

SILENCE

by

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(Based on a true story.)

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SCENE 1

HANNAH and INGRID stand on each side of the stage.

Hannah? INGRID

Yes. HANNAH

It's me... Ingrid. INGRID

Oh. HANNAH

I just called to say I'm sorry. INGRID

Did you read my e-mail? HANNAH

No. INGRID

Please do. HANNAH

What does it say? INGRID

Everything. HANNAH

INGRID
(To the audience:)
This is based on a true story.

SCENE 2

A country-house living-room.

Happy birthday! HANNAH

What is it? INGRID

Open it. HANNAH

Money? INGRID

HANNAH
So you can visit me.

INGRID
Thank you!

HANNAH
So we can see each other more often.

INGRID
It's been a while.

HANNAH
Time flies.

INGRID
I'm so glad you could make it.

HANNAH
It really isn't far.

INGRID
From Stockholm?

HANNAH
Yes.

INGRID
I guess not.

HANNAH
A couple of hours on the train, that's all.

INGRID
No, that really isn't far.

HANNAH
So this is where you live?

INGRID
Yes.

HANNAH
It's so big.

INGRID
Isn't it wonderful?

HANNAH
It's so far from everything. Don't you feel lonely?

INGRID
I've got Erik.

HANNAH
Of course you do.

INGRID

We're happy out here.

HANNAH

I'm sure you are. Who's coming tonight? Anyone from the course?

INGRID

I've lost contact with most of them.

HANNAH

That's a shame.

INGRID

It is. Would you like a glass of wine?

HANNAH

Please.

(INGRID pours HANNAH a glass
of wine.)

It's so quiet out here.

INGRID

It is.

HANNAH

I mean, it's nice. It's just so quiet.

INGRID

Uh-huh.

HANNAH

Must be a couple of miles to the closest neighbor.

INGRID

Almost.

HANNAH

And at least fifty to the closest town.

INGRID

Sixty-five.

HANNAH

You can even hear the sound of the clock.

INGRID

Isn't it nice?

HANNAH

It is.

INGRID

Nice and quiet.

HANNAH

I couldn't bear it.

What?
INGRID

I mean living like this.
HANNAH

Why not?
INGRID

I don't know. It's just so silent. How is Erik?
HANNAH

He's upstairs, resting.
INGRID

He's a bit shy, isn't he?
HANNAH

I wouldn't say that.
INGRID

He's always so quiet.
HANNAH

Sometimes he talks too much.
INGRID

We should try to get him drunk tonight.
HANNAH

No.
INGRID

See what happens. It might make him open up.
HANNAH

We shouldn't do that.
INGRID

Wouldn't it be fun?
HANNAH

No.
INGRID

I'm just joking.
HANNAH

We shouldn't do that.
INGRID

I was just joking.
HANNAH

I know.
INGRID

HANNAH
Well.

INGRID
I just don't think it's such a good idea.

HANNAH
It wasn't an idea, it was a joke.

INGRID
Good.

HANNAH
It was just a joke.

INGRID
Yes, you said that.

HANNAH
Don't take me so seriously.

INGRID
I just don't think it's funny.

HANNAH
Okay, I'm sorry.

INGRID
It's okay.

HANNAH
I just wish he would talk to me sometimes. I think I've seen him three or four times and the only thing I've heard him say is like 'hello' and 'good bye'.

INGRID
He can be difficult.

HANNAH
Yes.

INGRID
He's probably just shy.

HANNAH
Yes, probably.

SCENE 3

HANNAH, INGRID and ERIK are sitting round a table. The table is set for seven, but no one else has come.

INGRID
Where are they?

ERIK
I don't know.

INGRID
Maybe they aren't coming.

HANNAH
Of course they are.

INGRID
Imagine if no one turns up.

HANNAH
They're probably just late. No one turns up in time at a party, do they?

INGRID
No.

ERIK
Peter and Linda called earlier.

INGRID
They did?

ERIK
Yes.

INGRID
What did they say?

ERIK
They weren't sure they would be able to come tonight. Their car broke down.

INGRID
Oh.

ERIK
They were going to the pub instead. They asked if we wanted to come.

INGRID
What did you say?

ERIK
I said we'll see.

INGRID
But it's my party.

ERIK
I know. But what if no one comes?

INGRID
Hannah is already here.

ERIK

You know what I mean.

INGRID

Besides, we've already had wine, so no one can drive.

