Birkenau

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Mood and themes	3
Structure, style and historical context	4
Story and characters	5
Tools	7
How to run this game	8
Sources of inspiration	11
Characters	
Judaism	
Scenes	
Setlist	
Gamemaster's guide	
Names and time schedule	

Created for Fastaval 2018 with guidance from scenario coordinators Tina Heebøll Arbjørn and Anders Frost Bertelsen.

Text, idea and layout: Jonas Sanberg Jensen.

Sparring: Jeppe Bergmann Hamming, Thor Fejerskov Jensen and Simon Steen Hansen.

Corrections: Jeppe Bergmann Hamming and Thor Fejerskov Jensen.

Playtesters: Maria Bergmann Hamming, Marie Wolfsberg Oscilowski, Jeppe Bergmann Hamming og Thor Fejerskov Jensen.

Thanks to everyone who helped during the creative process with everything from idea to finished game.

A special thanks for Pernille for neverending support, understanding and love.

Introduction

Birkenau is a dark drama about four Jews and their experiences before and during The Second World War. The four meet on the train to Auschwitz-Birkenau and become friends when they are forced to play in the camp's orchestra. As musicians they bear witness to the extermination of their own people and must choose, if they will resist against impossible odds. The four remember their past and are confronted with their previous transgressions. Even if they survive, nothing will remain the same.

Duration

The game should last 4-5 hours including workshop.

Mood and themes

Birkenau concerns Jewish identity, resistance and music. Each of the characters must decide what it means to them to be Jewish, if they will resist their fate and what part music will have in their lives. The mood of the game is tragic and dark.

Structure and style

The game consists of three acts with predefined scenes. Scenes are set in the concentration camp, representing the games present day, or in the past. The two type of scenes are mixed throughout the game. The game is played semi-live, which means that players embody their characters and the game is played using physical space, not as a traditional tabletop game.

Characters

Each player has one main character, which is played throughout the game. Each character has a predefined challenge and motivation for surviving the camp. Each character also has a choice that must be made during the scenes set in the past. The four main characters are:

David Müller

The young violinist who refuses to be a Jew. He has broken of contact with his family, but still suffers because of his heritage.

Samuel Bercow

The accountant who has always done what he was asked.

Meyer Hirsch

The strong man who saw his family wither away in the ghetto. He is filled with hate.

Jakob Loew

The grocer who refused to believe, that harassment would become persecution.

Tools

Birkenau uses two primary tools: a stage area and music. The game is played in a 2 x 2 m square marked on the floor. The stage is subdivided to ensure that each scene can be played on full stage (2 x 2 m), half stage (1 x 2 m) or quarter stage (1 x 1 m). The stage size can change during the individual scene.

There is specific background music for each type of scene.

Gamemaster's part

As gamemaster it is your job to set scenes, cut them and play supporting character. You will use questions to set the scenes. It is also your job to introduce the game and read the prologue and epilogue to the players. Most importantly, your job is to allow silence and thoughtfulness throughout the game.

Mood and themes

Mood

Birkenau is a dark game that uses music and silence. The mood is deliberately dark and intense and may be uncomfortable as the players relate to characters that are being subjected to assault and the stages size decreases.

It is an important part of the game that there is time and space for silence and that you, before the game, have an honest talk about the fact that it deals with sensitive subjects. To keep the intensity of the game it is generally not recommended that you take breaks during the game.

Themes

Birkenau deals with three primary themes: Jewish identity, resistance, and music.

Jewish identity

Judaism is a religion but also a culture. It concerns not only the relationship with God, but also how you live your life and how you see yourself. Jewish identity can be religious, cultural or hereditary. The Jewish cultural uniqueness is strong because Jews have traditionally been persecuted. During the game, the characters must decide how to relate to their own Jewishness. They all hail from Jewish families, but have different attitudes towards Gentiles and their own faith.

> "I am Jewish, because almost everyone in my family before me were Jews. I am Jewish because I don't want to be Russian, Czech or German. I am Jewish because I at the age of twenty told Jewish jokes, because I am more afraid of a cold than war and because I consider sex to be more important than literature. "
>
> - Maxim Biller

Resistance

Another important theme of the game is resistance. The characters are all trapped in the concentration camp, where other people are in control of their fate. They must each decide whether to resist, even though they know that this can bring about their deaths. In the storys past they must also decide whether to bow their heads or resist. The actions of resistance may be physically small, but are symbolically big.

Music

Birkenau is a game filled with classical music. Music is an important part of each characters past, either as classical music, Jewish folk music or both. An important point of the game is, that music drowns out the noise of the camp and comforts, but at the same time pacifies the prisoners. A big part of the characters possibility to resist is about the choice between playing music or staying silent.

Structure, style and historical context

Structure

The structure and scenes of the story are predetermined making it the players task to focus on the actions and feelings of the characters throughout the game.

The scenes are organised in three acts preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue, both read to the players by the gamemaster. All scenes are played once and in predetermined order. There are two types of scenes mixed throughout the game:

Type of scenes

Scenes in the story's present day, placed in the concentration camp. All main characters are present in all of these scenes.
Scenes in story's past. A single main character and most often a supporting character played by the gamemaster are present in these scenes.

Style of play

The game is played in a single room, where all players are present during the entire duration. The style is semi-live and the players use speech, gesticulation and touch during the game, just like actors in a play. There are no props or costumes in the game.

The style is play should be focussed on communicating the characters feelings, but should also contain an introspective element, as the players explore the characters inner conflicts.

Setting

The game takes place before and during The Second World War in Germany and Poland. The years leading up to the War was dominated by increasing anti-Semitism, persecution and poverty. The Jews were stripped of property and rights as the German army conquered Europe.

Historical context

Birkenau is a game inspired by real events, but is not an accurate retelling of events during the War. The characters are based on actual people and the story is set in a historically correct world. All atrocities and examples of persecution are real and are compiled from available accounts of survivors.

As a player or gamemaster, knowledge of The Second World War, Judaism or music is not a prerequisite. There is no focus on specific dates or historically correctness. The Second World War is the setting, but it is not the story. If specific knowledge is required in a particular scene, the players and gamemaster are given this knowledge in the description of the scene. As a supplement, each player will have a fact-sheet named Judaism for use during the game.

Overall neither players nor you as the gamemaster should waste time or effort on determining whether something as accurate in the historical sense. If it first into the scene and overall mood of the story, it is an acceptable part of the game.

Story and characters

Story

Birkenau begins with the four Jewish main characters meeting aboard a cattle-cart travelling through Germany. They have all be rounded up by the German authorities and have no idea what awaits them. The train stops and they have reached their destination: the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The four Jews are submitted to a humiliating selection process and survive. Wearing nothing but rags, they are put to work and slowly get to know each other. As they think, they can endure no more work, the guards discover a common trait: the four are all musicians. Their salvation comes in the form of places in the camp's orchestra, but they are forced to witness torture and abuse while realising even their instruments belonged to dead prisoners.

The music becomes an escape from the horrors of the camp, and the four remember how life used to be before war and misery. They are confronted with choices from their past, where they had to choose between faith and family. In the past they all had the possible to resist what happened to them. Regardless of their choice, it has cost them everything.

In the camp, the situation becomes more and more desperate. It is clear, that the goal is total annihilation and the orchestra supplies the score to the selection of ever more prisoners. The executions become more and more random.

The prisoner orchestra starts a quiet resistance: they refuse to keep playing and the players must choose whether they too resist against impossible odds. The resistance has consequences and the suffering continues. On Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the four must decide what their faith and life means to each of them. They have one last opportunity to play music for their own sake, before they are forced from the camp, marching towards their end, or left for dead.

Main characters

Below is a short description of each main character. Each player will take the part of one main character throughout the game. During the game, each of the main characters must make an important choice in the characters past. This choice, as well as a predetermined challenge and motivation for surviving, help define the characters. The descriptions are short, and as gamemaster you should also read the complete characters that are given to players.

David Müller

David has never considered himself a Jew. When his family would not allow him to play music, he abandoned his Jewish heritage and became entirely German. He married the gentile Ingrid and took her last name. He became a skilful violinist, but his Jewish heritage cost him everything, when the persecution intensified. In the past, David had to choose whether he saved his wife by forcing her to divorce him.

Samuel Bercow

Samuel is a modest man, who spent his entire life following the rules, be it in his work as an accountant or in his stringent and correct handling of the cello. He has never been very outspoken about being a Jew: that was just how things were. In the past Samuel had to choose whether to save his daughters by betraying other Jews, when the Nazis offered to let the daughters go in exchange for Samuel giving them an account of every Jew in town.

Meyer Hirsch

Life in the ghetto has marked Meyer's soul. After seeing his family wither and die, the strong square-cut man is but a shadow of himself. When he closes his eyes, he can still remember the many parties in the poor home, where he played his clarinet and everybody danced. Those days are over and now music is but a way to retain the painful memories of a family that is no longer there. Only anger and hate remains. In the past, Meyer had to choose whether to kill his wife to spare her further suffering in the ghetto.

Jakob Loew

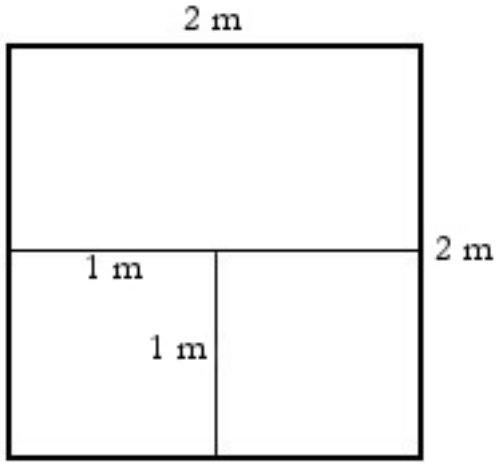
Throughout his life, Jakob has been through a lot. As a devout Jew, every bit of harassment and persecution has only strengthened his belief in God. His family has done well and with profits from his little grocery store Jakob was even able to send his eldest son to America. Jakob has always been respected in the Jewish community, not the least because he was always willing to entertain with his viola. Now, in the autumn years of his life with a failing body, he is faced with the greatest test of his life. He has lost his youngest son on The Night of Broken Glass, where the Nazis destroyed Jewish property and murdered at random. In the past, Jakob had to choose whether he would bury his son according to tradition and thereby risk the lives of his remaining family.

