



THROWN UPON THE WORLD

BASED ON A TRUE STORY



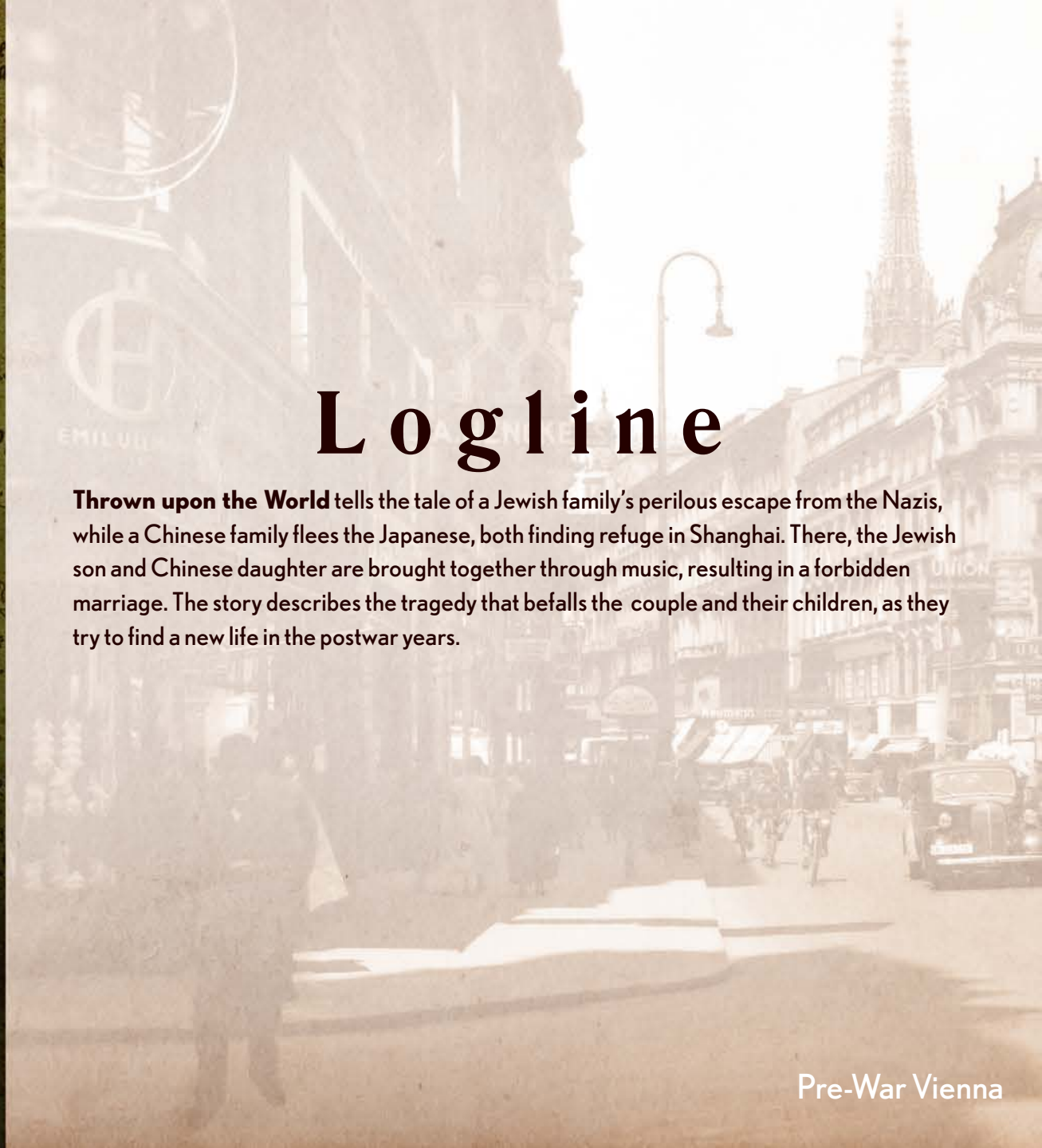
*Reared as we are, in quiet and in peace,
Now all at once we're thrown upon the world.*

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Logline

Thrown upon the World tells the tale of a Jewish family's perilous escape from the Nazis, while a Chinese family flees the Japanese, both finding refuge in Shanghai. There, the Jewish son and Chinese daughter are brought together through music, resulting in a forbidden marriage. The story describes the tragedy that befalls the couple and their children, as they try to find a new life in the postwar years.



Pre-War Vienna



Old Shanghai

Synopsis

Based on a true story, **Thrown Upon the World** is an epic tale of love, treachery and an ultimate betrayal.