ERIK

We'll take a taxi.

INGRID

Why can't we just have a nice evening at home?

ERIK

Yes.

HANNAH

I'm sure they'll come. They're probably just late.

ERIK

I might go later anyway, haven't seen Peter for a while.

INGRID

Well I guess we should start eating before the food gets cold. We'll just make sure we save some for the others.

They start eating.

HANNAH

So Erik, what are you up to?

ERIK

Nothing.

INGRID

Erik lost his job.

HANNAH

I'm sorry.

INGRID

It's not easy nowadays, finding a job around here. Is it Erik?

No answer.

HANNAH

I'm sure it's not.

INGRID

They've closed down three of the big factories.

HANNAH

Must be hard. Finding anything.

ERIK

They're moving out, that's what happens.

INGRID

It is.

ERIK

It's much cheaper running factories abroad these days, no one can afford to stay.

INGRID

But we shouldn't complain. We've still got my unemployment benefits. Right Erik?

ERIK

Right.

INGRID

Erik thought we should kill Lisa and have her for dinner.

HANNAH

Who's Lisa?

INGRID

Lisa, the goat.

ERIK

Just to feed her costs as much as the rent.

HANNAH

Poor little Lisa.

INGRID

I could never do that. I've had her since she was a little kid, I could never let her down like that.

ERIK

I guess the animals are more important than us anyway?

INGRID

Does anyone want wine?

HANNAH

Yes please.

ERIK

I'll have another beer please.

INGRID

I'll get one for you.

INGRID exits to the kitchen.

HANNAH

So, what kind of a job are you looking for?

ERIK

Don't know.

HANNAH

Hard to know.

(ERIK shrugs his shoulders.)

I'm sure you'll find something soon. Sooner or later you always find something.

ERIK

Depends on who you are.

HANNAH

I'm sure you will.

ERIK

Well, I'm not, people like me aren't really prioritized.

HANNAH

Don't say that.

ERIK

Why not?

HANNAH

I'm sure you'll find something, you just need some patience.

ERIK

Patience?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

Sweden is no longer what it used to be.

HANNAH

I guess it's not.

ERIK

The society's getting harder.

HANNAH

It is.

ERIK

And the only way to survive is to get hard yourself.

HANNAH

Perhaps it is.

ERIK

Patience is the last thing we need.

HANNAH

I'm not sure about that.

ERIK

But sometimes I guess it's better just to shut up.

HANNAH

I don't know, is it?

ERIK

I got fired for speaking my mind.

HANNAH

Did you?

ERIK

Freedom of speech is only for those who are already politically correct.

HANNAH

Perhaps you're right.

ERIK

So, what do you do for a living?

HANNAH

I'm a receptionist, but it's just to get some money. I'd rather work as a designer.

ERIK

A designer?

HANNAH

Ingrid and I took the same course, don't you remember?

ERIK

I do, but that's more like hobby, isn't it? Nothing to make a living out of?

HANNAH

I aim to do so.

ERIK

But no one really manages that, do they?

HANNAH

Of course they do.

ERIK

You can't really call it a job.

HANNAH

Of course you can.

(INGRID comes back from the kitchen.)

Ingrid, why don't you help me out here?

INGRID

What?

ERIK

You can't really call design a profession, can you?

INGRID
I guess you can.

ERIK
You guess, you can?

INGRID
I guess I do.

ERIK
So you guess that you guess that you can?

HANNAH
Who do you think designed this table for example, why do you think it looks the way it does, if no one designed it?

ERIK
How creative is it to design a table anyway? The idea of putting four legs on a table isn't exactly new.

HANNAH
You know what I mean.

INGRID
Of course he does.

Silence. ERIK smiles.

HANNAH
Isn't it cold in here?

INGRID
It's always like this.

ERIK
Costs too much to keep it warm.

INGRID
The other day we had no water 'cause the pipes were frozen.

HANNAH
Must be awful.

ERIK
But Ingrid thinks it's more important to feed the animals.

INGRID
Some mornings we even see our breath.

ERIK
You get used to it.

INGRID
It's just until Erik finds a job.

ERIK
You get used to everything.

INGRID
Is everyone finished? Should I start preparing the cake?

ERIK
Please.

HANNAH
I'll help you.

INGRID
You don't need to.

HANNAH
You shouldn't have to prepare your own birthday cake.