Tools

Birkenau uses two primary tools: the size of the stage and background music.

Stage

The stage area, where the entire game is played consists of a 2x2 m square marked by the gamemaster with masking tape. After creating the initial square, the area is divided into two parts with another line of masking tape. One of these halves is now again divided into two equal squares. The stage should end up looking the figure below:



During the game, three different sizes of stage area are used, meaning that each scene is played using 1 m^2, 2 m^2 or 4 m^2. The size of the stage area can change during the scene and in the description of each scene, it is noted whether the scene is played using full, half or quarter stage.

If the players exit the stage area during a scene, they leave the scene. Make sure that there are a couple of chairs on the stage for the players to use if they wish. The possibility of using different sizes of stage area is a tool utilised to increase physical closeness and create an at times claustrophobic feeling.

Music

As gamemaster you will need to play music during the game. You will need a small stereo to do this, preferably something a little bigger than a smartphone. A laptop with small speakers should be sufficient.

The soundtrack for this game consists of a single track for all scenes taking part in the present (in the concentration camp), a single track for all scenes taking part in the past and a single track for Act 2, Scene 6: “Children's song”. The tracks are:

From Jewish Life: 1, Prayer by Ernest Bloch **Present**
Atlantico by Robert Cacciapaglia **Past**
Are you sleeping? by Songs for Children **Act 2, Scene 6**

Playlist

The soundtrack can be found on Spotify and is called: Birkenau – Fastaval 2018 or using the link http://sptfy.com/D6p

How to run this game

To be the gamemaster running Birkenau is in many ways similar to running other Nordic freeform games. As gamemaster, you will set, describe and cut scenes. You will also read the prologue and the epilogue to the players. During the game, you must also make sure, that the music score is running as described under Tools.

Setting scenes

Each scene is described with a suggestion for introduction and ending, but you are welcome to improvise these instead, as long as the overall message and themes are intact. Each scene has predefined attributes. **When you set the scene, you must tell the players the scene's title, the size of the stage, which characters are in the scene and when the scene ends.** The other bits of information in the description are for you as gamemaster, so you know the purpose and overall plot of the scene.

Supporting characters

The players each take control of a main character during the game, which means that you as the gamemaster play all supporting characters. There is at most one supporting character in each scene and most often in scenes set in the past. The supporting characters are described in the relevant scenes.

Special focus

When running this game, there are specific elements that may differ from other games and that you should be attentive of. These elements are:

Allow silence

Normally it would be paramount that scenes are cut at the peak of its plot element. This is usually called cutting the scene tight. In this game, it is essential to leave some time and space for the players to be silent and think. Do not rush the game, but leave the players opportunities.

Closeness

The stage area is small, even when at its largest. This is a conscious decision and during the game it is completely acceptable to be physically close to other players. Please tell the players this, if they find the setup unnerving.

Asking characters

The players will help you describe some of the scenes during the game. When you use questions for the players to describe, make sure everyone knows that you are asking the characters, not the players. Players should answer from a first person perspective as their character.

The past

In the descriptions of the main characters, events from the characters past are mentioned. It is a conscious choice that these events are described without to much detail, as the players will have opportunity to play through these events during the game. The players are provided with a description of their characters and it is your task to inform them, at these parts of their characters will be elaborated during the scenes set in the past.

Preparation

Before the game you must prepare the stage are as described under Tools. Masking tape is ideal for the task as it is easy to remove afterwards. You should also have a stereo or other method of playing the music score to the players during the game. The use of music is also described under Tools.

You will also need to make the some of the written material of this game available by printing in advance. As gamemaster you should be able to access Scenes, Setlist, Gamemaster's guide and Names and time schedule during the game. Players must each be able to access one of the four main characters and the factsheet Judaism.

Startup

Before the game, you must inform the players about the games themes, form and tools. You will find a complete list of pregame information and how to start up the game in the Gamemaster's guide.

Safety

Because the game includes topics such as death, genocide and loss, it is important that you before the game tell the players, that this is a serious game about serious topics. It is important that everyone talks about his or hers physical boundaries. Although there is no sex in the game, the players are going to be physically close and some players may not feel at ease. When talking about boundaries, you can lead by example and start out by describing how you feel.

It is also important that everyone accepts, that if you for some reason cannot complete a scene due to physical or mental distress, it is completely acceptable to leave the scene. Talk this through. Make the game safe and people will have a better experience.

Explain the stage

Describe how the stage area functions and how it can change during the game. Also explain that leaving the stage area means that you leave the scene. Let everyone try it out.

Hand out characters

Now you should give each player a main character and the factsheet Judaism.

Workshop

When the players have read their characters, and any question has been answered, you should do a few quick workshop exercises. There are three exercises that should be done before starting the game. They are described below:

Exercise 1

The players sit down. You ask them to close their eyes, focussing on their breath. When they are calm, ask them to imagine their character. Going slowly from one to the next, ask the players to imagine the characters feeling joy, anger, happy, hateful and sadness.

Exercise 2

The players stand around the room. You ask them to close their eyes, focussing on their breath. When they are calm, ask them to imagine their character. They can now open their eyes and walk around the room finding the physical expression of their character. Let them walk like the character and find their characters facial expressions.

Exercise 3

When the players have finished exercise 2, ask them to continue walking around, but now they are to seek each other out and greet each other. When they meet, they will shake hands and say the characters name and age. Make sure everyone greets each other multiple times, allowing them to learn the other

characters names, before you conclude the exercise. After the workshop, you should start the game.

If you need a break before the game, it should be done before the workshop. If you need breaks during the game, they should be short, silent and between acts.

Debriefing

After the epilogue has been read to the players, you should thank them for participating. Ask the players to tell of their most beautiful experience during the game. Try to keep the debriefing in a happy and positive tone to create a contrast to the bleak mood of the game. Some players will want to talk about specific scenes or important moments during the game. Allow this and give the players some time and space. Some groups of players will need longer to process.

If need be, you can use a variation of the first workshop exercise. Each player is sitting down with their eyes closed, focussing on their breathing. Go through the following emotions one by one: happiness, anger, bliss, hate, and sadness. After each emotion, tell the players to let it go and simply focus on their breath. When done, let the players open their eyes again.

Thank the players one more time for participating and wrap up.

Sources of inspiration

There exist a lot of material concerning the persecution of Jews and The Second World War. Below you will find a list of works that served as inspiration for this game:

Books

Viktor Frankl, 1967: Ein Psycholog erlebt das Konzentrationslager / Psychotherapy and Existentialism
Guido Fackler, 2007: This Music is Infernal: Music in Auschwitz.

Documentaries

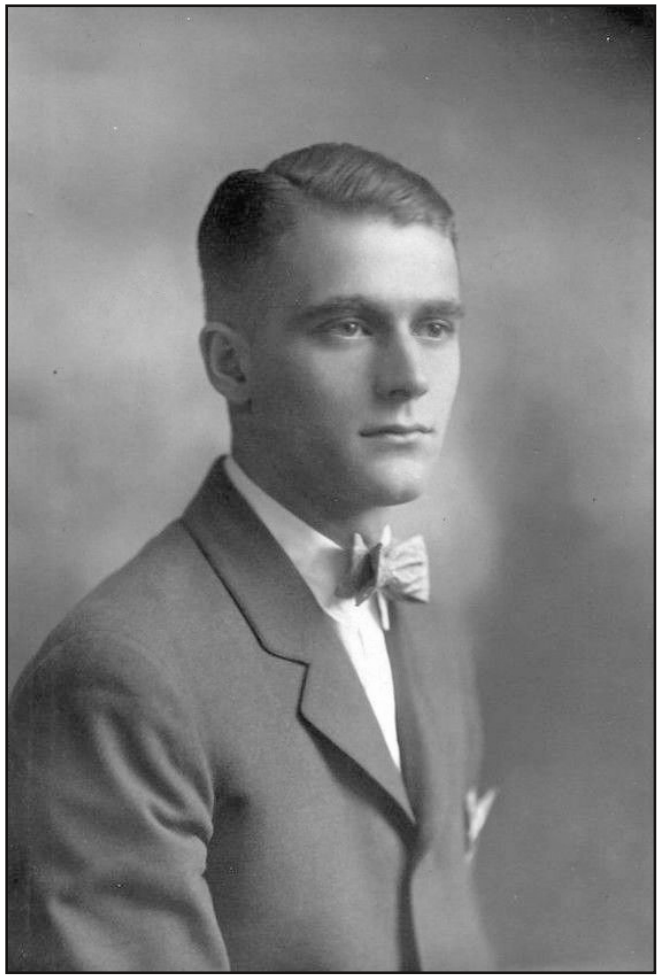
Simon Schama, 2013: The Story of The Jews.
Claude Lanzmann, 1985: Shoah
Alain Resnais, 1956: Nuit et Brouillard / Night and Fog.

Webpages

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum: http://www.ushmm.org
Yad Vashem: http://yvng.yadvashem.org/
Mémorial de la SHOAH: http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/

Characters

David Müller



"I told him, that I did not believe you could burn people in our modern times. That humanity would not tolerate it…"
- Elie Wiesel

David Müller

29 years old, creative, loving, extrovert, refuses to be Jewish

Description

To be an artist is not always easy, especially if you are from a family that only values financial success. David realised this when he, despite a great talent for music, was forced into the family business. Unhappy and broken, he ran away from his obligations, trained as a classic musician and found happiness in Berlin. He married the German **Ingrid Müller** and they untraditionally took her last name to distance themselves from David's family.

