

The Cellist  
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FADE IN

EXT. PARK - SUNNY DAY

A bright park in the seventies. Walkers stroll on small dirt paths while hippies take the sun on the grass.

A LITTLE GIRL, about seven years old, walks hand-in hand with her young MOTHER.

A squirrel runs down a tree and stands in the middle of the path in front of them. The little girl stops and crouches. She looks up towards her mother who gives her a piece of bread from her handbag. The little girl carefully breaks off small pieces and throws them to the squirrel. The mother takes the opportunity to adjust the girl's hair.

Far ahead of them across a patch of grass, a young CELLIST settles down at a crossing between paths. He unfolds his music stand and tunes his cello. At the first distant note, the little girl raises her head and looks towards the cellist. She completely ignores the squirrel that inches forward for another piece of bread.

The little girl stands up and pulls her mother towards the cellist. The mother follows reluctantly across the patch of grass towards the joyful enthusiastic tune. People gather around the cellist.

EXT. PARK - CELLIST - MOMENTS LATER

The cellist is a young smiling man. When the little girl and her mother reach the small gathering, he has started a new piece. The little girl gives the piece of bread to her mother and takes advantage of the moment's inattention to slip through the crowd to the front. Behind, her mother tries to keep an eye on her but doesn't dare to disturb people to catch up.

The little girl sits on the ground. She focusses all her attention on the hands of the cellist.

At the end of the piece, people disperse. Some drop a few coins in the brand new hat on the floor. The cellist nods to every person with a smile as he retunes his instrument.

The mother reaches the little girl and tries to lead her away. The little girl resists. She searches in her pockets and extracts a button, a wrapped sweet and a few stones. After a short hesitation, she steps tentatively towards the cellist to offer him the sweet. He smiles at her and holds his hat out. She drops the sweet in it.

CELLIST

Thank you.

The face of the little girl lights up. She waves at the cellist as she walks away with her mother. He waves back with his bow.

INT. SHOPPING CENTRE - UPPER FLOOR - DAY

A worn down shopping centre in the eighties. Bleak neon lighting, squeaky escalators and Muzak playing out of bad quality speakers. The shopping centre is crowded and noisy. Amongst the crowd, a group of giggling TEENAGE GIRLS walk from one shop window to the next. One of the girls is trailing behind. She looks enviously at the classical CDs and LPs in a record shop window.

The sad sound of a cello reaches the girl through the noisy crowd. She turns around and looks into the atrium a few storeys below. The cellist sits alone in a badly lit corner of the busy open space.

She runs towards the closest elevator and elbows her way down the stairs amidst the grumbling shoppers.

INT. SHOPPING CENTRE - ATRIUM - MOMENTS LATER

She finally reaches the cellist who looks older and more tired than in the park. She's mesmerized by the tune. Around her, the crowd goes on shopping. A few people drop coins in the cellist's worn out hat but they don't linger. In the background across the shopping centre, the girl's friends point towards her.

The girl comes out of her reverie when the cellist finishes his piece. She fumbles into her small handbag and extracts a coin. She drops it in the old hat while smiling to the cellist.

CELLIST

(smiling for the first time  
of the scene)

Thank you.

Her smile widens. Her friends catch up with her and drag her away as the cellist starts a new piece.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND - CORRIDOR - RUSH HOUR

A busy corridor in the London underground, late nineties. The cellist, old and weathered, plays in a cramped corner without ever raising his eyes from the ground. The music resonates through the corridor. Its technical accuracy doesn't compensate the lack of emotion. People rush past him without paying attention.

A young woman pulling a cello case behind her walks down the corridor. As she reaches the cellist, she stops in her track and looks intently at the ragged hat. People bump into her but she doesn't give in. After a few failed attempts at moving her, the crowd adjusts around her and the cellist.

The cellist stops playing but doesn't look up. She fumbles into the pocket of her case and extract a concert ticket.

TICKET

Bach Cello Suites - Mariana  
Rogers

She steps towards the cellist. He doesn't notice her. She touches his free shoulder. He raises his head in a start. She smiles and puts the ticket into the ragged hat.

MARIANA

Thank you.

She walks away followed by the surprised look of the cellist as she blends into the crowd. He bends down with difficulty to pick the ticket in the hat on the floor. He squints to read it. His eyes fill with tears as he pockets the ticket with a shaking hand.

He starts playing again, this time looking up at the crowd passing by. The music gradually become more emotional and organic. He nods at people who look in his direction.

FADE TO BLACK