

LEOPOLDSTADT

BY TOM STOPPARD

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ALL TOM STOPPARD PLAYS

The Play must be performed as published in the authorized edition. It is understood that there will be no nudity in the Play unless specifically indicated in the script and that nothing in the stage presentation or stage business in the Play will alter the spirit of the Play as written.

For Sabrina

Leopoldstadt was produced by Sonia Friedman Productions and was first performed at Wyndham's Theatre, London, on January 25, 2020. It was directed by Patrick Marber, the set design was by Richard Hudson, the costume design was by Brigitte Reiffenstuel, the lighting design was by Neil Austin, the sound design and original music were by Adam Cork, the movement was by Emily Jane Boyle, the casting was by Amy Ball CDG, and the children's casting was by Verity Naughton. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

WILMA	Clara Francis
GRANDMA EMILIA	Caroline Gruber
HERMANN	Adrian Scarborough
EVA	Alexis Zegerman
GRETL	Faye Castelow
ERNST	Aaron Neil
YOUNG SALLY	Maya Larholm/Libby Lewis/ Beatrice Rapstone
JANA	Natalie Law
YOUNG ROSA	Olivia Festinger/Tamar Laniado/ Chloe Raphael
YOUNG JACOB	Jarlan Bogolubov/Daniel Lawson/ Ramsay Robertson
LUDWIG	Ed Stoppard
PAULI	Ilan Galkoff
HANNA	Dorothea Myer-Bennett
HILDE	Felicity Davidson
POLDI	Sadie Shimmin
FRITZ	Luke Thallon
HERMINE	Yasmin Paige
JACOB	Sebastian Armesto
NELLIE	Eleanor Wyld
ROSA	Jenna Augen
KURT	Alexander Newland
AARON	Griffin Stevens
ZAC	Joe Coen
SALLY	Avey Leventis
OTTO	Noof Ousellam
MOHEL	Jake Neads

YOUNG NATHAN Rhys Bailey
 PERCY Sam Hoare
 YOUNG LEO Toby Cohen/Jack Meredith/Joshua Schneider
 BELLA Olivia Festinger/Tamar Laniado/
 Chloe Raphael
 MIMI Maya Larholm/Libby Lewis/
 Beatrice Rapstone
 CIVILIAN Mark Edel-Hunt
 POLICEMAN Joe Coen
 POLICEMAN Jake Neads
 HEINI Zachary Cohen/Louis Levy/Montague Rapstone
 NATHAN Sebastian Armesto
 LEO Luke Thallon

The production closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and reopened in 2021 with the following cast changes:

HERMANN Aidan McArdle
 EVA Dorothea Myer-Bennett
 JANA Cara Ballingall
 LUDWIG, JACOB, NATHAN Sebastian Armesto
 HANNA Natalie Law
 FRITZ, CIVILIAN Mark Edel-Hunt
 HERMINE Macy Nyman
 LEO Arty Froushan

Leopoldstadt was subsequently produced by Sonia Friedman Productions, Roy Furman, and Lorne Michaels on Broadway at the Longacre Theatre, New York, on October 2, 2022, with the same creative team. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

WILMA Jenna Augen
 GRANDMA EMILIA Betsy Aidem
 HERMANN David Krumholtz
 EVA Caissie Levy
 GRETL Faye Castelow
 ERNST Aaron Neil

YOUNG SALLY Reese Bogin/Romy Fay
JANA Sara Topham
YOUNG ROSA Pearl Scarlett Gold/Ava Michele Hyl
YOUNG JACOB Joshua Satine/Aaron Shuf
LUDWIG Brandon Uranowitz
PAULI Drew Squire
HANNA Colleen Litchfield
HILDE Eden Epstein
POLDI Gina Ferrall
FRITZ Arty Froushan
HERMINE Eden Epstein
JACOB Seth Numrich
NELLIE Tedra Millan
ROSA Jenna Augen
KURT Daniel Cantor
AARON Jesse Aaronson
ZAC Matt Harrington
SALLY Sara Topham
OTTO Japhet Balaban
MOHEL Daniel Cantor
YOUNG NATHAN Anthony Rosenthal
PERCY Seth Numrich
YOUNG LEO Michael Deaner/Wesley Holloway
BELLA Pearl Scarlett Gold/Ava Michele Hyl
MIMI Reese Bogin/Romy Fay
CIVILIAN Corey Brill
POLICEMAN Jesse Aaronson
POLICEMAN Matt Harrington
HEINI Max Ryan Burach/Calvin James Davis/
Jaxon Cain Grundleger
NATHAN Brandon Uranowitz
LEO Arty Froushan