Past

David was flamboyant, creative and outspoken. He played every night in the many jazzclubs of Berlin, but made a living as a violinist in the local symphony orchestra and by teaching pupils in his living room. He would have never thought, that the Nazis would persecute good people. Despite all his precautions, he lost his place in the orchestra due to his Jewish heritage. The pupils stopped coming: no German would allow a Jew to teach their children. David and Ingrid had to give up their large apartment and the last remains of a comfortable life, when the Jews where moved into special parts of the city. When David was caught and shipped east like cattle, Ingrid was not taken. However David does not know if she escaped unharmed.

Faith

David never considered himself a Jew and had for many years been a proud German. Since running away from his family, he had not looked back and had not attended the Synagogue. Choosing to take Ingrid's last name was a way of distancing him from his Jewish heritage, symbolized by his original family name: Iskowitz. David mostly remembered the Jewish traditions as superstitions. He did however remember his grandfather **Moshe Iskowitz** with love, as he always supported his endeavours despite hostility from the rest of the family.

Challenge

To rediscover and accept his heritage.

Motivation for surviving

To reunite with his wife Ingrid and never leave her again.

During the game, you will experience the time before the war. You will have the opportunity to make choices about David's past and must make the following decision:

Choice

Will you force your beloved wife to leave you to save her from persecution?

The violin

The violin is a string instrument with four strings. The violin is one of the most important instruments in classical music. Its tone and clear sound distinguishes it from other instruments and makes the violin advantageous when playing a melody.

Samuel Bercow

"Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions."
- Primo Levi

Samuel Bercow

48 years old, cautious, dutiful, must learn to act, misses his daughters.

Description

Samuel has always been a decent man, both in private and in his work as an accountant. He has always done what have been expected of him as a son, husband and father. Shortly after returning from service in the trenches of the First World War, Samuel married his childhood sweetheart **Esther**. Together they had the two pretty daughters, **Katrin and Hannah** and settled down in Frankfurt. The First World War had awoken something in Samuel, who had always been considered a bit of a pushover. After fighting for Germany, he felt proud. In his everyday life he remained a peaceful and quiet man.

Music

Music always had a significant place in Samuel's life. As a young man, he wanted to play the cello for a living, but his father decided that training as an accountant was a more realistic way of life compared to being a musician. In the evenings Samuel often played his favourite pieces on the cello, while Esther listened. It gave him peace of mind.

Faith

Samuel has always been a good Jew, but never a fanatical one. He followed every tradition and rule, because it was expected of him, men he has not prayed honestly since the trenches. When the persecutions increased, Samuel bowed his head and kept doing his work. He tried to save his daughters by buying forged papers with his last money. They were put on a train to Paris. His wife Esther disappeared without a trace and when Samuel was looking for her, he was himself taken by the Nazis. Now he was alone.

Challenge

To learn to act and resist.

Motivation for surviving

To be reunited with his daughters.

During the game, you will experience the time before the war. You will have the opportunity to make choices about Samuel's past and must make the following decision:

Choice

Are you willing to betray other Jews to save your family?

The cello

The cello is the second-largest string instrument surpassed only by the double bass. The four strings have a deeper tone compared to the violin or viola. The size of the instrument requires the player to sit on a chair with the cello between his legs, just to play it. The sound is deep, soft and often considered melancholic.

Meyer Hirsch

"If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

- Shylock, The Merchant of Venice, Act 3 Scene 1.

Meyer Hirsch

34 years old, strong, down to earth, godly, thirsts for revenge.

Description

Meyer has always been a strong man. Although he only had the most basic of education, he was always able to feed his family through hard labour. There was no shame in getting your hands dirty and no shame in fighting back, if someone insulted you. Meyer was a generous, laughing man with great respect about him in the community. He was young when he married the beautiful **Sarah**. Although money was scarce, they managed to buy a small house in Stettins Jewish neighbourhood. Meyer was proud to have a family, where everyone pitched in.

Music

Playing the clarinet has always been Meyer's way of contributing to parties and dances. He learned to read music scantily as a child, but was always best at playing folk music. Meyer had no great knowledge of culture and never formed an opinion on which composer he preferred. He just wanted to play to make people happy.

Faith

Meyer was an observant Jew. He had a close and personal relationship with God and had always found inspiration and comfort in his congregation. It was at a party hosted by the synagogues youth club, that Meyer met his wife Sarah. Meyer and his family lived among Jews, talked to Jews and worked with other Jews. Maybe that was the reason, that being forced into the ghetto did not seem as much of change. As the conditions worsened and meals were further apart, the happy and carefree Meyer disappeared. His wife dwindled away and lost her mind. Their children **Avi and Lea** died in the ghetto by her hand. Meyer was haunted by guilt, nightmares and anger. He had everything and now only hate remained.

Challenge

To reconcile with his past and imagine there can be a future.

Motivation for surviving

To take revenge on those that were to blame for his familys fate.

During the game, you will experience the time before the war. You will have the opportunity to make choices about Meyer's past and must make the following decision:

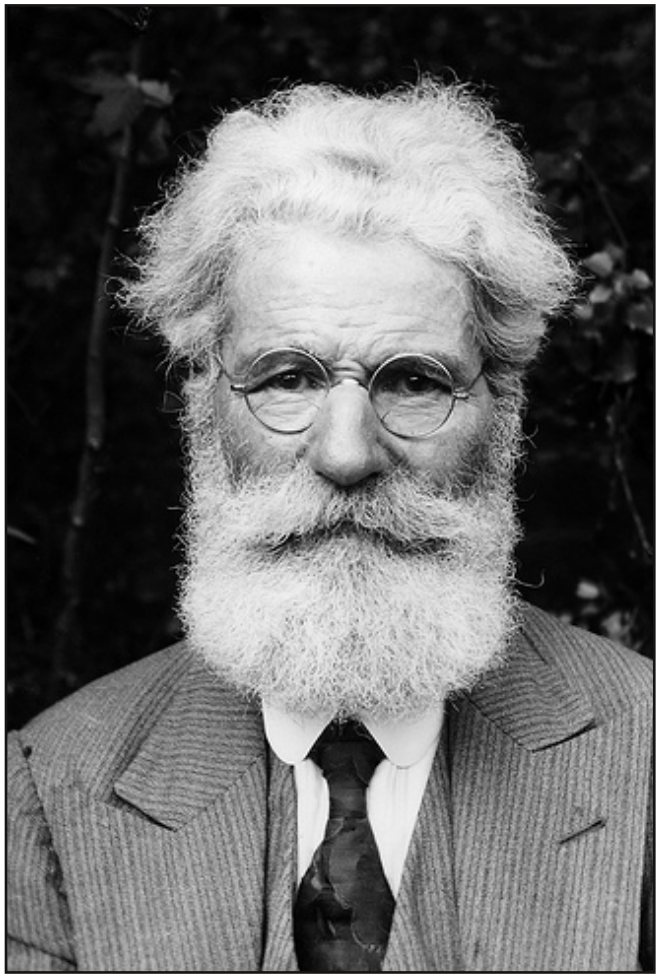
Choice

Are you willing to kill your wife to spare her further suffering?

The clarinet

The clarinet is a woodwind instrument. It has the largest range of any wind instrument and the sound improves if the instrument is played at body temperature. The instrument is used in both classical music and in Jewish folk music.

Jakob Loew



"To be a Jew is to be strong with a strength that has outlived persecutions. It is to be wise against ignorance, honest against piracy, harmless against evil, kind against cruelty"

- Phyllis Bottome

Jakob Loew

65 years old, fatherly, forgiving, kind, believes in a just God.

Description

Being an elderly man with a big smile and an even bigger beard, gave Jakob a naturally kind expression. It reflected his fatherly and forgiving personality. For more than 45 years, Jakob had worked in the small grocery store in Leipzig - initially as a help to his father and later as the proprietor. Everyone in the town respected him and he was loved by children, both Jewish and German, when he allowed them to pick out sweets in the store, as their parents looked away. When Jakob played the viola he also brought joy to people, usually by happy tunes at parties in the Jewish neighbourhood. His father insisted on only two things: that Jakob should learn basic mathematics and that he should learn to play an instrument. Jakob always felt loved and that was perhaps the reason, that he was so disappointed and sad, when the hatred and persecutions from the Nazis intensified.

Past

Jakob had to grown sons: **Ephraim and Levi.** Ephraim travelled to America in the early 1930s and made his fortune. He often wrote his aging father and even came back to Germany to offer Jakob the money to travel with him to America. Jakob refused – although the harassment increased. He could not imagine a time, where Germany would be unsafe. His faith was disproven when his youngest son Levi was beaten to death on The Night of Broken Glass. The aging Jakob lost his smile that day and had to comfort his sobbing wife **Miriam.**

Faith

Jakob was a traditionalist and orthodox in his approach to Judaism. He considered himself as a Jew in both faith and blood, and was one of the respected Elders of his congregations. He had also experienced persecution before and believed that whatever happened, it had to be a test from God. But even Jakob had to acknowledge that no test had ever been so destructive and horrible before.

Challenge

To accept that life in the present can have preference to tradition.

Motivation for surviving

To put a stone on his sons grave.

During the game, you will experience the time before the war. You will have the opportunity to make choices about Jakob's past and must make the following decision:

Choice

Are you willing to loose your remaining family to uphold Jewish traditions?

The viola

The viola is a string instrument with four strings. It is slightly larger than a violin, but are played in the same way. The viola has a deeper, more muffled and softer sound than the violin or the cello. It is often used in Jewish folk music, where it is known as a fidl.