INGRID
Don't worry, I'll be fine.

ERIK
Please sit down Hannah. Relax. You're the guest here, aren't you?

HANNAH
I guess I am.

INGRID clears the table and leaves the room.

ERIK
And you've traveled all the way from Stockholm today. Please rest for a while. Would you like more wine?

HANNAH
Yes please.

ERIK
How is Stockholm at this time of the year?

HANNAH
As usual.

ERIK
Stressed?

HANNAH
Depends on what you compare it with.

ERIK
No real Christmas spirit?

HANNAH
Maybe not. I don't know. I've actually never celebrated Christmas.

ERIK
Oh, yes, that's right. You celebrate Hallabala instead, or what do you call it?

HANNAH
Hanukkah.

ERIK
So I guess mr Santa is banned from your home. Isn't that a pity?

HANNAH
We have presents, if that's what you mean.

ERIK
And no Christmas ham?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Why don't you celebrate Christmas?

HANNAH
We have other traditions.

ERIK
But why not Christmas?

HANNAH
Because we don't believe in Jesus.

ERIK
Neither do I.

HANNAH
So why do you celebrate Christmas?

ERIK
'Cause it's a nice old tradition. Do you think that's wrong?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Do you think your traditions are more important than ours?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Then why are you telling me what traditions to celebrate?

HANNAH
I'm not.

ERIK
Good.

(Pause.)
You know what? I don't think Ingrid's friends will come tonight.

Why not?

HANNAH

I don't think they like me.

ERIK

Maybe they don't.

HANNAH

I don't like them either, but it's a shame they won't see Ingrid because of me.

ERIK

It is.

HANNAH

I should probably see Peter tonight and leave the two of you alone. Otherwise I might scare you off as well.

ERIK

Maybe.

HANNAH

You don't like me, do you?

ERIK

You seem a bit difficult.

HANNAH

Difficult?

ERIK

Yes.

HANNAH

What about you, are you perfect?

ERIK

I'm sure I'm not.

HANNAH

Let's just say I'm tired of kissing everyone's arse.

ERIK

So you've been kissing a lot of arses?

HANNAH

I won't kiss yours.

ERIK

Well, that suits me fine.

HANNAH

INGRID comes in from the kitchen with a big birthday cake.

INGRID

Cake's ready.

ERIK
That looks fantastic.

HANNAH stands up and starts singing.

HANNAH
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you...

ERIK stands up, raises his glass and interrupts Hannah with his own song. It starts out with the tone of happy birthday but ends up more like a military march.

INGRID
That was a different version of happy birthday. Haven't heard it before. Does anyone want coffee?
(ERIK stands up and leaves the room.)
I'll take that as a no, how about you?

HANNAH rises and leaves the room in a different direction to ERIK.

SCENE 4

ERIK has gone out, HANNAH and INGRID remains at the house.

HANNAH
Where is the phone?

INGRID
What?

HANNAH
Where is the phone?

INGRID
Who are you going to call?

HANNAH
I'm going to call a taxi.

INGRID
Oh, Hannah. They won't drive out here at this hour.

HANNAH
Just show me where the phone is and let me try.

INGRID indicates the phone. HANNAH starts dialling.

INGRID

But Erik already tried, he was told they wouldn't drive out here at this hour.

HANNAH

I guess we'll just have to pay them enough.

INGRID

Besides, where would you go if they did come?

HANNAH

Answering machine. Are there any other companies?

INGRID

No.

HANNAH

What kind of a place is this? The only taxi company that exists doesn't even answer the phone.

INGRID

That's how it is out here.

HANNAH

Then you'll have to drive me.

INGRID

In what car? Erik took ours.

HANNAH

Do you have a bike?

INGRID

It's way to far.

HANNAH

I guess I'll have to hitchhike then.

INGRID

Hannah, please!

HANNAH

Please what?

INGRID

He isn't even here now.

A few moments of silence.

HANNAH

Why did you invite me here?

INGRID

'Cause I wanted you here.

HANNAH

But didn't you realize?

INGRID
Because you are my friend.

HANNAH
Then why would you expose me to something like this?

INGRID
He would never do anything.

HANNAH
Do anything?

INGRID
He wouldn't harm you.

HANNAH
He already has harmed me.

INGRID
He would never harm you physically. Not as long as I'm present.

HANNAH
But otherwise, you think he would?

INGRID
That's not what I said.