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Patrick Marber was my first reader at every stage. His notes had a beneficial effect on *Leopoldstadt* from first to last.

The staff at the London Library were helpful as ever. Among the books I profited from are *Emancipation* by Michael Goldfarb, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Waal, *The House of Wittgenstein* by Alexander Waugh, *Last Waltz in Vienna* by George Clare, and *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, an indispensable collection of essays by various hands (ed. Ivar Oxaal et al.). Steven Beller's *A Concise History of Austria* was my backcloth.

Alistair Summers helped me with the Seder and the *bris milah*, and Daniel Kehlmann patiently answered many questions about matters Austrian and Viennese.

My thanks go to all of the above, and to Sonia Friedman, begetter and producer, whose commitment has been unconditional.

Simon Trussler (1942–2019) was my copyeditor for my most recent plays. We spent many gentle ruminative hours on the phone preparing texts for the printer. We never met. Simon died after completing the first proof copy of *Leopoldstadt*.

CHARACTERS

GRANDMA EMILIA

HERMANN, her son

EVA, her daughter

GRETL, married to Hermann

LUDWIG, married to Eva

WILMA, sister of Ludwig

ERNST, married to Wilma

HANNA, sister of Ludwig and Wilma

JACOB, son of Hermann and Gretl

PAULI, son of Ludwig and Eva

NELLIE, daughter of Ludwig and Eva

SALLY, daughter of Ernst and Wilma

ROSA, Sally's twin

POLDI, cook/housekeeper

HILDE, parlour maid

JANA, nursemaid

FRITZ, a young officer

HERMINE, daughter of Hanna and Kurt

AARON, married to Nellie

KURT, married to Hanna

ZAC, married to Sally

OTTO, a banker

MOHEL

PERCY, an English journalist
LEO, son of Nellie and Aaron
NATHAN, son of Sally and Zac
MIMI, daughter of Sally and Zac
BELLA, Mimi's twin
HEINI, son of Hermine and Otto
CIVILIAN

DOUBLING

Characters may be doubled at the discretion of the producing theatre. Previous configurations are supplied below for reference:

2020 West End doubling: Young Sally and Mimi; Young Rosa and Bella; Fritz and Leo; Jacob and Nathan.

2021 West End doubling: Young Sally and Mimi; Young Rosa and Bella; Fritz and Civilian; Ludwig, Jacob and Nathan.

Broadway doubling: Wilma and Rosa; Young Sally and Mimi; Jana and Sally; Young Rosa and Bella; Ludwig and Nathan; Hilde and Hermine; Fritz and Leo; Jacob and Percy; Kurt and Mohel.

LEOPOLDSTADT

Scene 1

Vienna, December 1899.

At the prosperous end of Viennese bourgeoisie, twelve members of two intermarried Jewish families, and a housekeeper-cook (Poldi), a parlour maid (Hilde) and a nursemaid (Jana), are variously occupied among the overcrowded, fussy furnishings of an apartment off the Ringstrasse.

The combined families are eight grown-ups and four children, plus an infant in a bassinet (Nellie).

The apartment, spread over one floor of a grand high-ceilinged block, is the home of the Merz family, the occupancy now reduced to the matriarch, Emilia Merz, her son Hermann and his wife Gretl, and their son Jacob, who is eight.

