

Characters

Sam (M/F) - A job seeker looking for adventure in another country. Wears a suit.

Vasilis (M/F) - A translator. Speaks with a heavy foreign sounding accent. Wears casual clothing.

(The origin of the accent can be from anywhere. The name of the character and the country should be changed to fit the origin.)

Scene 1

(An office setting with chairs and a table. The chairs should face each other so that the audience can see both faces. There is a door or the impression of a door at the side. At rise, Vasilis is seated at the table reading something or is on his phone. After a moment, Sam knocks on the door then enters.)

Vasilis: **(in a heavy accent)** Ah! Good morning, good morning. Come on in, please.

Sam: Thank you.

Vasilis: Have seat. **(gestures toward seat)** You are here for interview, yes?

Sam: Yes.

Vasilis: Oh good, good. Sit, please. **(sits)** Now, I tell you how this works. I call company, they ask me questions, then I ask you questions. You give me answers and then I translate back to company, yes?

Sam: OK.

Vasilis: OK. We off to a good start. You ready?

Sam: **(takes a breath)** Yes. I think so.

Vasilis: OK. We go now.

(Vasilis picks up a cell phone and dials a number while reading from a piece of paper. He begins talking into the phone. During the entire conversation both with Sam and on the phone, Vasilis speaks English but with a very heavy accent. Sam gets suspicious as the conversation progresses.)

Vasilis: **(on phone)** Yes... Hello... This is Ajax Company? Yes, yes. We are ready to begin interview... **(nods at Sam)** Yes, yes.... Understood... OK. I tell him. **(to Sam)** They are ready now. What is your full name?

Sam: Samuel Schlossheimer.

Vasilis: His name is...

(The actors are encouraged to improvise on getting Vasilis to correctly pronounce Sam's full name.)

Vasilis: Current address?

Sam: Yorba Linda, California.

(Vasilis gives Sam a look and then another round of improvisation begins on the name of the town until...)

Sam: L.A. Just say L.A.

Vasilis: Oh, that is better. **(on phone)** He lives in L.A. **(to Sam)** And you are ok to move to *[Greece]* to work for this company?

Sam: Yes.

Vasilis: **(on phone)** Yes he move. **(to Sam)** But you do not speak *[Greek]*, correct?

Sam: That is correct.

Vasilis: **(to phone)** Not *[Greek]*. We are ready for next question. **(pause)**

Sam: Um, excuse me.

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(Vasilis holds up one finger as if to say “wait”)

Sam: Excuse me. I need to ask you a question.

Vasilis: **(to phone)** Just a moment. **(mutes phone and turns to Sam)** What is it? I’m trying to get next question. Is very important we not leave them waiting.

Sam: Yes, I understand but there’s something I don’t understand.

Vasilis: Yes?

Sam: Well, it sounds like you are just saying everything in English, just in a heavy accent.

Vasilis: Oh yeah. Well it is just a very specific dialect that comes from a very tiny village in very small part of the country. Long history, something about pirates and skirmishes and temporary occupations, a lot of boring stuff. Would take too long to explain. It is very difficult to learn and translate. Not many people can do it. You are very lucky to have me.

Sam: Oh, I see.

Vasilis: Shall I continue?

Sam: Uh, yes.

Vasilis: **(unmutes phone)** He still alive. Next question. **(to Sam)** They want to know your work experience.

Sam: Well, I have worked at many high profile and significant firms all across the country.

Vasilis: (to phone) He says he can't keep a job. (to Sam) References?

Sam: Oh, I have excellent references and can get them to you within the next week.

Vasilis: (to phone) He say the check not come through yet for the people he hired to write references. (to Sam) How long you been doing this work?

Sam: Well, let's see. I started working out of college for maybe twenty, no twenty-five years. The years seem to fly by.

Vasilis: (to phone) He's old and a little bit senile. Next?

Sam: Wait a minute! That doesn't sound right.

Vasilis: (to phone) Please hold. Technical difficulty. (to Sam) You want to, how you say, sabotage this interview? You not want this job?

Sam: Of course I want this job. That is why I am here but it sounds like you are just twisting my words around in English.

Vasilis: I told you. Is difficult translation. You must just be patient and trust me. (unmutes phone) We are back. I am very sorry. (to Sam) They want to know about your sales records.

Sam: Sales records?

Vasilis: Yes. Very important.

Sam: Well, we naturally have undulating sales points with significant peaks and occasional troughs but overall our results are consistent.

Vasilis: (to phone) Mostly dreadful.

Sam: (stands) Now wait just a moment. I know what I heard. You are ruining my interview.

Vasilis: (to phone) Call back in five minutes. (to Sam) No, no. Is like I said. Very tricky. You must trust me. We get you the job of your dreams. Now, here.

(Vasilis guides Sam back to his chair)

Vasilis: You sit. Take it easy. (Sam sits) Good. Now you just relax. It is going very good. (Vasilis sits) I tell you what. You tell me a little about yourself and then I call them back and explain everything and things will be just fine, no?

Sam: Alright, alright. I guess I'm just a little nervous.

Vasilis: Of course. Here, let me get you a little water, eh? It is good to stay, how you say, hibernated? (gets a glass of water)

Sam: Hydrated.

Vasilis: high-rated?

Sam: Hydrated!

Vasilis: Oh, Drated like the singer?

Sam: No, that's Drake.