HANNAH
And still you've got the nerve to invite me here?

INGRID
Hannah, please!

HANNAH
Please what?

INGRID
Please calm down.

HANNAH
I am calm.

INGRID
You're overreacting.

HANNAH
Am I?

INGRID
You're blowing this out of proportion.

HANNAH
Ingrid.

INGRID
Yes.

HANNAH

He has a problem with me being a Jew.

INGRID

Hannah, please calm down.

HANNAH

I don't know, he might even be a Nazi.

INGRID

I don't want you to be angry with me.

HANNAH

How can you be with a Nazi, and still pretend to be friends with me?

INGRID

If he just got the chance to know you and see how nice you are, how would he still be able to hate you?

HANNAH

Don't you see that you support his beliefs by just ignoring them?

INGRID

We don't talk about it.

HANNAH

You don't talk about it?

INGRID

He's allowed to believe in what he believes, as long as he lets me believe in what I believe.

HANNAH

And what is that?

INGRID

Hannah, please don't be angry with me.

HANNAH

Angry?

INGRID

Just don't provoke him, and you will see everything will be fine.

HANNAH

So you think that I'm the one who shouldn't provoke him?

INGRID

I'm just saying I know the way he works.

HANNAH

And if he starts to...

INGRID

Then I'll stop him. He loves me, Hannah, trust me.

HANNAH
I've already trusted you.

INGRID
I'm so glad you came here.

HANNAH
I thought you were my friend.

INGRID
All this way, just for my birthday.

HANNAH
Happy birthday.

SCENE 5

Late night. ERIK is sitting at the table. HANNAH enters.

ERIK
Here she is.

HANNAH
I'm sorry. I didn't know you'd come back.

ERIK
I have.

HANNAH
Obviously.

ERIK
Please take a seat.

HANNAH
I just came down to get my bag.

ERIK
Don't worry. Sit down for a few minutes. Chat with me.

HANNAH
It's really late, isn't it?

ERIK
So you don't want to talk to me?

HANNAH
Yes I do. It's just...

ERIK
Don't be shy. Please take a seat.

HANNAH
Okay.

ERIK
Are you having a good time?

HANNAH
Yes.

ERIK
It's nice out here, don't you think? Away from all stress and noise of the city.

HANNAH
It is very quiet.

ERIK
Quiet and peaceful, isn't it?

HANNAH
It is.

ERIK
But I guess you prefer the pulse of the city?

HANNAH
In some ways, I do.

ERIK
I don't blame you. I've been playing with the thought myself.

HANNAH
Moving to the city?

ERIK
I think it would have its advantages.

HANNAH
You do?

ERIK
There are more jobs, right? More opportunities.

HANNAH
I guess there are.

ERIK
But Ingrid would never agree to move.

HANNAH
I think she belongs here.

ERIK
I guess she does.

ERIK starts staring at HANNAH. HANNAH doesn't know what to do. A few moments of silence.

HANNAH
Why are you staring at me?

ERIK
I wanted to see how long I could stare at you before you reacted.

HANNAH
That's a fun game.

ERIK
It is.

HANNAH
But I've already reacted, so would you please stop staring at me?

ERIK
You're deep, aren't you?

HANNAH
Deep?

ERIK
You look deep.

HANNAH
I do?

ERIK
Your eyes do.

HANNAH
I don't think I am.

ERIK
And the way you dress. Are you a communist?

HANNAH
No, why?

ERIK
You look like one, the way you dress.

HANNAH
I lean to the left, if that's what you mean, but I'm not a communist.

ERIK
I thought you were.

HANNAH
I actually came down just to get my toothbrush.

ERIK
Don't you appreciate talking to me?

HANNAH

It's getting kind of late and I think Ingrid is waiting.

ERIK

But we were having such a nice conversation.

HANNAH

Sure.

ERIK

Then would you please sit down and relax. You're making me stressed by standing while we're talking. Would you like a glass of wine?

HANNAH

I don't know.

ERIK

Don't be shy. We're hospitable in this house. We share what we have.

ERIK pours HANNAH a glass of wine.

HANNAH

Thank you.

ERIK

But you aren't used to that, are you?

HANNAH

Used to what?

ERIK

Hospitality.

HANNAH

Yes I am.

ERIK

I thought Jews only thought about themselves.

HANNAH

I'm leaving.

ERIK

Are you?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

Don't you like talking to me?