Judaism

Judaism was founded in the Middle East, allegedly by the biblical Abraham.

There is only one God and the Jews are His chosen people.

Judaism is a religion of rules. The Torah consists of 613 laws and rules; the most important being The Ten Commandments.

The Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews was scattered across the known world (the diaspora).

God is worshipped in the Synagogue, where men and women are separated and a rabbi precides over services.

It is prohibited to eat pork, horsemeat, shellfish and a variety of other animals. Meat and dairy can not be mixed in a meal and a correctly prepared meal adhering to the rules is called Kosher.

The time from sundown friday to sundown Saturday is Sabbath. Working is not allowed, not even lighting a fire. The time is used for prayer, contemplation and being with family.

Birth

Circumcision (brit milah) is performed on all Jewish boys on the eighth day after birth. As Abraham circumcised his son Isak, so shall all Jewish boys be circumcised to confirm the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

Bar Mitzvah

When a Jewish boy turns thirteen, he is a man and is celebrated with festivities and a reading in the Synagogue. The boys father is no longer responsible for his sins and the boy participates on equal terms in holy days.

Wedding

At a wedding, the future husband and wife are married under a canopy (chuppah) that represents their future home. The two drinking from the same glass, which they smash afterwards, concludes the ceremony. Destroying the glass symbolises that even in a time of joy, the destruction of the Temple should be remembered.

Death

It is tradition to rip ones clothing when a close relative dies. The body must be watched over before the funeral, which should be performed as swiftly as possible. Cremation is strictly forbidden as it destroys the work of God. When visiting a Jewish graveyard, placing a small stone on the grave is a sign of respect.

Scenes

Prologue

This is a story about Jews. About regular people, that was like their neighbours, friends and colleagues. This is the story of four men who were shamed, humiliated and persecuted. But it also the story of love and compassion: the story of a hunted people.

Read this to the players.

Persecution has always been a part of being Jewish. At no point were the Jewish people and faith safe. Everywhere Jews were considered strange, foreign and suspicious and they were blamed for all manner of things. With a certain dry sense of humour, some Jews point out that the Jews are Gods chosen people entirely because no other people wanted the job and the suffering that would come with it. Persecution has shaped the Jewish people. And no persecution has been greater than the Nazi attempt to utterly annihilate the Jews.

This is the story about four Jews before and during the Second World War. This is the story of their hopes and dreams, their friendships and identities. This is the story of faith, music, resistance and death.

Act 1, Scene 1: The Transport

Stage size
Quarter stage

Characters
All main characters (no supporting characters)

The scene ends...
When everybody has been introduced and explained why they brought their instruments.

Purpose
To introduce the characters to each other and set the mood of the game.

Plot
The main characters are transported by train to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Information
The players should have at least two parts of the scene with the possibility of talking and introducing themselves. Below you will find the introduction, a description of the journey and the end of the scene. The common denominator is that every player character have brought an instrument (David: Violin, Samuel: Cello, Meyer: Clarinet, Jakob: Viola) and they are crammed together.

Introduction
You can remember when you were put on the train – not that it matters now anyway. You have to take turn sitting on the floor that is strewn with sand and a bit of straw. The cart stinks and as the days pass, the scent of unwashed people is mixed with the stench of the bucket in the corner, meant for people to relieve themselves in. Every time the train stops, more people are crammed into the cart, even though you were sure, that there were no more room. Everyone is clinging to luggage, usually a small suitcase and there can be no doubt that everyone brought their most priced possessions. There is only soft and scared conversation. Here you are: unknown to each other and crammed together, each with your most priced possessions: your musical instruments. David has his violin, Meyer his clarinet, Jakob his viola and even Samuel managed to bring his cello on board. Maybe you can be friends in this terrible situation. Meyer is the first to break the silence.

Travel description
Day becomes night and becomes day again. Through the cracks in the side of the cart you can see the landscape slowly rolling by. The sound of the train passing the joints of the tracks are like a metallic heartbeat. Sometimes the train stops and nobody knows if this is the end. But just as you think you have reached your destination, the train starts again. Slowly rolling along. Perhaps going East, but definitely leaving the world you know.

End
Very few talk about where you might be going. Some heard rumours, but no one know anything for certain. The fear is felt in the air, but most people try not to scare the children caught in the cart with you. They know something is terribly wrong. The train stops and you can hear noise from the outside: shouting and dogs barking. You hear the carts being disconnected and the train disappearing in the distance. You are at the end of the line.

Act 1, Scene 2: The Firstborn

Stage size
Full stage

Characters
Meyer og Herschl (supporting character).

The scene ends..
When Meyer and Herschl are drunk, happy and have agreed on their childrens future.

Purpose
To let Meyer experience the happiness of parenthood and dream of the future.

Plot
Meyer is the father of a son and he is happy. His son Avi was just circumcised and is now part of the Jewish people. Meyer drinks and talks with his best friend Herschl about the boys glowing future.

Information
During this scene you will play Meyer's friend Herschl. He is happy for his best friend and the two should talk about all the good things that awaits little Avi and the family. Please exaggerate: Avi can become anything: a politician, a business tycoon or even an academic!

Supporting character: Herschl
Hersch is a simple, happy, carefree Jewish man. Just like Meyer he works hard to provide for his family. He is not a great thinker, but he wants the children, both Meyer's and his own, to do something else with their lives than fight for mere survival. He wishes they might work using their minds instead of their hands.

Introduction
1932. It is the proudest day of Meyer Hirsch's life. He is not only a father. He is the father of a son, who has been circumcised today. Brit Milah: the young Avi has become part of God's chosen people. The covenant has been renewed. Meyer celebrates the day with his best friend Herschl. The drink cheap brandy and talk about the great future that lies ahead for Avi and his generation.

Act 1, Scene 3: Selection

Stage size

Quarter stage -> Half stage -> Full stage.

Characters

All main characters and unnamed SS-officer (supporting character).

The scene ends..

When the four arrive at the shed that is their new home and realise this is their new reality.

Purpose

To transform the characters into prisoners and introducere the music as an escape from reality. The scene is also the characters first chance to react as Jews (the tattoo).

Plot

The main characters arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau and are selected for manual labour. Their possessions are taken from them, they are each tattooed with their prisoner identification number and are placed in the same shed.

Information

Your task as gamemaster is to lead the characters through a hectic scene. You must also play a single unnamed supporting character, a SS-officer, twice during the scene. The scenes different elements are described in chronological order below. Keep note of the fact that the size of the stage changes twice during the scene. Your focus should be on portraying the sounds, sights and impressions of the camp. If you decide to use questions for the players to describe the scene, keep the questions specific.

Introduction

Auschwitz-Birkenau. The door of the cart opens and you are met by an inferno of light, sound and fear. You can catch a glimpse of the pale sky and the chimneys spewing grey smoke towards it. Everything is chaos with dogs barking and guards shouting in German. You are chased out the cart – the first to step out stumble and fall. If you look back as you leave the cart, there is a curled up dead body in the corner that nobody have noticed; a small huddled figure with a yellow star on its chest.

The four main characters are chased out of the cart and **the stage area changes to half size.** They can hear music and are rounded up in a row:

You are rounded up and stand on a row. The chaos is complete, but then you hear it: the most beautiful classical musical. You look around and just on the other side of the barb wire fence, you see an orchestra of prisoners. When you listen to the music, all other noise, chaos and despair disappear. It created calm and slowly everyone falls in line, some crying other collected without any expression of emotion.

Selection

You must now play the SS-officer. The SS-officers task is to choice whether the newly arrived Jews should live or die. If he sends them to the right (his left) the Jews are selected for work. If the sends them to the left (his right) they are sent to the gas chambers. As gamemaster you should assess the players before sending them to the right (your left). You should assess Jakob longer than the others, as he is soldier. You can push the players out of the stage area in the process.

You must now describe how the characters are stripped of the clothing and possessions (including

instruments). They are given striped rags, have their heads shaven and are tattooed with their prisoner identification number before being let into the camp. The description is:

You are sent right, where only a minority is allowed. The oldest and youngest, as well as those who need help to walk, are all taken to the left and into a large building. The building has tall chimneys spewing grey smoke. You walk slowly into a concrete building and as soon as you enter, you notice that the music is disappearing behind you. The further into the building you are forced to go, the more distant the music becomes. Everything is taken from you and you are naked in front of each other. One by one your heads are shaven and you are given striped rags and wooden shoes. Finally you are taken to a small room:

You must now once more play the unnamed SS-officer. You should ask each of the players of their name and occupation, before sending them further into the camp. You can once more force the players out of the stage. When all the players are through, use the following description:

The tattoo

A guard grabs you by your left arm and tattoos a number on it. One prisoner, one number: your new name. It hurts. Jews don't have tattoos as they destroy Gods work. No Jew with a tattoo can be buried in a traditional Jewish cemetery.

All prisoners are tattooed with their identification number on their left forearm. In Judaism the body is sacred because it is made in Gods image, and a tattoo ensures that you cannot be buried in a traditional Jewish cemetery. When this has been described the **stage changes size to full size** as the characters are placed in the wooden shed that is their new home. The description of this can be found below:

You are placed in the same wooden shed, number 20 and are taken there. The small building is already full with wretched people, all with a yellow star on their chest and an empty look in their eyes. You can smell the filth and there are bunk beds: three men for each bunk. Some of the men have almost completely disappeared.

Give the players some space and time to breath and let the characters react to what they have experienced during the scene. The focus should be the loss of their instruments and the tattoo. Ask them if necessary. Give them time to think, talk and be silent.

Act 1, Scene 4: Charity

Stage size
Full stage.

Characters
Samuel and Werner, the homeless veteran (supporting character).

The scene ends..
When Samuel has spoken to the veteran Werner and walks home to his family.

Purpose
To let Samuel do a good deed and remind him of The First World War.

