

The Berlin Diaries

By Andrea Stolowitz

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TIME:

The past

The present

The future

CHARACTERS: ENSEMBLE - all played by two actors, 1M (50s-60s), 1F (20-30s). Each actor will play every character at some point in the play.

Max Cohnreich: The diarist.

Andrea Stolowitz: The playwright.

Various: Mom (Andrea's mom), Rebecca (USHMM archivist), David (uncle), Lillian (cousin), Moishe (old man at synagogue), Clerks 1 and 2, Berlin Archivist, Paul (S. African cousin), Norbert (German in archive), Claire (aunt), Rod (secret archivist/rock star), Fr. Krautz (German archivist for restitution files).

SETTINGS:

Berlin. New York. Portland. North Carolina. Skype, and other various locales that travel us through time and place.

ACTORS:

Two actors, (1M, 1F) share all 14 characters, including Max and Andrea.

SYNOPSIS:

Andrea Stolowitz's great-grandfather kept a journal for his descendants after escaping to New York City in 1939 as a German Jew. Following the complicated lure of genealogy, Stolowitz goes back to Berlin to bring the story of her unknown ancestors out of the archives into the light. The record keeps as many secrets as it shares. How do people become "verschollen", lost, like library books?

SCRIPT:

The two actors take turns speaking, rotating at each character heading. The script is marked throughout with **bold** for the lines played by the **female actor**. Each new scene is always begun by the female actor. Example as below.

ANDREA: **It's June 15th,**

ANDREA: 2010.

ANDREA: I'm Andrea

ANDREA: Stolowitz. I'm -

*In the above example we start with the female actor (bold), observe the actor rotation (F,M,F,M), and see the character of Andrea is shared.

There are two scenes (scene 8 and scene 18) which begin like this:

ANDREA: ...

In these two scenes the male voice is the first one we hear because the Andrea character has no spoken text.

SCENE 1:

ANDREA: **It's June 15th,**

ANDREA: 2010.

ANDREA: **I'm Andrea**

ANDREA: Stolowitz. I'm -

ANDREA: **teaching at Duke when I get the letter.**

REBECCA: Dear Ms. Stolowitz,
Recently a diary-

Slide: The diary

REBECCA: **Recently your mother Peggy Stolowitz
donated**

REBECCA: a wonderful diary, written in 1939 by her grandfather,
Dr. Max

REBECCA: **Cohnreich to the United States
Holocaust Museum. I hope you enjoy it**

REBECCA: and please let me
know if there is anything I can do
for you in the future.

ANDREA: **Sincerely,
Rebecca L. Erbelding, Archivist,**

Slide: Rebecca Erbelding.

REBECCA: United States Holocaust Museum Archives.
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW,
Washington, DC 20024
2126.

Slide: Google map

**ANDREA: We move to this house suddenly
because the last house we live at, 604
Gattis Street, Durham, NC
27705**

Slide: 604 Gattis on the Google map.

ANDREA: is the target of
a drive-by shooting.

**ANDREA: A transcription error on the side
of the gang is what the police said.**

ANDREA: They mean to hit the house next door but they write

ANDREA: the address down wrong.

ANDREA: They write

ANDREA: our address.

REBECCA: Please let me know if there is anything
I or the US Holocaust Museum
can do for you.

ANDREA: I'm putting my son to bed.

ANDREA: I'm bending over to kiss him good night.

ANDREA: **Pop. Pop.**

ANDREA: Something comes through the window. I
 throw myself on top of him.
 Pop. Pop.

ANDREA: **We wait.**

REBECCA: Your mother, Peggy Stolowitz, thought you
 might want to have a copy of this diary.

ANDREA: **A car screeching away-**

ANDREA: A moment.

ANDREA: **A moment.**

ANDREA: My son wriggles underneath me

ANDREA: **I yell out to my husband.**

ANDREA: I wait.

ANDREA: **He answers.**

ANDREA: You run to check the baby swing.

ANDREA: **She's in there. She's
 sleeping.**

ANDREA: She didn't even wake up.

ANDREA: **You could have found her in there swinging away not
 sleeping but -**

ANDREA: Don't say it.

ANDREA: You're dizzy. Nauseous.

ANDREA: The room pulsates.

ANDREA: Spins.

ANDREA: You can't breathe.

ANDREA: The police come.

ANDREA: They sit you down.

ANDREA: Head between your knees, they say.

ANDREA: Breathe. Breathe. Breathe.

ANDREA: Everyone's fine.

ANDREA: Everyone's fine.

ANDREA: Everyone's fine.

ANDREA: We all move to the back room.

ANDREA: Far from the windows at the front of the house.

ANDREA: My son can't sleep.

**ANDREA (sings): Hush-a-bye
don't you cry...**

ANDREA: Go to sleep my little baby.

ANDREA: **When you wake you shall have
All the pretty little horses.**

ANDREA: We decide to move.

ANDREA: **But you don't know if you'll have a
job next year. Remember?**

ANDREA: I'm worried about my job, and
my agent-

ANDREA: **who also represents Mamet
and Letts**

ANDREA: is dropping me.

REBECCA: **Dear Ms. Stolowitz,
Recently, your mother gave a wonderful diary**

MOM: Dear Andrea,

ANDREA: **The e-mail is written in all caps. From my mother.**

MOM: Read please this attached from the person
at the Holocaust Museum. *They* want the diary.

ANDREA: **I think a museum is a great place for it. The best place.**

MOM: I know. You don't want to have to deal with it
when I'm dead.

ANDREA: **Wait a second no one said anything about-**

MOM: And when I'm dead there

will be no one left to remember.

ANDREA: **There's Rebecca Erbelding. She'll remember.**

MOM: Who?

ANDREA: **Rebecca Erbelding.
The archivist at the Holocaust
Museum. She'll remember. At the
Holocaust Museum they “never forget.”**

MOM: That's not funny.

ANDREA: **Anyway. Who's dying? No one's dying.**

ANDREA: We move. And my job is
extended so we can pay the rent.

ANDREA: **No one's dying.**

REBECCA: Ms. Andrea Stolowitz, eight one four
Berkeley Street, Durham, North Carolina
27705

ANDREA: **I get this large envelope in the mail.
At first I think it's from my agent.**

REBECCA: As you know there are fewer and fewer living
victims and witnesses

REBECCA: **which makes the original documents of that era
all the more important.**

REBECCA: I hope you enjoy it.

Please let me know if there's anything I can do for you in the future.

ANDREA: **I look at the pages.**

ANDREA: High-gloss color copies of minuscule script.

ANDREA **It's impossible to read. It's so small.**

ANDREA: It hurts my eyes.

ANDREA: **And it's half in German.**

REBECCA: There are so few original documents from this era.

ANDREA: **I put it on the shelf above my desk.**

ANDREA: Very high up.

ANDREA: **Later we move away
To Oregon to 3971 South East
37th Ave., Portland OR
97202.**

Slide: google map

ANDREA: I'm unpacking.
I see the diary.

ANDREA: **I put it on the same shelf high above my desk.
I can't read it.**

ANDREA: And you don't even open it

ANDREA: **Until**

ANDREA: Until you have to.

ANDREA: **Until eight years later.**

MAX: (German accent)
 January 1st, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine
 To my dearly beloved grandchildren.
 I dedicate this film of my life.

MAX: **I dedicate this film of my life.**

ANDREA: I dedicate this film of my life.

Scene 2. NYC/Oregon

ANDREA: **So thanks for making the time.**

DAVID: Sure. Sure. No problem.

ANDREA: **That's my uncle I'm talking to. In New York**

DAVID: David.

ANDREA: **I wanted to ask before I left because, you know, of the
difference in time. And everything.**

DAVID: Right.

ANDREA: **It could be hard to call later. I mean I'll have SKYPE
and all that -**

DAVID: Can you hold on for a second, Andrea?

ANDREA: **Sure.**

She waits. Sounds of outdoors.

DAVID: Sorry. That was Nancy.

ANDREA: **Say hello. From me. Us. All of us.**

DAVID: Of course. So what can I do for you?

ANDREA: **I guess I called because I wanted to ask-
I'm not sure how to put this -**

DAVID: I know. Nancy told me. You know
this sort of thing, this type of thing is really
her field.

ANDREA: **Yeah.**

DAVID: You're breaking up. Can you speak louder and into the phone?

ANDREA: **Yes. I mean I said yeah.**
Is this better?

DAVID: Now there's an echo.

ANDREA: **Better?**
I guess I always wanted to ask...

DAVID: For trauma to be passed on there needs to be some kind of event.

ANDREA: **Right-**

DAVID: And just because something happened doesn't mean it was a traumatic event. Lots of things happen.