Vasilis: Hydraked? Sounds dirty.

Sam: No, it's... never mind. I'll take that glass of water.

(Vasilis gets a glass of water then walks toward Sam)

Vasilis: Yes, here you go. Nice cold water. Very refreshing. **(reaches Sam)** Oh my goodness! It has been five minutes.

(When Vasilis is just over Sam, he turns his wrist over to look at his watch which is also the same hand that is holding the water. The cold water goes into Sam's lap)

Sam: Woah!

Vasilis: Oh, Mr. Schlotzenskimmer I am very sorry. This is just terrible. I have towels to dry you up. **(phone rings)** Oh, no. They have called back. Here!

(Vasilis grabs paper towels, runs back to Sam and starts patting him with the towels)

Sam: Answer... the... phone...

(Sam tries to talk but his mouth gets blocked by a towel. Eventually he stands and pushes Vasilis away)

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Vasilis: **(finally realising what Sam is saying)** Oh, yes. **(drops wet paper towel on floor)** I answer the phone. **(to phone)** Yes, hello? No, everything OK. Just needed a short bathroom break. We are fine. **(to Sam)** You ready to continue?

(As Sam attempts to return to his chair he slips on the paper towel but tries to retain his composure. As Sam struggles...)

Sam: No!

Vasilis: (to phone) Yes, yes. Everything OK. What is next question? (pause) Oh, OK. (to Sam) Example of your best and worst work day.

Sam: Best and worst work day?

Vasilis: Yes. Your best day. What happened? Why was it so good? Your worst day. Why so bad? You know.

Sam: (gains composure) Well, let's see. My best day was when we had our employees bring their kids to work and they got to see how everything worked and my worst day would have to be... (thinks) oh! When the toilets backed up in the company bathrooms.

Vasilis: (to Sam) Oh, yes. Very good. I see why you are good at this. (to phone) He say he in favor of child labor and he not able to keep his building properly maintained.

Sam: Now, wait a minute. You're not speaking in any kind of dialect and you are ruining this interview for me. You tell me what's going on right now or I'm going to have you arrested for fraud.

Vasilis: (to phone) Uh, I call you right back. He has to use the bathroom again. There may be a medical issue. (hangs up then to Sam) Please don't call the police. I am poor immigrant...

Sam: (thinks about doing something rash but then reconsiders) Now you're going to sit down right there and I'm going to sit down here and then you're going to tell me exactly what's going on.

Vasilis: OK, OK. I tell you... I was born in a small village in a remote town... We were very poor. My entire family: my mama and my papa and the twelve children and all our grandparents and all the children who no one knew where they came from and all the cousins and the nephews and the nieces and the neighbors and the peddlers on the streets had to work hard to keep food on the table...

(As Vasilis talks, melancholic music, preferably from the same origin as his accent, begins to play. Vasilis pretends not to hear it but Sam hears it and gets confused.)

Sam: What is that music?

Vasilis: (continues) We had to toil from sunup to sundown, through all kinds of weather. There was no time for play or fun. We couldn't throw the ball or chase the stick like other kids. There was no time for our parents to tell us bedtime stories or tales about our ancestors...

Sam: Could you turn that music down?

(As Vasilis continues to talk, there is the sound of a cat, then a dog barking, then lightning and rain and the lights flicker. Throughout these changes

Sam looks around confused but does not get angry. Eventually he just gives up and collapses in his seat.)

Vasilis: It was then that I knew I had to do something different, something drastic to change my life. So I left my little hometown even though my mother cried and my father cried and the twelve children and the grandparents and the cousins and the nephews and the nieces and all the neighbors and the peddlers cried. I left the little town I had known all my life and went to America so I could learn English and be a translator. I studied and I learned and I toiled and then I got my paper that says I am good English speaker. I brought my paper back to my country and showed my sisters and brothers and cousins and nephews and nieces and the neighbors and the street sellers and they all became really happy for me. So I came back to America to find work...

(Suddenly, the sounds stop and the lights return to normal. Vasilis stops talking. Sam looks around dazed)

Sam: What just happened? No music, No dog? No cat? No rain and thunder?

(Vasilis walks over to Sam and takes his hand. When he talks to Sam he no longer has a foreign accent)

Vasilis: Congratulations, Mr. Sclossheimer from Yorba Linda, California.

Sam: **(looks shocked)** What?

Vasilis: You have successfully completed your interview and we are happy to say that we would like to offer you the position.

Sam: I, uh, I don't understand.

Vasilis: You see, our executives are constantly under a great deal of pressure. As much as we are interested in your credentials we also need to know how you act under extreme conditions of stress. You did not incite violence and were able, for the most part, to maintain your self-control.

Sam: I did?

Vasilis: Ah you see? You are humble as well. **(shakes hand again)** Congratulations. We will see you Monday morning, yes?

Sam: Well, uh, yes. Monday morning.

Vasilis: Good, good. **(guides Sam to the door)** Someone will show you where to go to sign the paperwork and then you will be all set.

Sam: Uh, thank you.

Vasilis: Oh no, thank you. We always need good employees. Bye now.

(Vasilis leads Sam through the door. He then returns to the desk and straightens up. In a few moments there is a knock at the door. Vasilis goes to the door and opens it. He then speaks in a completely different accent.)

Vasilis:

Yah! Come in! I will be your translator.

Curtain