitment, and who cannot and will not be defeated by iron bars.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

As Eliezer walks, some of the orthodox Jews in the crowd watch him with TEARS; others confront him with HATE. And still he walks through the crowd. Their attitudes demonstrate the truth of what we HEAR, part of a speech that Eliezer continues in English:

ELIEZER (V.O.)

What is it if not the resettlement
of the Land of Israel?

Hemda meets him in the crowd. With her is ITAMAR, now an OLDER TEENAGER. Hemda carries a copy of the first volume of the dictionary.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Only this will bring healing to our
national body, and only on this path
can we walk hand in hand together...

She takes Eliezer's right hand. Itamar takes his left hand. They walk through the crowd proudly.

HEMDA

(in Hebrew)

Bo... Yesh lanu milon lehashlim.

(subtitles)

Come... we have a dictionary to
complete.

Eliezer nods weakly and takes the CLOAK that Itamar offers him. The V.O. CONTINUES in English as they walk through the crowd.

Among the crowd are RABBI MEIR and the other leaders who met in his house. Their angry, hate-filled glares confront them. Hemda offers the dictionary to Meir.

ELIEZER (V.O.)

Why must some destroy our faith,
others our traditions, and still
others our national body?

Meir refuses to take it. AVI, his aide, takes it. Meir glares at him for taking the book.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Why do we not see that if we do not
unite, the end is near?

(MORE)

The hate-filled glares follow Eliezer, Hemda, and Itamar as they continue past Meir and his followers. Avi smiles shrewdly and tears the volume of the dictionary to pieces.

Meir approves of the destruction of the book. Avi throws the pieces into the street as the Ben-Yehudas move away. The

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED: (2)

149

torn pieces of the dictionary float away down the gutter, exactly like the Robinson Crusoe book earlier in our story.

ELIEZER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And that unity must be around the
resettlement of the Land of Israel!

CAMERA, ON CRANE, BEGINS TO RISE. We see a CROWD of a THOUSAND SUPPORTERS and OPPONENTS surrounding the gate to the prison and pushing and shoving each other as the Ben-Yehuda family move bravely forward. HOLD FOR A LONG BEAT, then FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

150 INT. NEW GRAND HOTEL IN JERUSALEM (1916) -- AFTERNOON

150

The leaders of the Jewish settlements are gathered in an otherwise empty ballroom. Present are a young DAVID BEN-GURION (to become Israel's first premier), MEIR DIZENGOFF, Tel-Aviv's founder and mayor, and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Hemda, and their son Itamar.

BEN-GURION

(to Dizengoff)

Meir Dizengoff! Ma shlom Tel Aviv? O
shema alai lehagid "kvod Rosh ha'ir"?
(subtitles)

How are things in Tel Aviv? Or is it
"Mr. Mayor" now?

Dizengoff acknowledges the accolade with a sad smile.

DIZENGOFF

Ben-Gurion, haturkim, hem...
(subtitles)
The Turks, they...

The conversation is interrupted by the entrance of GAMAL PASHA, the governor of Jerusalem, together with a phalanx of AIDES and TURKISH POLICEMEN. The babble of conversation comes to an end as Pasha walks among them in silence. After a beat:

PASHA

So... you are the leaders of the
Jews in this country. Well, the
Ottoman empire rules the land. And I
am its governor!

He stops, coming to a halt in front of Eliezer and Hemda.

PASHA (CONT'D)

If this talk of Zionism continues,
all of you will be exiled! Zionism
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

PASHA (CONT'D)
is now and for all times forbidden
in Turkey and all its territories.

The room erupts in murmurs.

PASHA (CONT'D)
(shouting over the
crowd)
Turkey is for Turks! Only faithful
and obedient Ottoman citizens will
be tolerated from now on.
(his gaze rests on
Eliezer)
Is there anyone who wishes to respond
to me?

Eliezer remains silent for a beat, then he starts to speak.
But Hemda interrupts him.

HEMDA
Governor Pasha, are you the man
responsible for putting my husband
in jail?

Pasha is taken aback by the gentle voice of Hemda.

HEMDA (CONT'D)
Why was he released, Governor Pasha?

PASHA
Mrs. Ben-Yehuda...

HEMDA
Was it the international pressure
from your unrighteous actions? Was
it the cries of the women and children
you have oppressed?

Eliezer rolls his eyes. She shoots him a glance, but ignores
his unspoken protest.

HEMDA (CONT'D)
Or was it your own guilty conscience
that set my husband free? What will
it take, Governor Pasha, to free the
Jews in their own homeland?

Ben-Gurion and Dizengoff gently take her by the arm. Eliezer
and Itamar concur as they escort her out of the room.

PASHA
Only faithful and obedient...

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED: (2)

150

HEMDA

(interrupting)

Yes, yes. We have heard all of that...

PASHA

...Ottoman citizens will be tolerated
from now on.

The crowd closes around them as they move toward the exit.

BEN-GURION

Eliezer, aleikhem la'azov et
Yerusaleim.

(subtitles)

You and your family must leave
Jerusalem.

HEMDA

Le'olan lo!

(shouting back over
her shoulder)

Netzakh Yisrael lo yeshaker!

(subtitles)

Never!

BEN-GURION

The Eternal One of Israel will not
lie. First Samuel 15:29.

(in Hebrew)

Milim mesukanot, Ben-Yehuda.

(subtitles)

Dangerous words.

ELIEZER

Ben-Gurion, einenu mefakhadim
me'hapasha.

(subtitles)

We are not afraid of Governor Pasha.

BEN-GURION

(whispering)

Shmuot mesaprot ki yeshna makhteret
beshem Nil'i asher merglim letovat
habritim keneged haturkim.

(subtitles)

There is a small organization called
Nil'i who are spying for the British
against the Turks.

DIZENGOFF

Ein zo she'ela shel pakhad. Yeshnam
od kravot, yedidai.

(subtitles)

It is not a question of fear. There
are other battlefields, my friends.