DAVID: **I'm sorry, Andrea, because I feel like that's not what you want me to say.**

DAVID: I feel like you want me to say there was some terrible trauma.

DAVID: **There just wasn't you know. Everyone made it hear alive.**

DAVID: Everyone escaped.
The diary is a nice tribute to that.

ANDREA: **Right - I -**

DAVID: I'll be clear here. I don't believe in what you're doing. I mean what you're trying to prove.

ANDREA: I'm not trying to prove anything -

DAVID: Any kind of problems you're experiencing well they're not related to the family history. You're looking for something in the past but there's nothing there.

ANDREA: Right, it's just that have you ever wondered-

DAVID: So I'm sorry this won't fit into your theory of...whatever your theory is.

**ANDREA: Right. I don't really have a theory.
I was just wondering why, I mean,
trying to understand why we have such a small family.
And of the ones we have, why no one really gets along.
Or talks to each other. And hasn't for a while.
Cuz it's a little weird you know.**

DAVID: I don't know about that, Andrea. Lots of families are “weird.” And small. And we're talking now.

ANDREA: Right.

DAVID: I mean don't get me wrong. I think the diary will be terrific source material. It's a truly fascinating resource. And an important family heirloom.

**DAVID: Your mother and Claire I am sure can tell you that.
They actually fought over it for a while. Over who
should get to keep it.**

DAVID: There was some bad feeling.

Now that your mother donated it to the Museum
they've probably worked it out.
I'm sure you'll be able to use those memories and ideas in it
to make something very artistic.
Maybe like *Driving Miss Daisy* or *Sundays
with Morrie* —

ANDREA: **Tuesdays.**

DAVID: or something.

Wailing sirens from the NYC side.

DAVID: **It's just my grandfather's diary is just not going to
explain anything, and this is really my view, because
there's nothing to explain. I'm sorry.**

DAVID: You know the Tolstoy quote right? All happy
families are alike. All unhappy families are unhappy in
their own way.

ANDREA: **Yeah.**

DAVID: Families are unhappy.
It doesn't mean there's any reason for it.
There's nothing to find out. OK?

ANDREA: **OK.**

DAVID: Now have a great time in Berlin. And go eat a cream puff at
Cafe Kranzler for me.

DAVID: **Shit, Andrea, the cappuccino maker is backing up.**

DAVID: Gotta go.
Talk soon.

SCENE 3. Driving the I-5.

ANDREA: **I'm on the entrance ramp of the I-5**

ANDREA: dialing the phone

ANDREA: **trying not to be sideswiped by an 18-wheeler.**

ringing

ANDREA: Sometimes I wonder what would happen if I just took this hairpin entrance curve a little too fast. Or at just slightly the wrong turning angle. 1 degree off.

ANDREA: **I imagine this as I'm holding the steering wheel, trying to be steady.**

ANDREA: It's exactly an hour from the parking lot of the college where I teach to my house. Most of it on the interstate.

ANDREA: **I often think of quitting.**

ringing

ANDREA: Some days I just can't stomach being excited about the American Theater. It feels somehow dishonest to encourage anyone to go into this line of work.

ANDREA: **I often believe it's some kind of pyramid scheme into which I'm obliged to recruit people otherwise the whole system will break apart.**

ANDREA: Kind of like the one that brought down Albania.

ringing

ANDREA: **But the truth is, I need the money.**

ringing

LILLIAN: Hello. You have reached the voice mail of Lillian Lathrop. Please leave your message after the beep.

ANDREA: And then all of the sudden I don't know what to say.

ANDREA: Hey, Cuzzie.

ANDREA: I'm screaming into the headset. The car vibrates as I accelerate.

ANDREA: Just leaving you another message.
I'm leaving on Tuesday. For Berlin.

ANDREA: I think you remember that I got this grant to do a project well write a play, based on our great-grandfather's diary. For the year. Lucas and the kids are coming too of course.
swerving,

screech

ANDREA: Fuck you, you ass wipe!

ANDREA: Sorry. I'm driving home from Salem. Anyway - sorry we missed each other on the weekend.

ANDREA: I mean we were there. At the big rock. On the coast. And Eric came with your kids and then his brother and wife and their kid.

Video image of moving car fades into Haystack Rock with the Pacific stretched behind it.

ANDREA: Fucking crowded today on the I-5.

ANDREA: Anyway yeah. I'm sorry you couldn't make it. It would have been nice to see you. Eric says you were at the pizza place in town. You just didn't...couldn't make it down to the beach.

I wanted to say goodbye. Before I left.

ANDREA: **And then I guess you guys got into a fight.
And then it seemed like the quarter mile from
the restaurant to the beach was an impossible distance.**

ANDREA: Like the ocean was between us and not across from us, you know?

ANDREA: **So I'm sorry we missed each other.**

Video of the I-5 flying by.

ANDREA: Anyway I guess I just wanted
to talk to you. See if your grandmother
might have said anything about the diary ever.
Or our great-grandfather.

ANDREA: **Anyway. I'm sure the diary will tell me everything I need.**

ANDREA: but if you have any thoughts you could,
well you could
call me.

ANDREA: **Just wanted to touch base before I land in Berlin. Yeah.**

ANDREA: Well hope to see you soon.

ANDREA: **Sorry we didn't find each other
on the beach.**

ANDREA: Hopefully next time.

ANDREA: **Hopefully next time.**

Sound of phone being hung up.

MAX: Meine Liebe Enkel,
So at least der Anfang ist really Englisch and it must actually be in Englisch because these memories eines Grossvaters are thought of and written down for you. Und because your Müttersprache, or better, your native language, will be English, I hope you will understand me because your parents were once Germans too and you will learn so much German that these language mistakes in this book becomes no puzzle to you.

ANDREA: That these language mistakes in this book becomes no puzzle to you.

MAX: That these language mistakes in this book becomes no puzzle to you.

SCENE 4. Central Synagogue Berlin

ANDREA: **It's August 15th, 2018 --**

ANDREA: We've been in Berlin for 17 days. I'm at a

ANDREA: **conference that has the longest acronym on the planet-**

ANDREA: WFJHCS&D.

ANDREA: **It's been mostly at the Hilton. But not today.**

ANDREA: World Federation for Jewish Holocaust Child Survivors

ANDREA: **I've been invited --**

ANDREA: and their Descendents.

ANDREA: **To give a seminar about the play.**

ANDREA: The one I came to Berlin to write.

MOISHE : **(too loud)**
My god, this is going on forever.

ANDREA: And now I'm at the top of the central synagogue in Berlin at
the fifth hour of a meeting that was supposed to be two and a
half hours -

MOISHE : **The Nazis didn't succeed in killing us**
so now the claims commission is trying to do it.

Beat

That was a joke.

A crazy laugh.

ANDREA: Uh-

MOISHE: **But what do I care if I get a heat stroke up here?
I'm old. What are you doing here?**

ANDREA: Here?

MOISHE: **At this thing.
You're the only one under fifty.**

ANDREA: I don't know.
They invited me.

MOISHE: **Because you're young.**

ANDREA: I guess so.

MOISHE: **They want the 3rd generation to be involved.
They are afraid that when we die everyone will forget.
So they invited you.**

ANDREA: Oh.

MOISHE: **Yes it is so.
What else are you doing here?**

ANDREA: I'm sorry?

MOISHE: **Berlin is far. You came all the way over here for this?**

ANDREA: No. I -

MOISHE: **Yes?**

ANDREA: I'm writing a play.

MOISHE: **A what?**

ANDREA: A play.

MOISHE: **For the stage?**

ANDREA: Yeah.

MOISHE: ...You any good?

ANDREA: Well—

MOISHE: **You had your work performed ever?**

ANDREA: Yes.

MOISHE: **Oh. Like in a real theater?**

ANDREA: Yes.

MOISHE: **And you make a living from this?**

ANDREA: Sometimes. Well mostly.
I teach too.

MOISHE: **Agh. I see.**

ANDREA: Now, as we speak, I'm having a reading in New York.

MOISHE: **You get paid for that?**

ANDREA: Not usually. For readings I mean.

MOISHE: **I see. And that's what you're doing here?**

ANDREA: What?

MOISHE: **Working on a play?**

ANDREA: Yes.

MOISHE: **About?**

ANDREA: A diary.

MOISHE: **Well does it have juicy secrets at least?**

ANDREA: Secrets?

MOISHE: **Yeah like in Anne Frank. We find out things. Secret things.**

ANDREA: And he smiles at me in a piercing way.

ANDREA: **I'm wondering if he can tell that up until now I have only skimmed the diary for major details.**

ANDREA: For grant writing. To fund the project.

ANDREA: **You only skimmed the first seven pages.**

ANDREA: A close reading is coming.