Plot
Samuel is on his home from work and is carrying Hanukkah presents for his children. He walks past a homeless man and decides to do a good deed (mitzvah) and talks to him.

Information
In this scene you will set and end the scene as well as play the homeless veteran. Your task is to get Samuel to tell about The Great War and why he stopped on his way to give him a little money. Do this by talking about the war and include Samuel. If Samuel rejects Werner, he can instead become angry and curse the Jews, the Communists and anyone else, he considers the source of his misfortune.

Supporting character: Werner, the homeless veteran
Life after The Great War has not been kind to Werner, who fought in the trenches. Now he is a homeless alcohol. Reduced to begging on the streets, he sits near the entrances of Frankfurts department stores trying to earn a little money. He is proud to have fought for his country, but is bitter that no one appreciates his sacrifice.

Introduction
Germany 1932. It is cold outside and it looks like it will soon snow. Samuel Bercow is on his way home from the little accounting firm, but first he must fulfil a promise to his wife: he is shopping for Hanukkah-presents for the children. Hanukkah is every child dream and is almost like Jewish Christmas. Samuel is happy that he can afford enough presents for all six days of Hanukkah: Little toys, candy and trinkets. The poorer Jews cannot afford as much. Samuel walks by a ragged man begging in the street. He is dirty and smells foul. Samuel starts by walking past him, men stops to think that not everyone is as fortunate as himself. He walks back to the beggar, who looks at him and asks: "A coin for a veteran, sir?"

Act 1, Scene 5: Roast and Potatoes

Stage size
Half stage.

Characters
All main characters (no supporting characters).

The scene ends..
When everyone have described their ultimate meal and compared it to the very real dinner served in the camp.

Purpose
To let the characters exchange views in food and manual labour, giving them an opportunity to express personalities and beliefs.

Plot
The characters have been put to work digging ditches. They are constantly hungry and pass the time talking about food. They return to the camp and must deal with the difference between their dreams and reality.

Information
This scene is divided into two parts. The first takes place as the characters work digging ditching and the second part takes place in the camp after dinner.

The players must describe the meal of their dreams. You can use questions if they are having difficulties. You should also ask them, whether the meal is kosher. This will allow the players the opportunity to express whether the characters are religious or not. You can also use questions and descriptions to underline which characters are used to manual labour (Meyer and Jakob) and who is not (David and Samuel). Introduction and description for the trip back to the camp can be found below:

Introduction
Auschwitz-Birkenau. You have been selected for work and are used to the fullest. Every day from daybreak to sunset you perform tough manual labour. The food is scarce and even when there is enough it is terrible. Hot water with a hint of a potato is called soup. Strange porridge made from indistinguishable meat is a feast. Random beatings and executions are numerous. Every morning you march from the camp to the sound of the orchestra. You can almost loose yourself in the music that drowns out the sounds and suffering of the camp, albeit only for a second. You dig ditches and everyday someone perishes. You are hungry all the time and to pass the time during work, you talk about food. It becomes an obsession. You talk about dishes, sides and serving every day, all dag. Today you are on you knees, digging with your hands, when Samuel starts talking about his favourite desert.

Back to the camp
As the sun sets, you march back to the camp. It is important to stay in the front of the column, because when those in front you collapse, you haven't got the strength to step over them. Returning to the camp, the orchestra plays once more. It is beautiful. You see one of your fellow prisoners starts to run slowly. He smiles as he throws himself at the electric fence and screams as he expires. Suicide is a sin, but who can blame him? You are given your daily rations and sit together, eating. It is some kind of soup with unknown bits of meat in it. Could be pork. David is the first to speak about the hideous food.

Act 1, Scene 6: Honeymoon

Half stage

Stage size

David and Moshe, his grandfather (supporting character).

Characters

When Moshe has given David a wedding present.

The scene ends..

To allow David to distance himself from his family and Jewish heritage, while at the same time reminding him, at it will never disappear entirely.

Purpose

David receives a visit from his grandfather

Plot

In this scene you will play David's grandfather, Moshe Iskowitz. Shortly after David's wedding, Moshe seeks him out. He praises him for adopting a German name adapting to the changing times. Maybe the German name will protect him? Moshe is happy on behalf of David, even though he himself does not really understand the fascination with being German. They also talk a bit about David's childhood. At the end of the scene, Moshe gives David an envelope with 324 Reichmark as a wedding present. In Jewish tradition, the number 18 is a lucky and holy number, making 18x18 (324) Reichmark a generous wedding present.

Information

Moshe looks like a caricature of a grandfather. He has a fragile body, but is full og laughter, smile and joy. He sought out David to congratulate him and praise him. He has always loved David dearly and helped him, even when the rest of the family wouldn't accept him.

Supporting character: Moshe Iskowitz

Germany 1034. You and Ingrid, your wife, have just returned from your honeymoon to Vienna. The wedding was small and only a few friends and Ingrid's family was there. You didn't want to invite your family. You choose to take Ingrid's last name and leave Iskowitz in the past with you family. One day there is a knock on the door and you open. Your grandfather, Moshe, smiles and you invite him in. Fortunately Ingrid is not at home.

Introduction

You open the envelope and cant help smile. The old man has given you 324 Reichsmark. The luckiest and holiest number in Jewish tradition: 18, multiplied by itself. A generous German-Jewish present for you and Ingrid.

End

Act 1, Scene 7: The American Son

Introduction

Germany 1934. It is a day of celebration. Jakob and his family have prepared a feast as they are receiving a honoured guest. Ephraim, Jakob's son that travelled to America years ago, have returned and is bringing good news. His business is flourishing and he has become a wealthy man. His return to Germany has made it clear just have much the Jews of Germany must endure. After a noisy and vibrant meal, Ephraim and Jakob sit down to smoke their pipes. They talk about the little things in life and whether it is time for Jakob to go to America.

Stage size

Full stage.

Characters

Jakob and Ephraim, the son returned from America (supporting character).

The scene ends...

When Jakob has ensured his son, that Leipzig is the familys home now and always.

Purpose

To let Jakob explain why he wants to remain in Germany and what his home means to him.

Plot

Jakob's son, Ephraim, living in America, has returned to Germany to visit his family. He is a success and offers to pay the travel expenses for the family, so they can leave Germany. Jakob refuses.

Information

In this scene you will play Ephraim, Jakob's son, who previously travelled to America. He has built a business and has returned to visit. After dinner, he speaks with his father about the harassment of the Jews of Germany. He tries to convince Jakob to leave and offers to pay. He does not understand the nostalgia and sense of belonging that Jakob has towards the town and its people.

Supporting character: Ephraim Loew

Ephraim has returned from America. He is a successful businessman dressed in expensive clothing feeling proud. He is humble towards his old father though. He is sure, that the family could have a better life in America.

Act 1, Scene 8: Used Instruments

Stage size
Full stage.

Characters
All main characters, unnamed SS-officer (supporting character).

The scene ends..
When everyone has found an instrument and described it.

Purpose
To confront the characters with the fact that their new task is at the expense of others and that there were other musicians before them.

Plot
The characters are confronted by a SS-officer, who gives them the opportunity to play in the camp orchestra. It is a way to avoid the harsh manual labour. They are taken to a large warehouse where an endless amount of belongings, including instruments, are stored. They much choose an instrument and loose themselves in the memory of the previous owner.

Information
In this scene, you must play the unnamed SS-officer and afterwards use specific questions to ensure, that the players describe their new instruments and the previous owners. The scene should be long and lingering. There must be room for silence and pauses. Below you will find introduction, notes, questions and end in chronological order.

Introduction
Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is a cold night in the camp. You are hungry, weak and tired. One day after the other in endless pain. You don't know how long you can keep going on. Some of you might be close to giving up; others still have strength. The corpses of comrades are carried out every morning and new arrive, scared and with fear in their eyes. The door opens and a SS-officer enters.

SS-officer (supporting character)
You will now play the SS-officer. He heard, that there are musicians here and he needs them for his orchestra. He can lure them with the fact that those who play music, does not have to dig ditches. He asks musicians to volunteer and becomes angry if no one does. Let the players talk together and give them an opportunity to volunteer.

You volunteer, perhaps for the sake of music, perhaps to survive a little longer. No one tells you what happened to the previous musicians. The guards take you to a large building near the camps entrance. It is a giant warehouse filled with objects: piles of luggage, shoes, clothes and human hair. Mountains of things, sorted by type, colour and quality. All that is left of thousands of people. You are taken to a pile of instruments and directed to pick one. David is the first to find his instrument, a violin.

Questions
Is this instrument old? Is it worn? Why is it beautiful? How owned this instrument? When did they play it? Where they any good?

End
You are taken to new lodgings, where the other musicians live. Conditions are still horrible. The last thing the guards do, before they leave, is to give you some sheet music. You sit on the floor, flipping trough the music. For some of you, the paper speaks music, for others it is little more than doodling. You can talk, but remain mostly silent.

Act 2, Scene 1: Piano Lesson

Introduction

Germany 1937. It is not easy being a Jew, but David still manages. No one would suspect that he would have Jewish ancestry. Still, David fears that some one might find out and suspects that it has already happened. David's favourite pupil Dieter just finished his lesson. He has been taught in Davids living room for years and the two have become friends. However, Dieter doesn't want to be taught by David anymore.

Stage size

Half stage.

Characters

David and Dieter, the pupil (supporting character).

The scene ends...

When Dieter leaves and slams the door.

Purpose

To let David know, that he is no longer safe and expose him to anti-Semitism.

Plot

David teaches pupils on the piano to make a living. One of his dearest students tells him, that he longer no wants to take lessons. At first, he claims it is his parents' fault, but later admits that he would rather join the Hitlerjugend than being taught music by a dirty Jew.

