



# **Instructions – read these out loud to all participants**

## **About this piece**

This is an interactive piece that can be used without preparation. The instructions will be given as they are needed, and are simple and clear.

You will each portray several characters, one after the other. Together, the fates of these characters will tell a story. Your main task is to portray your characters. You don't dress up or move about, you just talk and describe. Get in character, describe the characters, be like them.

The piece is divided into episodes. In each episode one of you will be the guide, making sure things happen in the right order. The others will portray one character each, improvising dialogue and actions. Scenes go on until the participants decide it's a good place to end.

## **Reading out loud**

During this piece you will be reading out several short texts. Read them in a clear voice, not too fast. Some of them are things your characters are thinking or saying; read them as if they're spoken by your character. Take it easy, give each other plenty of time to picture the events that are being described.

## **Disagreement**

Although the characters may be in conflict, you, the participants, shouldn't be. If there is disagreement about what should happen in a given situation, what might be possible for the characters to do, who wins a conflict et cetera, it's important that you don't waste time and effort on a long discussion. Do a quick vote by show of hands, and move on.

## **Do this before you start**

- Hand out the Episode folders. The oldest among you is participant 1, and gets folder 1. The next oldest is participant 2, and gets folder 2. Give folder 3 and 4 to the remaining participants at random.
- Make sure participants 3 and 4 are sitting next to each other.
- In the first episode participants 3 and 4 will portray a Jewish married couple. Participant 2 portrays soldiers and officers they encounter along the way. Participant 1 is the guide, and makes sure everything happens in the right order.
- Give everyone the time to read their instructions for Episode A. The instructions are clear and detailed, to help you get started on the story.
- When everyone has read their instructions, the guide (participant 1) starts the episode.





**Episode folder**

**4**



# Episode A: The banishment

From Germany to Poland, October 1938

In this episode you will be portraying Rivka Grynspan.

Take a few minutes to read the text below.

## Rivka Grynspan

- You are a Jewish woman, approximately 50 years old. You're married to the tailor Sendel (portrayed by another participant). You have three children: Esther (21), Mordecai (19) and Herschel (17). Herschel is in Paris.
- You've lived in Germany for 27 years. Three years ago you were forced to sell your tailors' shop. Now you've been thrown out of your house. You just wanted to live a good life, but what will happen to you now?
- Your only hope is to start a new life in Poland. You hope you can get to the USA. You know several Jews who've moved there. Your only contact abroad is your son Herschel.
- You have these items with you:
  - A large suitcase, which you have trouble carrying
  - Your family jewelry, which you've sewn into the lining of your coat. If they're taken from you, you will be very sad – they belonged to your great grandmother. If someone in this episode investigates your coat, you have to tell them what they find there.
- You stand up for your family. Be strong. Your family needs you, and Sendel is on the verge of a breakdown. You must keep the family together.



## Prologue: Read this aloud when the guide tells you to

My name is Rivka Grynspan. I am married to a kind and good man, a tailor named Sendel. We're Jews, and have been living in Germany for 27 years. We've got three children. Their names are Esther, Mordecai and Herschel. They're almost grown up now.

We've been living a peaceful and quiet life, and have always tried to be god-fearing and good towards other people. But that hasn't helped us these last years. There are new and strict laws for Jews, and with every passing year it's been more difficult to live in Germany. We always said: "It can't get any worse now", but every time, it did get worse.

## Blessing: Read this aloud when the guide tells you to

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the Hanukkah candles.



**Episode folder**

**3**



# Episode A: The banishment

From Germany to Poland, October 1938

In this episode you will be portraying Sendel Grynszpan.

Take a few minutes to read through the text below.

## Sendel Grynszpan

- You are a Jewish man, about 50 years of age. You're married to Rivka (portrayed by another participant). You have three children: Esther (21), Mordecai (19) and Herschel (17). Herschel is in Paris.
- You've lived in Germany for 27 years. Three years ago you were forced to sell your tailors' shop. Now you've been thrown out of your house. You only wanted to live a good life, but what will happen to you now? Your only hope is to start a new life in Poland.
- You aren't a young man anymore. If you have to walk far, you'll get tired and need to sit down to rest.
- You speak Russian, Polish and German.
- You have these items with you:
  - Documents showing you're a Polish citizen, including a Polish passport.
  - 200 German Marks that you might be able to use to bribe guards and soldiers. 50 are in your wallet, 150 in your shoes.
  - A pocket watch of gold. It's been in your family for generations. If it's taken from you, you will be very angry.
  - A prayer book. Your faith dictates that the written word is to be treated like a living creature; old prayer books must be buried by a Rabbi.
  - A large suitcase that you have trouble carrying.
- Your nerves are worn thin. You have very little strength left in you.



