

Opening moments from THE INTERVIEW:

ACT I

SCENE 1

Setting: *A modest, but comfortable, home decorated in contemporary style, in pastel hues. Furnishings include a sofa, armchair, end table with lamp, credenza, table and two chairs. In view are a white porcelain tea set and a plate of pastries. Elsewhere, a yahrtzeit* (memorial) candle burns. We see suggested exits to the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and guest closet. On the walls (if any) are decorator prints, but no photos are in sight. All shelves and surfaces are filled with books.*

See end of script for glossary and pronunciation guide.

At Rise: *BRACHA is waiting. Classical piano music plays from the stereo. We might also hear a second piano playing against the first. The doorbell rings and the second piano falls silent. On the other side of the door, ANN arrives, carrying a large shoulder bag. SHE snuffs out a cigarette and is applying breath freshener. We see her dusting the snow from her shoulders. BRACHA shuts off the stereo and crosses to open the door. SHE finds ANN, who is now stomping her feet.*

ANN: I am so sorry! The roads were awful. I didn't know if I'd get out of my driveway. Plus, we were watching the school closings, but, of course, Beachwood won't cancel unless there's an avalanche or something. Then the school bus was twenty minutes late... I'm Ann.

BRACHA: So I figured.

ANN: It's so nice to finally meet you.

BRACHA: *(takes ANN's wet clothing.)* Just a moment. *(wipes up a puddle with a paper towel, then points to ANN's boots)* Give me those. *(BRACHA places the boots on a mat then grabs a pair of two-inch heel scuff slippers)* Put these on.

ANN: Thank you, Mrs. Weissman! *(puts on slippers; they don't fit)*

BRACHA: Bracha. Come, you're cold. Have some tea. *(pours two cups)* Sit! ... Sugar?

ANN: Sure. *(BRACHA plops two sugars into ANN's tea.)* That's...

BRACHA: *(adds more sugar, then offers ANN a pastry)* You'll have some?

ANN: No, thanks. *(BRACHA does not withdraw the plate.)* Really. You have a lovely home. Have you been here long?

BRACHA: Twelve years tomorrow. That's when my husband died.
(indicates the burning candle) He waited until we moved in so all his friends could see how nice he fixed it up.

ANN: I'll want to hear about him, too.

BRACHA: How much time do we have?

ANN: Today, just an hour. Actually, less than an hour. I'm really sorry.
Tomorrow, all morning.

BRACHA: How long's the tape?

ANN: Two hours.

BRACHA: So you want my life in two hours?

ANN: We could go to three; we just aim for two.

BRACHA: It's not enough.

ANN: It's never enough. **(takes a pastry)** This is very good.

BRACHA: **(spots a fallen crumb and fetches a handheld vacuum. SHE runs it around ANN, then sets it on the floor between them)** I don't like pests. So, what do you want to know?

ANN: **(hastily retrieving her forms)** This morning I'll just be making some notes - names, dates, places - so I can ask the right questions when the tape rolls.

BRACHA: Do I get a copy?

ANN: Of course!

BRACHA: I'll want an extra... just in case.

ANN: I'll see what I can do.

BRACHA: When do I get it?

ANN: It usually takes three to five weeks.

BRACHA: You've done a lot of these?

ANN: Not a lot, actually.

BRACHA: How much they are paying you?

ANN: We volunteer.

BRACHA: Huh.

ANN: Could we start?

BRACHA: **(rises and exits to the kitchen; from offstage)** I'm still listening.

ANN: **(yelling off)** It'd be better if you were in here. **(BRACHA returns with a pitcher of water and a glass.)** Let's start with your name.

BRACHA: You know it already. **(offers ANN another pastry)** Not much of an eater, are you?

ANN: I just had breakfast. **(making notes)** What was your name at birth?

BRACHA: The same. Bracha; it means "blessing."

ANN: Maiden name?

BRACHA: Lebowicz.

ANN: Could you spell that?

BRACHA: With a c-z. **(snatches the pen and forms from ANN's hands; as SHE speaks, SHE writes)** L-e-b-o-w-i-c-z.

ANN: (*reclaiming her things*) Actually, I'm the one supposed to be filling these out.

BRACHA: I have to see the words to spell them.

ANN: Okay, wait just a second. (*finds a pen and pad in her tote*) Here, use these. Now, when and where were you born?

BRACHA: (*scribbling*) Nineteen-twenty-five. September the fifth. Lodz. This pen won't write. (*ANN depresses the button on the pen; BRACHA writes a word and shows ANN.*)

ANN: I know that one.

BRACHA: Of course you do. Where were you born?

ANN: Me? In Germany.

BRACHA: Where?

ANN: Lansberg. Tell me about your parents.

BRACHA: What do you want to know?

ANN: Their names.

BRACHA: Menachem and Roža. Lebowicz, of course. Roža is Rose.

ANN: It was my mother's name. What'd your father do?

BRACHA: Rose what?

ANN: You wouldn't have known her. She lived in Chicago.

BRACHA: How about before?

ANN: She was from Poland, too – Zgierg.

BRACHA: Huh.

ANN: You heard of it?

BRACHA: It was so close, I could take a streetcar. What was her name over there?

ANN: Lieber.

BRACHA: ...No, I don't know it.

ANN: Not today, but I want you to tell me all about Zgierg. ... Everything you remember, okay?

BRACHA: Sure.

ANN: But now, I need to know what your father did.

BRACHA: About what?

ANN: I'm sorry, for a living.

BRACHA: The lumber business.

ANN: He owned it?

BRACHA: And my uncles. The sawmill, too. We used to play in their lumberyard, making seesaws with the planks...

ANN: So he was well-to-do?

BRACHA: Well enough.