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SCRIPT SAMPLE

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UNRELENTING RELAXATION

By Amanda DeMaio

CHARACTERS

DOROTHY ROTHSCHILD: From Krosno, Poland. Sarcastic, bitter and incomplete.

JANE HUDSON-BURKE: From Norwich, England. Refined, hopeful, quiet...

LOUISA-MAY BROCKMAN: From Odense, Denmark. Intelligent and guilt ridden.

HANYA WESTOLA: From Helsinki, Finland. Strong, connected, yet at times detached.

ARIELA SOLIS: From Paris, France. Resolved, and matter of fact, the organizer.

THE INTERVIEWER: For the purposes of contrast, a male voice is preferred.

Each of these women is strong and each has a clear sense of why they are telling their story. They are five very different women, five individuals. But at the same time they are one.

SCENE: Five separate levels, or seating areas each reminiscent of living quarters for each character

TIME: The present

SOUND: All sound should correspond to what is being said. It should be low enough so as to not distract from what is being said, but to enhance it. There are many more sound cues possible than those mentioned in the text.

Act One

INTERVIEWER: *(Voice over)* They are old now. What you see before you is not how they see themselves. They had hopes and dreams like every one else, but theirs was a time of change. Their stories should stand before us, as a reminder that no matter how hard one tries to live a certain way, there can always be something in an instant that can change a life forever. You see them now, one way, even though they see themselves as they were before, before they realized they could never be what they wanted, or what they planned to be.

(The following is a series of monologues, prompted by an interviewer. The stage is completely black. Each woman is set in her own spot light. A spot comes on, hitting Dorothy Rothschild. She is alone on stage for several seconds and then we hear the fumbblings of a microphone, over the speakers. She looks nervous, uncertain)

INTERVIEWER: Ok. Ah, thank you for meeting with us today. Um, *(we hear fumbling papers and noise in the background)* We, ah, yeh. We'll get started in a second, ok?

DOROTHY: Yes. Fine.

INTERVIEWER: Have you been properly miked Mrs. Rothschild?

DOROTHY: *(dryly)* It's Ms. Can you hear me?

INTERVIEWER: Ah, yes ma'am.

DOROTHY: Then I'm supposing that yes, I have been properly miked.

INTERVIEWER: *(There is a silence)* Thank you ...ma'am. *(More silence)* Ms. Rothschild, before we begin, I did want to thank you for agreeing to talk with us, *(silence. She doesn't move, even when spoken too, she remains unnervingly composed, and refined. The interviewer speaks to others in the booth)* Ok folks are we ready here? Let's not make this a career, Jesus...

ANOTHER VOICE IN BOOTH: Ok people; settle down, in 5,4,3,2 and recording.

INTERVIEWER: For the records can you please state your name?

DOROTHY: Dorothy Rothschild.

INTERVIEWER: And where were you born?

DOROTHY: In Krosno, Poland.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us, exactly where is Krosno?

DOROTHY: It is near the Soviet and Slovakian borders.

INTERVIEWER: What was it like living in Krosno?

DOROTHY: Small. Krosno was very small. And peaceful.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a good life in Krosno, Dorothy? May I call you Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Yes. And no.

(Lights out on Dorothy and up on Jane at the same time, who is sitting somewhere else on stage)

INTERVIEWER: Hello, Ms. Burke.

JANE: Jane, please call me Jane.

INTERVIEWER: Certainly Jane. Thank you for agreeing to speak with us this afternoon. Ah, shall we get some of the technicalities out of the way first? Ah, since you are not liked we need to make sure that you can speak easily into the microphone. Is it positioned well for you?

JANE: Oh, well, can you hear me? Yes? Well then I suppose its fine.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful. Alright, please speak clearly, and let's begin with your name and where you were born.

JANE: My name is Jane Hudson-Burke, and I was born in Norwich, England.

INTERVIEWER: Your last name is Hudsonburg?

JANE: No, Hudson-Burke. Hudson was my first husbands' last name.

INTERVIEWER: I see, excuse me. You were born in Norwich? What was it like?