ANDREA: **(to MOISHE)**
Really. As a diarist my great-grandfather's forthcoming about everything. He seems more interested in revealing, than concealing.

MOISHE: Uh-huh.

ANDREA: **And he smiles again. And then he leans in and whispers**

MOISHE: There are always secrets.
I have to go give my testimony now. They always put me up after her because I'm funny. Well as funny as I can be. She tells the Mengele story and makes 'em cry; I make 'em laugh. I don't know how I do it. The story is not funny but I make some jokes on the beginning.
Well you know, you're a playwrighter.
You got to make 'em laugh first. Then they can cry.

ANDREA: **It's so hot up here.**

MOISHE: Always the same story about the fire. The barn. We're locked in there. I escape. Only I escape. So many years later and I still do not know why it is only I who escapes.

ANDREA: **I'm staring at him. He's walking away. He turns back
and smiles.**

MOISHE: Good luck with the play.

ANDREA: **Good luck with the play.**

SCENE 5: Andrea's Berlin Apartment

MAX: **January 8th, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine**
Today is the birthday of my only sister
Griseldis Anker née Cohnreich who is living now in
Tel-Aviv, Palestine. Gordon Street 14.

*Slide: Google map,
Gordon St. 14*

ANDREA: I am back in the apartment staring at the building across the
way. There's a man smoking a cigarette.

ANDREA: **He waves. Is he watching me or am I watching him?**

ANDREA: Is he in shorts or is he standing on his balcony in his
underwear?

ANDREA: **I've noticed that Germans sometimes treat underwear**
like outerwear. You wave back.

ANDREA: I'm thinking of Hitchcock's REAR WINDOW. You write
down

ANDREA: **Griseldis Anker née Cohnreich**

ANDREA: on the family map you're making.

ANDREA: **Here.**

MAX: She left Germany in 1934 with her husband Heinrich
with whom I had a very strong friendship.
We families visited always each other at least once a week
as we lived quite close to one another.

ANDREA: **They visited.**

ANDREA: They visited.

MAX: I established my medical practice in October in nineteen hundred and eight at Schlüterstraße 27.

MAX: Griseldis's son and his young wife are now living today in Haifa, Palestine.

Slide: Google map from Berlin to NYC to Gordonstr. 14 Tel-Aviv to Haifa.

MAX: Yesterday we got the first letter from your great-grandmother Helene Heitinger née Lychenheim from Rio de Janeiro where she arrived as an emigrant of nearly 72 years. She joins in Rio her only son Werner (your great-uncle) who is a painter, especially for horses.

ANDREA: Helene Heitinger. Werner Heitinger. Berlin to Brazil. 1939.

Slide: Brazil, Tel-Aviv, NYC, Berlin on the map.

ANDREA: Mom?

ANDREA: I'm on the phone.

ANDREA: Waiting.

MOM: Hello?

ANDREA: Did he ever see his sister again?

MOM: What?

ANDREA: **Did Max ever see his sister Griseldis again? The one who went to Israel? Or what about the ones who went to Brazil?**

MOM: Andrea?

ANDREA: **Yes.**

MOM: It's the middle of the night here.

ANDREA: **Oh...I...shit. I miscalculated the time difference.**

MOM: It's OK. What is it you wanted to ask?

ANDREA: **No it's OK. I'll call tomorrow.**

MOM: Well you already woke me up.

ANDREA: **Sorry.**

MOM: OK.

ANDREA: **Did your grandfather ever see his sister again? The one who went to Israel. Or his nephew Wolfgang. Or all the others?**

MOM: My grandfather died in 1949.

ANDREA: **I know that.**

MOM: I don't think he did. No. I'm sure he didn't.

ANDREA: **What about your mother, Eva? Did she ever visit her aunt or cousins?**

MOM: I remember her sending packages to them. With sugar. When I was small. Or maybe the packages of sugar were for a cousin somewhere else. Maybe Yugoslavia? Or Sweden?

ANDREA: **But you never met them?**

MOM: No.

ANDREA: **None of you? Not Claire, not you, not David?**

MOM: No. I think mother may have visited once in the 50s. But I can't be sure.

ANDREA: **Oh.**

ANDREA: I wait.

MOM: **Andrea?**

ANDREA: Yeah.

MOM: **Something else?**

ANDREA: Did you know he and his sister lived near each other in Berlin. And that Werner lived with Helene. And that they all saw each other. Hung out. Visited. That kind of thing?

MOM: **They did?**

ANDREA: Yeah.

MOM: **No. No, I didn't know that.**

ANDREA: They used to see each other once a week. At least.

MOM: How's the play going?

ANDREA: I don't know.

MOM: Oh. I'm not sure why you had to go to Berlin to write a play.

ANDREA: Mom.

MOM: Sorry. Sorry.

ANDREA: OK.

MOM: Alright. Bye.

ANDREA: And she's about to hang up

ANDREA: but there's always that lingering on the phone with my relatives.

ANDREA: That lingering when you're about to hang up but before anyone does.

ANDREA: It's like we're all scared, somehow genetically scared, that this could be the last time we ever talk to each other.

ANDREA: But we are there now, in that pause, before everyone has gone to Brazil or South Africa or Palestine, when there's still time to shout --

ANDREA: And I'm shouting across time -

ANDREA: wait --

ANDREA: And of course she's still there. Because she's been waiting too.

*Sound of phone disconnecting.
Or Skype.*

SCENE 6:

ANDREA: **Sitting in the apartment.**

ANDREA: Everyone else is at work. Or school.

ANDREA: **It's fall. The grape vines on the building
across the way are completely red now.**

ANDREA: They remind me of the ones in Oregon.

ANDREA: **On the interstate. The I-5. The one I drive on
to go to the job that feels like a pyramid scheme.**

ANDREA: Insomnia is present.

ANDREA: **I have talked to the Apothekerin.**

ANDREA: Female pharmacist.

ANDREA: **She's recommended trying to**

ANDREA: relax.

ANDREA: **I try to explain that I can hear everyone
else breathing.**

ANDREA: She recommends ear plugs.

ANDREA: **I might have to go to a doctor.**

ANDREA: I'll admit it. I don't like doctors.

ANDREA: **Which is odd for someone like you
who's a bit of a hypochondriac.**

ANDREA: I'm doing my close read of the diary.

ANDREA: Scouring for clues. Anything.

MAX: June 23rd, 1940
Zum Fünfzigsten Geburtstag von Hermann Weigert nach
einer Haemorrhoiden Operation, lange verworfen, die Dr.
Rosens ausführte

**ANDREA: A poem to Hermann Weigert for his 50th birthday
after his long-postponed hemorrhoid surgery conducted
by Dr. Rosen.**

MAX: Wenn sich der Mensch auch noch so "weigert"
Und denkt sich "Herr man" wird verrückt
Und wenn des Hintern Krampf sich steigert
So oft man sich zum Stühlgang bückt

**ANDREA: When a man can't decide
And thinks to himself "I'll go crazy"
And when his ass pain increases
So often that he must always run to the toilet**

MAX: Wenn die verfluchten Haemorrhoiden
Mit stacheldraht das Loch versperr'n
Dann wünscht man endlich: Gebt mir Frieden,
Bedienen Sie sich, meine Herr'n.

**ANDREA: When the damned hemorrhoids
seal your asshole with barbed wire
That you wish finally, "Give me peace"
Help yourself, my good man**

MAX: Das ist mein Wunsch zum heutigen Tage
Für Hermann Weigert, Piles befreit;
Der Fünfundzwanzig Jährige, frei vom Plage,
Genieß bis Hundert Friedens zeit!

**ANDREA: That is my wish for today
That Hermann Weigert, free of hemorrhoids
Will be fifty years free of plagues and enjoy for
the birthday of 100 years, peaceful times.**

ANDREA: OK.

ANDREA: It's maybe not quite what I expected.

ANDREA: Maybe next time you'll actually read the primary source material

ANDREA: Before you write grant applications claiming it is the basis for your work.

ANDREA: Yeah.

ANDREA: I feel like my gums are receding.

ANDREA: I talk with my mother on the phone.

ANDREA: I tell her it's all going great.

ANDREA: I talk with my new agent.

ANDREA: I tell her it's all going great.

MAX: My dear little cryers and other readers of this book, be patient with me.

MAX: **I couldn't foresee that I myself would one day sail over the Atlantic Ocean, not as a tourist who is traveling for pleasure, but as an emigrant in order to leave behind me for good all the disappointments of Europe**

MAX: and to begin a new American life, while my parents are still lying below the headstone in the Weissensee cemetery of Berlin, Germany.

*Slide: Weissensee Cemetery,
Berlin.*

MAX: **Jacoby Cohnreich.**

ANDREA: Martha Cohnreich.