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED: (3)

150

BEN-GURION

Ve'zmanim tovim yoter, Ben-Yehuda.
 Sa le'America. Haker zionim Americaim.
 Shakhnea otam la'azor lanu berga'im
 kashim elu.

(subtitles)

And better times. Go to America.
 Meet with the American Zionists.
 Convince them to help us in our hour
 of greatest need.

Eliezer hesitates.

BEN-GURION (CONT'D)

Ha'amen li, ezratkha be'Ney York
 to'il lanu yoter me'asher
 m'yerusahlaim.

(subtitles)

Believe me when I tell you. You can
 be ten times more useful to us in
 New York than in Jerusalem.

Eliezer considers this as they are roughly pulled from the room by their friends. The remaining people in the room block the police from following them. HOLD FOR A BEAT on the contentious scene, and then CUT TO:

151 EXT. NEW YORK CITY (1917) -- LATE AFTERNOON**151**

CGI FX: ESTABLISH the SKYLINE of 1917 New York City. SUPER the PLACE and DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR:

New York City
 29 Tevet 5677

We HEAR the O.S. VOICE of Eliezer. He speaks in Hebrew first.

ELIEZER (O.S.)

Yehudim yekarim, yedidim yekarim.

LOSE SUPER. Hold for a beat on the skyline, then cut to:

152 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL BALL ROOM (1917) -- EVENING**152**

Eliezer, now 59 YEARS OLD and Hemda, now 40 YEARS OLD, are attending a Jewish conference in New York. They are dressed in FORMAL WEAR appropriate for a high society awards dinner.

ELIEZER

Precious Jews, precious friends.
 (MORE)

SUPER a NEW DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR, so we now read: 23 January 1917. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER as Eliezer speaks the rest of his speech in English for his audience.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

Eliezer and Hemda are the guests of honor. A BANNER stretches across the back wall and tells us this is the "Zionist Organization of America".

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

I have lived in Jerusalem for the past thirty-five years.

CAMERA MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM. We SEE the REACTIONS of the CROWD as Eliezer speaks. All of the reactions are enthusiastic.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

I have seen many changes over the years. Some births... the third volume of my Hebrew dictionary is now in print.

POLITE APPLAUSE from the CROWD.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

And some deaths. I have buried five of my children on the Mount of Olives.

REACTIONS of PAINFUL SYMPATHY move across the ASSEMBLED MEN and WOMEN. Hemda smiles sadly.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

A great war has taken the world by the throat. My friends in Jerusalem demanded we come here, to America, to let you know of the struggles the Jewish nation now faces.

(he looks over to a
JEWISH COUPLE)

If it were not for the Wortheims, we would have no place to stay here in New York.

The AUDIENCE LAUGHS good-naturedly as the WORTHEIMS nod in acknowledgment of the thanks. Mr. Worthiem moves forward and steps to the LECTERN.

WORTHEIM

Ben-Yehuda, there are those of us present who would look at you as one of the prophets of ancient Israel, who were often unpopular but always true to their calling. Ben-Yehuda... you are a fanatic!

(audience LAUGHTER)

But you are a faithful fanatic! Every breath of your life has been dedicated to improving the lot of our people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED: (2)

152

WORTHEIM (CONT'D)

Men such as you make a nation immortal.
You have worked to make a home for
our nation.

TWO YOUNG MEN comes forward with a long WHITE CLOTH, ROLLED
and HELD BETWEEN them.

WORTHEIM (CONT'D)

Now it is our turn. We shall work to
make a home for you. We have something
for you. First...

Wortheim gestures to the two men. They unfurl the cloth and
we SEE the NEW FLAG of the nation of Israel, white with two
blue bars and a Star of David between them.

WORTHEIM (CONT'D)

You shall fly this flag as a "matan
am" -- a gift of the nation -- over
your new home... in Jerusalem, when
you return after the war.

The audience applauds, but Eliezer is puzzled. He has no
home in Jerusalem.

WORTHEIM (CONT'D)

And second, to help you build your
new home, we are pleased to present
you this check... for ten thousand
dollars.

More APPLAUSE and GASPS of AMAZEMENT. The amount is more
than enough in 1917 dollars to build a new house. Eliezer is
dumbfounded; so are Hemda and Itamar. HOLD FOR A BEAT on
their astonished reactions, then CUT TO:

153 INT. STATE HOUSE, LONDON (1917) -- DAY**153**

British Foreign Minister LORD ARTHUR BALFOUR steps up to a
LECTERN. SUPER the DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR: 17 Cheshvan
5678. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER. Lord Balfour is
surrounded by MEMBERS OF THE PRESS from around the world. A
FLASH goes off as the PHOTOGRAPHERS take pictures.

SUPER the DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR: 2 November 1917.
HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER. For all the excitement, it
could be a press conference held yesterday. He speaks in
English.

LORD BALFOUR

His Majesty's government views with
favor the establishment in Palestine
of a national home for the Jewish
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

LORD BALFOUR (CONT'D)
 people, and will use its best
 endeavors to facilitate the
 achievement of this object.

A REUTERS REPORTER throws up his hand to ask a question of
 the Foreign Minister. He wears a PRESS BADGE with the name
 "REUTERS" on it.

REUTERS REPORTER
 Foreign Minister Balfour, what has
 been the reaction of the Americans
 to your declaration?

LORD BALFOUR
 I should think you should ask
 President Wilson, young man.

HOLD FOR A BEAT as the members of the press jostle each other
 to ask more questions, then CUT TO:

154 EXT. WHITE HOUSE (1917) -- DAY**154**

We HEAR the O.S. VOICE of LOUIS BRANDEIS, as he implores the
 President of the United States.

JUSTICE BRANDEIS (V.O.)
 Mr. President, your Conference of
 Small Nations meets in Philadelphia.
 Who are you going to send to represent
 the Jews?