JANE: My family had lived in Norwich for generations. It was lovely. We were a very upper class family and I was the eldest daughter.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you live in Norwich?

JANE: I lived there, well I going to live there my entire life...

INTERVIEWER: Why?

JANE: Because that's the way it was.

(Lights out on Jane and up on Louisa at the same time, who is sitting somewhere else on stage)

LOUISA: Louisa May Brockman, from Odense Denmark.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, well thank you. I was going to ask you that first.

LOUISA: I assumed so.

INTERVIEWER: I must ask, how did you get your name?

LOUISA: Mother loved America. Louisa May Alcott was her favorite writer.

INTERVIEWER: Had you ever been to America before?

LOUISA: No. No one in my family ever left Denmark, except for me.

INTERVIEWER: Your Mother loved America, but had never been?

LOUISA: She loved what America stood for. "Anyone can become anything in America" she used to say. Whether or not that is true, I do not know, but I assume it is closer to truth than not.

INTERVIEWER: In some cases perhaps.

LOUISA: It would have been true for me.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

LOUISA: I wanted to go. I wanted to go to an American university and study medicine.

INTERVIEWER: Did you want to be a doctor?

LOUISA: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of doctor did you want to be?

LOUISA: I wanted to work with children.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

LOUISA: Because to me, they are life.

(Lights out on Louisa and up on Dorothy at the same time)

INTERVIEWER: What did you do when you were little?

DOROTHY: I played the piano.

INTERVIEWER: *(Waiting for more of an answer)* what else?

DOROTHY: I played the piano.

INTERVIEWER: *(Pause)* Is that all you did?

DOROTHY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: *(Pause)* Were you any good?

DOROTHY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: *(Pause, to the booth)* Stop. Stop the tape for a second. Ms. Rothschild, can you be a little more involved with these answers, please? You did agree to this. No one forced you to be here today, I need you to work with me Ms. Rothschild, please...

DOROTHY: I'm sorry. It is difficult sometimes to talk of my childhood and my life. Sometimes it doesn't seem that it could have ever been me...that little girl who played the piano, and laughed and sang. It's...hard sometimes to remember...

INTERVIEWER: I know.

(Lights out on Dorothy and up on Hanya at the same time)

HANYA: No! You don't know. So don't ever say that you do. When I tell you something about myself don't you ever tell me that you "know". You could not ever possibly know, not ever. Not ever.

INTERVIEWER: Yes Ms. Westola. *(Long pause)* Are you all right to begin?

HANYA: *(Quietly)* Yes. May I have just a minute...?

INTERVIEWER: Certainly. Begin whenever you are ready.

(Lights out on Hanya and up on Louisa at the same time)

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about your life. Where in Denmark did you grow up?

LOUISA: I was born in Odense as I said, and was raised there with my two older brothers.

INTERVIEWER: What was your favorite thing to do when you were little?

LOUISA: When I was little? I really don't remember.

INTERVIEWER: What about school?

LOUISA: I adored school.

INTERVIEWER: Ok then. What were your favorite subjects?

LOUISA: Everything. I loved everything. I loved to study. I would memorize entire chapters, not because I had to, but because I wanted to. That is why Mother spoke of me becoming a doctor. She said I had the endurance and the intelligence to be a medical student. And if I studied medicine, I would go to study in America.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the real reason to study medicine? So you could come to America?

LOUISA: No. I truly wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to help people. I wanted to save lives.

INTERVIEWER: If you could be a doctor today, would you be?

LOUISA: No.

(Lights out on Louisa and up on Dorothy)

DOROTHY: I'm sorry, may I begin again?

INTERVIEWER: Certainly. Why don't we start with this question? *(To booth)* Start tape please? *(Pause)* You were born in Krosno, Poland-

DOROTHY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of town was Krosno?

DOROTHY: At that time Krosno was small, like I said. Everyone knew each other. Everyone always had their attentions in somebody else's business. It was a very typical small town. Industrial.

INTERVIEWER: Was your family always from Krosno?

DOROTHY: Yes. No one moves willingly to a place like Krosno. It was fine if you never wanted much from life. The town was filled with hard working, hard looking people. My parents both grew up there, as did their parents before them, and I was the only one who wanted something else.