CLERK: *(Russian accent)*
Spell please "Cohnreich."

ANDREA: I'm in a tiny office at the Weissensee cemetery.

CLERK: **Spell please "Jacoby."**

ANDREA: The leaves swirl and the birds caw.

ANDREA: **J-A-C-O-B-Y**

ANDREA: I'm trying to locate the headstone mentioned in the diary.

ANDREA: **The air is crisp. Cold almost. Fall.**

ANDREA: The fatigue creeps and pulsates

ANDREA: **behind my eyes**

ANDREA: Every time I blink I imagine that perhaps I'm sleeping just for a few seconds.

ANDREA: **The clerk is scrolling down with the mouse.**

CLERK: You're sure with a "y"?

ANDREA: **Yes.**

CLERK: Not an "i".

ANDREA: **No.**

CLERK: Also not Isidor. And not Marcus, Nathan, Leopold? Not Minna? You are sure?

ANDREA: **What?**

CLERK: You are not accidentally mistaking the name?

ANDREA: **No. Jacoby. With a "y". And his wife Martha.**

ANDREA: And he's typing on the computer and nodding and making notes. And then he sighs. He picks up the phone. He talks quietly to someone.

ANDREA: **I look around the office.**

ANDREA: And then a second clerk comes into the office.

ANDREA: **And goes over to the computer.**

CLERK2: Jacoby with a "y"?

ANDREA: **Yes.**

CLERK2: And why do you wish to contact him?

ANDREA: **I pause. Because I think I must have heard him wrong.
Maybe this is a dream. But if it's a dream, what
language are we speaking?**

CLERK2: Please...Missus...Of what relevance is he to you?

ANDREA: **Uh -
I ask if we can speak German.**

CLERK2: We are speaking German.

ANDREA: **It's true we are speaking German.
But they are not Germans.
We are three non-Germans speaking German.
Words are coming out of my mouth.**

CLERK2: Please, slower. Of what relevance are these people to you?

ANDREA: **I explain the relationship.**

CLERK2: So they are your family.

ANDREA: **Yes.**

ANDREA: And then the two of them start pulling out papers

ANDREA: **and highlighters and maps.**

ANDREA: The first one is handing me some papers.

CLERK: **You see here is the cemetery.**

ANDREA: He points to the map.

CLERK: **You will to walk along until you come
to section N7.**

ANDREA: He hands me another map. He highlights it.

CLERK: **You will go within here to the second row.**

ANDREA. He's drawing in pen. He pulls out another map.

CLERK: **And this map for the row as you can easily see. Seventh
stone. They are buried together.**

ANDREA: Together?

CLERK: **Platzmangel. Damals.**

ANDREA: Platzmangel?

CLERK: **No room. At that time.**

ANDREA: I take the maps. They go back to looking at the computer.

ANDREA: **They're scrolling down.**

ANDREA: I'm walking out.

ANDREA: **You stop. In your tired brain niggles a thought.**

ANDREA: Who are the others?

CLERK: **The others?**

ANDREA: The others you mentioned.

CLERK: Well this you must know if they are your family.

ANDREA: How many are there?

CLERK: How many?

ANDREA: Cohnreich names.

CLERK: I am sorry I can not tell you that. Data protection.

ANDREA: More than ten?

**ANDREA: One clerk is looking at the computer.
They are both ignoring me.**

ANDREA: The first clerk goes to the back room. The second clerk looks at me. He stares. I blink. And then slowly he nods. And then he turns back to the screen. The first clerk comes back. No one says anything. Am I asleep?

ANDREA: Is this a dream?

ANDREA: It's a movie.

ANDREA: But no, if it were a movie something would be happening and I'm just standing here and they are doing what clerks do. The clock ticks.

ANDREA: Maybe I am in an Iranian movie.

ANDREA: **The second clerk gives me the email address of the librarian who can approve my request to see the records that can tell me who is buried there.**

The first clerk tells me that I will have to pay for it. Genealogy research is not free.

ANDREA: I tell them I'm a playwright.

ANDREA **I have a DAAD grant. I'm working on a project.**

ANDREA: They shrug.

ANDREA: **You see, I'm trying to understand what happened.**

ANDREA: Why there is no one. And why of the ones we have no one gets along.

CLERK: **Tell it to the librarian.**

ANDREA: And then they both turn back to the screen.

ANDREA: **And then you're walking**

ANDREA: I'm walking past headstones and headstones

ANDREA: **some upright, some falling over.**

ANDREA: I stop to look.

ANDREA: **Verschollen. 1943.**

ANDREA: Verschollen?

ANDREA: **I know that word.**

ANDREA: It's what the library says when a book is lost. Where is it that people can disappear like library books?

ANDREA: Perhaps they are all together the lost people and lost books and lost socks. Perhaps the verschollene are all together reading books no one can find in mismatched socks.

ANDREA: Who goes to the cemetery anymore anyway? It's a burden of an old time.

ANDREA: You pass a couple with a baby. They smile. "Very peaceful here" they say.

ANDREA: I finish with map one. I'm in section N7.

ANDREA: You walk forward, map two in front of you. You look like a tourist.

ANDREA: I look around to see if the other Cohnreich names are in this section. They are not.

ANDREA: It's not a library. They don't shelve all the authors together. Even if the books are verschollen.

ANDREA: I'm walking, stumbling really. The ground is uneven. Trees growing out of tombstones. Weeds everywhere. I'm off the main path now.

ANDREA: Third map. And I look up. And there it is.

ANDREA: The headstone that's mentioned in the diary.

Slide: photo of headstone

ANDREA: **So it is true after all. Some part of me doubted it.
But it's really here.**

ANDREA: Oh ye of little faith.

ANDREA: **I walk around it. Weeds all over. I grab them and pull.**

ANDREA: It hurts. I look at my hands.

ANDREA: **Stinging nettle.**

ANDREA: I found them. My great great grandparents.

ANDREA: **It's a long time ago.**

ANDREA: And I'm standing on top of the grave mound and my hands
are burning and there's no one around me.

ANDREA: **Maybe you're in a Polish movie.**

ANDREA: And I stand on the grave and pour
water over my hands.

ANDREA: **And I think**

ANDREA: May the suffering of each generation decrease.

ANDREA: **May the suffering of each generation decrease.**

SCENE 7:

ARCHIVIST: **Hello and welcome to the center for the study of Berlin.**

MAX: Feb 21st, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine
Today at noon I brought Evchen to Park East Hospital to
get her child there. This is seven blocks from her apartment
112 East 90th Street to 112 East 83rd Street.

Slide: google map of addresses

ANDREA: **Last night I finally slept. A full night's sleep.**

MAX: She was as courageous and charming as ever.

ANDREA: **And today I found this archive -**

ANDREA: They have these books —

ANDREA: **These address books —**

MAX: 7:00 PM: Everything is alright as telephone calls assure me.

ANDREA: **From Berlin. From the 1920's and 30's.
And you can request them.**

MAX: When Alice, or better Mutti, arrived home at 8:00 PM, I
hurried back to the hospital, where I arrived at 8:35
o'clock.

ANDREA: **And they bring them to you.**

- MAX: But Evchen worked quicker:
At 8:27 PM On Tuesday, Feb 21st, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, she gave birth to a fine and healthy American girl who will be named Claire Helen, our first grandchild.
- ANDREA:** **The actual books. Not a microfiche.**
- ARCHIVIST: We also have them on microfiche should you be desirous of microfiche.
- ANDREA:** **I look in the books from 1928, 1931, 1934, and 1939.**
- MAX: Her weight is almost 8 pounds.
Her eyes are clear, bright, deep brown.
- MAX:** **Her hair is dark. (Addendum 1946: though it has changed to blond)**
- MAX: The weather forecast is:
Cloudy and colder with rain turning to snow tonight and possibly continuing to tomorrow morning, then partly cloudy and moderately cold.
- ANDREA:** **I'm looking up all the people mentioned in the diary.**
- MAX: We send announcements via telegram to Paris and Amsterdam, to Rio de Janiero (Heitingers) and Tel-Aviv (my sister Griseldis Anker).
- ANDREA:** **And suddenly the names, the names in the diary-**

MAX: Griseldis Anker. Tel-Aviv.

ANDREA: I find in the 1934 address book at Kantstraße 129.

ANDREA: Helene and Werner Heitinger

MAX: Rio de Janiero. 1939.

ANDREA: are at Hewaldstraße 5.
That's right near me in Schöneberg.

MAX: my niece and nephew Puppi and Gunther.

ANDREA: Wielandstr. 18. In 1939.

MAX: They are waiting to emigrate.

MAX: My cousin Betty Stein. South Africa. 1936.