Two familial groups are the visitors: Hermann's sister Eva with her husband Ludwig, and their two children, Pauli, aged eight, and the baby, Nellie. Wilma is Ludwig's sister, married to Ernst. They have two daughters, Sally and Rosa, who are twins and younger than Jacob. Finally there is Wilma's unmarried sister Hanna, who is eighteen.

Gretl is gentle. So is Ernst.

Poldi, aged about forty, and Hilde are in the Merz household. Jana has come with the baby but is supervising the children.

The grown-ups have been served coffee in dainty cups.

Several balls are in the air from the word go, and little or no sense can be made except that chocolate cake with whipped cream is going round on little plates delivered by Poldi and Hilde, and a Christmas tree is being decorated by the four children, overseen by Jana.

Emilia is at a table dispensing the chocolate cake, cutting slices and adding a large dollop of whipped cream to each plate. For this purpose she has put aside the family photo album.

Hermann, solo, is fulminating over a thin “book,” a pamphlet of eighty pages.

Eva is confiding scandal to Gretl over another small book.

Ernst is talking to Ludwig about a third book.

Wilma is seated where she can talk to Emilia or intervene in any squabbles between the children. She is turning the pages of the photo album.

Hanna is playing the piano for herself. She is playing “Stille Nacht! Heil’ge Nacht!”

The Christmas decorations come from a large box: silver balls, bells, streamers, paper chains, stale iced biscuits and chocolates shaped like little animals, soldiers, musical instruments etc.

Thus the chatter of the children finds room where it may over, under and between Emilia’s instructions to Poldi, the proffering of cake and the receiving of cake, and such tête-à-tête conversation as can be made out between the sisters-in-law (Eva and Gretl) and between the brothers-in-law (Ernst and Ludwig), all to the sound of “Stille Nacht!” on the piano.

CHILDREN. ...That’s mine. He took my silver bell, Jana!...Don’t pull on the paper chain, Sally, you’ll break it...It needs more over here...The snowflakes have to go on last...This one’s broken...I need a hook for the reindeer...Rosa, you can do the snow round the tree, there’s cotton wool for that...The little trumpet works, toot-toot!... (*Etc.*)

WILMA. (*Showing a photo.*) Who’s this, Emilia?

EMILIA. Hermann’s father, when we were engaged.

Hermann throws his pamphlet down with an angry snort.

HERMANN. Imbecile!

Seeing that everybody is occupied, he picks it up again and resumes reading.

EVA. (*To Gretl.*) ...like a daisy chain, two by two... “Hello”—drops her drawers—“Bye-bye”—“Next!”—“Hello”—drops her drawers—“Bye-bye”—“Next!”—

Gretl covers her mouth at the audacity of it.

GRETTL. Eva!

EVA. —changing partners, like a round dance.

ERNST. (*To Ludwig.*) ...Interpreting dreams, you will recall, got Joseph out of prison in Egypt and into a top job with the pharaoh... but the Viennese medical fraternity is more conservative, even though half of them would still be in the land of Canaan...

SALLY. (*Straying.*) Can I have mine, Grannie Emilia?

EMILIA. You can when you finish the tree. We only have a tree for you little Papists.

WILMA. Ernst is Protestant, Emilia.

EMILIA. It's still a nice Jewish boy with ideas about himself—you can hit a dozen like him throwing chestnuts across the Danube Canal.

Sally returns to the tree.

GRETTL. (*To Eva.*) Well, can I be after you with it?

JANA. You're not allowed to eat the decorations, Rosa. I saw you, Missy.

ROSA. I only licked it.

JACOB. I've got the star for the top, Mummy! I want to do it, Jana.

JANA. Hold on to me, then.

Jacob has to stand on a chair to reach the top of the tree.

Hermann throws his pamphlet aside again.

LUDWIG. (*To Ernst.*) Hysteria, neurosis...the more modern the diagnosis, the more the treatment returns to its origins in the priesthood. So, yes, the interpretation of dreams, why not?

ERNST. But he has no connections and no followers. He should have been *extraordinarius* by now.