INTERVIEWER: What else did you want?

DOROTHY: To play the piano.

INTERVIEWER: To simply play the piano?

DOROTHY: No. Such delusions of grandeur I had. I wanted to play with a major orchestra in Vienna.

(Lights out on Dorothy and up on Jane, at the same time)

JANE: I went to a private school in Norwich, and my first year in college, I met my husband. My first husband, Edward Hudson.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of things did you study in school?

JANE: As little as possible. I was very uninterested in school. I never wanted to become a professional in anything.

INTERVIEWER: Then why did you go?

JANE: Why does anyone go to school unwillingly? For my parents. They strongly believed in education.

INTERVIEWER: And what did you believe in?

JANE: Marriage and a family. All I ever went to school for was to meet my husband, and I did just that. I dropped out after six months and was married three months after that.

INTERVIEWER: A rather short engagement, was it not?

(Jane shrugs and smiles. Lights out on her and up on Ariela, sitting somewhere else on stage)

ARIELA: Hello. Thank you for agreeing to do this. We, um. We needed you. We could never have been able to do this without you, and I just wanted to say thank you, now, before I forget.

INTERVIEWER: You are very welcome Ariela. Now. Are you ready to begin?

ARIELA: Yes. Yes I think so.

INTERVIEWER: Whenever you're ready.

ARIELA: My name is Areila Solis. I was born in 1920 outside Paris, and by the age of six, I knew I wanted to be a ballerina. I trained for several years and finally, I managed to convince my parents that I was very serious about dancing. An opportunity then arose for me to join the best dance school in Paris. My father reluctantly agreed to remove me from my regular school and with my Mothers help; I began at the Conservatoire de L'Opera in Paris.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you want to dance?

ARIELA: It was something beautiful. In a city such as Paris, I never understood why anyone would want to be something ugly. The city was so beautiful, that I wanted to be like the city, I suppose.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

ARIELA: I had one sister, Veronique. We were very close and had always shared everything, so my acceptance into the Conservatoire was magnificent but at the same time it was difficult because it separated me from my family. But at the time they understood.

INTERVIEWER: Who were your influences?

ARIELA: Unquestionably, the Prima Ballerina, Yvette Chauvire. I wanted to dance like her. The way she moved amazed me. When I watched her dance, she made me forget everything else going on. She was beautiful, and so incredibly expressive. She always seemed at one with the music. It was she; she made me want to dance.

(Lights out on her and up on Hanya, at the same time)

INTERVIEWER: Are you all right to begin?

HANYA: Yes. Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: If at any time you want to take a moment Ms. Westola, all you have to do is let me know. Ok?

HANYA: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Alright. Ready? *(She nods. To the booth)* Can we start tape again please? We are rolling, you may start whenever you like.

HANYA: I am Hanya Westola. I was born in Helsinki, Finland, in 1915. My family owned a small, um, what do you call it, a market? That was the only job I ever had. Until I met my

husband, and my children.

INTERVIEWER: How did you meet your husband?

HANYA: He would come into the store every other day, for fresh bread for his family. We would talk and one thing led to another.

INTERVIEWER: Then when were you married?

HANYA: We were married in 1933. I was 18, and he was 20.

INTERVIEWER: These days being married at 18, seems a little young.

HANYA: It was not uncommon then. We loved each other. Our parents were very happy for us, and it was decided that we would marry.

INTERVIEWER: At 18, were you really ready for marriage?

HANYA: Yes. I loved my husband. I still do. Nothing will ever take the place of him. He was my life. He was everything.

(Lights out on Hanya and up on Louisa, at the same time)

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't there a very prominent university actually in Odence?

LOUISA: *(Smiles)* Yes.

INTERVIEWER: But you still wanted to go to America?

LOUISA: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you where you when you decided you wanted to be a doctor?

LOUISA: I was, I believe, about eight?

INTERVIEWER: What year was that?

LOUISA: That was, um. Well I was born in 1923, so I was eight in 1931. I graduated in the top of my class in 1939. I was 16.

INTERVIEWER: Graduating at 16? Was that common?