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

155 INT. WHITE HOUSE (1917) -- DAY**155**

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON sits at a chair in the Oval Office.
 Beside him is LOUIS BRANDIES, mid 50's, an Associate Justice
 of the Supreme Court. A White House SERVANT, a black man,
 pours coffee for the two men, who are seated beside a COFFEE
 TABLE on which sits the MORNING NEWSPAPER. The President
 sips his coffee as he speaks.

PRESIDENT WILSON
 Justice Brandeis, surely you are not
 serious!

JUSTICE BRANDEIS
 I am very serious, Mr. President. As
 you know, I have been a member of
 the Executive Committee of the Zionist
 Federation in Boston.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

155

PRESIDENT WILSON

I am familiar with your work in that area. But do you really believe that the Jews are ready to rule themselves in the Holy Land?

As Brandeis responds, something catches the eye of the President. It's the newspaper on the coffee table. He turns it so he can view an article more easily.

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

Absolutely! There are men who are capable. There is one here in the U.S. right now. His name is Ben-Zion Ben-Yehuda.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Those double Hebrew names!

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

He's a young man now. The same fire in the blood... the blood of his father... burns through the son's veins, too.

The President's eyebrows raise at this.

JUSTICE BRANDEIS (CONT'D)

(smiles)

His pen name is Itamar. He was born in Jerusalem, and his native tongue is Hebrew. But he speaks excellent English as well. I would like to introduce him to you.

The President takes the newspaper from the table. He studies it carefully.

INSERT -- THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

We SEE a report with the headline, "Billy Sunday Comes to Washington Next Week." We SEE a black-and-white PHOTO of BILLY SUNDAY, whose features are frozen in the particular style of evangelistic zeal which made him famous. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT:

BACK TO SCENE

The President tosses the newspaper to the table. It lands in front of Brandeis.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Look at this.

Brandeis cranes his neck to read the headlines.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED: (2)

155

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

Billy Sunday. The evangelist. Very... colorful.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Spoken, sir, like a diplomat. No... very influential. They say he will preach to over a million people this month alone.

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

And you know what that means.

A statement, not a question.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Votes!

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

(smiles)

Spoken, sir, like a politician.

The President laughs, shaking his finger at Brandeis in mock admonishment.

PRESIDENT WILSON

I knew I picked the right man when I appointed you to the Supreme Court.

Brandeis nods his appreciation.

PRESIDENT WILSON (CONT'D)

It means more than that. It means that people approve of what the man says and does, Louis. And not just a few!

(taps the newspaper)

Ten, maybe twenty million Americans will listen to this Billy Sunday this year alone. And they will support who he supports, too. Now... if Sunday's people were to throw their support behind your Zionist fellow...

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

Christian support? Mr. President, the Jews... they... we won't know what to think.

(bitterly)

The Crusades...

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED: (3)

155

PRESIDENT WILSON

(interrupting)

...were a long time ago, Louis. This is America. Things are different now.

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

(quickly)

Are they, Mr. President?

After a beat, the President makes up his mind.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Tell you what... if you can get this Itamar Ben-Yehuda on stage with Billy Sunday, I will make Itamar a delegate to my Conference of Small Nations.

Brandeis picks up the paper and looks at the image of Billy Sunday in the paper. He lifts his coffee cup.

JUSTICE BRANDEIS

Agreed.

(toasts him with the coffee cup)

L'khaim!

Brandeis and the President salute the deal. They CLINK their coffee cups together and each takes a drink. HOLD FOR A BEAT, as Brandeis drops the newspaper onto the coffee table.

ECU -- THE NEWSPAPER

as it DROPS INTO THE SHOT. HOLD FOR A BEAT on the PHOTO of BILLY SUNDAY as we HEAR the O.S. SHOUTS of "Amen" and "Hallelujah" from the crowd as BILLY SUNDAY PREACHES. We ANIMATE THE PHOTO as he speaks and PULL INTO THE PHOTO until it FILLS THE FRAME:

BILLY SUNDAY

Let me tell you folks, I'm against sin! That's right, ladies and gentlemen, Billy Sunday is against sin!

The black and white image TRANSFORMS to COLOR...

156 INT. BILLY SUNDAY RALLY TENT (1917) -- EVENING

156

ECU -- BILLY SUNDAY

as WILLIAM ASHLEY SUNDAY preaches. He is mid-30's, tall, handsome, charismatic. He is dressed in a white shirt, black tie, and suspenders. As he preaches, the CAMERA PULLS BACK

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

156

and AROUND to reveal the inside of an ENORMOUS TENT. Wooden chairs filled with PEOPLE stretch back as far as we can see.

The famous evangelist stands on a LARGE TABLE in the middle of the tent, surrounded by TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND CGI FOLLOWERS. The table is his stage. Billy hefts a BASEBALL BAT as he preaches, going at it with hellfire and brimstone. We HEAR an ORGAN in the background as SHOUTS of "Amen!" and "Preach it" abound from the AUDIENCE. Billy speaks quickly in his unique, run-on sentence style.

BILLY SUNDAY

I'll kick at sin as long as I've got
a foot, and I'll fight at sin as
long as I've got a fist, and I'll
bite at sin as long as I've got a
tooth, and when I'm old and footless
and toothless...

(steps from behind
the lectern)

...I'll gum at sin till I go home to
glory... when my Jesus is gonna knock
my sin on to perdition!

Billy swings the baseball bat like he's hitting a home run. The crowd ERUPTS ENTHUSIASTICALLY; they know that before he hit the sawdust trail, Billy was the best and the highest paid baseball player of his day. Billy pauses to wipe the sweat from his brow with a towel. He looks over to see...

ANGLE -- HELEN SUNDAY

At the edge of the crowd, HELEN SUNDAY (Billy's wife, mid-30's, girl-next-door looks, plainly dressed) stands with ITAMAR BEN-YEHUDA, now mid-20's and dressed in a conservative beige EUROPEAN-STYLE SUIT. Itamar looks around him in amazement at a culture that is so alien to him, but so enthusiastic for the cause of Zionism.