Hermann has come over and hovered.

HERMANN. (*To Ernst.*) He should go to Argentina. He'd be a professor in no time.

ERNST. Why Argentina?

HERMANN. Or Africa. Palestine is a lost cause so long as it's ruled by the Ottomans. Or Madagascar! They say there's plenty of room for a Jewish state in Madagascar.

LUDWIG. Madagascar with Jews—it sounds a bit like a dream in itself.

HERMANN. (*Dismissively.*) A pipe dream.

GRETTL. (*With Eva's book.*) Inscribed to Ludwig...!

EVA. Arthur couldn't get it published, let alone put on, so he printed a few copies for his friends. Ask Hermann.

JACOB. Look, Mummy!

GRETTL. (*Not looking.*) That's lovely, darling. (*To Eva.*) Hermann's in a temper about having his own country somewhere.

EVA. I'll leave it here for you.

JACOB. You're not looking!

Gretl and Eva turn to look. Jacob's star at the top of the tree is a large golden Star of David.

EVA. (*Momentarily bewildered.*) Is that right?

EMILIA. (*Looking.*) Oy.

GRETTL. It's a beautiful star, darling, but it's not the star we put at the top of our Christmas tree.

PAULI. I'll find it. I know which one it is.

JACOB. What's wrong with it?

EMILIA. Poor boy, baptised and circumcised in the same week, what can you expect?

Jacob accepts the right star from Pauli.

GRETTL. It's true. He yelled both times.

EVA. I don't understand my brother—he got himself Christianised long before he met you, Gretl, and married you in church like a good Catholic, so why...?

GRETL. He's just a man, he doesn't want his son to be different from him.

Eva laughs. Hermann is instinctively drawn to investigate.

HERMANN. What are you talking about?

EMILIA. Foreskins. Hanna, can't you play something else?

Hanna stops playing. Ludwig and Ernst pay some attention.

EVA. With my Pauli it's simple. We're Jews. Bad Jews but pure-blood sons of Abraham, and Ludwig's parents would have nothing to do with us if their grandson didn't look Jewish in his bath. In fact, if I'd had myself Christianised like Hermann, Ludwig wouldn't have married me, would you, be honest.

LUDWIG. I would when they were dead.

EVA. Is that a compliment?

LUDWIG. (*Mildly.*) Honour thy father and thy mother. (*Noting Wilma's reaction.*) I didn't mean that the way it sounded. (*Bowing his head to Ernst.*) And Ernst. Of course. Mathematics is the only language in which you can make yourself clear, I find. You really ought to come to Momma and Poppa for Seder this year, Wilma, with Ernst and the girls, naturally.

WILMA. I should. It might be her last year.

LUDWIG. (*To Hermann.*) You and Gretl too, of course. It would be nice for the cousins to do Seder together.

GRETL. I'll come. What happens at Seder?

HERMANN. (*To Ludwig.*) You seem to think becoming a Catholic is like joining the Jockey Club.

LUDWIG. It's not unlike, except that anyone can become a Catholic.

WILMA. You're snobby about Grannie and Grandpa Jakobovicz, Hermann, if I may say so.

HERMANN. I?

WILMA. Yes, you. You're snobby about their accent and using Yiddish words, and dressing like immigrants from some village in Galicia except they're still there, keeping the village shop, there's too much of the shtetl about them for you.

HERMANN. That's not being snobby, it's being...no, snobby, yes, I admit it.

GRETTL. I'd like to see Galicia, Hermann. It will be interesting.

HERMANN. How can it be interesting?

EVA. (*Peacemaking.*) For that matter, everyone can come to us for Seder, can't they, Ludwig?

HANNA. Oh, yes please, Eva!

WILMA. (*To Hanna.*) What about Momma and Poppa?

EVA. Them too. Vienna will be exciting for them. It's only changing trains.

WILMA. Changing what train? It takes half a day to *get* to the train, and she'll want to bring her bedding, not to mention enough food to open a restaurant. She'll spend three weeks getting ready, getting more nervous every day and worrying about leaving the shop...In fact, with her heart it will probably kill her.