## Starting situation: Read this out loud when the guide tells you to

We were woken in the middle of the night by someone pounding on our door. It was the police. They ordered us out of the house. A police inspector waved a paper at us and shouted: "Sign it! You're being deported!" We were put in police cars and driven to the station. I looked out the window while we were driving. The streets were black with people. They cheered and shouted: "Out with the Jews! Go to Palestine!"

This morning, on the Sabbath, we were put on the train to Neubenschen, a small place near the Polish border. We haven't eaten for two days. We don't want to eat the German bread.

The police are saying we're being sent back to Poland. I don't understand why they're saying "Back". We've lived here for 27 years now! We're Germans, not Poles!

Rivka says we have to start a new life in Poland. But I'm tired. I don't know if I have the strength for it.



**Episodehefte**

**2**

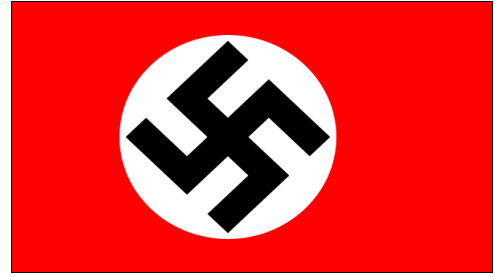


# Episode A: The banishment

From Germany to Poland, October 1938

Take a few minutes to read through the text below.

You will be portraying several secondary characters in this episode. You'll portray each one in turn. The guide will tell you when to portray which one.



All your characters are soldiers or officers. They all have a strong dislike for Jews. None of them want Jews in their country.

## The soldiers

By the German border you will portray a **German border guard**. Your job is to search all the Jews leaving the country – not just the men, but the women and children too. They're not allowed to bring out more than 10 German Marks each.

You've already searched a few hundred Jews, and you know they sometimes bring things like:

- Expensive watches and jewelry, hidden in pockets or sewn into clothes. Some even have things in their shoes.
- Too much money – they're allowed to bring 10 German Marks each.
- Too much luggage – this makes you laugh. You know it will be taken from them later.
- Books they consider extremely valuable. If you want to, you can destroy them.
- They need to bring their passports to get into Poland. Don't take that from them – you want them out of Germany.

*How to act:* Sit up straight. Talk down to the Jews. Remember to search every one of them.

On the way to the Polish border you will portray an **officer of the SS**. Your job is to get the Jews to Poland as fast as possible – you only have two days before the Polish border closes. Use all means available to get the Jews out. Don't let them speak to each other. The old couple (Rivka and Sendel, portrayed by the others) have too much to carry; take it from them and throw it in the ditch. If they walk too slowly, you might throw them to the ground.

*How to act:* Speak loudly, right into their faces. Pretend to wave a gun.

By the Polish border you're **Jaroslaw**, one of a small handful of Polish soldiers stationed in a small border town. You'll be seeing twelve thousand Jews marching towards the border. You have no clear orders. You can't let them all in; you can't shoot them all. There are no officers present. Perhaps you can frighten the Jews with a warning shot.

*How to act:* Be scared, with eyes wide open. Yell at the Jews to go back. Pretend to wave a rifle.



**Episode folder**

**1**





# Episode A: The banishment

From Germany to Poland, October 1938

Take a few minutes to read through the text below.

In this episode you'll be the *guide*. That means you have two tasks.

**Direct the piece.** You'll make sure that the story commences in the order described below. Tell the participants when it's their turn to do something, for example read a text out loud.

**Portray bit parts.** If necessary, you can portray secondary characters – for example family members, train personnel or people on the street. Do this if it's necessary. In this episode this especially includes the main characters' children, Mordecai (19) and Esther (21). Remember that they're secondary characters; they're not supposed to take the initiative or suggest things, but they will answer questions if asked.

You will now start the first episode. You'll direct it, bit by bit, in the following order. *Cross off every part you've been through!* That makes it much easier to remember where you are.

[ ] When everyone has had the time to read through their instructions for Episode A, start the episode by reading out who the different participants are:

1. The guide (that's you).
2. Soldiers they will meet: First a German border guard, then an officer of the SS, then a Polish soldier.
3. Sendel Grynzspan, a Jewish tailor, around 50 years old.
4. Rivka Grynzspan, his wife, around 50 years old.

[ ] Ask participant 4 to read the prologue.

[ ] Read this text, and wait until the participants have ended the scene before you continue.

## **The Sabbath**

*The small room is warm and cozy today. All week long you've been waiting for the Sabbath. The smell of the evening meal has spread through the house, and Sendel is filled with peace and contentment. Ester and Mordecai aren't at home tonight; they're out of town visiting friends.*

*The table is set with wine and bread, covered by a cloth. The candle flames waver slightly when Rivka puts the candles on the table. She covers her eyes and says the blessing.*

*Rivka and Sendel, you're present in this scene. Rivka speaks the first line when she reads the blessing out loud. You end the scene by being peaceful and content with the meal, after having a small argument.*


[ ] Read the introductory text below.