BACK TO SCENE

Billy gestures to his wife, who takes Itamar by the hand and guides him up to the stage. TRUCK WITH THEM, FAVORING BILLY as they MOVE FORWARD.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

I want to preach to you about
somethin' very important t'night!
Somethin' that no-o-o-body's talkin'
about t'night. Do you hear what I'm
saying, church?

(MORE)

We HEAR SHOUTS of "Amen" and "Say it, Billy! Say it!"

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: (2)

156

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

D'ya f-e-e-el what I'm saying, church?

WOMAN IN CROWD

I f-e-e-el it, Billy!

BILLY SUNDAY

I'm talking about the land that Jesus walked. The land that Jesus came to rescue, church! And you know what my Bible says? It says that same Jesus...

MAN IN CROWD

Je-e-sus!

BILLY SUNDAY

That same Jesus... he's gonna come back.

We HEAR SHOUTS of "That's right!"

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

But you know what, church? I say it's high time for Christians to look at unfulfilled prophecies by the light of prophecies already fulfilled. The curses on the Jews were brought to pass literally.

Itamar REACTS to this, at first alarmed, but he softens with the next sentences. As he listens, he notes the reaction to the man's message by the crowd: they are eating it up.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

So also will be the blessings. The scattering was literal; so also will be the gatherings. The pulling down of Zion was literal; so also must be the building up. The rejection of Israel was literal; and so also must be... the restoration!

The crowd GOES WILD, jumping up and SHOUTING. Billy turns to Helen. He beckons her and Itamar up to the "stage" table.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

There's somebody I want y'all to meet t'night!

(bends down from the table, aside to Helen)

Ma, what did you say his name was?

HELEN SUNDAY

Ben-Zion...

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: (3)

156

ITAMAR
 (interrupting, to
 Helen, then to Billy)
 Itamar... my family calls me...

Billy cups his hand to his ear so he can hear over the crowd.

BILLY SUNDAY
 (to Itamar)
 How's that, son?

The YELLS of the crowd drown out what Itamar says. Never having heard the word "Itamar" before, Billy mistakes his name.

<p>ITAMAR Itamar! Ben-Zion Ben-Yehuda.</p>	<p>BILLY SUNDAY Ben? Your name is Ben!? (laughs out loud)</p>
---	---

Before Itamar can finish, Billy grabs him by the collar and PULLS him up a set of steps right up to the front of the crowd as he hands his baseball bat to Helen.

We SEE Ben-Zion's REACTION: he is very much a fish out of water. As Billy speaks, his iron grasp keeps Itamar tightly in front of the crowd.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)
 (to crowd)
 Now, you know me. What's my name, church?

MAN IN CROWD
 Billy!

BILLY SUNDAY
 (cups his ear)
 Say what?!

WOMAN IN CROWD
 You're Billy Sunday!

BILLY SUNDAY
 Well, church, if I'm Billy Sunday, I want you to meet... Benny Saturday!

Billy pulls Itamar forward into the floodlights. Itamar blinks in the light. The crowd goes WILD again! As the SHOUTS subside, Billy continues, his hand tightly on Itamar's shoulder, pulling him front and center.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)
 What right have we to say that the words Judah, Zion, Israel and
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: (4)

156

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

Jerusalem ever mean anything but literal Judah, literal Zion, literal Israel and literal Jerusalem? In the New Testament, Israel and Israelite occur forty times, and all literal, Judah and Judea about twenty times, and literal in every case.

Finally fully in the light, Billy slaps Itamar on the back, then grasps Itamar's neck in a friendly grip.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

Benny here... is a Son of Zion... literally! He's as Jewish as... lox and bagels.

(crowd LAUGHS)

As Jewish as... the city of David!

The crowd goes nuts. Itamar cannot believe what he is seeing.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

(over the crowd)

Benny lives in Jerusalem,

(to Itamar)

...isn't that right, son?

(not waiting for a reply)

...which even now is being liberated from the Turks by General Allenby's army.

The crowd goes even more nuts!

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

Church! I give you our own...

(drawing it out like a boxing announcer)

...Benny Saturday!

In a SOTTO VOICE, Billy Sunday whispers to Itamar.

BILLY SUNDAY (CONT'D)

(sotto)

You got five minutes, son. Make 'em count.

Billy SLAPS him on the back twice. "Benny" stumbles a bit from the big man's blow, moving forward into the light. The crowd welcomes him with SHOUTS of "Preach it, Benny!" Unsure of himself at first, Itamar warms to the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: (5)

156

ITAMAR

(in Hebrew, nervous)

Shalom. Ma shalom ha?

(in English, still nervous)

How are you? It is true, as Mr. Sunday said, I... I am Ben-Zion. It means "Son of Zion." But I am also a son of Ben-Yehuda. That means a "Son of Judah" ...how do you say it? -- a "Son of Praise."

Something about the crowd catches his eye. He turns to one side, and speaks to the left side of the house, awkwardly imitating Billy Sunday's preaching style.

ITAMAR (CONT'D)

Is there anyone here... who is a "Son of Judah?"

Hands go up on the left. Encouraged, Itamar continues to imitate Billy Sunday's preaching style, but this time he nails it perfectly.

ITAMAR (CONT'D)

(to the right side)

Is there anyone here... who is a "Son of Praise?"

Hands go up on the right, then hands go up all over the house. Haltingly at first, Itamar continues to imitate Billy Sunday perfectly as he speaks. Billy and Helen REACT, somewhat amused.

ITAMAR (CONT'D)

In the history of nations, there are times when the realists cannot lead properly. Only the dreamers, those who do not take facts into account, can cross the impregnable boundary of reality and create a better reality for the nation.

(beat)

I'm asking you!

(points to crowd)

Are you a "Son of Judah" tonight!?

More CHEERS, and then slowly the crowd begins to chant "Billy Sunday. Benny Saturday."