LUDWIG. There's nothing wrong with her heart, but even so...

WILMA. Who are you to say that?

LUDWIG. Who is Doctor Lissak to say it, do you mean? Even so...

WILMA. Just like a son! Momma and Poppa denied themselves everything so they could be proud of you getting into the university—

LUDWIG. I was agreeing with you.

Hanna from her place at the piano bursts out.

HANNA. What about me? When is anybody going to be proud of me getting out into anywhere? It's all very well for you, Wilma, you never gave Momma a thought when you snapped up your brother's university friend regardless whether he was a Jew or a Hottentot! I want to come to Vienna for Passover!

Gretl goes to her to comfort her.

GRETTL. And so you shall, won't she, Hermann? When's Passover?

HERMANN. (*Shrugs.*) How do I know...March, April...but anyway we're likely to be in the Italian Lakes again next—

WILMA. No! (*To Gretl.*) Stop interfering. We're going to Momma and Poppa. It might be her last chance to show she's forgiven me for marrying Ernst.

EMILIA. If she hasn't, you can bring the girls to me, Wilma. Unless it's the same time as Easter. I don't mind Christmas because baby Jesus had no idea what was going on, but I feel funny about Easter eggs.

HERMANN. (*To Ernst.*) You seem to have been struck dumb.

ERNST. Who wouldn't be?

GRETTL. I have to go anyway, I've got a sitting.

JACOB. What's a sitting? Can I come?

GRETTL. No, darling, I can't be changing my expression while you're fidgeting.

Hanna speaks to Gretl while life goes on.

During the conversation between Gretl and Hanna, the Christmas tree is completed, admiration is expressed. Eva and Wilma have brought wrapped Christmas presents, for the Merz family, to be put under the tree now. Naturally Jacob is inquisitive prematurely ("Which is mine?") and is rebuffed ("Wait and see!") and the twins are made excitable by identifying the presents they themselves have brought for Jacob. There is a total of about a dozen parcels, including Pauli's presents to the Merz family, which Pauli "announces" as he places them under the tree. Eva and Wilma get the children under control and assemble them around Emilia's table to be given chocolate cake.

The men—Hermann, Ludwig and Ernst—take a token part in all this while having their cups replenished by Hilde, supplied with a fresh pot by Poldi. The baby wakes up. Jana quietens her.

None of this obscures the words exchanged by Gretl and Hanna.

HANNA. Gretl, can I tell you something? I've met someone.

GRETTL. (*Pleased.*) Oh, Hanna! Tell me at once.

HANNA. He's an officer in the Dragoons, and he—he likes me.

GRETTL. Of course he does! A Dragoon! Yellow or black?

HANNA. I don't know, he wasn't in uniform.

GRETL. Where were you introduced?

HANNA. We weren't exactly...

GRETL. How did you meet him?

HANNA. He just spoke to me in the street.

GRETL. Oh.

HANNA. He and his friend. They were very polite. They saw me getting off the tram at the corner of the Opera.

GRETL. And then what?

HANNA. They said, can they have the honour of taking me for tea at the Imperial. They were so amusing. Then the other one had to leave.

GRETL. The other one?

HANNA. Yes. Theodor. Fritz, the one I liked, asked me to dance. Oh, Gretl, you should have seen me!—whirled around in the arms of a dashing young officer with the violins and squeeze-boxes going mad till I could have fainted!—Miss Hanna Jakobovicz in society! Then I had to go because I always help to put the girls to bed when I stay with Wilma and Ernst. Fritz asked if he could walk me home, and I said he'd have to walk me to Galicia but I'm sure Mummy and Daddy would ask him in—I know, I could die when I think of me gabbling nonstop and making silly jokes, but he said he'll walk me to my sister's this time but we should have tea again before I go home, and he invited me to tea at his place tomorrow.

GRETL. Goodness. Did you say yes?