Information

In this scene you will play Dieter, a German boy. Dieter has been taking lessons from David for three years and has improved his skills at the piano. He was a quiet boy, but the two have become a sort of friends. Dieter really wants to be part of the Hitlerjugend, but the other boys tease him because he is playing music with a Jew. Dieter would like David to believe that it is the other boys and his parents' fault, but admits that he himself doesn't want to be taught by a Jew.

Supporting character: Dieter

Dieter is a 13-year old German boy. He has always liked music, but has been convinced that he should try to be more of an Aryan man with a healthy interest in outdoor living and marching. He does not understand why he should hate the Jews, but is willing to do so nonetheless. He knows all the cries and propaganda.

Act 2, Scene 2: Sabbath

Full stage.
Meyer and Sarah, his wife (supporting character).
When Meyer has made Sarah a promise.

Stage size
Characters
The scene ends...

To establish a family-life for Meyer but with expectations of the persecution that is about to happen.

Purpose

Meyer and his family have eaten their dinner on the Sabbath and the children have been put to bed. Sarah and Meyer are talking about how well the children are doing and how happy the family are. Meyer dreams of greater things but Sarah is worried. She makes him promise that she will never have to live without her children.

Plot

During this scene you will play Sarah Hirsch, Meyer's wife. She has eaten dinner with her family and is now talking to Meyer. Meyers best friend Herschls daughter recently died of pneumonia and Sarah is obsessed with the fear of loosing her children. She wants Meyer to promise her, that she will never have to live without them.

Information

Sarah is a temperamental, beautiful and fiery woman. She is proud of being a good wife, mother and homemaker. Her children means everything to her and she cant even imagine living without them.

Supporting character: Sarah Hirsch

1937. Life goes on in the small Jewish community. It is the Sabbath and the Hirsch-family just finished their dinner. Nothing fancy, but a feast for them nonetheless. The children Avi and Leah have been put to bed, leaving Meyer and his wife Sarah in the small living room. With the children sleeping, they can talk about more serious topics. Herchl, Meyers best friend, lost his daughter to pneumonia. He sits at home grieving. To loose a child is a faith worse than death. Sarah looks at Meyer seriously.

Introduction

Act 2, Scene 3: The Music Stops

Half stage.
All main characters (no supporting character).
When everyone has decided to resist or not.

Stage size
Characters
The scene ends...

To give the characters an opportunity to resist oppression.

Purpose

The camp orchestra plays at another selection of newly arrived prisoners. The conductor stops the music and refuses to continue. The characters can choose to continue or resist by stopping.

Plot

This scene mirrors the third scene of the first act, where the main characters themselves are selected to work. This time, the characters are providing the music that soothes the fear of newly arrived. In this scene, the characters have the opportunity to resist by not playing. Remember to emphasise that the music blocks out the horrible sounds of the camp and provides comfort, while at the same time pacifying the prisoners. The characters know that they contribute to a calm and orderly camp by playing on.

Information

Let the players spend whatever time they need to describe their acts of resistance. They can talk with each other if they want and can do almost anything they want. They cannot however escape from the camp. The scene will inevitably end with the guards beating the orchestra senseless. Introduction and end can be found below:

Introduction

Auschwitz-Birkenau. As part of the camp orchestra your work is different from the others prisoners, but no less horrible. Every day you watch as the workers march from the camp and returns weak, broken and exhausted. But the worst days are when new prisoners arrive. You sit on the other side of the fence and play, witnessing fear and confusion. Fewer and fewer are selected for work and more and more disappear into the building with the great chimney, never to be heard from or seen again. When you play, you cannot hear the camp and disappear into a better world. One grey day you play for the newly arrived, when the conductor stops you. He doesn't want to play anymore and throws his sheet music into the mud. He stands proud with his arms crossed and there is resistance in his eyes. The first violinist taps his bow on his music stand as a sign of respect. Others also clap or tap their music stands, while some tries to continue playing. What do you do? Meyer stops playing and addresses you.

End

The guards are without mercy. First, they shoot the conductor and then the first violinist when he refuses to take his place. Then the beatings begin. Kicks, punches and spitting are abundant before you are thrown back into your little wooden shed. Perhaps you smile defiantly and perhaps you cry with desperation.

Act 2, Scene 4: Night of Broken Glass

Full stage -> Half stage.
Jakob and Levi, his son (supporting character).
When the synagogue has burned to the ground.

Stage size
Characters
The scene ends...

To confront Jakob with loss and anti-Semitism.
Jakob is cleaning up his store, when his son Levi comes running in. The brownshirts are smashing Jewish stores and synagogues. The two hide in the basement, but Levi cant stand the sight of the synagogue burning. He runs into the burning building to save the Torah-scrolls, but is killed in the street afterwards.

Purpose
Plot

In this scene you will play Levi, Jakob's youngest son. Levi comes running in to Jakob's store around closing time and tells him, that gang are destroying Jewish property. They hide in the cellar, **reducing the stage to half size**. They can see the synagogue burning through the window. Levi is passionate and you. He hates the bullies destroying everything. Use Levi to describe what happens. He is mad at his father because he doesn't fight back. He runs out of the store and disappears from the stage. Afterwards you must describe how Levi runs into the burning synagogue and emerges with two of the heavy Torah-scrolls. He is seen by the brownshirts and beaten to death as Jakob watches through the little cellar window.

Information

Levi is in his early twenties and chosen to take over his fathers business when the time comes. He is also a young man with a temper and he hates to witness insults to Jews. He is terribly angry and wants to make a difference. He is a man of action.

Supporting character: Levi Loew

Germany 1938. It is a night in November. Jakob is closing up his little store. He sweeps and cleans up. In the distance he can hear noise and perhaps even smell a bit of smoke? Jakob's youngest son Levi comes running into the store.

Introduction

Levi runs out the store and takes a deep breath before running into the burning synagogue. After what seems to be an eternity, he emerges with two of the big Torah-scrolls. He is covered in ashes and can barely stand. The incident is witnessed by a band of brownshirts that shows him no mercy. They beat him to death and spit on the body and the Torah-scrolls.

End

Act 2, Scene 5: Trading People

Stage size
Full stage.

Characters
Samuel and Werner, the veteran, now a Nazi (supporting character).

The scene ends...
When Samuel has decided whether he is willing to do anything to save his daughters.

Purpose
To answer Samuels choice: Are you willing to betray other Jews to save your family?

Plot
Samuel is trying to get his daughters on a train leaving Germany. He has spent his last money on train tickets and false passports. He cannot afford to get his wife and himself out of the country. After making sure, his daughters have gotten on the train, he meets the veteran, who is now a Nazi. The Nazi offers him a deal.

Information
In this scene you will play the veteran Werner, who has become a Nazi. He sees Samuel on the train station and knows something is up. Jews are not allowed to travel and Samuel is most definitely a Jew. He may even have seen Samuel with his daughters earlier that day. The veteran really doesn't care about the two girls, but he wants to blackmail Samuel and offers him to let the girls go, if Samuel will provide a list of every Jew in town. He can also threaten him with searching the train. During the conversation, the Nazi might realise, that they have spoken before.

In this scene, the player with the character Samuel must answer the question: Are you willing to betray other Jews to save your family? The question must be answered through action in the scene.

Supporting character: Werner, veteran and Nazi
As a veteran, Werner found new opportunities when the Nazis came to power. There was plenty of need for veterans with fighting experience and Werner rose through the ranks. Now he walks the streets of Frankfurt with power. He is proud and merciless, but is willing to let Samuel's daughters escape, if Samuel will help him find other more important Jews.

Introduction
Germany 1938. After the Night of Broken Glass it is no longer safe to be a Jew in Germany. Everything has changes and what was discrimination before is now law. Samuel is afraid that his daughters Katrin and Hannah are not safe. Everyday there are more stories about abuse, humiliation and disappearances. Using his last money, Samuel has bought false passports and train tickets. He is crying when he puts the girls on the train and is ashamed that he cannot afford to leave with his wife as well. He wanders across the train platform and is seen by a man in a brown uniform. Samuel looks down, but the Nazi is coming straight for him. He stops him.

Act 2, Scene 6: Children's Song

Half stage.
All main characters (no supporting characters).
When the two prisoners are dead.

Stage size
Characters
The scene ends...

To give the main characters another opportunity to resist.
The orchestras resistance has inspired others in the camp to rebel and the characters are forced to witness the torture and execution of two men, who tried to escape.

Purpose

Plot

In this scene the players will describe torture and execution, and must decide whether they will continue to resist their conditions. In this scene, the act of resistance consists of whether they sing along to the childrens song, that the guards insist they sing. You as gamemaster must ask the characters specific questions to describe the scene. Examples are found below

Please note, that there is a specific music track for this scene alone. The track is "Are you sleeping?"

Information

Introduction

Auschwitz-Birkenau. Every morning and every night, the prisoners must be counted. This takes place in the square at the centre of the camp and continues until everyone has been accounted for. Some times, the guards find it amusing to miscount on purpose so you have to stand in the pouring rain even longer. You can hardly stand. Many prisoners are increasingly desperation and some even tried to escape. Maybe the orchestra inspired them? Everyone is lined up. Two captured fugitives are about to be tortured to death in front of you. The guards laugh and order everyone to sing a childrens song again and again. In the middle of the square is a single birch tree: A tiny bit of nature in this hell. Do you sing along to the childrens song? The guards look away and you can talk to each other.

Questions

One of the men falls to his knees. From where does he bleed?
The other man grabs his shoulder after being punched. Is it broken?
The two prisoners have wet faces. Are they wet from blood, tears or rain?
The choir of prisoners are horrifying. Do you sing along?

End

They have to be dead now: none of them are moving anymore. You are counted again and again. You can hardly stand from fatigue. Those who sang are hoarse now. You pass out in your bunks and dream of children singing.