HANNAH

I'm too tired.

ERIK

So you don't like talking to me?

HANNAH

It's really late, isn't it?

ERIK

I think we have a lot to talk about.

HANNAH

We probably do, but not in the middle of the night. Besides I think Ingrid is waiting.

ERIK

She doesn't mind.

HANNAH

I think she does.

ERIK

Well, she doesn't.

HANNAH

I told her I was just going to get my toothbrush.

ERIK

Perhaps you think I'm too stupid to talk with.

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

You don't like me, do you?

HANNAH

Why do you ask?

ERIK

'Cause you don't like my race, do you?

HANNAH

What do you mean?

ERIK

That you don't like my race.

HANNAH

We are of the same race.

ERIK

Oh yes. We're all human beings, aren't we?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

Yet we are so different.

HANNAH

Is that a problem?

ERIK

No. I've never understood people who think they're superior.

HANNAH

Me neither.

ERIK

One race who think they can control the world.

HANNAH

What's that supposed to mean?

ERIK

I could strangle those people with my bare hands.

HANNAH

Really.

ERIK

Don't you believe me?

HANNAH

I do.

ERIK

You do?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

So you do believe that I could strangle them with my bare hands?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

Do I look that evil?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

No?

HANNAH

No, you don't look that evil.

ERIK

Don't I?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

Do you think I look weak?

No. HANNAH

So I do look evil? ERIK

Yes. HANNAH

Do I? ERIK

Yes. HANNAH

Don't you think you're the evil one, saying that I look evil? ERIK

No, I mean yes. I do. I'm sorry. I never meant to say that you look evil. Can't I go upstairs now? HANNAH

Didn't you? ERIK

Didn't I what? HANNAH

Mean to say that I look evil? ERIK

No. HANNAH

I can be evil. ERIK

Can you? HANNAH

Don't you believe me? ERIK

I don't know. HANNAH

I can show you. ERIK

No thanks. HANNAH

You don't even realize the true meaning of the word, do you? ERIK

Don't I? HANNAH

I can teach you. ERIK

Yes. HANNAH

Yes? ERIK

Eh. HANNAH

So you want me to show you something evil? ERIK

No. HANNAH

To teach you the true meaning of the word? ERIK

Maybe another day. HANNAH

Another day? ERIK

It's getting really late, isn't it? HANNAH

The night is young. ERIK

I think Ingrid is waiting. HANNAH

She doesn't mind. ERIK

I should really be going to sleep. HANNAH

Should you? ERIK

Yes. HANNAH

Been a long day? ERIK

It has. HANNAH

And a nice party? ERIK

Yes. HANNAH

I'm glad you enjoyed it. ERIK

Thank you. HANNAH

Strange. ERIK

What's strange? HANNAH

You seem too nice. ERIK

Too nice? HANNAH

You just seem too nice to be a Jew. ERIK

What kind of a comment is that? HANNAH

A compliment. ERIK

No it wasn't. HANNAH

I said you seem nice. ERIK

To be a Jew. HANNAH

Yes. ERIK

What kind of a statement is that? HANNAH

It's a compliment. ERIK

I can't talk to you. HANNAH

Why not? ERIK

You're just... HANNAH

I am? ERIK

Yes you are. HANNAH

What am I? ERIK

Narrow-minded. HANNAH

Narrow-minded? ERIK

Yes. HANNAH

I said you were nice. ERIK

To be a Jew. HANNAH

You are a Jew. ERIK

Yes? HANNAH

It's nothing to be ashamed of. ERIK

Why would it be? HANNAH

I didn't say it was. Where are you going? ERIK

Upstairs. HANNAH

What are you gonna do upstairs? ERIK

Go to bed. HANNAH

Don't you like me? ERIK

I hate you. HANNAH

ERIK

You hate me?

HANNAH

And you hate me, so why don't we just leave each other alone?

ERIK

I don't hate you, I'm just disgusted by who you are.

(HANNAH makes another try to
leave the room.)

Don't you appreciate talking to me?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

But we had such an interesting discussion.

HANNAH

No, we didn't.

ERIK

Boring to talk politics at a party, right?

HANNAH

The party is over Erik.

ERIK

Let's talk about something else.

HANNAH

I was just going to bed.

ERIK

And I was just going to tell you a funny story.

HANNAH

I don't want to hear it.

ERIK

I'm sure you're gonna like it.