HANNA. No. I said no, the very idea! I don't want Fritz to think I'm that kind of girl. So I said—not unless I could bring a friend. So, will you?

GRETL. Me?

HANNA. I haven't got any friends in Vienna, and you're like a friend. Will you?

GRETL. Oh, Hanna...

HANNA. Please will you? Or I won't go.

GRETL. Well...why not? Of course I will.

Hanna embraces her. They remain together, laughing together.

Hanna starts playing a waltz.

Ernst and Ludwig have ended up resuming their conversation.

ERNST. (*To Ludwig.*) ...There's something about a theory being published at the very beginning of a new century. Like an augury. Like the curtain going up on something.

LUDWIG. New centuries just depend on when you start counting. But I don't doubt that dreams can tell us something about ourselves. I sometimes dream I've proved the Riemann hypothesis. In fact—

He calls to Eva.

Eva! Would you like to go to Paris this summer for the Exposition?

GRETLE. (*Returning from Hanna.*) I'll come!

EVA. Paris? What's going on? I can't get you to come to Ischl for a few days in the country, and now—

GRETLE. Of course you must.

ERNST. Vienna will be there in force. Mahler is taking the Philharmonic to the Paris Exposition.

LUDWIG. There you are.

ERNST. He's taking his Second Symphony to annoy the French.

EVA. We went to the premiere of the Second Symphony, Ludwig, and you didn't like it.

LUDWIG. That's not the point. He's our man.

EMILIA. Another Christian still wet from his baptism.

LUDWIG. And we're sending the *Philosophy* painting for the university to show the Parisians. I was asked to sign a petition got up against it by the philosophy faculty.

GRETLE. Did you hear that, Hermann? My painter is going to be exhibited at the world's fair in Paris!

LUDWIG. The faculty wants Plato and Aristotle discussing ideas in an olive grove, they don't want modern art stuck up on the ceiling of the university and calling itself *Philosophy*. We can have a look at it in Paris.

EVA. Ludwig, you couldn't be bothered to cross the road—

LUDWIG. I would have done if I wasn't so busy, but at the World Exposition the honour of Vienna is at stake, in art, in music, and to

give Paris its due, you might buy one or two dresses, say two at the most—

GRETLE. Eva! You have to go.

EVA. (*Suspiciously.*) And what will you be doing?

LUDWIG. As it happens, the Second International Conference of Mathematicians is to be held in Paris during the Exposition, which will give me the opportunity to meet some mathematicians I'm in correspondence with.

EVA. Well, if you're going with or without me, I'm coming.

GRETLE. (*Wheedling.*) Oh, Hermann! I want to go to the mathematical conference!

ERNST. Will Riemann be there?

LUDWIG. Riemann is dead.

ERNST. What about his wife?—No, that was in bad taste—

The baby starts crying.

GRETLE. I'm late. I have to take my green shawl...!

There follows a confusion of moves and utterances.

Hermann picks up Gretl's green shawl.

Pauli jogs the bassinet with a concerned interest in the baby.

PAULI. It's all right, Nellie, don't cry. Open your eyes, look, it's me, your brother Pauli.

Hermann brings the shawl to Gretl and drapes it tenderly around her.

HERMANN. Look at you! *He* should be paying *me*!

GRETLE. No, no—then how would I know my portrait is because you love me?

HERMANN. It is!

GRETLE. Kiss me, then, on the mouth, nobody's looking.

HERMANN. Yes, they are.

Gretl laughs, then ambushes him with a fleeting kiss on the lips, and hurries out. Hermann is pleased.

During the above Eva picks up Nellie, quietening her with endearments. Hilde is tidying up the coffee things to remove

them on a tray: she is politely thanked here and there. The children meanwhile are in a back-and-forth with Emilia— see below. Then Ernst, at Wilma's suggestion, is rounding up children. Hanna has continued to play Strauss.

EVA. (To Nellie.) There, there, who didn't get their chocolate cake? (To Jana.) I'll give her a feed. The children are going to get some fresh air and see the camels in Stephansplatz. Make sure Pauli has his gloves—

LUDWIG. Camels?