ANDREA: Berchtesgadenerstr. 5.

MAX: My cousin Siegfried Blochert

**MAX: Who taught me to ride a bicycle when I was
15**

ANDREA: Santiago de Chile

MAX: 1941.

ANDREA: In 1940, Fasanenstraße 65.

MAX: Herr Siegfried Cohnreich -

ANDREA: Wittelbacherstr. 13

ANDREA: And now

MAX: Und now

ANDREA: And now

ANDREA: I have this crazy google map-

Slide: google map with 21 addresses

ANDREA: This bike route from my house to all these addresses.

ANDREA: Walter Cohnreich -

**ANDREA: If it's 1931, he and Betty Stein live on the same block.
It's around the corner from our apartment.
We live here.**

ANDREA: Lindauer Str. 11

**ANDREA: And on and on, Ernst at Wielandstr. 18, Rosa at Renter
straße 83, Fritz at Xantener Str. 19.**

MAX: When I was 13 years old and became a Bar-Mitzvah
we had guests of over 100 people from the family
and we all gathered on this day in Berlin, in the Koenig von
Portugal hotel in the Burgstraße 12.

**ANDREA: And I'm biking through Berlin. And the weather's fine.
And I'm not tired.**

MAX: This new child, this new legacy of all of you, you little cryers is the start here of the favorable new American life of our family after all the disappointments of Europe.

MAX: And now, I shall go attend to the newest one-day-old member of our family, Claire Helen, by visiting her in the hospital today.

ANDREA: And off I go.

MAX: Und off I go.

Scene 8: Cafe in Mitte.

Paul is from South Africa.

ANDREA: ...

PAUL: I was asleep for ten years.

ANDREA: **“Where’s the exit” I’m thinking.**

PAUL: In my twenties. I was a graduate student. I was out with friends. I got attacked by a swarm of bees.

ANDREA: **I smile politely. He’s just handed me a seven-page family tree. I have to listen.**

PAUL: The next week I got bitten by a poisonous spider. We have a lot of them in South Africa. And then my body seemed to go into overload. And then I slept 23 hours a day for ten years.

ANDREA: **He insists that all the Cohnreichs are related. He showed me the link on the family tree. He said, if they’re a Cohnreich they are related. He does this for a living. He’s a professional genealogist. I’m a hack.**

PAUL: My mother had all sorts of specialists around to the house. My situation was becoming more critical. Finally she found a doctor in the United States. He looked at the test results. The spider and bees were a coincidence. Like when your windscreen wipers break and your car battery goes dead. A red herring.

ANDREA: **I found him during my 14-day free trial on ancestry.com. He's my fifth cousin once removed.**

PAUL: I had a congenital vitamin D-processing disease. The doctor insisted that unless I came to the US I would die. My mother arranged for the travel. I was in intensive care. The treatments themselves could be life threatening. I had the first treatment. I improved. I had a second treatment. Again dramatic improvement. I was scheduled for a third treatment.

ANDREA: **I'm nodding. I want to get the family tree home and compare it with the phone book entries.**

PAUL: The doctor was very old. He had a heart attack in the intensive care unit while tending to his patients. Since all the patients were unconscious because it was intensive care no one could shout out for help.

ANDREA: **Maybe there are more apartments to visit. More relatives to see. Ok they're long since dead, but still. I've made a 5K jogging route from my house past seven relatives' apartments. I wave hello every time I jog by.**

ANDREA: Hello! Great great uncle Walter! So nice to see you.

ANDREA: **I imagine I drop in to say hi. They're of course happy to see me.**

PAUL: And he died there. Between the beds.
My health began to deteriorate again.
My mother found another team of doctors in Tel-Aviv
who performed the same treatment.
I moved to Tel-Aviv. I will soon have my final treatment.
They are writing articles about me.
Sometimes when I tell people that I was asleep for ten
years. They say they're jealous. They say
"God, I wish I could sleep for ten years.
I'm so tired." They actually say that.
Can you believe it?

ANDREA: **I tell him I can't sleep.**

ANDREA: He says we're complementary relatives. One can't sleep
and the other can't stay awake.

ANDREA: **I'm glad I found him on ancestry.com**

ANDREA: He turns to me again -

ANDREA: **We smile at each other.**

PAUL: We smile at each other.

ANDREA: **I'm still smiling.**

PAUL: She's smiling at me.

ANDREA: **We pause.**

PAUL: Oh, by the way, I wanted to ask you, do you know what
happened to Helene?

ANDREA: **Helene?**

PAUL: Helene Heiting, your great-great grandmother. I can't find her in the records.

ANDREA: Yes. I've been to her apartment in Berlin. A lovely old building near the Rathaus Schöneberg, which is weird because I live right there too. I can jog past her apartment. I wave when I go by and sometimes I look up into her balcony and -

PAUL: So you know what happened to her?

ANDREA: Yes, of course. She went to Rio de Janeiro. In 1939. With Werner. Her son. They lived together. Well actually he went ahead and she...well she...

MAX: She joins in Rio her only son Werner (your great-uncle) who is a painter especially for horses. We are very happy that the two of them are together again as they used to live together in Berlin too.

ANDREA: I tell him about the diary. I'm happy to be able to tell this guy something in exchange for the family tree. And I hate being indebted to people.

PAUL: That's a good story.

ANDREA: Yes.

ANDREA: All of my family made it out alive.

ANDREA: He's looking at me strangely.

PAUL: But the reason I was asking

ANDREA: But the reason I was asking he says

PAUL: Was because I wanted to know if she shared the same fate as her sister.

ANDREA: Her sister?

PAUL: Hedwig.

ANDREA: Hedwig?

PAUL: Hedwig Guth.

ANDREA: Why don't I know this? Why isn't she mentioned? Hedwig Guth. There's no Hedwig Guth in the diary.

PAUL: Yes. She's...

ANDREA: She's Max's aunt. By marriage.

ANDREA: And I ask

ANDREA: But she didn't live in Berlin did she?

PAUL: Oh. Yes. She definitely did. Her whole life.

PAUL: And I tell her.

PAUL: Which I'm sorry to do because it seems like she hadn't known. But I didn't know there were people who nowadays didn't know.

ANDREA: Hedwig Guth, he says,

PAUL: Deported 1942 Theresienstadt. 1943 killed.
Bergen Belsen.

ANDREA: I'm staring at him.

ANDREA: You're dizzy. Nauseous.

ANDREA: The room spins.

PAUL: She's staring at me.

ANDREA: Breathe.

PAUL: I'm glad to know that Helene did not share the same fate as
her sister.

ANDREA: Breathe.

ANDREA: And I take a sip of water.

ANDREA: And I thank him.

ANDREA: I go outside. Dizzy.

ANDREA: Head between your knees.

ANDREA: Breathe.

ANDREA: Breathe.

ANDREA: Everything is not fine.

ANDREA: The street pulsates and spins.

ANDREA: How many more Hedwig Guths are there?

ANDREA: And what kind of diary is this anyway?

moment between Max and Andrea.

MAX: My Dear Grandchildren:
My friendly teacher in English,
Mrs. Florence Tim, is prevented this week from giving me
the usual night school lessons.
I write her the following poem:
My dear Mrs. Flo Tim:
What is love without a dream
What is the coffee with no cream
What is the flower with no scent
What is a whiskey that's not blent
What is the i without the dot
What is the shoe string with no knot
What is a worker with no boss
What is a gambler with no loss
What is a castle with no ghost
What is the breakfast with no toast
What is a garden with no sun
What is a sweetheart with no fun
What is a champagne that does not spark
New York without the Central Park
What is an orange with no peel
What's Roosevelt with no "New Deal"
What's Rockefeller with no center
What's the center with no renter
What is the beer without its foam
What is the Pope without his Rome
What makes my temper harsh and grim

What makes my body thin and slim
What fills my glass not to the brim
That is a week without Flo Tim.

Andrea stares at Max.

Scene 9.

ANDREA: **Hello?**

DAVID: Andrea? Good to hear from you.

ANDREA: **Thanks.**
It's my uncle, in New York.

DAVID: David.

ANDREA: **I'm nervous.**

DAVID: How's Berlin treating you?

ANDREA: **Great. Great.**

DAVID: How's the play? You're halfway done with the year.

ANDREA: **Plodding along. I'm not actually writing yet.**

DAVID: Right. Right.

ANDREA: **Yeah.**

ANDREA: Yeah.

ANDREA: **So I wanted to ask, you know, did Omi, I mean your
mom. I mean Eva.**

DAVID: Yes. I know who you mean.

ANDREA: **Right. Did she ever you know, talk about her great aunt.
In Berlin. Hedwig. Hedwig Guth.**

DAVID: Hedwig Guth?

