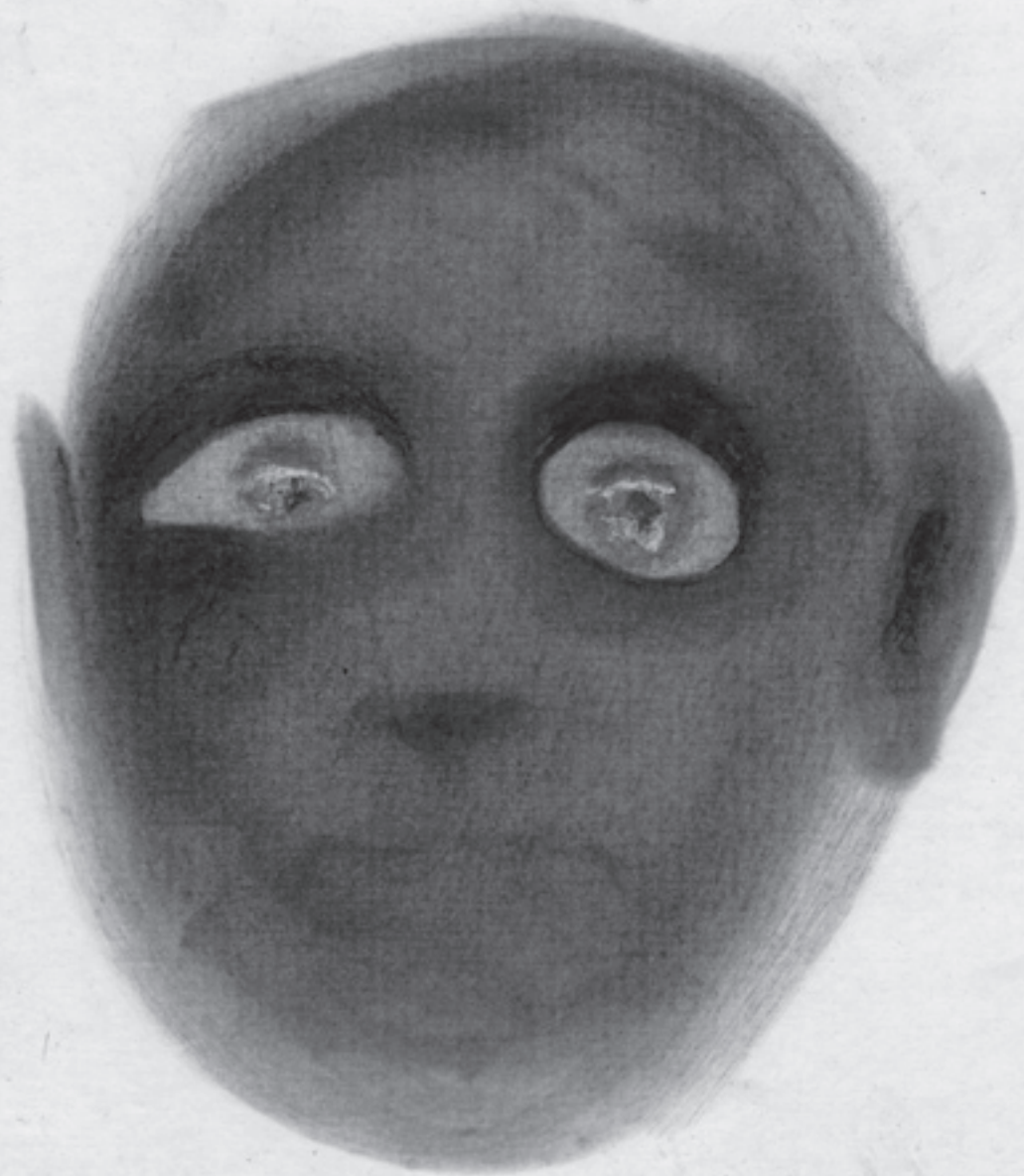


MY JOURNEY WITH DAD

Translator: Diana Draper

Synopsis

Michael lives alone with his ageing dad. Before his mum died, he promised her he would look after him, right to the bitter end. At the time, however, he had no idea just how bitter that end would be and how hard it would prove to keep his word. His efforts to fulfil his promise have turned his world upside down: he has lost the woman he loves and his job is on the line. But most painful of all is his relationship with his sick father, who is gradually losing his memory and falling apart. During the course of his journey, Michael eventually comes to know his father, to dispel the looming shadow of Uncle Richard and to understand at last the true story of his past life. To do this, however, he must stick it out to the very last station.



The stage walls can be seen. Scattered around the floor are pieces of furniture and household objects. Of these, four stand out from the rest: a fiddle, a couple of suitcases, a clotheshorse with a woman's clothes on it and a telephone.

Two actors come on stage. One sits down on a chair located at one side of the stage, while the other comes to the front and with the change of lights, starts talking.

DAD-ACTOR: "Old? Old is for things, not people" that's what the old people used to say (*hurt laugh*) and we would laugh at them thinking it was just old people's talk. (*despairingly*) And laughter soon dries up. And you start to forget. (*pause*) You forget... First, you start forgetting things: what did I do with my keys? Then you start forgetting appointments: what day did the doctor say to go back? And you learn to write things down... (*despairingly*) until you start forgetting to look at what you've written. You forget what happened the day before, what you said this morning and what you have to do this evening. You forget your pills, your glasses, names, birthdays, faces, trips. And in the end, you forget where you are and why you're there. And then you forget who you are. Forgotten. Everything. The good things and the bad. The things best forgotten and those worth remembering. There are no limits to forgetting. From being someone, forgetting turns you into a nobody. But it's not you alone: when you become a no one, so does everyone else. Just remember one thing: we get older every day. There's no escaping it. And there's no going back.

