

DER BEKER

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INT. BAKERY - NIGHT

ROLL OPENING CREDITS OVER MONTAGE

A slab of red meat is placed on a slaughter block. A cleaver cuts through the fibers of the flesh.

THE BAKER (62), a burly man with gray beard, feeds slices of meat with one hand, while working the crank of the GRINDER with his other.

Strings of meat pulp stream out of the grinding plate.

A batch of dough is placed on a table, sprinkled with flour. The baker grabs a pastry scraper and cuts up small squares.

He folds the squares with some grinded meat, brings them onto a tray, quick brush with egg wash and into the hot oven.

He wipes off his workstations, does some cleaning, sweeps the floor, finds a dead rat and throws it out.

Behind a pallet of flour bags he sprinkles some BLUE FLAKES from a RED TIN CAN.

END OF OPENING CREDITS

INT. BAKERY - MOMENTS LATER

The Baker is seated by a table and turns a page of a jiddisch newspaper while sipping on a cup of coffee.

WE HEAR A BELL RING, AS IF SOMEONE CAME THROUGH THE DOOR IN THE FRONT.

The baker glances at his wristwatch and mutters to himself.

ALL THE DIALOGUE IS IN YIDDISCH.

BAKER
(shouting over his
shoulder)
You don't get extra hours just
because you come early, Schmolke!

WE HEAR FOOTSTEPS COMING TOWARDS US, THEN STOP.

The baker glances up at the door, does a double take.

BAKER
Who are you?

We only see the back of a well dressed YOUNG MAN (28) standing by the door. He doesn't respond.

BAKER
We're not open yet.

The man doesn't respond.

BAKER
How did you get in?

YOUNG MAN
I just walked in, the door was open.

BAKER
No, it wasn't.

We reveal the face of the young man, a Jewish face.

YOUNG MAN
Yosel, don't you remember me?

Yosel (the baker) looks at him, squinting while the young man walks towards him.

YOSEL (BAKER)
I don't know, you look familiar.

YOUNG MAN
It's me! Velvele?

YOSEL
Velvele?

VELVEL (YOUNG MAN)
Yes, little Velvele.

YOSEL
Velvel.

VELVEL
Yes!

YOSEL
My lord. Lofke's boy?

Velvel gives him a big smile, which is not reciprocated.

VELVEL
Well, you seem to be in good health.

Yosel responds with a talmudic shrug.

VELVEL
Didn't know you were the baker now.

YOSEL
It's a living.

VELVEL
What happened to your business?

YOSEL
I left that life behind me in the
old country.

VELVEL
Really? You used to run that town.

YOSEL
I live a quiet life now. Less
trouble.

Yosel looks Velvel up and down.

YOSEL
What is that, Armani?

Velvel looks down at his coat with a simper.

YOSEL
Not bad, what do you do?

VELVEL
Oh, this and that. Mostly textiles.

YOSEL
Textiles? Last I heard, you took off
with the collection money from WIZO.

VELVEL
Oh, that was just a teenage prank.

YOSEL
Prank? We never saw you again.

VELVEL
I hopped on a boat to Copenhagen
after dad died.

Velvel just looks at Yosel.

YOSEL
I'm sorry for what happened to your
father.

VELVEL
Hey what doesn't kill you, right?

YOSEL
So what brings you to Borås?

VELVEL

Well, I came here for business.

YOSEL

You don't say, let me know if you find any.

VELVEL

I've been quite successful lately and garnered the attention of some important people.

YOSEL

Really?

VELVEL

Yes, I had a meeting yesterday with Mr. Shekelberg.

Yosel looks at him, thinks.

YOSEL

I heard he got bitten by a snake a few years back?

VELVEL

Oh, yea?

YOSEL

Yea, the snake died shortly after.

Velvel grins.

VELVEL

Mr. Shekelberg is actually a great man, despite what people say.

YOSEL

I'm sure.

VELVEL

He has done quite well for himself.

YOSEL

Does he know that you are here?

VELVEL

I didn't say that much, but I've taken upon myself to explore potential new business for Mr. Shekelberg.

YOSEL

Really?

VELVEL

I have a business proposal that I wanted to share with you.

YOSEL

Oh, yea?

Velvel helps himself to a chair.

VELVEL

I saw some of the prices as I walked through the front. I think you could up the price tag by at least a couple of kronor.

YOSEL

Oh, yea? What do you care about my prices?

VELVEL

With my help, you could increase your revenue.

YOSEL

I've tried that but the customers just go to Belke. Trust me, I've been doing this for--

VELVEL

--trust me on this. Up your prices by at least 10 percent.

YOSEL

10 percent? You're out of your mind.

VELVEL

Don't worry about Belka, that's what I mean.

YOSEL

Don't worry?

VELVEL

Yes.

Yosel looks at Velvel, puzzled.

YOSEL

Don't worry about Belke?

VELVEL

Don't worry about Belke. Raise your prices.

Yosel thinks.

VELVEL

Believe me, it will be alright.

YOSEL

I'll think about it. Hey, nice of you to come by, if you don't mind I have--

Yosel is about to get out of his seat.

VELVEL

No, no. I'm not done.

Yosel sits back down, puzzled.

VELVEL

With the increased income you would be able to afford additional security.

Velvel's words make Yosel's eyes lit up. Velvel looks back at him, confidently.

YOSEL

Security? I don't know.

VELVEL

As business would be more profitable--

YOSEL

--I'm just a simple baker, there's really no money in this--

VELVEL

--the bakery could be more susceptible to... trouble.