LOUISA: I was... an advanced student. For several classes I was simply given tests to pass, and I did. As a result I was exempt from taking a lot of things my other classmates were

sitting through.

INTERVIEWER: Did this create social problems for you?

LOUISA: No. Not at all. I see what you are getting at, but I never suffered from a lack of childhood, if that's what you'd like to call it. I was still able to go out and see friends and such. I just took different classes than they did.

(Lights out on her and up on Dorothy at the same time)

DOROTHY: I was an only child, and both my parents worked hard for me.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean for you?

DOROTHY: It was not difficult to survive in Krosno at the time. The work was hard, but abundant. And it was not particularly expensive to live there either. My parents wanted the best for me, and at an early age, they began to send me to weekly music lessons. I picked up the piano quickly and found it to be almost easy, compared to my regular schooling.

INTERVIEWER: While you were in the equivalent of normal public schooling, you were also taking piano lessons?

DOROTHY: Yes. Weekly at first, but as time went on, and I graduated from lower schools, my piano lessons increased to every day.

INTERVIEWER: Was this along the wishes of your parents?

DOROTHY: My father believed I was wasting my time and his money. My Mother? Well, she had to agree with Father. Secretly though, I knew she was happy for me. She would smile as I would play sometimes, and she always asked me to play while she cooked.

INTERVIEWER: Did they know how good you were?

DOROTHY: Yes. They both did. My father would always say though that, "Any one who practiced as much as I, um, damn well better be good"

INTERVIEWER: When did you tell your parents you wanted to play the piano professionally?

DOROTHY: It was 1939. I was 18 and in my last year of school. That was when I got my idea about Vienna.

INTERVIEWER: And your parents?

DOROTHY: They wanted me to work.

INTERVIEWER: Where?

DOROTHY: I always assumed at the millenary factory. To be honest with you, I was so disgusted with that thought, I never asked.

(Lights out on her, up on Jane, at the same time)

INTERVIEWER: When were you married?

JANE: Edward and I were married on June 18, 1941.

INTERVIEWER: And then what?

JANE: Edward had gone to school to be an English professor. And um, part of his initial training at the time consisted of teaching internships, as they're called now. So, in September of 1941 we were asked to move, and he was to teach English in a foreign school. We were transferred to Singapore. It was not what we wanted at all.

INTERVIEWER: Why not?

JANE: It was 1941. It was wartime. My parents begged Edward not to go. But he insisted it would be all right. I was to go with him, and we were to be stationed at a newly completed naval base near by. We arrived in time for the new school year, and settled in rather well, really. The only problem was that we were not staying at the naval base. We were about a fifteen-minute walk from there. Neither of us liked the arrangement, and as soon as we realized that was the case, Edward demanded there be a change of housing. They said there were to be no changes for the first six months. After that Edward and I were to be promptly moved into the base.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you at this point?

JANE: I was twenty-two.

(Lights out on Jane and up on Ariela, at the same time)

ARIELA: In 1931 I graduated from the Conservatoire and was accepted with the Paris Opera Ballet. There, I would spend eight or nine hours a day dancing! I couldn't believe it.

INTERVIEWER: Did your family continue to support you?

ARIELA: Oui. Yes of course. It was hard though, like I said. The demands placed on me at the Conservatoire were nothing compared to the L'Opera Ballet. My mother had been very ill, the first year I was there, and I almost left to be with her, but none of my family would hear of it. Especially Mother. It was always a hard decision, my family and dancing. I loved

them both so very much. But, one day Mother told me that she and Father and Veronique, they would always be there for me, and that some day dancing would not be. “For now” she said, “chase what will disappear first”.

(Lights out on her and up on Dorothy, at the same time)

INTERVIEWER: So, it was assumed that you would work in the factory after your schooling was completed?

DOROTHY: They even wanted me before I finished my classes! I told them there had to be time for my music studies. I begged them to allow me to finish everything first, and they agreed upon that, eventually.

INTERVIEWER: Then it was set. You were to finish school and the lessons would continue until then, correct?

DOROTHY: Yes

INTERVIEWER: What changed?

END SAMPLE.