ITAMAR (CONT'D)

I am here to tell you, that men like Mr. Sunday say the return to Israel of the Jewish people is a fulfillment

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: (6)

156

ITAMAR (CONT'D)
of Biblical prophecy... the "dry
bones" of Ezekiel will come together
again.

BILLY SUNDAY
(from the back of the
"stage")
Amen, Benny! Amen!

The crowd goes wild.

ITAMAR
(to the crowd)
Do you believe that tonight!?

The crowd rises in applause. HOLD FOR A BEAT on Itamar's
amazed reaction. He turns to look back at Billy.

Billy gives him a "thumbs up" signal. Helen takes Billy's
arm, fully supporting his endorsement.

Itamar looks at the crowd. He smiles. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then
FADE TO BLACK as the crowd enthusiastically reacts. FADE TO
BLACK.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

157 EXT. JERUSALEM HILLS (1917) -- DAY**157**

SUPER the DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR: 30 Kislev 5673. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER.

A column of BRITISH TANKS, INFANTRY, and OFFICERS on horseback approaches Jerusalem. Overhead, a number of MILITARY BIPLANES cruise over the city. In the distance, we see the TURKISH ARMY fleeing.

SUPER THE DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR: 10 December 1917. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER. INTO THE SHOT rides GENERAL ALLENBY astride a magnificent Arabian war horse. Beside him rides an AIDE DE CAMP, a young Lieutenant, who is peering into the distance through a PAIR OF FIELD GLASSES. Both the men and the army they lead are dusty and dirty from a hard campaign.

LIEUTENANT

They're leaving, General Allenby!
All of them! The entire Turkish army.

INSERT -- OPTICAL -- THROUGH THE FIELD GLASSES

The Turkish army heads north, out of the city.

LIEUTENANT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Civil authorities, police... everyone.
They're turning tail and heading
north, General.

BACK TO SCENE

Allenby looks up to SEE the biplanes cruising over the city as the Lieutenant puts away his field glasses.

ALLENBY

Excellent! And without a shot fired.
(looking up at the
biplanes)
We can thank our pilots for some of
that.
(to the Lieutenant)
Tell the men to proceed.
(MORE)

Allenby moves forward a few paces, thinks about it, then brings his mount to a halt. He dismounts to the curious gaze of his Lieutenant. Allenby turns to speak to his aide.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

ALLENBY (CONT'D)

I shall not enter the City of David
as a conqueror, Lieutenant. Rather...
as a pilgrim, I should think.

The General turns toward the city and begins to lead his
mount and his army forward.

LIEUTENANT

Quite...

HOLD FOR A BEAT as the famous General walks his mount toward
the city as the tanks and infantry move forward, then CUT
TO:

158 EXT. MATAN AM HILLSIDE (1920) -- DAY**158**

Eliezer, looking frail at 61 YEARS OF AGE, and Hemda stand
on the site for what will be their home. A EARLY MODEL TRUCK,
little more than a Model-T with a bed, stands on the side of
the road that runs to Biet-Lekhem.

CGI FX: We SEE to the north the WALLED CITY and MOUNT ZION
with the entire old city and the Temple Mount in the f.g. on
the right. CAMERA TURNS and, in the other direction lies the
JUDEAN DESERT. In spite of the heat of summer, a COOL WIND
BLOWS on the hilltop.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Hatalpiot shelamu.

(subtitles)

This is it... our Talpioth.

Hemda paces off the imaginary rooms.

HEMDA

(in Hebrew)

Kan ihiye kheder avodatkha. Ve'kan...

(subtitles)

This will be your study. And here...

(paces, in Hebrew)

...hamitbakh. Ve'kan...

(subtitles)

...our kitchen. And over here...

(paces again, in Hebrew)

Khadar hamegurim. Ve'kan...

(subtitles)

...the parlor. And here...

(paces again, in Hebrew)

Khadar hashena shelanu... im mirpeset
gdola binyukhad.

(subtitles)

Our bedroom... with an extra large
balcony.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

158

Eliezer smiles, then a COUGHING SPELL seizes him. Hemda hurries over as he turns to steady himself, holding on to the side of the truck as the DRIVER and a WORKMAN wait. In the truck bed we SEE a TARP thrown over an object we cannot see. After the coughing spell subsides, Eliezer throws the tarp aside, UNCOVERING a CORNERSTONE with the Hebrew words "Matan Am" engraved in the stone. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

159 EXT. MATAN AM HILLSIDE (1920) -- LATER

159

The WORKMAN from the truck taps the CORNERSTONE into place, finishing off his work by tapping along the edges of the stone with his SHOVEL. He steps back and we SEE the STONE. Eliezer reads the INSCRIPTION IN HEBREW O.S. so we don't miss the importance of it.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Even hapina shenitna lanu bematana
al yedei ha'uma.

(subtitles)

Our cornerstone for Talpioth... A
gift of the nation...

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then CUT TO:

160 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1920) -- DUSK

160

SUPER the DATE in the HEBREW CALENDAR: 14 Tamuz 5680. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER as a HOODED FIGURE steps INTO THE SHOT. He wears the traditional Arab THOBE and GHUTRA. He adjusts the double-coiled IGAAL circlet and pulls the ghutra into a MASK to hide his face.

CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see a THOUSAND similarly dressed ARAB MEN, all wearing their ghutras as masks. They carry sticks and torches. SUPER the DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR: 30 June 1920. HOLD FOR A BEAT, LOSE SUPER, then CUT TO:

161 EXT. JERUSALEM CENTRAL SQUARE (1920) -- DUSK

161

A HEBREW MAN, dressed in the orthodox style, turns INTO VIEW and SEES the Arabs approaching. His eyes grow intense as we PULL BACK TO REVEAL about TWO HUNDRED JEWISH MEN, with their WOMEN and CHILDREN. They quickly move the women and children to the rear.