It is 1938, when the Kolbers, affluent Viennese Jews, flee the Nazis for Shanghai. Eva and her daughter take the Trans-Siberian Railroad through war zones, where they confront the Gestapo, shakedowns, and endure Japanese imprisonment. In the meantime, her husband Josef, and their twin sons travel by ocean liner, after concealing valuables in crates of sewing machines.

Meanwhile in China, the rich and powerful Gan Chen family finds their lives upended by Japanese invaders. Forced to abandon their burning estate, the family also finds refuge in Shanghai. While the families adapt to their new lifestyles during the war, their children meet. Walter Kolber is a handsome violinist; beautiful Chao Chen, a gifted pianist.

After the war, their interracial romance blossoms, when Chao Chen discovers she is pregnant. Without familial blessings, the lovers marry and head with their newborn to a refugee camp in Austria. As Chao Chen grapples with language and cultural barriers, two more children are born as the family is met with turmoil and tragedy, while they try to find a way to America.

The Kolber and Chen families' story is a riches-to-rags saga that plays out against the backdrop of WWII and its postwar years. Religious persecution, racial prejudice, and power struggles tear each family apart. The series chronicles the lives of a cast of indelible characters, especially Chao Chen, who is beset by adversity and challenges at every turn. She is sustained through it all by her two great loves – her children and music. However, her life ends tragically as she loses her children, her music, and even all hope.

The story largely takes place in Vienna, Shanghai, and along the path of the legendary Trans-Siberian Railroad. There are also vivid scenes of the Shanghai Ghetto and an Austrian Displaced Persons Camp.

The television series will be told in ten episodes that weave historical events into the intimate family story of Walter Kolber and Chao Chen, their friends, their family, and their world.

The Lovers

Chao Chen {The Gifted Pianist}



After a dramatic escape from the invading Japanese army, Chao Chen also escapes outdated Chinese traditions, especially an arranged marriage.

Naive, she meets violinist Walter Kolber. Pregnant, she marries Walter, and her family disowns her.

At an Austrian refugee camp, she experiences abuse, abandonment and discrimination, even from Jews. She suffers a breakdown when her husband takes her children to America, leaving her behind forever.

Walter Kolber {The Violinist}



Walter is a talented musician, who with his family, dramatically escapes the Nazis for Shanghai.

A charismatic, narcissistic womanizer, Walter is paired to perform at a concert with innocent Chao Chen. When she's pregnant, they secretly marry.

While living at a Displaced Persons Camp, Walter, who is only interested in advancing his music career, at times abuses and abandons his family.

In a successful scheme, he takes his boys to America, leaving Chao Chen behind. Once there, he abandons his children, too.



The Kolber Family



Eva Kolber
{The Leader}

Eva arranges her family's escape to Shanghai with Nazi s at the doorstep.

Taking a 46-day complex rail route, she endures the Gestapo, shakedowns and Japanese imprisonment.

In Shanghai, she helps start the sewing factory and Vienna House of Fashion, but dies shortly after the war's end.



Josef Kolber
{The Appeaser}

An Austrian war hero, Josef avoids arrest by the Nazis.

He takes a steamship to Shanghai, concealing money and valuables with his sewing equipment.

Josef is forced to engage with Shanghai's underworld in order to start his business.



The Kolber Family



Lilly Kolber
{The Manipulator}

A talented designer, Lilly takes the rail route to Shanghai with her mother. Over the 46-day journey she panics each time they are stopped by the Nazis or Japanese.

Young, pretty and Caucasian, she attracts the attention of many men, especially Japanese soldiers.



Dolfie Kolber
{The Twin}

Dolfie Kolber, Walter's twin, is the antithesis of his brother. He has common sense, is a good student, follows direction but afraid to take risks. Not particularly close to Walter, he is offended that his mother's favorite is Walter, and not him.



The Chen Family



Rui-De Xu
{The Wicked Stepmother}

First wife to Gan Chen, aging Rui-De Xu is bitterly jealous of his Concubine, especially her looks and her children.

She continuously plots against Chao Chen, trying to end her “worthless” music career, while attempting to marry her off to a Chinese.



Ya-Nan
{The Concubine}

Gan Chen’s trophy, she is the mother of his children.

She is no longer protected after his untimely death.

Afraid of Rue-De Xu, she’s complicit in the plots against her daughter, Chao Chen.



Supporting Characters



Mai-Leen {The Nurturer}

Chao Chen's childhood nanny and confidante.

She helps the family escape, as the Japanese army burn down the family's estate.

She cannot convince Chao Chen to avoid Walter, whom she distrusts.



Gan Chen {The Wise Man}, wise, rich and powerful, was the family's head. Widely recognized as an elite scholar, he served as the Magistrate (Governor) of a Province adjacent to Shanghai.

He built a huge family estate which included a 40-room mansion.

He suffers an untimely death causing a family power struggle.