## **Introduction**

*May 1933 a fire was burning outside the Berlin Opera. Books written by Jews and Bolcheviks went up in flames. Hitler's National Socialists were getting rid of everything they considered un-German, such as the books of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Voltaire.*

*This was only a pale shadow of what was to come. In the years after, the rights of the Jews were removed, little by little. In 1935 they lost the right to vote, and were forced to sell all their shops and businesses at ridiculously low prices. In 1937 the National Socialists pronounced all Jews to be Bolcheviks – Communists. In 1938 the Jews were forced to adopt names that showed they weren't proper Germans: The women had to call themselves Sara, the men Israel.*

*Then the banishment of Jews from Germany began. 17 000 Polish Jews were*





*brutally taken from their homes and transported to the Polish Border. Two of them were Sendel and Rivka Grynszpan. They'd lived in Germany for 27 years.*

- [ ] Ask participant 3 to read the starting situation.
- [ ] Read the following text, and wait for the participants to end the scene before you continue.

**The German border**

*You get off the train in Benchen, close to the Polish border. The German soldiers tell you to get in line. Everyone in front of you gets searched, one by one. Now it's your turn. Sendel and Rivka, you're standing in front of a German border guard.*

*Sendel, Rivka and the Border Guard are present in this scene. The Border Guard has the first line. You end the scene with the Border Guard sending Sendel and Rivka on.*

- [ ] Read the following text, and wait for the participants to end the scene before you continue.

**The road to the border**

*After standing for hours in the cold the endless rows of people are forced to march. Soldiers with bayonets push you onwards. To your left and right are forests and fields. You understand that you're on your way to the Polish border.*

*Sendel, Rivka and the SS Officer are present in this scene. Rivka has the first line. You end the scene with the SS Officer being violent toward Sendel, Rivka or their children, and leaving them.*

- [ ] Read the following text, and wait for the participants to end the scene before you continue.

**The Polish border**

*You walk for hours, an enormous mass of people. The road in front of you and behind you is full of people as far as you can see. Some are wearing thick coats and carrying heavy suitcases, others haven't even been allowed to bring their jackets. Some fall down along the way, unconscious or possibly dead.*

*Movement slows down, and you see that the foremost people have stopped. Around you people are mumbling that you're in no man's land, the area between Germany and Poland. In front of you is a small house – possibly a border post of some kind. On the other side of the border is a small handful of Polish soldiers. They look nervously at the mass of people that you're a part of. Behind you are the German soldiers with their bayonets; in front of you are Polish guns. The Germans and Poles are too far apart to talk to each other. Behind you an officer starts shouting: "Don't stop! Keep walking! Quick, quick!"*


*Sendel, Rivka and Jaroslaw, you can start the scene. Jaroslaw has the first line. You end the scene with Jaroslaw firing a shot above the Jews' heads.*

- [ ] Read the following text, and wait for the participants to end the scene before you continue.

**The Nazis push**

*The soldiers behind you shout "Forward! Cross the border!" They lower their bayonets and start pushing from behind. You hear screams from the Jews and laughter from the officers. The people behind you start pushing forward to get away from the German soldiers. There's enormous pressure, and you almost fall over several times. Rivka and Sendel, you're not able to keep together in the ensuing chaos – and you don't know where your children are anymore.*

*Rivka, you can continue the scene. You can say what you do, say and think. You end the scene by telling how you find your daughter Ester, but not your son Mordecai.*

- [ ] Read the following text, and wait for the participants to end the scene before you continue.
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### ***The small town of Zbaszyn***

*Through the chaos you hear loud shouting from the Poles. "The General is here!" A Polish general has arrived. The soldiers calm down.*

*For a long time you just stand there, not knowing what to do. The shouting and shooting have stopped, but nobody knows what's going to happen next. Nobody tells you. Some of the German soldiers smoke cigarettes while waiting. An hour passes, maybe two, while you search for Mordecai. It's no use – nobody has seen him.*

*After a while the Poles set up an improvised border office where everyone with a Polish passport is allowed to enter. That means almost all the Jews. You don't know what happens to those who don't have the right papers. They're left behind.*

*The Poles don't know what to do with so many refugees. There's twice as many Jews as citizens in this small town. The two of you are put in a stable, surrounded by frightened people and cold horse manure. Then you hear a familiar voice, a man asking for Sendel, Rivka and Ester. It's Mordecai!*

*Sendel and Rivka, you can start the scene. Sendel has the first line. You end the scene with Rivka reading out loud a letter she writes to your youngest son, Herschel, who lives in Paris.*

[ ] When the participants have ended the scene, go on to Episode B: The Assassination. Ask everyone to read the instructions for Episode B in their Episode Folder. Another participant will be the guide for the next episode.