EVA. The Nativity scene.

EMILIA. Who wants to lick the spoon?

CHILDREN. I will...Me, me...Yes please, Grandma Emilia...I'm the oldest, Grandma...

EMILIA. The first one to say "You have it, Grandma" would have got the cream, but no one said it, so—

She licks the cream spoon.

WILMA. Thank you, Hanna! All hands on deck. Coats on, coats on!

Hanna abandons the piano and goes out.

HERMANN. Jacob, have you told Uncle Ludwig?

LUDWIG. Told me what?

HERMANN. Come, Jacob...tell your uncle.

JACOB. I was first in my class for mathematics.

LUDWIG. My word. Well done!

HERMANN. His teacher says he's a natural.

LUDWIG. I congratulate you, Jacob. You have great pleasures in store. Numbers are a huge toy box, we can play with them and make amazing, beautiful things.

HERMANN. Ask him something!

LUDWIG. What are you hoping to get for Christmas?

HERMANN. I mean, test him, you'll see.

LUDWIG. Oh, well...do you think you can add together all the numbers between one and ten in your head?

HERMANN. That's too easy. Go on, Jacob. (*Generally.*) Not so much noise!

Jacob concentrates and calculates. Hermann watches expectantly.

WILMA. Are you going with them, Ernst?

ERNST. No, I've got to show up at the neurology department.

WILMA. Did you have to have a patient *today*?

ERNST. No...

WILMA. You didn't do this last year.

ERNST. I wasn't *extraordinarius* last year. It's just one drink with the lecturers—and a "Merry Christmas" to the assistants...it's expected.

JACOB. Fifty-five!

Ludwig pats him on the head. Hermann is pleased. Hanna has come in with woollen hats and scarves for the children.

LUDWIG. Quite right. And fifty-five is five elevens. That's interesting.

HANNA. Come on, Jacob!

Jacob runs to have his coat put on.

LUDWIG. (*To Hermann.*) About average.

HERMANN. (*Nettled.*) What do you mean? Wasn't he right?

LUDWIG. He answered correctly but he failed the test. Carl Friedrich Gauss when he was seven years old was asked to add all the numbers from one to a hundred. With barely a pause he answered "Five thousand and fifty." Now *that's* a natural.

HERMANN. Was it the right answer?

LUDWIG. Would I be telling you the story if it was not the right answer?

HERMANN. A Jew might have made a guess, because there'd be a good chance the other person didn't know either.

Ludwig is amused.

LUDWIG. But why a Jew?

HERMANN. Don't you start. Is your Pauli a natural?

LUDWIG. (*Laughs.*) He's obsessed with model soldiers. He can't wait to be in uniform.

One way or another, everyone except Emilia, Wilma, Hermann and Ludwig go on their way. Eva taking the baby out in her arms, and Poldi and Jana clearing the debris.

Emilia settles down with the photo album.

The brothers-in-law are not very close but they are comfortable with each other. Hermann offers Ludwig a cigar, but Ludwig prefers a cigarette. Hermann lights a cigar and pours two whiskies from a decanter.

HERMANN. Well, what's the trick?

LUDWIG. To see that you can add the numbers in any order you like...one plus ten, two plus nine, three plus eight...so each pair adds up to the same sum, for Jacob five elevens.

HERMANN. He'll be better off being good at something useful. (*Faux pas.*) Something practical. In the circumstances. I don't mean mathematics isn't useful, of course.

LUDWIG. Of course. Though number theory isn't. As far as we know.

HERMANN. No doubt Eva has told you that Gretl can't have any more children, so all my money is on Jacob. An unfortunate expression, you're thinking.

LUDWIG. Not at all. Admirably to the point.

HERMANN. Best of all I would have liked my son to be a great composer. A virtuoso of the piano would be almost as good. But alas! So Jacob will take over Merz and Co from his father and grandfather as is the nature of things, and I'll have done my duty to the business.