THE PLAY BEGINS

(LIGHT CHANGE)

The sound of a train comes nearer and nearer, getting louder and louder. The

train is approaching fast. DAD is standing happily in the middle of the stage. He doesn't hear the train. He's busy playing his "imaginary" fiddle, completely immersed in his own world. He's composing a new tune, the most beautiful tune in the world. And it's going really well. The train's horn sounds.

On another part of the stage, the son, MICHAEL, is concentrating hard, doing multiplication after multiplication. He has no paper and is holding no pen. He's doing all the sums in his head.

MICHAEL: Nine thousand five hundred and thirty-five times eight thousand two hundred and thirty-one equals seventy-eight million, four hundred and eighty-two thousand, five hundred and eighty-five. 9535 times 8232 equals 78 million, 492 thousand 120. 9535 times 8233 equals 78 million, 501 thousand 655. 9535 times 8234...

Meanwhile, DAD starts singing and playing wonderful music on his imaginary fiddle. He hums along to the melody; he seems happy, talking to his wife.

In the background, the MUSICIAN sings his song:

*In the journey of life
we all have luggage.
Heavy bags,
as heavy as gaping hollows*

*At the last station though
everything is light.
Maybe too light
in this arduous journey for two.*

Next, we hear what's going on inside DAD's head.

DAD: *Goldie*, there's something in the air today! I feel different: healthy, strong... just like I felt the day we met. Do you remember *Goldie*? Do you remember how I lifted you into the train? I held your hand, pulled you to me and up you came *Goldie*! Come here! Nothing is impossible for the young. And (*gently tapping his head*) I'm still young! (*excitedly*) I can't wait to see you. Too right I can't! And

(gently tapping his head again) when I get my heart set on something... *(sentence left hanging)* Just like when I pulled you and brought you straight to me. *(remembering the moment)* Come here Goldie! And you said “Me? Goldie? But I’ve got dark hair! And then you laughed. Oh, that laugh of yours... that wonderful laugh! *(he laughs, lost in his memories)* My Goldie! *(coming back down to earth)* Now, listen to this. It’s nearly finished. Listen! Beautiful isn’t it? *(humming along to the tune)*. Beautiful. As beautiful as you, gorgeous. The most beautiful of all.