Act 3, Scene 1: Sorrow

Half stage. **Stage size**
Jakob (no supporting characters). **Characters**
When Jakob has made his decision. **The scene ends...**

To answer Jakobs choice: Are you willing to loose the rest of your family to uphold Jewish tradition? **Purpose**

Jakob must bury his son and must decide, whether it is more important to him to uphold tradition and bury him quickly, or whether he should wait until it is safe, but violate the traditions. **Plot**

I this scene your task is to set and end the scene. Jakob will be talking to his dead son, which will off course not answer him, about the dilemma. If Jakob chooses to perform the traditional burial, you must describe how his family suffers as a consequence. **Information**

Introduction

Germany 1938. Levi is dead. The synagogue is burned to the ground and the storefront is smashed. In the early morning, when the brownshirts had left the area, Jakob went into the square and brought his sons body inside. He washed it and dressed Levi in his best suit. Levi now lies on the dining room table. His mother is crying in an adjacent room as Jakob recites prayers over the boy. Tradition demands, that Levi must be buried as quickly as possible. But that requires a procession through town to the Jewish cemetery. The air is filled with fear; as such a procession would be very dangerous right now. Jakob is alone with his sons body and talks to him about the dilemma.

End

If Jakob chooses to ignore tradition:
Levi is buried, but not until the town has settled down. Jakob cant help thinking, that it is his responsibility and fault if Levi cannot find peace…

Or

If Jakob chooses to uphold tradition:
It is a strange sight with a funeral procession walking through the rubble and broken glass with the body of Levi. Everyone looks and them and the Germans spit at them. The brownshirts learn about the procession and shows up at the Jewish cemetery. The beat everyone and topple the gravestones. Several Jews dies a result. Miriam, Jakobs wife, doesn't survive her injuries and her sorrow.

Act 3, Scene 2: Moving Boxes

Stage size
Half stage.

Characters
David and Ingrid, his wife (supporting character).

The scene ends...
When the sun rises as Ingrid and David pack the last of their belongings.

Purpose
To answer Davids choice: Do you force your wife to leave you, to protect her?

Plot
David and his wife Ingrid are moving. Since David is Jewish, they must leave there apartment and move to a designated neighbourhood, where they are to share an apartment with two other families. They can only bring a few of their belongings.

Information
In this scene you must play Ingrid, David's wife. The two love each other very much and Ingrid has always been a good and supportive wife. She is a little naïve and doesn't care that David is Jewish. Even now, when they are loosing their lives to persecution. David will try to push Ingrid away, so that she can be spared further pain.

Supporting character: Ingrid Müller
Ingrid is David's loving wife; Blond, vibrant, energetic and supportive. She doesn't care where he comes from, as long as they are together. She loves his creative energy and saves small memories of their time together: concert ticket stubs, a photo from a weekend getaway, their records and so on.

Introduction
Germany 1939. David and his beloved wife Ingrid have been ordered to move. Just like other Jewish families they are forced from their property. They are to live in an apartment with two other families. David protests, as Ingrid is not Jewish, but as long as they are married, she is considered a Jew: she must suffer what he suffers. Through the years they have collected many souvenirs and knickknack. Now they sit in the apartment sorting it all. They can only bring very few things and cant help remembering. David considers leaving Ingrid: running away or forcing her to divorce him, to keep her safe from all the horrible things he thinks are about to happen.

Act 3, Scene 3: Consequences

Stage size
Half stage.

Characters
Samuel and Esther, his wife (supporting character).

The scene ends...
When Samuel has decided what to do.

Purpose
To force Samuel to face the consequences of his previous choice and force him to tell his wife, what he has done.

Plot
Samuel and Esther are sitting alone in their living room. Samuel, who either let their daughters be caught by the Nazis or helped the Nazis by naming other Jews (Act 2, Scene 5), is riddled with guilty conscience. His wife Esther knows that something is wrong and confronts him.

Information
This scene depends on the outcome of Act 2; Scene 5: Trading People. The consequence of Samuels choice is either that his daughters are safe in France while Samuel names other Jews to the Nazis, or that the daughters have been caught and have disappeared. The Jewish community is under intense pressure.

You will play the supporting character Esther, Samuel's wife. Regardless of Samuel's choice, she is unhappy. Either because their daughters or their friends and neighbours have disappeared. The Nazis seems to know where everyone is hiding.

Supporting character: Esther Bercow
Esther is Samuel's supportive wife. She knows something is wrong and that Samuel is not the same as he once was. Something is troubling his conscience, men he will not tell her what. If Samuel helped the Nazis, she cannot support him. If he let their daughters disappear, she cannot forgive him.

Introduction

If Samuel choose to save his daughters and help the Nazis:
Germany 1941. Samuel and his wife Esther have just finished a humble dinner: Two potatoes and a can of fruit. Being Jewish is worse everyday. Samuel has a troubled conscience. Even though he knows that his daughters are safe, he has not heard from them for some time. The Nazis call on him often. They want evermore names and details. Samuel has witnessed his people disappear. Now he has no more names to give and is desperate. Esther is suspicious. He doesn't know what to do other than tell her the truth.

If Samuel refused to help the Nazis:
Germany 1941. Samuel and his wife Esther have just finished a humble dinner: Two potatoes and a can of fruit. Being Jewish is worse everyday. Samuel has a troubled conscience. His daughters are gone, but he could have saved them. He is ashamed. Samuel has seen many of his people disappear. Esther is suspicious. He doesn't know what to do other than tell her the truth about their daughters.

Act 3, Scene 4: Winter Night

Stage size
Half stage.

Characters
Meyer and Sarah, his wife (supporting character).

The scene ends..
When Meyer has decided to kill Sarah or not.

Purpose
To answers Meyers choice: Are you willing to kill your wife to spare her further suffering?

Plot
Meyer and his family have been moved to the ghetto. It is a cold winter and the children are becoming ever weaker. They are bedridden and dying. Meyer returns to a quiet room after a hard days work in the cold. Sarah is unhappy but calm. She killed the children out of compassion and asks Meyer to kill her.

Information
In this scene you will play Sarah, Meyer's wife. She is desperate and on the edge of madness. She knew the children wouldn't survive and didn't want to see them suffer. Now she asks her husband to kill her. She will not live on without her children, but suicide is an affront to God

Supporting characters: Sarah Hirsch
Sarah is a mere shadow of her former self. The vibrant and beautiful woman is now empty inside. Her pride and joy, the children, have been so sick and she could see any other way than granting them peace. Her goal now is to convince Meyer to honour his promise: that she doesn't have to live on without her children. She wants Meyer to kill her.

Introduction
1941. Meyer, Sarah and their children have been moved to the ghetto long ago. It is freezing and there isn't enough food, water or work. Meyer gets and extra ration on the days he work, but the children and Sarah are disappearing before his eyes. Over the last weeks, the children have started coughing. Avi and Leah are bedridden. Even Meyer knows that they will perish within days. Sarah, their mother, are becoming more and more desperate. She cries and when Meyer returns to their home this evening, everything is quiet. The children are lifeless in their bed. Sarah sits in the corner of the room. She is out of tears and looks directly at Meyer.

Act 3, Scene 5: Yom Kippur

Half stage.
Stage size

All main characters (no supporting characters).
Characters

When everyone has spoken their minds and atoned on Yom Kippur.
The stage ends...

To allow the characters to talk about their faith, their past and how the camp has changed them.
Purpose

It is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and in the quarters of the orchestra, an old man decided to uphold tradition. People are praying and there is an impromptu service.
Plot

In this scene the players must be allowed to talk and express the characters religious sides, at the same time being confronted with the absurdity of the prisoners apologising to God and each other for violations. The camp does not apologise. It is important that the characters are allowed to talk and room should be left for silence. This is also the characters opportunity to apologise for the past. Introduction and end can be found below.
Information

Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is a holiday: Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The holiest day of the Jewish year. According to tradition, God writes the fate of every man in the book of life once a year, but he doesn't finish it, making it set in stone, before Yom Kippur. On this day every Jew should pray, give penance and donate to charity. Each man must regret his sins, promise not to commit them again and ask God for forgiveness. But only sins committed against God can be forgiven by God; Sins towards men must be forgiven by the individual man. This afternoon, in the bleak light someone decided to uphold this holy day with prayer. You all sit there: cold, hungry, tired and with doubts on how long you will survive. Is there something you want to atone for? You speak softly and Jakob is the first to speak.
Introduction

The night is filled with the sound of mumbling prayers. The sun rises and the holiday is over. The nightmare continues.
End

Act 3, Scene 6: Deliverance

Stage size
Full stage -> Half stage -> Quarter stage.

Characters
All main characters (no supporting characters).

The scene ends...
When everyone has decided if they want to play music one last time.

Purpose
To allow the characters to decide if they want to resist one last time or simply lay down and die.

Plot
The characters are weak and dying in the last days of the camp.

Information
This is the last scene of the game and the players must be allowed to finish the story of each character. Your task is to set the scene, change the stage size and end the scene. The stage size changes from full to half to quarter stage during the scene. You must decide when to decrease the size of the stage as the scene progresses. This scene should be ended with a simple thank you, not a description. After the scene ends, you must ask each player if their character survives and if he is strong enough to work. You will need this information for the epilogue.

Introduction
Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is winter and everything is covered with snow. You four are sickly and hungry. The trains no longer stop at Birkenau. Every night you hear noise and gunfire, last night it came from the gypsy camp. Someone is shouting outside right now. In the distance, you can hear the sound of artillery getting closer. Maybe you have the strength to talk and play music one last time? Maybe even find the courage and resist? This is your last chance and the last scene.

End
Do you survive?
Are you strong enough to work?

Epilogue

Those still able to work **(INSERT NAMES OF CHARACTERS THAT EXPRESSED THEY WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO WORK)** were forced to march towards other camps. On these death-marches, thousands lost their lives in the cold winter were falling behind meant execution. The few survivors would ultimately be liberated from Bergen-Belsen in Germany, but not before being forced into several additional months of forced labour.

