

SCENE 2

A little while later in Joe's apartment. The door opens and lights come back up. Joe still sits at the table. Ben's lying on his grandfather's bed.

Yvie enters with two meat pies and places them in front of her father.

YVIE

Well that was fun. The oil light on your Toyota never went out and the exit off 84 was closed.

JOE

But you made it. Good girl.

YVIE

Barely. But yeah.

She tries to get the spilled sugar back in the bowl.

All that sugar, dad. What's it doing out?

She sees Ben on the bed.

You call this looking after your grandfather?

No answer.

Are you OK, sweetie?

He sits up.

JOE

He's a trooper. Don't bother to heat up the pie for me.

YVIE

You don't want it heated up?

JOE

Lemme just taste it. Back in Chicoutimi taking bites before your *Memere* catches me.

YVIE

It's funny. Going to that French Canadian Club really took me back. Learning to play *Batoiuille* with *Memere*.

BEN

What's that?

YVIE

An easy card game.

JOE

War.

YVIE

It's French for War. We played it when you were little. The same card table's in the same corner!

JOE

Plus c'est change, plus la/

YVIE

I know! It's true. It's true about memories when you get older, isn't it, dad? Like long-term memory gets clear and now the everyday stuff today just-

JOE

Memory's better than ever. Long and short. All that fish oil you're feedin' me.

He pulls the bottle of fish oil pills from his walker. She checks inside.

YVIE

Yeah right dad.

She gets plates and forks for the three of them. Then gets two fish pills from the bottle.

JOE

Ben too.

Ben come to the tables.

Start now and you will never forget.

Ben swallows one reluctantly.
Joe leaves his. They eat.

YVIE

I need to ask you something.

JOE

Anything.

YVIE

You kept saying something in your sleep last time I was here.

JOE

Is that right?

YVIE

About the Swede.

JOE

Swedish potatoes.

Ben opens his mouth to speak.
Then says nothing.

YVIE

Potatoes?

JOE

I loved your mother's Swedish potatoes. Did she use one or two cans of condensed milk?

YVIE

I have no idea.

JOE

You can't remember? Have a fish pill.

YVIE

I do remember that concoction you made for Sunday night breakfasts: half maple syrup and half butter.

She clears the plates.

BEN

How come you don't make that for me?

YVIE

Total heart-clogger's why. So the Swede doesn't mean anything.

JOE

Oh no. The Swede means something. He was a close buddy.

YVIE

You never mentioned him. I never met him.

JOE

No.

BEN

Grandpa, was he-

JOE

Interview's over.

Joe slides the leather box toward Ben.

But you take that.

BEN

I can't, Grandpa.

YVIE

Ben. Your grandfather wants to give you something.

BEN

I know but-

JOE

Sell it on the internet. And that coat's leaving too. The coat collector's dropping by after all these years.

YVIE

Anna's coming here?

JOE

Tomorrow.

YVIE

Is she coming after 3?

JOE

Four o'clock.

BEN

I'm coming too.

Yvie gives her father a kiss on his head. He keeps nodding.

LIGHTS DOWN.

SCENE 3

When the lights slowly come back up, Joe is in exactly the same place at the table in the same pajamas. The pie dish is empty. The leather box in his hands.

I turned him face down in the snow. Then me and the Swede, we crossed the bridge. But a shot rang out and the Swede... just toppled over. Shot in the back. It was the sentry. I knew I didn't cut that vein. He still had the strength to-he managed to kill before he died. And I made sure he was dead. I turned and I-I emptied the magazine in that sentry's body. Every bullet. Then I hear shouts. And rifle shots. I had to run. I had to go, didn't I?

Beat.

But it was too late for the Swede. He was gone.

Silence.

Footsteps outside the door. A soft knock. Joe is in another world.

A weakling like me kills a giant like the Swede.

More knocks, but never hard.

ANNA

(off)

Hello?

He startles.

May I come in?

JOE

Don't knock, Yvie. A daughter doesn't need to knock.

The door opens and ANNA enters, a slim and stylish elderly woman.

ANNA

Joseph?

He looks horrified. Clutches at his pajama top and wipes the dirty forks off the table.

JOE

What the hell?

YVIE

(off)

Was that the door, dad? Are you dressed?

She enters from the kitchen carrying a big box.

Ben follows behind her with another. She sees Anna.

Oh!

She puts down the box. Anxious.

But you're not dressed.

JOE

Bring me the fleece.

She helps him put it on.

ANNA

I can come back another time.

YVIE

Oh. No. Please don't go.

JOE

You stay right where you are.