YOSEL

Trouble?

VELVEL

With my connections and extensive network, I would ensure the security of the premises, supply chain, staff and the owner.

YOSEL

I really appreciate that you--

VELVEL

--if the community knows that you're under my protection, you will have less trouble.

YOSEL

But they don't give me any trouble.

VELVEL
Delayed payments.

YOSEL
Everybody pays, sooner or later.

VELVEL
Sabotage.

Yosel looks frightened.

VELVEL
Vandalism.

Yosel is now staring at Velvel.

VELVEL
Arson.

Yosel is stunned, Velvel lets words sink in while he smirks. The two men look at each other for a moment until Yosel throws himself on his knees before Velvel.

YOSEL
(crying)
I've toiled for years to build up
this bakery!

Yosel grabs a hold of Velvel's coat.

YOSEL
Please, I beg you!

VELVEL
Get off me!

YOSEL
I'm saving up dowry for my
daughter's wedding.

VELVEL
Get your hands off me!

YOSEL
Please! Don't do this to me!

Velvel pushes Yosel off him, to the floor.

VELVEL
Get a grip on yourself!

Velvel brushes the flour off his fine coat, disgusted.
Yosel weeps into his hands.

VELVEL
Have some respect for yourself!

YOSEL
(to the ceiling)
Why? Why?!

Velvel leans forward to Yosel's face.

VELVEL
Have you ever gotten away with
something you shouldn't have?

Yosel looks up at him, confused.

VELVEL
Perhaps look at this as a paypack.

YOSEL
Please, violence is not the answer.

VELVEL
No, violence is more like a
question. And the answer is yes.

A BEEPING ALARM GOES OFF ACROSS THE ROOM.

YOSEL
Oy, my knishes.

Yosel gets up, blows his nose in his apron while rushing
over to the oven.

VELVEL
What kind of knishes do you got over
there?

Yosel opens the oven and takes out the trays with the
knishes.

YOSEL
Eh, beef.

VELVEL
Are they good?

YOSEL
The best on this side of the Baltic
Sea.

VELVEL
Oh, yeah?
(to self)
I'll be the judge of that.

YOSEL
Want one?

VELVEL
Yeah, bring one over.

YOSEL

Ok, just a minute.

Yosel reaches for a box on his shelf. Velvel sees some more flour on his coat and brushes it off.

YOSEL

So how long are you in town for?

VELVEL

Oh, just over the day.

VELVEL

I have some business in Gothenburg.

YOSEL

Wow, you get around.

Yosel comes back to Velvel with a knish on a plate.

VELVEL

Wow, look at this.

YOSEL

Be careful, it's piping hot.

Velvel takes a fork and cuts it up.

VELVEL

Smells good.

YOSEL

Straight out of the oven.

Velvel blows on a piece of the knish, on the fork.

VELVEL

Get me the books would ya?

YOSEL

The books?

VELVEL

The accounting!

Yosel scurries away.

INT BAKERY - MOMENTS LATER

Yosel watches on as Velvel goes through the bookkeeping while chowing down the knish. Velvel finishes the last bite of the knish and closes the binder.

VELVEL

Well, we definitely need to get these numbers up.

YOSEL

I'm barely getting by.

VELVEL

I'm afraid you just gotta work harder.

YOSEL

I'm here at three o'clock, every morning.

VELVEL

I guess you just have to stick around later then.

YOSEL

But I'm not a kid anymore, after lunch I'm--

VELVEL

--don't give me that crap, watch your mouth.

Yosel looks at him, meekly.

VELVEL

We are raising prices, turning up productivity and cutting costs.

Velvel stops, coughs and gives his chest a thump.

YOSEL

You alright?

VELVEL

Yeah, I'm fine. Anyways, you are working for me now. Every Sunday I'll send my guy over to pickup the payments.

Yosel nods.

VELVEL

The money should be in as big bills as possible, you put it in a brown paper bag. It should be ready for pick up at exactly nine sharp in the morning.

YOSEL

Nine.

VELVEL

Not a minute later.

YOSEL

Not a minute later.

VELVEL
I want clean bills in the bag.
You'll put a cover sheet for the
week's transactions, your costs.

YOSEL
My costs.

VELVEL
Your sales.

YOSEL
My sales.

VELVEL
And make you sure that you...

YOSEL
Yes?

VELVEL
You make sure that...

Velvel looks around the room, squinting.

YOSEL
You alright?

Velvel looks disoriented.

YOSEL
You OK?

Velvel glances down at the plate on the table, now just holding a couple of bread crumbs. He looks back up at Yosef before dropping to the floor.

Yosel seems strangely unmoved by Velvel's sudden incapacitation. He looks down at Velvel on the floor, then draws a jaunty sigh.

YOSEL
(to himself)
Oy, oy, oy.

Yosel gets up, grabs the body by the armpits and drags it across the bakery. He passes a table by the oven and on stands the RED TIN CAN.

INT. WALK-IN FREEZER - CONTINUOUSLY

The fluorescent lights flicker on and reveal two frozen jewish men hanging on hooks from the ceiling. Yosel comes in, dragging Velvel's body, and dumps it on the floor.

YOSEL
Don't go anywhere.

Yosel chuckles to himself.

Outside the walk in freezer, Yosel dusts off his hands,
shakes his head and leaves the frame.

CARD: DER BEKER - EIN JIDDISCHE GANGSTER

THE END