Those to sick to march **(INSERT NAMES OF CHARACTERS THAT EXPRESSED THEY WEREN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO WORK)** were left in Auschwitz. German troops were ordered to the camp to exterminate the last survivors, but they never arrived and those left behind sat around waiting for a death that never came. The camp was liberated by the Red Army on the 26th of January 1945. Only 7500 prisoners were still alive at the liberation, where Soviet soldiers found the remains of hundreds of thousands, including 7.7 tonnes of human hair.

This was the story about four men, four Jews, four ordinary men...

Read this to the players.

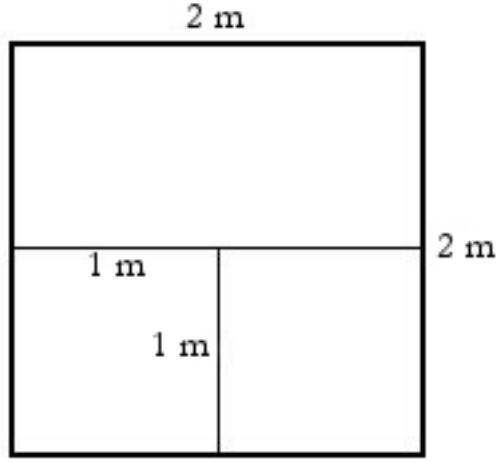
Setlist

#	Name	Type	Summary	Characters
	Prologue			
	Act One			
1;1	The Transport	Present	The characters meet aboard the train to Auschwitz.	Main characters.
1;2	The Firstborn	Past	Meyer celebrates his infant son.	Meyer, Herschl (GM).
1;3	Selection	Present	The characters are selected for work in the camp.	Main characters, SS-officer (GM).
1;4	Charity	Past	Samuel meets a homeless veteran.	Samuel, Werner (GM).
1;5	Roast and Potatoes	Present	The characters work and dream of food.	Main characters.
1;6	Honeymoon	Past	David has a visit from his Jewish grandfather.	David, Moshe (GM).
1;7	The American Son	Past	Jakob's son returns and asks him to leave Germany.	Jakob, Ephraim (GM).
1;8	Used Instruments	Present	The characters are given used instruments.	Main characters, SS-officer (GM).
	Act Two			
2;1	Piano Lesson	Past	David loses a pupil because of his Jewish heritage.	David, Dieter (GM).
2;2	Sabbath	Past	Meyer promises his wife, that she will never be alone.	Meyer, Sarah (GM).
2;3	The Music Stops	Present	The camp orchestra refuses to play on.	Main characters.
2;4	Night of Broken Glass	Past	Jakob's son is killed on The Night of Broken Glass.	Jakob, Levi (GM).
2;5	Trading People	Past	Samuel can either protect his daughters or his faith.	Samuel, Werner (GM).
2;6	Children's Song	Present	The characters witness torture and can choose to resist.	Main characters.
	Act Three			
3;1	Sorrow	Past	Jakob must choose between safety and faith.	Jakob
3;2	Moving Boxes	Past	David can leave his wife to protect her.	David, Ingrid (GM).
3;3	Consequences	Past	Samuel's wife confronts him.	Samuel, Esther (GM).
3;4	Winter Night	Past	Meyer must choose if he keeps his promise to Sarah	Meyer, Sarah (GM).
3;5	Yom Kippur	Present	The characters must repent and apologise.	Main characters.
3;6	Deliverance	Present	The characters have one last chance to play music.	Main characters.
	Epilogue			

The gamemaster's guide

Preparation

The stage: Prepare the stage for the game by creating a 2 x 2 m square on the floor using masking tape. Divide the square into half by using another line of masking tape. You now have two 1 x 2 m areas. Subdivide one of these areas using masking tape. The stage should now look like this:



Music: You will have to play music to the players during the game and must make sure to bring a laptop, preferably with a pair of small speakers.

Printing: Before the game, you must print Characters (x1) and Judaism (x4) for the players. For yourself, you must print The gamemaster's guide (x1), Scenes (x1), Setlist (x1) and Names and time schedule (x1).

Introduction for the players

Below is a series of facts and considerations about the game that you must go through with the players before you start the game:

Start by calibrating your expectations of the game. What sort of game are the players expecting?

Tell the players, that the story is a tragic drama set before and during World War Two. All player characters are Jews imprisoned in the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. The mood is dark and claustrophobic.

The game is about Jewish identity, resistance against impossible odds and music. During the game, there will be room for silence and thoughtfulness.

The game is inspired by actual events, but is not a documentary. Players should not be worried whether their actions in the game are historically accurate, as long as they include the games mood and themes.

The game is played on a stage with three different sizes. Demonstrate to the players, how the stage works by showing them the squares made with masking tape on the floor. The stage size is defined for each scene and can change during the scene. If you physically leave the stage, you are no longer part of the scene.

Each scenes setting and order in the game is predetermined. There are scenes set in the present, where all player characters are included and scenes set in the past, where we explore each of the player characters. Scenes set in the past will elaborate events mentioned in the description of the player characters.

As gamemaster, you will set scenes and cut them. You also play all supporting characters during the game. In some scenes, you will ask questions. Questions are for the characters, not the player and should be answered as such.

It is important that everyone feels safe during the game. As the game concerns tragic subjects and players are physically very close, it can become a bit overwhelming. If a player feels the need to stop or take a break, the player must exist the stage. After the scene is concluded, it is possible to have a talk whether the player wishes to leave the game

Characters

There are four main characters that you must know distribute to the players. None of the characters have any special prerequisites, but if you want to do a little bit of casting, you can consider the following:

The characters of David and Samuel revolve around moral conflicts and love, and have a tendency to be quieter. The characters are well suited for players with a more subtle style of play and a certain sense of maturity. Meyer is the character with potentially a more physical style of play and is suited for a player with an extrovert style. Jakob revolves around his religion and is suited for an experienced player.

When handing of the character descriptions, you should also give each player a copy of Judaism. Now give the players the opportunity to read through the material and explain that each character has a challenge, a motivation to survive and a choice they have to make. Answer any questions.

Break

If you want to take a break before the game, now is an appropriate time.

Workshop

Exercise 1: The players sit down. You ask them to close their eyes, focussing on their breath. When they are calm, ask them to imagine their character. Going slowly from one to the next, ask the players to imagine the characters feeling joy, anger, happy, hateful and sadness.

Exercise 2: The players stand around the room. You ask them to close their eyes, focussing on their breath. When they are calm, ask them to imagine their character. They can now open their eyes and walk around the room finding the physical expression of their character. Let them walk like the character and find their characters facial expressions.

Exercise 3: When the players have finished exercise 2, ask them to continue walking around, but now they are to seek each other out and greet each other. When they meet, they will shake hands and say the characters name and age. Make sure everyone greets each other multiple times, allowing them to learn the other characters names, before you conclude the exercise.

Running the game

During the game, you must play the games soundtrack. Each type of scene has its own track that must be repeated until the scene is over.

Scenes in the present: From Jewish Life: 1, Prayer.
Scenes in the past: Atlantico.
Act 2, Scene 6: Are you sleeping?

During the game

You must set scenes and cut them. You will read the prologue and the epilogue for the players.

When setting a scene, you must tell the players the scenes title, size of the stage, which characters are in the scene and when the scene ends. There are descriptions for setting and ending each scene in Scenes.

In some scenes you will ask the characters question to describe the setting and situation. Players should respond as their characters.

Remember to allow silence and thoughtfulness.

You will play all supporting characters. Supporting characters are described in the scenes that they are a part of. You can use the Setlist to help you.

When the game has started it is recommended that you don't take any breaks before you are done. If necessary to take a break, make sure everyone is silent during the break that should be kept short.

Debriefing

After the epilogue has been read to the players, you should thank them for participating. Ask the players to tell about their most beautiful experience during the game.

If the players want to talk about more scenes or the possible future of their characters, allow them to do so. Give the players some time and space. Some groups of players will need longer to process.

If need be, you can use a variation of the first workshop exercise. Each player is sitting down with their eyes closed, focussing on their breathing. Go through the following emotions one by one: happiness, anger, bliss, hate, and sadness. After each emotion, tell the players to let it go and simply focus on their breath. When done, let the players open their eyes again.

Try to keep the debriefing in a happy and positive tone to create a contrast to the bleak mood of the game.

Thank the players one more time for participating and wrap up.

Names and time schedule

Names

In the text, including the characters, supporting characters and names are mentioned quite a lot. To ensure, that you as gamemaster can help the players, each main character with associated supporting characters and mentioned family, is listed below:

David Müller
Dieter: David's pupil, who refuses to continue his lessons because David is a Jew.
Ingrid Müller: David's beloved Aryan wife.
Moshe Iskowitz: David's grandfather, who has always supported his endeavours.

Samuel Bercow
Esther Bercow: Samuel's wife, who confronts him.
Katrin & Hannah Bercow: Samuel's daughters, who he tries to help escape.
Werner: Homeless veteran and later a Nazi.

Meyer Hirsch
Avi & Leah Hirsch: Meyer's children.
Hersch: Meyer's best friend.
Sarah Hirsch: Meyer's wife, who murders their children.

Jakob Loew
Ephraim: Jakob's eldest son, who emigrated to America and tries to convince Jakob to join him.
Levi: Jakob's youngest son, who is killed during the Night of Broken Glass.
Miriam: Jakob's wife.

Time schedule

The game should last 4-5 hours. As a guideline you will find a suggested time schedule of the individual components below:

Preparing the room: 15 minutes.
Introduction and warm-up exercises: 45-60 minutes.
Act one: 60-75 minutes.
Act two: 45-60 minutes.
Act three: 45-60 minutes.
Debriefing and cleaning up: 15-30 minutes.