DAD can’t seem to get the last part of the melody right. He suddenly stops short, at a loss as to how to continue. For a second he seems disoriented, and then he comes to again, but it’s not that. He cannot get the next bit of the tune right. He tries time and time again. However, he doesn’t despair. His smile soon returns and he starts playing the tune again, from the beginning this time.

DAD: Not much more now, by Jove! We’re nearly there!

The sound of the train, its horn and the melody all merge together.

MICHAEL stands up and calls out.

MICHAEL: Dad!!!!!!!

MUSICIAN: Second station: The Clotheshorse. Mum! What shall I wear?

Scene 3

DAD is distraught, sobbing quietly. MICHAEL is trying to get his work finished. Meanwhile, DAD is getting more and more upset.

DAD: Why not? I want her to come. Goldie! She must know that I’m having trouble finishing the tune. Come on gorgeous! I’ve got something to tell you... I’m scared *(suddenly becoming a little boy again)*... so scared mother! Yup, that’s right; me, scared! You left and fear came knocking. I don’t want to be alone with him. Shh,

shh ... he never says anything but I know he's there. He turns out the lights; and he knows I'm scared of the dark. (*He whistles quietly*) *fweeeh!* Goldie? It's only when I think about you that the fear goes away. Why did you leave? You know that I need your hands to chase the fear away; your lips to make mine smile; your black hair to call *Goldie*. *Goldie...* (*looking gloomily at MICHAEL*) There he is all right. Always there, watching ... never smiling. I know who he is. (*pause*) He calls me "Dad". Ha! Dad! He won't fool me! (*whispering*) That's not my son. That's Richard. That swine Richard!! ... All right, all right ... I'm not going to start off on your brother again! I promised you I wouldn't and I'm a man of my word. But this time it wasn't me that started it, with his "good-for-nothing" this and "good-for-nothing" that! Who does he think he is, looking me up and down in front of my kid? As if he were the best thing since sliced bread? Ungrateful wretch! We welcomed him into this family, welcomed him with open arms we did! As if it were easily living with Mr Perfect! (...) What? (*nervously*) Sorry sweetheart, sorry. I shouldn't have said that. (...) I know we need his money to make ends meet. Please don't be sad. Say something, please ... I can't bear to see you upset. Not you. Don't go. Where are you going? Where are you going *Goldie?! Where are you going?! Don't go, mother ... Goldie! Don't leave me! Don't go!*

MICHAEL enters and can't bear to see DAD crying.

MICHAEL:- Dad, shush... shush Dad! Mum's dead ... Mum...

MICHAEL leaves and the spotlight shows the clotheshorse. MICHAEL takes the clothes that are hanging there and, in a mechanical way, starts putting them on, following the same everyday routine. Dressed as Mum, he approaches DAD. MICHAEL knows there's no other way to calm DAD down. DAD's face lights up.

DAD: My love! You came, you always come... Thank you! I thought ... I thought ... (*calming down*) Never mind. Look at you, all dressed up! Wearing that dress I gave you ... (*he gently takes her hand*) You look a treat, gorgeous, the prettiest girl in the square. The most

beautiful of all. And you chose me! Heaven's above! Hard to fathom, isn't it? And all the while there you are with your sweet laugh. Oh, how we laughed! My goodness! Well, you've got to laugh in this world, haven't you? Oh thank you. *(he kisses her hand)* Come on, mademoiselle *(with a wink)* You still like that, right?

They both sit down.

DAD: Do you want to hear it? It's nearly finished. *(he hums the tune)*
Marvellous! The most beautiful of all. Just like you...

MICHAEL-MUM: How are you?

DAD: Fine. I'm just fine now. And you?

MICHAEL-MUM does not reply. He/she just looks at DAD.