HIGH ANGLE -- FROM ABOVE

As they pull into the CENTRAL SQUARE the two angry groups meet. A RIOT BREAKS OUT.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

161

BACK TO SCENE

We SEE Jewish SHOP WINDOWS being smashed, a SYNAGOGUE is set on fire, and a CHURCH DOOR is desecrated -- all by HOODED FIGURES.

162 **EXT. RISHON LEZION SETTLEMENT (1920) -- DUSK**

162

A MUCH OLDER MOSHE and KHANNA with ZVI and ZIPPORAH, now in their 60's, as well as their SONS and GRANDSON, are defending themselves against the HORDES of ARABS on HORSEBACK, firing RIFLES at the attackers. Other MEN and WOMEN, clearly the newer arrivals, also fire rifles, while other WOMEN and CHILDREN load more rifles and pass them forward to the defenders. The tents have been replaced over the years by buildings and storage barns. The place is lush and green.

Among the SOUNDS of RIFLE FIRE is one particular SHOT. Khanna stiffens. We see a BLOOD STAIN spreading across her breast. She looks in horror at her blood-stained hand as she touches the blood. As she dies, her rifle falls against her husband. Moshe turns to see her collapse. He bends quickly down, but more bullets continue to PLINK around him. With a grim look, Moshe begins to fire, angrily picking off a HALF-DOZEN ATTACKERS ON HORSEBACK in rapid succession as the other settlers continue to fire. John Wayne would be proud!

HOLD FOR A BEAT as Moshe fires shot after shot. In his anger are TEARS as he fires. We then DISSOLVE TO:

163 **INT. JERUSALEM HOTEL (1920) -- DAY**

163

British HIGH COMMISSIONER HERBERT SAMUEL steps up to a LECTERN. We're set up virtually identical to Scene 126. High Commissioner Samuel is surrounded by MEMBERS OF THE PRESS from around the world. FLASHES go off as the PHOTOGRAPHERS take pictures. He speaks in English.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

Gentlemen of the press, I am Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner over affairs here in Palestine for His Majesty the King of England. It is my duty to inform you of His Majesty's decision in regards to the question of language. His Majesty and His Majesty's government recognize that a language defines and unites... and, as can be seen in the riots of recent days, it can sometimes divide... a people.

(MORE)

A MURMUR runs through the audience.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

163

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Nevertheless, after reviewing the petitions submitted, and after giving careful consideration to the question, His Majesty and the Prime Minister have instructed me to come before you today to inform you that His Majesty, and His Majesty's government, do hereby recognize Hebrew as the language of the land of Israel.

The crowd ERUPTS in shouts as he continues, but we can barely hear what he is saying as we HOLD FOR A BEAT...

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL (CONT'D)

We are directing forthwith that all street signs be posted in Hebrew and English... and Arabic...

CUT TO:

164 EXT. ABYSSINIAN STREET (1922) -- NIGHT**164**

A LONE FIGURE makes his way down the darkened street, his breath forming PUFFS in the cold December night air. We SEE that the STREET SIGN is in ENGLISH, HEBREW and ARABIC. SUPER the DATE in the Hebrew CALENDAR: 26 Kislev 5683. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER.

The figure steps up to the door of the Ben-Yehuda household, where Itamar greets him. The figure is Dr. Maziah.

ITAMAR

(in Hebrew)

Dr. Maziah. Toad la'el shehegata.

(subtitles)

Thank God you've come.

(to the new guests)

Dr. Weitz, Dr. Nayman, Dr. Kaygan.

Bevakasha...

SUPER the DATE in the GREGORIAN CALENDAR: 16 December 1922. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then LOSE SUPER. The four physicians enter the doorway as a FIFTH MAN hurries to the door and steps INTO THE SHOT. We see his face emerge from the shadows: it's British High Commissioner Samuel! Itamar speaks to him in English.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

I came as soon as I heard.

ITAMAR

We are honored, High Commissioner Samuel. Please... come in.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

164

Itamar gestures to the door.

165 INT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1922) -- NIGHT

165

CONTINUOUS ACTION. As Commissioner Samuel ENTERS, Hemda is pacing back and forth, filled with fear and remorse. Itamar steps past her, leading the Commissioner and the other men into the small house. They look at something O.S. for a long beat.

NEW ANGLE -- FAVORING ELIEZER

In the far corner on a small sofa lays the still form of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. He wears an immaculate three-piece suit.

BACK TO SCENE

The men step quickly into the house as a GAGGLE of DIFFERENT LANGUAGES erupts from the worried guests: English, French, Arabic, Russian, Yiddish, even Dutch.

CLOSE -- ON BEN-YEHUDA

He lays pale, his chest hardly moving, and his breath comes in small, shallow gasps. The BABBLE from all of the speaking causes him to stir.

BACK TO SCENE

Eliezer raises his body and leans weakly on his left elbow. He opens his eyes and looks around him.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew)

Dabru be'Ivrit! Keitsad okhal lanukh
ksheoznai shom'ot safot zarot. Rak
Ivrit te'afsher li lanuakh.

(subtitles)

Speak Hebrew! How can I rest when my
ears are assaulted by a Babel of
languages? Only Hebrew will allow me
some rest. Please...

All the conversation HALTS. The others in the room look from one to another, astonished and a little bit embarrassed. They begin to whisper to each other ad lib in Hebrew. Even Commissioner Samuel speaks haltingly in what little Hebrew he knows to Dr. Maziah.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

(in halting Hebrew)

Ha'im hu goeses?

(subtitles)

Is he dying?

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED:

165

Maziah grimly takes out his stethoscope and steps over to the sofa. Itamar moves quickly to Eliezer's side. He kneels down, takes his father's hand between his own, and rubs it gently.

ITAMAR

(in Hebrew)

Ani letsidkha, abba. Bekhorkha. Haben ha'Ivri harishon she'ito hekhyeta et halashon ha'Ivrit. Shedarko kama letkhiya ha'uma ha'Ivrit kfi she'khazita.