Whisky in hand, they honour the moment with a silent toast, and settle themselves in chairs. There is a pause, which Emilia and Wilma fill.

EMILIA. I've been writing in names that are missing, the ones I know, which is by no means all of them. That's what happens, you see. First, there's no need to write who they are, because everyone knows that's Great-Aunt Sophia or Cousin Rudi, and then only some of us know, and already we're asking, "Who's that with Gertrude?"

and “I don’t remember this man with the little dog,” and you don’t realise how fast they’re disappearing from being remembered...

WILMA. It’s still an amazing thing to me, to know the faces of the dead! I can remember Grandpa Jakobovicz’s tobacco-stained whiskers, but his wife died giving birth to Poppa before there were photographs, so now no one knows what she looked like any more than if she’d been some kind of rumour.

EMILIA. Everyone was mad to have a photograph when I was a girl, it was like a miracle and you had to go to a photographer’s to pose for him...wedding couples, soldiers in their first uniforms, children in front of painted scenery...and, always, women dressed up for the carnival ball, posing with a Greek pillar. Later, when we had a camera, there were too many pictures to keep in the album, holiday pictures with real scenery, swimming pictures, pictures of children in dirndl pinafores and lederhosen, like little Austrians. Here’s a couple waving goodbye from the train, but who are they? No idea! That’s why they’re waving goodbye. It’s like a second death, to lose your name in a family album.

She turns a page, writes a caption. She moves the album to Wilma and moves herself to a comfy chair where she soon dozes off. Wilma begins to stick loose photos into the album.

Meanwhile:

HERMANN. What do you think of the whisky? A gift from a supplier, best wool in Scotland, straight from the sheep. I happen to know our emperor had it made up into a hunting jacket.

LUDWIG. Uh-hmm.

HERMANN. Did you say you have no use?

LUDWIG. In the sense that a composer has no use, compared to a textile manufacturer...yes. But pure mathematics is as absorbing as music. It’s like finding the music in the untuned totality of number.

HERMANN. And do you get paid for that?

LUDWIG. Yes. I’ve no idea why. But if I went to sleep for a hundred years, the first thing I’d ask when I woke up is, “Has Riemann been proved?”

HERMANN. Why?

LUDWIG. Because if it has, I can state with certainty how many prime numbers exist below a given number *however high*; and if it hasn't, I can't. Not with certainty.

HERMANN. That is a very annoying answer.

LUDWIG. Yes, but it has the saving grace that a number theorist, however great, is innocent of usefulness; unlike the applied mathematician who is the handmaiden of ballistics, modern architecture—

HERMANN. Are you great?

LUDWIG. No. But I have a student who might be, which is not nothing.

HERMANN. Is he a Jew?

LUDWIG. No.

HERMANN. He'll be a professor before you are.

LUDWIG. I hope so.

HERMANN. Oh, don't exaggerate! Why do Jews have to choose between pushy and humble? You're probably in line for the next Jew-slot. So don't fall for this Judenstaat idiocy. Do you want to do mathematics in the desert or in the city where Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven *overlapped*, and Brahms used to come to our house? We're Austrians. Viennese. Doctors come from all over the world to study here. Philosophers. Architects. A city of art lovers and intellectuals like no other.

LUDWIG. Yes, and don't forget the cafés, the cakes...

HERMANN. The seat of six hundred years of accumulating Poles, Czechs, Magyars, Romanians, Ruthenians, Italians, Croats, Slovaks and God knows what else, from the Swiss frontier to the Russian Empire, parliaments and parties in I don't know how many languages, stitched together by the same black-and-yellow livery of post boxes from Salzburg to Czernowicz and fealty to the emperor-king Franz Josef, who emancipated his Jews in time for us to grow up with the same rights as everyone else. Obviously prejudice doesn't disappear overnight. The civil service, the army, the university...

LUDWIG. No. That must be why the police stand around watching Jewish students get thrown down the university ramp, before arresting them for causing a disturbance...

The play doesn't end here...

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