DAD: Oh no.. no! What's with the sad eyes? What's wrong?

As the sound of a fiddle starts playing, DAD holds out his hand to MICHAEL:Mum, inviting him/her to dance.

DAD: Come on... I'll take you to the moon. To the moon! Forget what Richard said! Don't think about money for now... Just wait until I get my hands on a fiddle, I'll place the world at your feet! And the moon too - just see if I don't!

MICHAEL-MUM looks away. DAD takes hold of his/her chin and turns his/her face towards him.

DAD: They're not that expensive, love. Come on! The money you've got stashed away under your mattress will be enough. We find some more money later to buy the kid some new shoes ...

Suddenly, MICHAEL takes off Mum's clothes in one brisk movement. DAD remains with his arms around the empty dress, as if Mum were still there. MICHAEL moves away and goes to his place on the stage.

MICHAEL: Don't do it Mum. Dad doesn't know, but since Uncle Richard left you've had to scrimp and save to get that money together!

DAD: Keep dancing, gorgeous! Keep dancing!

MICHAEL: Mum, don't! You can't give him that money you've worked so hard to save up! It's ours! It's for us to live on! My new shoes, Mum... They all laugh at me at school because my socks peep through my old ones. Mum...

On the other side of the stage...

DAD: Goldie... Goldie!!!

MICHAEL: No!!!!

DAD: Thank you! You're wonderful, Goldie! With this fiddle I'll do it, you'll see. With this fiddle I'll lay the whole world right at your feet!...

MICHAEL: No Mum. Don't listen to him! *(pause)* Dad doesn't have a clue what it's like to have to wear worn out shoes! How could he? It's just like Uncle Richard says - he doesn't even know what it feels like to have your feet on the ground!

DAD: *(Still dancing)* Keep flying! Keep flying, Goldie!

MICHAEL: *(Crying)* Don't Mum, Dad doesn't understand...

MICHAEL goes over to where DAD is and in a smooth motion once again puts Mum's clothes on and starts dancing with DAD. As the dance is finishing, DAD tries to kiss his beloved partner.

MICHAEL brusquely pushes him away.

MICHAEL: Dad!

DAD: *(salaciously, playfully)* Who's got the loveliest rump in our house?

MICHAEL angrily pulls off Mum's clothes and moves sharply away.

MICHAEL: That's enough! Enough! I'm sick to death of this! What on earth am I doing? Why do I let him get away with all this? I'm not like Mum. I don't love you like she did... I ... I ... *(looking through the emergency phonebook)* Ambulance 999, Red Cross 666554433, Salvation Army... Amnesty International 696696.

DAD-ACTOR: Fourth station: Two suitcases. The journey we made together.

Scene 5

DAD-ACTOR picks up the second suitcase and puts it beside the other one. The two suitcases are now spot-lit in the middle of the stage. DAD goes over and sits down on one. He starts telling MICHAEL a story. Or at least he tries to. MICHAEL is standing next to him, beside the other suitcase.

DAD: Son...

MICHAEL: What Dad?

DAD: I want to tell you a story.

MICHAEL: I don't like stories, they bore me.

DAD: Oh come on, let me tell you one. (*pause*) Once upon a time there was a little boy who was very good. One day he went on holiday with his family beside a lake of sparkling water.

MICHAEL starts packing. He has a very long list.

MICHAEL: Three pairs of shirts: yellow, blue and white...

DAD: Do you like it?

MICHAEL: What, water?

DAD: No, the story.

MICHAEL: Yes Dad. (*under his breath*) Four pairs of trousers, two for best and two for everyday.

DAD: And water?

MICHAEL: Socks: five pairs; and a sixth for bed. And ... half a dozen underpants as well.

DAD: There was lots and lots of water!

MICHAEL: Half a dozen should be enough.

DAD: Loads of it! Water everywhere! (*reaching his hand up to the ceiling*) This much at least! And do you know what happened to the little boy?