ANDREA: Yes.

DAVID: No. I don't think so.

ANDREA: Nothing?

DAVID: Not that I can remember, why?

ANDREA: I stop.

ANDREA: Why?

ANDREA: Why?

ANDREA: For some reason I hadn't considered this.

ANDREA: Well.

ANDREA: Well.

ANDREA: Well.

ANDREA: And then I go for it.

ANDREA: And I tell him.

ANDREA: There's a long pause.

ANDREA: I wait. And then -

DAVID: I don't think this can be true Andrea. I never heard anything about it.

ANDREA: **It's true I say. I know it is.**

ANDREA: And there's more silence.

ANDREA: **Well I just thought you should know.**

ANDREA: I mean just to know.

ANDREA: **Right?**

DAVID: I'd be interested to see the documents if you don't mind.

ANDREA: **The documents?**

DAVID: If you have them handy.

ANDREA: **He's testing me. Thinks I'm making up that Hedwig Guth was deported and killed and that we never knew.**

DAVID: When you get a chance of course.

ANDREA: **Sure. Sure.**

DAVID: Well thanks for calling.

ANDREA: **And we pause.**

ANDREA: And we pause.

ANDREA: **And we're both quiet.**

ANDREA: But we're there. I can hear him breathing.

ANDREA: **And then.**

ANDREA: And then...

sound of telephone being hung up.

Scene 10:

ANDREA: **I read the diary obsessively now.**

ANDREA: It's so cold I don't go outside.

ANDREA: **I'm convinced I will find something out.**

ANDREA: Something that will tell me what I want to know.

ANDREA: **I have sources**

ANDREA: and resources.

ANDREA: **#1 The Diary.**

ANDREA: #2 The 1931 Address Book of Berlin

ANDREA: **#3 The Family Tree, compliments of Paul.**

ANDREA: #4 The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names.

ANDREA: **And today. Today. I have to cross-link the names on the
family tree and in the address book**

ANDREA: with the Shoah database.

ANDREA: **From that information**

ANDREA: I'll see which ones lived.

ANDREA: **And maybe the diary will mention any of these people.
Dead or alive.**

ANDREA: I'm nervous.

ANDREA: **It's sleeting outside.**

ANDREA: I pour some whiskey.

ANDREA: **And I go through the lists.**

ANDREA: Name on Tree, Name in Phone book, alive or dead.

ANDREA: **I'm moving on: notating, searching, looking.**

ANDREA: I drink more whiskey.

ANDREA: **I print out.**

ANDREA: There are 32 Cohnreich relatives living in Berlin in 1931.
They are cousins, aunts, uncles, step-parents.

ANDREA: **I have the names.**

ANDREA: I pour more whiskey.

MAX: **August 27th, nineteen hundred and forty-three**

MAX: I have not opened this, my diary, since over six weeks.

MAX: **The reason is that I am in a bad temper and in such a
condition I am not able to enjoy anything. I cannot play
the piano, I cannot write, I cannot go to a museum. I am
without pluck and fervor. But what are the reasons?**

ANDREA: Fritz Cohnreich on Xantener Strasse. I type in his name.
I wait for the endlessly long database to crunch the name.
He's not there. He's not in the database. He makes it out
alive.

ANDREA: **Elsa Cohnreich.**
She makes it.

ANDREA: This isn't as bad as I thought. We are 2 for 2.

ANDREA: **And then I see.**

ANDREA: I see. There's an advanced search function.

ANDREA: **I can search by last name. And location.**

ANDREA: I type in "Cohnreich." I type in "Berlin."

ANDREA: **It crunches the numbers. Slowly. I wait.**

ANDREA: It strikes me as odd that no one did this before. I mean from my family.

ANDREA: **Maybe it's not weird.**

ANDREA: You have 32 relatives in Berlin and you never bother to find out what happened to them? After the Holocaust?

ANDREA: **Fine.**

ANDREA: I'm still waiting.

ANDREA: **Maybe it's only Hedwig.**

ANDREA: Still loading. I'm looking obsessively at the names

ANDREA **and the birth dates.**

ANDREA: If they're old already I feel like it's OK if they die.

ANDREA: **I mean not OK really but if some have to die, I'd prefer not the children. Not the young ones.**

ANDREA: It's like I'm rooting for some.

ANDREA: **And out come the results.**

ANDREA: 20 people.

ANDREA: **20 people from Berlin who were my relatives disappeared. Died.**

Slide: Illuminated names on family tree or in address book.

ANDREA: I look at the list. I look at the names.

ANDREA: **How could that be?**

ANDREA: Some families just aren't close.

ANDREA: **I always wanted a close family.**

ANDREA: I have a secret.

ANDREA: **How can I tell them this?**

ANDREA: What's past is past.

ANDREA: **These events are so long ago.**

ANDREA: No longer influential.

ANDREA: **But still. Shouldn't I tell them? Wouldn't they want to know? Shouldn't someone know?**

ANDREA: Someone does know.

ANDREA: **No.**

ANDREA: Yes.

ANDREA: **Yes.**

ANDREA: You.

ANDREA: **You know.**

ANDREA: I take another sip of whiskey.

ANDREA: **I don't want to know.**

ANDREA: I don't want to be the one to know.

ANDREA: **I go outside.**

ANDREA: I hop on my bike.

ANDREA: **I feel sick.**

ANDREA: My wheels are spinning out when I use the brakes.

ANDREA: **Lots of genocides happen. This isn't special. You're not special.**

ANDREA: I fall.

ANDREA: **My heart beats, thumping away in there, the adrenaline pumping from my encounter with the pavement.**

ANDREA: I'm biking faster now. The sleet has changed to snow.

ANDREA: **Cushions the falls better.**

ANDREA: Schlüterstraße 27.

ANDREA: **It's Max's address.**

ANDREA: I stand under a street lamp in front of the building.

ANDREA: **The snow is dumping down heavily now.**

ANDREA: Everything around me is surrounded by swirling white.

ANDREA: **I can't drink any more whiskey.**

ANDREA: The world is tilting and spinning but I have both legs on the ground.

ANDREA: **Did you know? I lob the question to him across the snowy sidewalk of seventy years...**

ANDREA: Why did you leave me with this information?

ANDREA: **Why are you making me the one?**

ANDREA: You should have told them. You made them think nothing happened.

ANDREA: **Nothing did happen. Nothing happened.**

ANDREA: I want to lie down on the sidewalk. I'm tired.

MAX: One of the reasons for my internal dissonance is my bad business in the practice. I am afraid of the future and I fear that I can not reach my goal, material independence. I will never achieve that here.

ANDREA: I turn the corner where it's quieter.

ANDREA: I'm lying down. The snow is falling on my forehead.

MAX: Second the situation with family matters.

ANDREA: I squint my eyes and watch the snow falling down. Cold is creeping through my coat.

ANDREA: The whiskey bottle is gone.

ANDREA: I must have left it somewhere.

ANDREA: I don't even know how much I drank of it. I'm lying down cushioned by piles and piles of snow.

MAX: Third, the great intolerable heat and humidity. The New York summer is quite unbearable.

MAX: My dearest ones, I leave you with the quotation that I think is correct...

MAX: He who forgets what he cannot change is happy.

Scene 11:

MOM: Hello?

ANDREA: Mom?

MOM: Andrea?

ANDREA: Yes.

MOM: How's the play going?

ANDREA: I haven't told her about the dead relatives from Berlin.
I'm not sure how to say it.

ANDREA: **“By the way, you know how you thought no one from our family died in the Holocaust? Well. Sorry. That's wrong”.**

ANDREA: And obviously no one else cares. This is not important for anyone.

ANDREA: **So I haven't told her.**

ANDREA: The play's going fine I say.

MOM: **You sound sick.**

ANDREA: I am.

MOM: **Oh. Well have some matzoh ball soup. Don't suppose they have that there anymore, now do they?**

ANDREA: I'm so sick I can't even get excited about this.

MOM: **You sound awful.**

ANDREA: I don't tell her about the five Israeli specialty food shops that have popped up around Berlin. All providing the Germans and non-Germans alike with matzoh ball soup.

ANDREA: **I don't tell her that young Israelis are moving here in droves.**

ANDREA: Berlin is the new utopia for Jews.

ANDREA: **A break from the war zone that Israel is.**

ANDREA: Jews from all over are here.

ANDREA: **Berlin.**

ANDREA: Some are getting their citizenship.

ANDREA: **Everyone's parents are pissed.**

ANDREA: *"How can you go back there"*

ANDREA: **Or *"I would never go back to where I was kicked out"***

ANDREA: What gets me are the facebook comments on my posts

ANDREA: **Saying**

ANDREA: *We can never forget.*

ANDREA: **Like coming back here is forgetting?**

ANDREA: Betraying something unspoken about being a Jew?