HANNAH

So far I've not liked anything you've said.

ERIK

But you haven't heard this story yet.

HANNAH

I'm glad I haven't.

ERIK

God, it's so funny. I'm sure you're gonna like it.

HANNAH

I am not.

ERIK
But I am.

HANNAH
I'm sure I'm not.

ERIK
You haven't even heard it yet.

HANNAH
Well, let's hear it then.

ERIK
Then would you please sit down and try to relax? You are making me stressed when you stand up while we're talking. You look so tense. Would you like a glass of wine?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Are you sure?

HANNAH
I'm just going to listen to the story, and then go to bed, so would you please tell me this really funny story now?

ERIK
Okay, you know when I was going to see Peter and Linda tonight?

HANNAH
Yes.

ERIK
We were going to this pub, McEvans, have you ever been there?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Really nice place. Cheap beer and nice atmosphere.

HANNAH
Would you please get to the point?

ERIK
Well, we're standing in the line to get inside, right behind this nigger.

HANNAH
Excuse me?

ERIK
Oh, you don't like the word nigger, do you?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

Well, we were standing right behind this black guy.

HANNAH

I don't want to hear any more.

ERIK

So I start to play this game. You know the one I played with you earlier tonight. You know when I stared at you?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

But this nigger, sorry black guy, doesn't react. He just stands there, looking in another direction, pretending that he doesn't see me. It's a long queue so we continue standing like that for about five minutes. I'm looking at him and he's looking in another direction and the whole time I see how he's feeling more and more uncomfortable.

HANNAH

I don't blame him.

ERIK

Anyway, at last he turns around and asks me what I'm looking at. So I say, 'I'm looking at you, nigger'. 'I'm looking at you, nigger.' That's all I say and this little nigger goes crazy. I mean crazy. Telling me I shouldn't call him nigger and threatening to get his friends to beat me up. Can you imagine? All I said was, 'I'm looking at you, nigger'.

HANNAH

Was that the story?

ERIK

No, I'm not finished yet.

HANNAH

I don't want to hear the end.

ERIK

But you must, God it's so funny.

HANNAH

No, I don't. You're sick, everything you say is sick and I don't want more of your sickness.

ERIK

So I'm sick, am I?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

Wait until you hear the end of the story.

HANNAH

I don't want to hear the end of the story.

ERIK

Why not?

HANNAH

Because I don't like it.

ERIK

How can you know, before you've heard it.

HANNAH

Because you're the one telling it.

ERIK

So you don't like me?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK throws his glass to the floor so it breaks.

ERIK

Well I don't like when you stand up while I'm talking to you. It's making me stressed. You don't want me to get stressed, do you?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

Well sit down then, and listen to the end of the story.

(HANNAH sits down.)

I'm sorry, it wasn't my intention to explode at you like that, but that's what happens when I get stressed and you're making me stressed by standing when I'm talking to you. We don't want that, do we?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

Okay. Where were we? Oh yes, we let the nigger go. I usually don't let people get off that easy, but his friends came to back him up and they were too many to fight. Anyway, later I go to the urinal, and while I'm standing there, feeling the pain from my bladder easing, who do you think turns up beside me? The nigger of course. The little fucking nigger, and he isn't as cocky now without his friends backing him up. Anyway, we had an interesting little conversation and then I started to beat him up. And here comes the funny part. He doesn't fall.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I'm beating him until the point that his head is just hanging, yet he doesn't fall. So I stop. I mean what's the point of punching him if he's not gonna fall? That's when I realize he's leaning over the sink. That's why he didn't fall. The guy must've been pretty wasted, 'cause he didn't even put his arms out to break the fall when I pushed him off of the sink. God, that fucking nigger must've been totally fucked, but he didn't fall 'cause he was stuck over the sink. Isn't that funny? I just punched and punched, waiting for him to fall, without knowing he was already unconscious. That's fucking hilarious, isn't it?

(HANNAH rises.)

Hey, where are you going?

HANNAH

I don't know.

ERIK

Didn't you think it was funny?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

Where are you going?

HANNAH

I don't know.

ERIK

That's because you aren't going anywhere.

HANNAH

Aren't I?

ERIK

No you aren't. Please sit down, relax, have some wine. The night's still young.

INGRID enters the room.

INGRID

Oh, here you are.

HANNAH

I was just leaving.