MICHAEL: He couldn't swim.

DAD: How did you know?

MICHAEL: Little boys never know how to swim.

DAD: Well neither did our little boy. What's more, he was scared of the water. As soon as the water started going over his knees, he would start screaming.

MICHAEL: He was scared of drowning.

DAD: That's right. But his mum and dad kept telling him not be frightened, to go on in! They told him that as long as he could touch the ground with his tiptoes, there was nothing to worry about. (*He becomes the storyteller once again*) In the end, the little boy plucked up the courage to go in, little by little, step by step! And then suddenly, the little boy cried out: Mummy! His mother was frozen to the spot. "Mummy, Mummy! Help!" came the little boy's cries.

MICHAEL: (*Whispering*) Mummy, help...

DAD: "Help him!" said Mum to her brother. "He's drowning! You can swim - get my baby out of the water!!"

MICHAEL: Help!

DAD: (*pause*) But just then, he kicked off his shoes...

MUSICIAN: But just then, he kicked off his shoes...

DAD: ...And he jumped right in!

MUSICIAN: ...And he jumped right in!

DAD: Without a second thought! He jumped right in where he had last seen his little boy! He plunged his hand in, but nothing! He plunged it in again, deeper this time, but still nothing. He didn't give up though, and then suddenly, "Yes!" he cried. Yes! Here he is! And he

pulled upwards with all his strength - dragging the boy up by his hair! He carried his little body to the edge of the lake and laid it at his mother's feet. The mother said nothing. Her brother was still standing beside her, both of them together, dumb, blind and frozen to the spot. And meanwhile I (*switching to the first person*) laid my little boy down on the ground and started pumping his chest and breathing into his mouth... Come on, breathe, little one! Breathe... Breathe! (*he's out of breath, drowning*)

MUSICIAN: Breathe, breathe, breathe...

MICHAEL: (*As if suddenly waking up from a dream. All of a sudden he grasps the true meaning of the story*) Dad ... Dad? Wh... Why didn't you ever tell me?

Silence. Only the sound of DAD's breathing can be heard.

DAD: (*going on to another story*) His Dad always used to say to him: lie down in the water. And the little boy never wanted to, because he was scared of drowning again you see. As if you could drown twice! And his Dad would say "just lie down," "I'll stay right here beside you."

MUSICIAN: Right here beside you.

DAD: "Look ... I'll put my hand under your tummy."

MICHAEL: Yes, Dad. (*Ready to participate in the recounting*) "Don't let go, Dad!"

DAD: Trust me, son. I won't let go. I'll always have my hand here, holding you up."

MICHAEL: "And what about when you take your hand away?"

DAD: Don't you worry about that! Move your arms: first one and then the other. One and then the other. Just like a windmill.

MICHAEL: Like this?

DAD: That's right! Just like that! And now, move your legs up and down!

MICHAEL: Look Dad! I'm swimming! Just like a windmill! Just like a windmill! I've learnt to swim, Dad!

MICHAEL "swims" from one side of the stage to the other. From side to side, front to back and all around. He's ecstatic.

MICHAEL: I've learnt!!! I've learnt to swim!!

DAD: (*moved*) That's right, son. You've learnt! You're a champion swimmer now! (*singing*)

MICHAEL: (*trying out different strokes*) Look! Look at me! Look how good I am!

DAD: (*suddenly tired*) That's right. You can swim. You can swim by yourself. You won't need my hand on your tummy any more. See?

MICHAEL: Dad...

DAD: Um?

Suddenly they both fall silent. No one says a word, each lost in their own thoughts. Tired. As if they had just done something really exhausting.

MICHAEL: Dad ... You...

DAD: Shush... it's time for bed.

MICHAEL: Dad ... you can't swim. Uncle Richard on the other hand...

DAD: Richard Snitchard.

MICHAEL: ...he was a really good swimmer. I've never seen you more than waist-deep in the water.

DAD: What have you never seen?

MICHAEL: You, swimming.