ANDREA: **But don't you see we are all screaming across time...we feel comfortable here.**

ANDREA: The ghosts of the past provide comfort.

ANDREA: **I have more family here than anywhere else, even if they are dead.**

ANDREA: I don't tell her I'm sick because I fell asleep outside Schlüterstraße 27 in the snow and drank too much.

ANDREA: **I don't tell anyone that. Not my husband. Not the pharmacist.**

ANDREA: What secretly bothers me is maybe-

ANDREA: **Maybe-**

ANDREA: that I'm crazy. Or going crazy.

ANDREA: **Crazy people rationalize falling asleep in the snow when they drink too much.**

ANDREA: Or alcoholics.

MOM: **I can't wait to read the play. I know everyone from the family will want to.**

ANDREA: Great.

ANDREA: **Uh-oh.**

MOM: So what's going on?

ANDREA: **I guess I just wanted to know if I read you a list of names if you'd perhaps recognize anybody.**

MOM: What kind of list?

ANDREA: **I read her the list.**

ANDREA: She doesn't recognize any names.

MOM: **Sorry.**

Sound of phone hanging up.

Scene 12. SKYPE Call.

ANDREA: **Hello?**

CLAIRE: Andrea?

ANDREA: **Hello?**

CLAIRE: I can't -

ANDREA: **And then**

ANDREA: the screen unfreezes

ANDREA: **and suddenly-**

ANDREA: we see each other.

ANDREA: **For the first time in a very long time.**

ANDREA: Claire.

ANDREA: **Claire Helen.**

ANDREA: The first American grandchild.

ANDREA: **She looks like a nice lady. A little like my mom.**

ANDREA: You can tell they are sisters.

ANDREA: **And her face a bit like David's.**

ANDREA: I'm asking about her memories. Of her grandfather.

CLAIRE: **I was nearly nine when he died.**

CLAIRE: I remember my grandmother Alice too. His wife.

CLAIRE: She died when I was three and a half.

CLAIRE: I remember lying in their bed during a thunderstorm.

CLAIRE: And he had a magic pocket watch.

CLAIRE: If you blew on it-

ANDREA: it opened.

ANDREA: My mom mentioned it too. We're silent.

CLAIRE: I learned later it was a button on the top of the fob that he pushed. But I thought it was magic.

ANDREA: This is my Aunt Claire.

ANDREA: We haven't spoken in twenty-two years.

ANDREA: It's complicated. I wouldn't say there are hard feelings between us. There aren't.

ANDREA: But it's good to see her. I mean I have an Aunt and here she is. Alive.

ANDREA: I haven't told her yet. The big news. About the cousins. About the ones who died.

ANDREA: And I want to read her the list of names.

ANDREA: I'm trying to go slow this time.

CLAIRE: **What else can I tell you about him?**

ANDREA: What do I say?

ANDREA: **Well...**

ANDREA: I'm wondering if he well, if he mentioned any of his
cousins.

CLAIRE: **Cousins?**

ANDREA: from Berlin.

CLAIRE: **I don't think he had any cousins.**

ANDREA: We smile.

CLAIRE: **Do you have any other questions.**

ANDREA: We pause. What about the family? I mean what's your
assessment.

CLAIRE: **Mine?**

ANDREA: Yes. We wait.

CLAIRE: **I don't know what I should say to her.**

CLAIRE: I don't understand this family.

CLAIRE: **I don't understand why we're not close. Why we don't
speak. Why we were never close. I was close with my
grandfather. But that's it.**

CLAIRE: It's very strange Andrea.

CLAIRE: It's like we have no one.

CLAIRE: It's some kind of curse. I mean if you believed in curses.

CLAIRE: Like there's this thing that sits on us from generation to generation.

CLAIRE: Dysfunction.

CLAIRE: Generation after generation.

ANDREA: I don't say this.

ANDREA: I don't say it.

ANDREA: I want to.

ANDREA: The diary. The family history in it. It doesn't point to a curse.

ANDREA: The early Berlin days seem familial.

ANDREA: Max had over 100 relatives at his Bar Mitzvah at the Koenig von Portugal hotel.

ANDREA: I never have more than five relatives in a room at one time.
But then -

ANDREA: Back then -

ANDREA: The front door opens. Noises.

ANDREA: It's my kids.

ANDREA: I ask.

ANDREA: She's nodding.

ANDREA: I stand them proudly in front of the screen.

ANDREA: They all stare. The kids look at me questioningly.

ANDREA: A long pause.

CLAIRE: Hi.

CLAIRE: I'm your great-aunt.

CLAIRE: Claire.

ANDREA: They smile. They say their names.

ANDREA: She asks them how they like Berlin.

ANDREA: They say something.

ANDREA: They glance at me.

ANDREA: I nod. They ask her where she lives.

ANDREA: And they are saying goodbye.

ANDREA: They run off to the park to play ping-pong.

**ANDREA: They have ping-pong tables in the parks here
I explain. It's a great little sport. Fun. Free. In the
parks.**

ANDREA: We stare.

ANDREA: I ask her if I can read her a list of names.

ANDREA: I do.

ANDREA: Anything?

ANDREA: She's shaking her head. I read on.

CLAIRE: Sorry.

ANDREA: I nod. Suddenly she volunteers —

CLAIRE: I remember a Tante Flora.

ANDREA: Flora?

CLAIRE: Yes. She was old. She lived with my grandparents. With Max and Alice.

CLAIRE: Yes, now that you are asking I remember.

CLAIRE: She lived in the back room. Behind the curtains.

ANDREA: She lived there?

CLAIRE: Yes. You should ask your Mom.

CLAIRE: She'll remember.

CLAIRE: Yes. Tante Flora.

ANDREA: My mind is reeling. Flora? Who's Flora?

ANDREA: **The problem with the address book records is a lot of people-**

ANDREA: Women-

ANDREA: **Aren't in them.**

ANDREA: Did Flora come to the bar mitzvah?

CLAIRE: **I'm glad you are working with the diary. I love that book.**

ANDREA: I smile. I want to go figure out who this Flora person is.

ANDREA: **Track her down on the family tree.**

ANDREA: Check in with Paul.

CLAIRE: **It was mine you know.**

ANDREA: Flora, Flora, Flora.

CLAIRE: **Well not mine but I had it.**

ANDREA: If I weren't on SKYPE I'd be pulling out some of the documents.

CLAIRE: **Your mother borrowed it, circulated it to family members, and never gave it back. I have no idea where it is today.**

ANDREA: I thought I wrote it to her. I'm sure I did.

ANDREA: **We peer into each other via Skype.**

ANDREA: It's in the Holocaust museum.

ANDREA: And I tell her about how its been donated. Although I am pretty sure she knows this already.

ANDREA: So it's safe. In perpetuity.

CLAIRE: I would like to read the diary again.

ANDREA: I tell her I know the archivist.

ANDREA: I tell her she can be provided with high-quality color copies.

ANDREA: I smile.

CLAIRE: I want to hold the book.

ANDREA: I tell her she can. It's in the archive at the Holocaust Museum.

ANDREA: In DC. Not far from her house.

ANDREA: She can drive there in 45 minutes.

CLAIRE: I can't go there.

CLAIRE: I went one time and then I had nightmares for weeks.

CLAIRE: I can't go back there.

ANDREA: I tell her how the archive is separate.

ANDREA: She won't have to go to the museum.

ANDREA: She says she can't go.

ANDREA: I offer to send the PDF.

ANDREA: No she says.

CLAIRE: I suppose what's gone is gone.

ANDREA: I suppose what's gone is gone.

CLAIRE: It was nice talking to you Andrea.

CLAIRE: Good luck with your project.

CLAIRE: It was nice to meet your kids.

CLAIRE: Maybe —

CLAIRE: Maybe someday we'll all see each other for real.

(Sound of SKYPE hanging up)

ANDREA: And she's gone. Her face frozen on the screen.

Scene 13:

ANDREA: **We've been on vacation.**

ANDREA: I'm stuck.

ANDREA: **The diary ends. Nothing more in it. Just dedications of poems to people I don't know.**

ANDREA: I'm missing something. Something clear.

ANDREA: **I re-read everything.**

ANDREA: There must be a clue.

ANDREA: **But if there is, I sure can't find it.**

ANDREA: I need a drink.

ANDREA: **I'm flipping through the papers and books and notes.**

ANDREA: I pull out the family tree from Paul.

ANDREA: **More tiny print.**

ANDREA: And then

ANDREA: **on page seven**

ANDREA: I see something.

ANDREA: **A name I recognize.**

ANDREA: Weigert?