(subtitles)

I am at your side, my father. Your first born, your Hebrew son whom you dedicated to the rebirth of the tongue, to be the tool of a people resurrected as of old, which you envisioned.

Dr. Maziah places the earpiece of the stethoscope to his ears. He puts the stethoscope's bell to Eliezer's chest.

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, a whisper)

Hineni ayef, bin.

(subtitles)

I am tired, my son.

Eliezer pushes the doctor away. He snaps at him.

ELIEZER (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Hanakh li...

(subtitles)

Let me be...

Hemda steps over to Eliezer's side and gently escorts Dr. Maziah aside.

ITAMAR

(in Hebrew)

Titoded, avi hayakar. Zehu rak kesem.

(subtitles)

Cheer up, dear father. It's just a spell, don't you know?

He looks up at Dr. Maziah, then over to Dr. Weitz, who unhooks an oxygen mask from a tank of oxygen near the sofa.

ITAMAR (CONTD) (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew, to the doctors)

Emor lo shezehu rak kesem!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: (2)

165

ITAMAR (CONTD) (CONT'D)

(subtitles)

Tell him it is just a spell!

(to Eliezer)

Zehu rak kesem, abba.

(subtitles)

It's just a spell, father.

(to the doctors)

Emor lo!

(subtitles)

Tell him!

Maziah and Weitz exchange concerned glances. Weitz puts the mask over Eliezer's mouth and nose. He turns the oxygen on. Eliezer's eyes brighten.

ITAMAR (CONT'D)

(in Hebrew)

Hine, ata ro'e? Ze rak hetkef neshima

kmo kol hahetkefim she'hitmodadeta

imam kol khaeikha.

(subtitles)

There, you see? It is only another one of those damned breathing attacks that you have endured so long.

Shaking his head, and with the nervous false confidence of a man denying reality, Itamar gets up from the sofa as Hemda takes his place. She gently caresses Eliezer's head.

Itamar steps away to let his step-mother minister to her dying husband. As he moves aside, something catches his attention, O.S. Puzzled, Itamar steps OUT OF THE SHOT to take a closer look.

HEMDA

(in Hebrew, to Eliezer)

Ha'im ata margish tov yoter?

(subtitles)

Are you feeling better?

ELIEZER

(in Hebrew, weakly)

Ken, bitti, yoter tov.

(no subtitles)

Yes, dear, better.

(shallow gasps, in Hebrew)

Ha'ivrit ozeret li lanuakh.

(subtitles)

Hebrew... makes me... rest.

Eliezer closes his eyes. The breathing stops. Hemda takes a quick, tearful breath. She looks up at Dr. Maziah. He moves

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: (3)

165

close to the sofa and listens with his stethoscope for a beat. He shakes his head.

MAZIAH

(in Hebrew)

Hu nakh im avraham ka'et.

(subtitles)

He rests with Abraham now.

Hemda buries her face in her hands. She cries, softly at first. The other guests REACT with grief and tears.

WITH ITAMAR

Itamar steps over to Eliezer's study. Commissioner Samuel notices and crosses over to Eliezer's desk.

166 INT. ELIEZER'S STUDY (1922) -- NIGHT

166

CONTINUOUS ACTION. Commissioner Samuel ENTERS the room as Itamar picks up a piece of paper from Eliezer's writing desk. He reads it quickly. He looks up and speaks to the Commissioner in English. Tears fill his eyes.

ITAMAR

Ten lines. Only ten lines.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

What? What was he working on?

ITAMAR

An exhortation... his third published essay urging a... what is the expression? A call to his people to return to Zion. It was a favor to Chaim Weizmann.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

(after a beat)

But what of his dictionary? His life's work?

Itamar points to a set of five volumes on the shelf next to the stand-up desk.

ITAMAR

The first five volumes. Now my mother and my brother Ehud will have to finish the work.

Itamar looks through some papers on the desk. He pauses to wipe the tears from his eyes. He searches one particular card for a BEAT. A puzzled look crosses his face. Then he smiles quietly to himself through the tears.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED:

166

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

What is it?

ITAMAR

One of his word cards.

He caresses the card for a beat. Then:

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL

A word card? Which one?

Itamar hands the word card to Commissioner Samuel.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL (CONT'D)

This was the last word he completed?

Itamar nods, wiping away a joyful tear. Commissioner Samuel reads it aloud, struggling as he sounds out the Hebrew letters.

ECU -- THE WORD CARD

We SEE the word in hand-written Hebrew letters.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ne... nef... esh. Nefesh.

BACK TO SCENE

Puzzled, Commissioner Samuel looks up at Itamar.

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Nefesh?

(beat)

What the devil does it mean?

(shaking his head)

Nefesh.

The Commissioner hands the card back to Itamar, who examines it for a beat. He looks up at the Commissioner.

ITAMAR

Soul, Commissioner Samuel. Nefesh means soul.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the Commissioner's stunned reaction.

INTERCUT various REACTION SHOTS: HEMDA, as she mourns; the VARIOUS GUESTS; ITAMAR, as he wipes his eyes; and then finally back to COMMISSIONER SAMUEL. HOLD for a BEAT on Commissioner Samuel, then CUT TO:

167 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA HOME (1922) -- NIGHT**167**

A CROWD has gathered around the house in spite of the winter cold. CAMERA, ON CRANE, BEGINS to PULL BACK and RISE. We SEE only a FEW PEOPLE at first. As WE PULL BACK and UP, we SEE MORE and MORE PEOPLE -- DOZENS, then HUNDREDS, then over a THOUSAND MOURNERS. They all carry CANDLES and they all wear DIFFERENT MODES OF DRESS befitting their wealth or poverty, their nationality, or their faith. They are united in one event -- the death of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.