Fu -Chan, Chao Chen's brother is the oldest child to Gan Chen and Ya-Nan. He is bespectacled and is being groomed to take charge of the family after the untimely death of his father.



Fu-Ti, Chao Chen's brother is the second child to Gan Chen and Ya-Nan. Fun-loving he is frustrated at his inability to help Chao Chen, against their common enemy, first-wife Rui-De Xu.



Run Chen is Gan Chen's brother who briefly runs estate after his brother's untimely death.

Supporting Characters



Miss Liang, young and pretty, is Chao Chen's piano teacher and mentor. Recognizing her talent, she arranges for Chao Chen to go to the Shanghai Music Conservatory on a full scholarship, over the objections of Rui-De Xu.



Professor Alfred Wittenberg, a renowned musician from Berlin is the director of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. A violin teacher to Walter, he pairs him with Chao Chen to perform at a fund-raising event. He stands and toasts the couple at their wedding reception.



Samuel Jedeikin is a Swiss Jewish businessman and resident of Shanghai who speaks Mandarin and Japanese. For an ownership interest, he provides capital to the Kolbers as he helps them navigate through the local laws and the underground's "Green Gang."



David Ozer is a good-looking Russian Jew with black hair and a trim physique. He meets Lilly at a night club and marries her shortly thereafter. He helps get the Kolber's business off the ground. In Shanghai he has two children with Lilly before leaving for Israel.



Hans Möller is a tall handsome blonde Swedish Jew who employs Chao Chen to teach him Mandarin. Chao Chen has an uncontrollable crush on him, and she is devastated when she discovers that he has died on a cargo ship accidentally bombed by the Japanese.



Dr. Fritz Jensen is a doctor who treats the Kolber family in the Displaced Persons Camp. He confronts Walter over Chao Chen's health and the well-being of their children.



Wu-An Wong, is a Chinese woman married to Dr. Fritz Jensen who befriends Chao Chen, treating her "like a sister."



Laura Margolis, aka "The Shanghai Savior," is a woman working in Shanghai for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) who arranges to feed thousands of Jews. She forces Josef to hire and feed Jews at his factory.

Supporting Characters



Frau Götz is Chao Chen's Jewish employer, a glove maker who reluctantly supplies gloves to the Japanese army.



Annalise Berglas is a stunning, wealthy, well-bred Jewish society girl who has unfortunate encounter with Walter Kolber, who lusts for her.



Monique LeBoutin is a beautiful petite blue-eyed blonde is the daughter of a French Diplomat. She finds work at the Vienna House of Fashion and befriends Lilly.



Li Shutong is a handsome, wealthy young investment banker whose hobby is singing. He retains Chao Chen to accompany him on the piano. A relationship between the two fails at the hands of Walter.



Du ("Big Ears") Yuesheng is the leader of the Green Gang, which controls Shanghai's the opium trade, houses of prostitution, and the black market. Josef Kolber is forced to make a "donation" in order to conduct his business.



Lillian Cohen is a compassionate American HIAS worker, who against all odds, helps arrange for Walter and his children go to America.



Pilot Synopsis

1946. Now pregnant, Chao Chen marries Walter Kolber in a modest, Jewish wedding ceremony, at a Shanghai café. This marriage is without the approval of either family. There, the newlyweds perform a piano and violin concerto which transports them back in time.

1922. Four-year-old Chao Chen is the child of the renown Magistrate Gan Chen and his beautiful concubine. As part of the powerful and wealthy Chen family, she and her brothers grow-up in a huge estate. This budding pianist's world dramatically changes after her father's untimely death, as his widow, the "first wife" Rui-De Xu, is interested only in destroying her career and marrying her off.

In 1938, as the Japanese army approaches, the Chen family is powerless as they watch their mansion burn to the ground. Chao Chen helps save the family as they flee to Shanghai.

Meanwhile in Vienna, the affluent Jewish Kolber family witness Hitler's rise to power. Mother Eva arranges their escape to Shanghai, the only place in the world that will accept Jews. After packing their sewing factory's equipment while concealing money and valuables, father Josef and twin sons Walter and Dolfie, take a steamship from Trieste. There, an incident on the dock potentially upsets their plan to leave.

Back in Vienna at about the same time, the Kristallnacht pogrom starts, as mother Eva and daughter Lilly are ready to leave for Shanghai. But their plans don't include a last-minute visit by the Gestapo.

Episodes

Episode 2

En route, Eva and Lilly are relieved of valuables by Gestapo.

Rui-De Xu negotiates a deal to keep her sons Fu-Chan and Fu-Ti from being drafted.

After docking in Bombay, Josef learns of Kristallnacht and imagines the worst of what might have happened to Eva and Lilly.

Chao Chen develops her skill as a pianist under the tutelage of Miss Liang.