ERIK

But we were in the middle of such an interesting conversation.

INGRID

Don't let me disturb you.

HANNAH takes INGRID aside.

HANNAH

Ingrid please. Is there no way to get out of here?

Get out of here?
INGRID

Yes.
HANNAH

Why would you want to get out of here?
INGRID

You know why.
HANNAH

Weren't you gonna sleep here?
INGRID

The car is back now, can't you give me a ride?
HANNAH

But where are you gonna sleep?
INGRID

I don't know.
HANNAH

There are no places open at this hour.
INGRID

It doesn't matter.
HANNAH

Well, I've had too much wine, maybe Erik could give you a ride.
INGRID

What?
ERIK

Nothing. It doesn't matter.
HANNAH

Couldn't you give Hannah a ride?
INGRID

Of course I could. Where would you like to go?
ERIK

Nowhere. Let's just wait until tomorrow when everyone is sober.
HANNAH

You're a wise girl, aren't you? More wine?
ERIK

That would be nice.
INGRID

Hannah?
ERIK

HANNAH

I'm fine, thank you.

ERIK

But we should have a toast.

HANNAH

Should we?

ERIK

We haven't sung for Ingrid yet.

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

Then I guess this is the time.

ERIK starts singing and HANNAH fills in.

ERIK AND HANNAH

Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday dear Ingrid,
Happy birthday to you!

INGRID

Thank you! This has been such a nice birthday.

HANNAH

Hasn't it?

ERIK

Yes, hasn't it? Hannah hook-nose.

INGRID laughs. HANNAH looks at her.

INGRID

I'm sorry.

ERIK

Don't be. It was funny, wasn't it? Don't you think so Hannah? Hannah hook-nose? Wasn't it funny?

INGRID

It was a little bit insensitive.

HANNAH

Insensitive?

INGRID

But it was only a joke, you know Erik.

HANNAH

I don't think I do. Do you?

INGRID

He doesn't always mean what he says.

ERIK

He doesn't always say what he means.

HANNAH

Right.

ERIK

But you do have a hook-nose. You can't blame me for that.

INGRID

You actually do. It's kind of cute.

ERIK

But perhaps I'm not allowed to say the truth. Perhaps I'm not allowed to say what I think, am I Hannah?

HANNAH

I didn't say anything.

ERIK

Maybe I'm not allowed to say what I'm thinking, in my own house, in my own country.

INGRID

Of course you are, don't be silly.

ERIK

I'm not silly. I'm just questioning who should be able to decide what I'm allowed to say. What do you think Hannah?

HANNAH

I guess no one is going to stop you from saying whatever you want.

ERIK

Is that right?

INGRID

I'm sure it is.

ERIK

Is that right?

HANNAH

Yes.

ERIK

Then why do you keep giving me that look every time I say something you don't like?

HANNAH

What look?

ERIK

Don't you think I can tell what you're thinking?

HANNAH
So what am I thinking?

ERIK
You think I'm filthy.

HANNAH
Do I?

ERIK
A filthy creature, that is what you think I am. Less noble and less worthy a life on this earth than you are. Isn't that right, Hannah? Isn't that what you think of all of us?

INGRID
I'm sure Hannah doesn't think that. Do you Hannah?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Don't look frightened. I would never harm you.

INGRID
Of course you wouldn't, Erik.

ERIK
You're my friend Hannah, don't you know that? I would never harm a friend, would I?

INGRID
Does anyone want more wine?

ERIK
Yes please!

INGRID
Hannah?

HANNAH
Why not?

ERIK
Hook-nose.

HANNAH
Or perhaps I should just go to bed.

ERIK
So I'm not allowed to say what I want?

HANNAH
Yes, you are.

ERIK
I don't need your permission for it.

I guess you don't. HANNAH

Hannah hook-nose. ERIK

Erik. INGRID

Yes Ingrid. ERIK

Please. INGRID

Please what? ERIK

Just please. INGRID

Please, don't please me. ERIK

I'm sorry. INGRID

You always are. ERIK

Am I? INGRID

Yes you are. ERIK

I'm sorry. INGRID

Don't be. ERIK

Oh, I'm sorry. INGRID

Stop being sorry. ERIK

Sorry. INGRID

Don't. ERIK

I did it again. INGRID

Yes you did. ERIK

I'm s... INGRID

You're what? ERIK

I'm not. INGRID

What aren't you? ERIK

Sorry. INGRID

Then stop saying it all the time. You're making me feel unpleasant. ERIK

I'm just stupid. INGRID

You are not. ERIK

I am. INGRID

You aren't. ERIK

I love you Erik. INGRID

I love you too, darling. ERIK

I don't want to make you feel unpleasant. INGRID

It's okay, love. ERIK

Erik? INGRID

Yes, love. ERIK

I love you. INGRID

ERIK hugs her.