HOLD for a BEAT, then, DISSOLVE TO:

168 EXT. MOUNT OF OLIVES (1922) -- DAY**168**

A CROWD of 30,000 MOURNERS makes its way up the hill. AT THE FRONT is the COFFIN of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. It is covered with the white flag that has a blue Star of David between two blue stripes, the flag of what one day will become the nation of Israel. (This is the same flag presented to him in New York in Scene 142.)

As the mourners pass, we SEE that they are made up of MEN and WOMEN, JEWS, CHRISTIANS, ARABS and FOREIGNERS. We see Jewish SOLDIERS, SCHOLARS, and STATESMEN. We see BUSINESSMEN, PIONEERS, and WESTERNERS.

Conspicuously absent are Hemda and Itamar.

We HEAR the VOICE (V.O.) of an aged HEMDA BEN-YEHUDA speaking in English as the mourners trudge up the hillside to the grave site.

HEMDA (V.O.)

My darling Eliezer Ben-Yehuda
surrendered his nefesh and passed
from this earth in his beloved
Jerusalem on the 26th day of Kislev,
in the sixth year of the Balfour
Declaration.

A LONE MOURNER, dressed in BLACK and wearing a shroud so we cannot see his face, follows the bier. He SINGS a MOURNFUL KADDISH. [CASTING SUGGESTION: Use Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (the grandson), now a rabbi from Florida, as the Lone Mourner.]

HEMDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I never visited his grave. I felt
that he lived on in his work.

HOLD for a BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

169 EXT. BEN-YEHUDA GRAVE SITE (1922) -- DAY**169**

It's a large site, big enough to hold eight graves. A COFFIN lies on a BIER, supported off the ground by a small stand. The mourners stretch all the way to the B.G. as far as we can see. We HEAR the words of the KADDISH. [PRODUCTION NOTE: NO FLOWERS ANYWHERE.]

HEMDA (V.O.)

His friends chose the spot... on the Mount of Olives.

HOLD FOR A BEAT as we HEAR the KADDISH, then:

HEMDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda lived to see Hebrew become the national language of the Jewish people.

DISSOLVE TO:

170 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1922) -- AFTERNOON**170**

Two EARLY MODEL CARS nearly hit each other in the narrow intersection. The DRIVERS ad lib curses at each other in Hebrew. CAMERA FAVORS THE STREET SIGN: it's in English, Hebrew and Arabic.

HEMDA (V.O.)

He saw street signs set up in Hebrew.

CAMERA FLOATS to a YOUNG WOMAN who places some LETTERS in a MAIL BOX. We SEE the STAMP on the letters. The stamp on the first letter is in Hebrew.

HEMDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He lived to see mail posted with stamps in Hebrew.

The letter is inserted into the mailbox. We SEE a NEW LETTER underneath the first letter. It's MODERN, with a picture on the stamp that honors Ben-Yehuda.

CGI FX: CAMERA PULLS BACK and we are in...

171 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (PRESENT DAY) -- AFTERNOON**171**

CONTINUOUS ACTION. It's the same street we were on before, only now it's TODAY. CAMERA PULLS BACK along the SAME TRACK WE CAME IN ON so we SEE the NEW STREET SIGN. The sign now reads "BEN-YEHUDA STREET" and there are two modern, LATE MODEL CARS blocking the intersection the same way our 1922 autos blocked the intersection. And the DRIVERS still ad lib their curses in Hebrew. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

172 EXT. RISHON LEZION SETTLEMENT (1882) -- DAY 172

MUSIC UP: ISRAELI NATIONAL ANTHEM.

CGI FX: The desert sands with its lonely, primitive tents, BLOOM into a modern farm. MECHANIZED FARM EQUIPMENT harvests grounds that are lush with vegetation. GRAPE VINES are FILLED WITH FRUIT. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

173 EXT. JERUSALEM STREET (1881) -- DAY 173

MUSIC CONTINUES. CGI FX: The primitive wood and stone shacks TRANSFORM into modern houses. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

174 EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM (1881) -- DAY 174

MUSIC CONTINUES. CGI FX: The bare sands are TRANSFORMED into the modern BEN-GURION AIRPORT as an El-AL AIRLINER lands, FLYING INTO THE SHOT. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

175 EXT. JAFFA GATE (1882) -- DAY 175

MUSIC CONTINUES. CGI FX: The primitive squalor of the Jerusalem street TRANSFORMS into a modern shopping area. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

176 EXT. JERUSALEM SKYLINE (1881) -- DAWN 176

MUSIC CONTINUES. CGI FX: The 1881 skyline (with its leaden-roofed Dome of the Rock) TRANSFORMS into the modern skyline. The Dome of the Rock is now covered in gold leaf. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then DISSOLVE TO:

177 EXT. ELIEZER'S GRAVE SITE (PRESENT DAY) -- DAWN 177

MUSIC CONTINUES. CAMERA FRAMES the simple grave site. HOLD FOR A BEAT.

HEMDA (V.O.)

It is true that before Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Jews could speak Hebrew. But after him, they did!

(beat)

And even to this day, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's enemies still desecrate his gravestone.

AT BEN-YEHUDA'S GRAVE, a YOUNG VANDAL spray paints a curse across Ben-Yehuda's gravestone. He writes in Hebrew.

HEMDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But at least they write their curses in Hebrew.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED:

177

CAMERA RISES and MOVES QUICKLY OVER the MODERN CITY OF JERUSALEM. The MORNING SUN casts a bright purple and pink glow over the city.

HEMDA (CONT'D)
(a smile in her voice)
My Eliezer would have been proud,
even at that.

HOLD FOR A BEAT on the MODERN CITY OF DAVID, then DISSOLVE TO:

178 EXT. KNESSET (PRESENT DAY) -- DAWN

178

MUSIC CONTINUES. The RISING SUN casts its glow over the modern building where the STAR OF DAVID flies over the Knesset. HOLD FOR A BEAT as the ISRAELI NATIONAL ANTHEM CONTINUES, then ROLL CLOSING CREDITS and FADE TO BLACK.

THE END