Anna stiffens. Yvie reaches out her hand.

YVIE

I'm Yvie.

ANNA

My goodness. Yes. So much like your mother!

Ben comes forward.

YVIE

And this is my son Benjamin.

BEN

Hello.

He shakes her hand shyly.

JOE

Sit her down.

ANNA

It's been an awfully long time.

Yvie offers Anna a chair at the table. She sits, legs sideways to the audience. Beautiful long legs. She snakes one around the other.

JOE

Cut her a slice of meat pie, Yvie.

YVIE

No, wait. The coat!

She runs to the closet and gets the fur coat.

Look what Mom saved after all those years!

Takes it from its hanger and holds it out to Anna.

I bet it still fits. Dad wanted you to have it.

She sits back hard on her chair. Like she's been punched. Yvie brings it closer. Anna holds out her hands to shield herself.

ANNA

That's why you invited me here?

YVIE

Well. Yeah.

ANNA

It's not mine.

YVIE

Yes it is.

Yvie doesn't know where to stand or where to look.

JOE

Get her a slice of *tourtiere*, Yvie.

YVIE

You told me she gave it to mom. For baby-sitting Daniel.

ANNA

Baby-sitting? Your brother and Daniel were best friends.

YVIE

I knew that didn't sound right.

JOE

It was a long time ago.

ANNA

Your mother spotted it at my place and just fell in love with it. I never should have given it to her.

YVIE

Why not? It was *kind* of you to give her the coat. I used to sit behind her in church and stroke the collar. It's so soft. Feel it.

Anna turns her head away.

ANNA

It was so cold when we left. Daniel needed warmth...

She can't go on.

Keep it away from me. Throw it away. Why didn't I throw it out all those years ago?

JOE

My thoughts exactly.

She sinks into her chair.

ANNA

You couldn't possibly share my thoughts.

YVIE

Let me get you something. A cup of tea.

JOE
Tea?! A shot of whiskey.

ANNA
Yes.

YVIE
Yes?

JOE
Under my bed.

YVIE
Dad.

JOE
Stop channeling your mother and pour us a shot.

Yvie puts the coat over her
chair.

ANNA
I'm sorry.

YVIE
It's OK. As long as he doesn't have much. It's just his
diabetes and he never checks his-

JOE
Pour one for Bandito over there too. How about you Ben?

BEN
That's OK.

Yvie hands them both a shot.
Takes the coat off the back of
her chair and sits down with it
in her lap. She strokes the mink
collar.

YVIE
I don't understand. Is it because it's real fur? This is
lamb, right? I know that's totally un PC/

ANNA

It was a gift. That I never wanted. But I didn't have another coat. And Daniel—he was only six months old.

YVIE

Then for sure you'd bring it with you.

ANNA

It was so cold.

YVIE

I'm confused. Dad said some things, but—

ANNA

What things?

YVIE

It's no big deal. Whatever you had to do, you did it to get by. I mean, it was really hard after the war, right?

ANNA

Get by, god yes. What exactly did I do, according to your father?

Joe's intent on his meat pie.

JOE

It's a good combination, *tourtiere* and whiskey.

ANNA

What did I do, Joe?

JOE

So you were a businessman's companion from time to time. You knew your trade. So what?

ANNA

A businessman's companion?

JOE

Nice trips to foreign cities. We never minded having Daniel.

ANNA

I see.

JOE

You had to earn a living. You had a Nazi baby to raise.

ANNA

Oh, Joseph.

Yvie shivers. Covers herself
with the coat.

You never tried to understand.

Yvie strokes the fur collar,
unaware she's even doing it. Ben
moves closer to his grandfather,
who reaches for his hand.

ANNA

It took *me* a long time to understand.

YVIE

Understand what?

ANNA

Do you know what the *Lebensborn* is, Yvie?

YVIE

No.

ANNA

The spring of life.

YVIE

Laybahnsborn. It sounds beautiful.

BEN

Laybahnsborn.

ANNA

It was pure evil. My mother was evil. And my father.

YVIE

How could you say that about your own parents?

ANNA

Oh, they were very good German. They took trips to nice foreign cities too. Zarmosc. Warsaw. Gdansk. And returned with future Aryans.

BEN

Orphans, right? I mean even that's sick, but-

ANNA

No. Stole them from their families. And put them in German schools and nurseries where they got the best of everything.

YVIE

But Anna, you- you were you taken too?

ANNA

Oh no. I was my mother's daughter, all right. A baby-sitter at 15 who loved those little ones.

YVIE

But Daniel.

ANNA

He's mine. The only blessedly good thing that happened in all my life.