DAD: Tomorrow you'll swim far out ... you'll see!

MICHAEL: OK Dad.

MICHAEL stands up and opens the suitcases.

MUSICIAN: Fifth station: Telephone. Pain calls from inside

Scene 6

It's morning. MICHAEL is standing still, holding the telephone. He doesn't know what to do. He can't decide whether or not to ring: he stands up, sits down, dials the number, hangs up... He gets closer, moves away, sits down, wipes the sweat off his forehead, wrings his hands... DAD, sitting nearby, is miles away, lost in his parallel world, trying with all his might to finish the same old tune on his fiddle. At last MICHAEL comes to a decision: he decides to confess everything. He stands up, moves over to sit beside DAD and starts talking.

DAD keeps playing his fiddle.

MICHAEL: Listen Dad, I've found a place for you in an old people's home.

DAD just carries on as before, not taking any notice.

MICHAEL: (*agitated now*) Do you realise what that means? An old people's home!

MICHAEL reaches the end of his tether, stands up and takes the imaginary fiddle out of Dad's hands and puts it on the sofa.

MICHAEL: Dad, stop that for a minute. Leave your fiddle alone. This is important.

DAD, visibly upset, stares at the place where he believes the fiddle to be.

MICHAEL: I want you to understand. I'll make you understand if it's the last thing I do!

DAD: Can't I play my fiddle any more?

MICHAEL: Of course you can. I'll give it back in a moment. I just want you to listen to me first.

DAD: I've nearly finished that tune.

MICHAEL: I know. Just a little more to go. I'll give it back in a moment.

DAD: Yes, please give it back. I owe it to your Mum. This time I'll do it!
This time I'll take her to the moon.

MICHAEL: I don't doubt it, Dad.

MICHAEL sits down again beside DAD and takes both his hands in his own.

DAD pulls his hands away and starts examining them.

MICHAEL: It's a really nice there, Dad, really comfortable. You'll have a bedroom all to yourself, and if you need anything, there's a little bell you can press to call someone: ding dong. *(pause)* It's right at the top of a hill, and has a fantastic view of the whole town. And the railway. And our house. Our...

The word "our" gets stuck in MICHAEL's throat. Something breaks inside him.

MICHAEL: I went to look at it. Everyone seemed really happy.

Like an automaton, DAD starts playing his fiddle again.

MICHAEL: Dad...! *(Try to regain his attention)* Dad! Hello! Dad, I haven't given you back your fiddle yet!

DAD stares at him in surprise. But he seems alert.

MICHAEL: I promised Mum I'd look after you. I promised her we'd make the journey together. But our journeys are so different Dad! So different...

DAD: Don't get upset, son. I'm going to write you a lovely tune. *(winking)* A lovely tune you can dance with CLARE to. Why don't you call her? Go on, give her a ring. But don't tell her it was me! I won't tell her either. It'll be our secret. You just put your arm round her waist and twirl her round and round...

MICHAEL: CLARE's not like Mum, Dad.

DAD: Your mother flew on the dance floor.

MICHAEL: I know. But CLARE doesn't know how to dance.

DAD: I'm not surprised! Always tapping away at that damn machine!

MICHAEL: Dad! What have you got against computers?

DAD: What?

MICHAEL: Computers. You ruined CLARE's one. Remember?

DAD: A lovely tune. That's it. I'll write it myself.

DAD starts playing his imaginary fiddle again.

MICHAEL: It's pointless Dad! I've got your fiddle.

MICHAEL lifts the imaginary fiddle up into the air and shows him.

DAD: Give it to me!

MICHAEL: Give it to you?! No, no. You'll have to come and get it!

DAD: I need my fiddle so I can finish my tune!!

MICHAEL: I'll give it to you, if you can catch me!

MICHAEL lifts the imaginary fiddle into the air once again.

DAD: If you don't give it to me, the tune will never be finished. It's up to you.