ERIK
I love you too, honey.

INGRID
Thanks.

ERIK
(To HANNAH:)
What are you looking at?

HANNAH
Nothing.

ERIK
Maybe you want a hug as well?

HANNAH
No thanks.

ERIK
Do you think I'm disgusting?

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
Don't you want a hug then?

HANNAH
No thanks.

ERIK
But I want a hug.

INGRID
I can hug you Erik.

ERIK
I want a hug from Hannah.

INGRID
But Hannah doesn't want a hug from you.

ERIK
She looks like she needs one. She looks so miserable.

INGRID
Do you need a hug Hannah?

HANNAH
I need to sleep.

INGRID
I'm so glad you came here.

HANNAH
Are you?

INGRID

We hadn't seen each other for such a long time, but now we're finally together again.

HANNAH

Yes, we are.

ERIK

Don't look so miserable Hannah. What can I do to cheer you up?

HANNAH

I'm just tired, need to get some sleep.

ERIK

Do you?

HANNAH

It's really late.

ERIK

The night is young.

HANNAH

It's been a long day.

ERIK

Don't you want a hug first?

HANNAH

No.

ERIK

So you're going to bed, are you?

HANNAH

I am.

ERIK

You're like an animal in bed, aren't you?

HANNAH

What?

ERIK

All Jews are, aren't they?

HANNAH

What are they?

ERIK

Like animals when they're having sex. How are you in bed Hannah?

HANNAH

I'm not discussing that with you.

ERIK
Like an animal, aren't you?

HANNAH
Stop it.

ERIK
I thought since you're less human you must be more like an animal.

HANNAH
I'm leaving now.

ERIK
But you're like an animal, aren't you? Like a dog or a rabbit? Fucking everything that moves. Wild, aren't you? You would even fuck me if I wanted to. Like an animal.

HANNAH
Ingrid!

INGRID
Yes.

HANNAH
Please!

INGRID
What?

ERIK
Or a chicken? Your neck looks so thin and so easy to break. Sit down.

HANNAH
No.

ERIK
One twist and that pretty little neck would no longer bind the head to the body. But would it be worth it for someone like you? Someone of such a filthy race?

HANNAH
Say that again.

ERIK
I said you think I'm from a filthy race, don't you?

HANNAH
Ingrid please?

INGRID
It's really not my birthday anymore.

HANNAH
What?

INGRID

I just realized. Since it was past midnight when you sung for me, it wasn't actually my birthday anymore. Isn't that funny?

HANNAH

Good night.

HANNAH starts leaving, but ERIK catches her, grabs her around her neck and holds her still.

ERIK

Do you think I'm evil now? Do you? Don't you like me anymore? You never did anyway, did you? No you didn't. My race isn't good enough, is it? There's no need to be frightened, 'cause it isn't worth it. Who would clean up all the blood? Who would want to clean up the blood after someone like you? And the carpet, it's almost new. We don't want your filthy blood on our new carpet. We don't want your filthy blood anywhere, so there's nothing to worry about. It's not worth it. Not for someone like you. Not for such a filthy creature. Relax. Breathe out. Calm down. I would never harm you, don't you know that? You're not worth it.

ERIK lets go of HANNAH and leaves the room. INGRID watches HANNAH in silence. She starts leaving in the same direction as ERIK, but just before exiting she turns around.

SCENE 6

Continuation of scene 1.

INGRID

Hannah?

HANNAH

Yes.

INGRID

It's me... Ingrid.

HANNAH

Oh.

INGRID

I just called to say I'm sorry.

HANNAH

Did you read my e-mail?

INGRID

No.

Please do. HANNAH

What does it say? INGRID

Everything. HANNAH

I just wanted to say that I care about you. INGRID

I cared about you too. HANNAH

Hannah, I... INGRID

But you must realize. HANNAH

I'm sorry. INGRID

I don't want you to call again. HANNAH

I just wanted to. INGRID

I'll hang up now. HANNAH