Josef and the boys arrive in Shanghai and find a lovely apartment in the French Concession.

Episode 3

Reaching Moscow Lilly becomes infatuated with her tour guide.

Eva and Lilly are abandoned at the train tracks at the Manchurian border. Later in Mukden, they are imprisoned by the Japanese for four days.

Josef and boys are still wondering if Eva and Lilly will ever make it, start up their sewing factory.

Walter and Josef are confronted by local gangster, "Big Ears."

Chao Chen, thanks to her brother, secures a job teaching Mandarin to handsome Hans Möller, heir to a Swedish shipping fortune, and develops a crush on him.

Eva and Lilly now on the final 4-day leg of their journey, take a freighter to Shanghai. The captain finds Lilly most attractive.

Episode 4

Eva and Lilly finally arrive in Shanghai New Year's Eve, 1939 and reunite with Josef and boys.

Chao Chen is distraught when Hans Möller is killed at sea by the Japanese.

Josef partners with Swiss businessman Samuel Jedeikin.

Out of a job, Chao Chen must seek employment fearing Rui-De Xu will make good on her threat to arrange a marriage. She finds a job with glove-maker Frau Götz, who reluctantly provides gloves to the Japanese military.

Lilly falls in love with wealthy Russian David Ozer, a member of the Shanghai Jewish Volunteer Corps.

Walter begins wooing the beautiful Annelise Berglas.

Episodes

Episode 5

Eva and Lilly open Vienna House of Fashion and hire Monique LeBoutin, whom Walter lusts after.

Eva sells Frau Gotz' fashion gloves, which are delivered by various employees, including Chao Chen.

Laura Margolis, an American relief worker who organizes feeding 8,000 starving refugee Jews, makes demands of Josef and Eva.

Walter is accepted at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and takes violin lessons from the renowned Professor Wittenberg. Chao Chen, already a student, eyes Walter walking across the quad. She does not realize she has just seen her destiny.

Episode 6

After Pearl Harbor, the Japanese take control of Shanghai and force the Jews into the Hongkew ghetto. With no other option, the Kolbers relocate into the storage attic above their sewing factory.

Walter upsets his father when he skips school to sell soap to residents of the Jewish ghetto.

Walter and Chao Chen are paired to perform at a Jewish Fundraising concert.

Chao Chen buys a red dress needed for the concert from the Vienna House of Fashion, where she unknowingly meets a most helpful Eva, who does not recognize Frau Gotz' shop girl.

After their performance, Walter and Chao Chen receive accolades, especially Chao Chen – much to Eva's chagrin.

Episode 7

Huge celebrations take place throughout Shanghai as the war ends with the bombing of Hiroshima.

Wealthy Li-Shutong, while courting Chao Chen, is confronted by a jealous Walter.

Walter and Chao Chen find an apartment together, then discover she's pregnant.

Walter and Chao Chen marry (from Walter's viewpoint).

Episodes

Episode 8

All the Kolbers plan on leaving Shanghai ahead of the approaching Communists. They will head in different directions.

After the baby is born, Josef and Eva discover Walter's secret marriage and baby through a duplicitous Lilly. Josef angrily disowns Walter. Eva is heartbroken to lose her favorite child.

After giving birth, Walter, Chao Chen, and the newborn leave for a Displaced Persons Camp expecting to start a new life in Vienna.

Episode 9

At the Camp, Chao Chen who does not speak German, suffers painful discrimination, even from Jews.

Walter abandons his wife with the baby for long periods to advance his career as a violinist and to pursue an affair with an Austrian woman.

Chao Chen experiences depression while she gives birth to two more boys, one while Walter is away.

Dr. Fritz Jensen and his Chinese wife Wu-An befriend Chao Chen. Dr. Jensen and Walter have a confrontation over Chao's well-being, who is again pregnant with their fourth child.

Meanwhile, Walter is working with American authorities to arrange his immigration to the United States.

Episode 10

Walter convinces Chao Chen to permit him to leave for America and allow the boys to go, too. He promises he'll send for her immediately after she gives birth to the fourth child.

When Walter reaches America, he promptly abandons the boys to a Jewish orphanage.

Back in Vienna, Chao Chen gives birth to a fourth child, and Walter cannot be located.

Chao Chen gives up her newborn for adoption to Dr. Fritz Jensen and his wife Wu-An, and then she is institutionalized.

After waiting 10 years, Chao Chen returns to Shanghai, as her daily hopes and prayers of ever seeing her children go unanswered.

Twenty years later, Chao Chen's youngest child Michael, travels from Beijing to America to reunite with his brothers. Together, they return to China to search for Chao Chen, only to find she has died. With their babies' clothes, she left behind letters that break their hearts.



S e t t i n g s

THROWN UPON THE WORLD

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