MICHAEL: *(playfully, to an imaginary crowd)* Hey! Hey you! I've got a wonderful fiddle here; a fiddle which plays the most beautiful music in the world. How much will you give me for it?

DAD shuts his eyes and turns his back on MICHAEL.

DAD: So, you want to play do you? I'm going to count to three and I want my fiddle right here, at my feet, do you hear? One...

MICHAEL: *(obediently)* Okeey... all right...

MICHAEL, still laughing, lays the imaginary fiddle at DAD's feet.

DAD opens his eyes and bends down, overcome by emotion, to pick up his fiddle.

MICHAEL looks at him affectionately.

MICHAEL: I'm ready to learn your tunes, Dad!

DAD: But I've got to finish them first! Otherwise you'll have a hard time learning them!

MICHAEL: And I'll dance to your tune too, Dad, if you want.

DAD: Not with me! You should be dancing with your girl!

MICHAEL: (*gently, not at all aggressively*) I don't want to dance with CLARE. CLARE left, Dad. She said it was either her or you. And I understood, see? I'm with you now, Dad. I'm here to look after your fiddle, if you want me to ... But you have to help me ... just a little.

DAD: (*moved*) Yes, but tomorrow...

MICHAEL: We'll worry about tomorrow tomorrow! Tomorrow I have to go and see my boss, and he's really angry with me.

DAD: That swine Richard ...

MICHAEL: (*laughing gently*) Yes, he is a bit like Uncle Richard when he gets angry! He told me yesterday that I needed to bring my head to work as well as the rest of me! And that if I left my head at home, then I should take my work home too!

DAD: (*taking him literally*) I'll help you find your head. Don't worry, It can't be far. Maybe it's under the sofa...

DAD starts looking for MICHAEL's head..

MICHAEL looks at him again, with affection and feeling.

MICHAEL: In this house everything hides under the sofa!

DAD: Well, it's a great hiding place. Head, little head, where are you little headikins? (*looking straight at MICHAEL*) You call it, it's more likely to listen to you than to me.

MICHAEL: Of course. It is *my* head after all! (*With a mixture of embarrassment and eagerness*) Head, little head...

DAD: (*Gesturing to him to call louder*) Come on... don't be afraid. Call it!

MICHAEL: (*Getting excited now*) Hey head, big head! Fat head!

DAD: That's the spirit! Louder - let it know who's boss!

MICHAEL: (*starting to really get into it now*) Hey, head! Silly old fat head! Where the hell are you?

DAD laughs happily. Meanwhile, 'MICHAEL gathers his strength, takes a deep, deep breath and then gives a kind of roar, as if he were a wild animal going in for the kill.

MICHAEL: Raaa!!! Little head!!! So, you want to play games, eh? I'm going to count to three and I want you right here, at my feet, do you hear? One...

Just then, DAD gestures to him to stay absolutely still. Without saying a word, he reaches under the sofa and pulls out an imaginary head and gives it to his son with an inane look on his face.

DAD: You were pretending not to be there, but we were too quick for you!

MICHAEL: Especially you, Dad.

MICHAEL fits the imaginary head back on top of his neck.

MICHAEL: Just as well you found it!

DAD: It must be awful to wander round without a head.

MICHAEL: I'd have been right up the creek! 9535 times 9002? 85 million, 834 thousand and 70!

DAD: (*admiringly*) What lovely things you say!

MICHAEL puts his arm round his father's shoulders affectionately.

MICHAEL: We'll be fine together, right Dad? You get on with your tune. And when you've finished it, play it for me, and then we'll start on

another one! And we'll go swimming! Even though we'll probably never swim as well as Uncle Richard!

DAD: Richard the swine! Swine and scoundrel!

MICHAEL: (*suddenly*) Swine and scoundrel!

DAD looks at him in amazement and admiration. MICHAEL is also quite surprised at himself. It's almost as if he can't believe he actually dared to say such a thing.

DAD: That's the spirit!

Instead of backtracking, MICHAEL decides to keep on going. He takes a deep breath and this time says the words with every ounce of his being.

MICHAEL: Aaaaaah! Swine and scoundrel!

DAD: (*Looking upwards, laughing*) It wasn't me this time!

MICHAEL: (*mad with daring, laughing too*) Rich you dick!!! Look at me swimming!

MICHAEL parodies someone swimming while DAD shouts out and eggs him on.

DAD: Hey Dicky boy – go take a long walk off a short pier!!!

MICHAEL: Uncle Dick! I'm the devil himself!!

DAD and MICHAEL are laughing hard, fit to burst.

DAD: Beep! Beep! Dickhead!

MICHAEL: Dick, Dicky boy! Richard! Look at me swimming! My dad taught me! Richard you imbecile, coward and dipstick! DICK-HEAD!!

The feeling of drunken abandon gradually ebbs away.

MICHAEL: (*laughing*) It's not easy to do it as well as him! But hey, actually being able to do it without getting stuck on the way is something, right? And at night-time, I'll tell you stories, or you can tell me some! And...

Although MICHAEL has gone off all excited, DAD does not start playing the fiddle.

DAD gazes at MICHAEL with a lost look, as if he were staring into space.

MICHAEL: And if I get told off at work, I'll just catch up at home! 9535 times 9003, 85 million, 843 thousand, 605! A sad, pathetic little accountant isn't going to intimidate me! It'll take more than that to rust this brain! At least as long as we keep doing those sums. Just one thing though, Dad: you have to promise not to go to the railway line by yourself any more! We'll go together whenever you want to watch the trains pass by! But from the station, eh? You can see the trains really well from there! Much better than from the track!

DAD doesn't even blink. He looks at MICHAEL as if he were a total stranger.

MICHAEL: Don't you want to go and see the trains go by with me?

DAD just stares at him, saying nothing.

MICHAEL: Dad, say something: we'll sort it out, right? Aren't you happy? *(looking around, from side to side)* Where did you leave your fiddle?

DAD: What fiddle?

MICHAEL: Your one! The one you're writing the most beautiful tune in the world for Mum with! And when you finish that one...

DAD's gaze tells MICHAEL that he hasn't understood anything.

DAD: How do you know about my tune? Who are you?

Dad's question is like a kick to the stomach for MICHAEL. He sits down, but then, finding the inner strength from somewhere, he stands up again.

MICHAEL: I'm your son, MICHAEL.

DAD just stares at him with a vacant gaze, understanding nothing. In his desperation, MICHAEL goes over to the clotheshorse and starts putting on Mum's clothes.

MICHAEL: And you're my Dad!

MUSICIAN: You forget your pills, your glasses, names, birthdays, faces, trips. And in the end, you forget where you are and why you're there. And then you forget who you are.

MICHAEL: You taught me to swim even though you couldn't swim yourself! You fished me out of the water when I was drowning! And then I grew up and got a good job. And I took you and Mum out to dinner with my very first pay check, remember?

MICHAEL is now completely dressed up as Mum and tries to bring DAD round.

MICHAEL: Mum was so proud of us, and you took her out to dance. Don't you remember, Dad?

MUSICIAN: There are no limits to forgetting. From being someone, forgetting turns you into a nobody. But it's not you alone: when you become a no one, so does everyone else.

MICHAEL dances round like a madman, dragging DAD along with him.

MICHAEL: Twirl with me, Dad. First this way and then the other... Dad, please! Dad...Dad!!!

MUSICIAN: We get older every day. There's no escaping it. And there's no going back.

DAD is lost in his world. Forever. MICHAEL is distraught. He knows DAD's gone forever. He slowly starts taking off Mum's clothes. Very slowly. He goes over to the telephone and picks it up.

MICHAEL: Come whenever you want. We're ready.

MUSICIAN: Sixth station: Fiddle, clotheshorse, two suitcases, a telephone. And you and me, here ... at the last station.