ANDREA: **Weigert?**

ANDREA: Wasn't he the guy —

ANDREA: **Diary pages are flying**

ANDREA: The guy in the...

ANDREA: **There...**

ANDREA: Wenn sich der Mensch auch noch so "Weigert"

ANDREA: **Und denkt sich "Herr man" wird verrückt...**

ANDREA: Holy shit.

ANDREA: **Hermann Weigert. The hemorrhoid poem.**

ANDREA: Weigert's in the family tree because...

ANDREA: **on page 7...**

ANDREA: He marries an M. Cohnreich...

ANDREA: **And that's how Max knows Weigert.**

ANDREA: But who's M. Cohnreich?

ANDREA: **No M. Cohnreich in the address book.**

ANDREA: Not in the Shoah data base.

ANDREA: **I return to the hemorrhoid poem.**

- ANDREA: Who is this guy? Whose asshole is Max writing about?
- ANDREA: The key to everything is in this guy's asshole.**
- ANDREA: I say this over and over to anyone who asks about the play.
- ANDREA: I say, the key to the project is locked in Hermann Weigert's asshole.**
- ANDREA: It's hard to assess people's reactions after that.
- ANDREA: I go back to my files and books.**
- ANDREA: I google Weigert, husband to M. Cohnreich.
- ANDREA: A wikipedia entry. I skim it.**
- ANDREA: Due to his Jewish ancestry...resigned from his post at the Berlin State Opera...
- ANDREA: 1942 joined the staff of the [Metropolitan Opera](#) in New York City.**
- ANDREA: At the Met he became the primary vocal coach to Astrid Varnay
- ANDREA: whom he married in 1944.**
- ANDREA: Poor M. Cohnreich.
- ANDREA: I google US immigration documents. Searchable by name.**
- ANDREA: 1935. M. Cohnreich comes to the US with Weigert.

ANDREA: **She travels back and forth three times.**

ANDREA: In 1939 she travels back to the US from Germany for the last time.

ANDREA: **on the passenger manifest**

ANDREA: M. Cohnreich

ANDREA: **travels with...**

ANDREA: her mother.

ANDREA: **Her mother?**

ANDREA: F.

ANDREA: **F. Cohnreich.**

ANDREA: I flip to page two of the manifest.

ANDREA: **Flora.**

ANDREA: Tante Flora.

ANDREA: **And the address they list**

ANDREA: is 1425 University Avenue, Bronx, NY

ANDREA: **Max's address.**

ANDREA: They are in the US. In New York. The city I grew up in.

ANDREA: **and I've never heard of these people.**

ANDREA: And suddenly while I've been agonizing about all those who died-

ANDREA: I forgot.

ANDREA: You forgot.

ANDREA: I forgot to think about

ANDREA: Those who lived.

ANDREA: The ones who lived.

SCENE 14:

ANDREA: **It's spring.**

ANDREA: Everyone's happy.

ANDREA: **I'm not.**

ANDREA: Finding the dead people was easier.

ANDREA: **Dead people don't move from place to place**

ANDREA: Dead people don't cross borders.

ANDREA: **Dead people don't change their names.**

ANDREA: Dead people don't have petty squabbles.

ANDREA: **Dead people don't stop talking to one another.**

ANDREA: Dead people aren't worried about what others think of them.

ANDREA: **Dead people don't hide.**

ANDREA: The live family is messier.

ANDREA: **I go meet an-expat I found on the internet.**

ANDREA: He's digitally mapping every Jew who was displaced in Europe during the Nazi regime.

ANDREA: **I sent him a \$10 donation and a note on facebook and**

ANDREA: Three facebook exchanges later we realized we're both in Berlin and set up a time to meet.

ANDREA: His name is

RODERICK: Roderick.

ANDREA: "Roderick" is one of these people who knows

ANDREA: everything and everyone.

ANDREA: I'm telling him the story of my research.

ANDREA: I've turned up nothing.

ANDREA: Then Roderick leans over to me.

ANDREA: and turns his face to the side and whispers about

RODERICK: special archives.

ANDREA: He pronounces it carefully.

RODERICK: Landesamt für Bürger und Ordnungsangelegenheiten (LABO)

ANDREA: State Office for Citizen and Official Matters

**ANDREA: Department One -- Restitution Office
Victims of National Socialism.**

ROD: If your relatives claimed restitutions, and don't get your hopes up because not everyone did, you'll be able to see an address for someone from the family perhaps as late as the 1980s.

ANDREA: **My hopes are up.**

ANDREA: I come from a long line of complainers.

ANDREA: **If anyone would claim restitutions it's my people.**

ROD: I'll get you the email of the archivist.

ROD: **She and I used to have a thing but it all turned too complicated you know.**

ROD: Commitment. Aaagh.

ROD: **And don't let those archivists push you away.**

ROD: They can be real bullies.

ROD: **They can smell fear.**

ROD: And they will attack.

ANDREA: **I smile. A nice day in Berlin. Roderick tells me about his new girlfriend and his band.**

ANDREA: And we drink our cappuccinis and sit in the sun and eat cake from a cafe near my house called Kuchenkultur which when I come back three weeks later will be closed.

ANDREA: **But for now, none of that has happened yet and we are just here, drinking coffee in the sun.**

SCENE 15:

NORBERT: **I am really very very sorry.**

NORBERT: On behalf of all the Germans.

NORBERT: **I'm sorry about what happened to your family.**

ANDREA: I smile.

ANDREA: **I'm at the restitution office, surrounded by files.**

NORBERT: I am an independent researcher. I am currently researching a Jewish family here in Berlin who owned a newspaper.

NORBERT: **No relation to me though.**

NORBERT: My parents were just unfortunately your ordinary Germans.

NORBERT: **I know that doesn't have a good connotation. I also have a scanner you can use. If you need it.**

ANDREA: A scanner?

NORBERT: **Yes.**

ANDREA: You don't mind if I use it?

NORBERT: **I will help you.**

ANDREA: I hand him a pile of files.

ANDREA: **Names. Berlin Addresses. International addresses in the countries they emigrated to. Names of children.**

ANDREA: Deportation dates. Next of kin.

ANDREA: International tracing service records confirming deaths in concentration camps.

ANDREA: Those alive claiming on the behalf of those who died.

ANDREA: I carefully pull out onion skin original testimonials: lost property

ANDREA: lost furniture

ANDREA: travel costs

ANDREA: uncompensated labor

ANDREA: interrupted educations

ANDREA: loss of parents

ANDREA: loss of children,

ANDREA loss of health.

ANDREA Days in prison with food or without.

ANDREA: Correspondences go back and forth.

ANDREA: Doctors notes

ANDREA: Divorce proceedings.

ANDREA: Letters, letters, letters. Back and forth.

ANDREA: Frau so-and-so is now ten years older than when she first applied in 1953.

ANDREA: Now she is very much in need of this money.

ANDREA: She is suffering from a severe nervous disorder

ANDREA: relating to the 32 days she was held in prison

ANDREA: We urge for a speedy handling of these affairs

ANDREA: Roderick is right. Letters go through the mid '80's.

ANDREA: That's not even history.

ANDREA: I remember 1985.

ANDREA: I'm pulling out papers. Norbert is scanning.

ANDREA: We pull papers, scan, and refile.

ANDREA: Papers.

ANDREA: Papers.

ANDREA: Papers.

Scene 16

ANDREA: **It's 3AM.**

ANDREA: Everyone's asleep. I can hear them breathing.

ANDREA: **I have a pile of papers in front of me. All the scanned files.
The family tree. The diary.**

ANDREA: Printouts from the Berlin address books. Photos of
apartment buildings.

ANDREA: **Maybe this will be in the play.**

ANDREA: Plays don't write themselves.

ANDREA: **I think I'm quite aware of that situation.**

ANDREA: I wish I could sleep.

ANDREA: **I'm making a computer file for each person. Basic
information, name, where they live, how they were
affected how much money they received.**

ANDREA: The files all show the last address in Berlin. The date they
left. Or were deported. Date of death. Documents proving
death. I update my map. I update the tree.

ANDREA: **This process used to be called "Wiedergutmachen".**

ANDREA: Means "to make good again".

ANDREA: Somewhere along the way everyone realized there is no way to make it good again. So now it's called restitution. I wonder what would happen in the US if we paid restitutions. Native Americans? Slavery? Japanese-Americans? Cold hard cash.

ANDREA: I keep cataloging and reading. Every name gets a file, every file gets data.

ANDREA: Eventually I realize I am going to be able to figure out where everyone went and what they changed their names to.

ANDREA: Australia. Brazil. South Africa.
Israel. Argentina.

ANDREA: The United States.

ANDREA: An impossible archive.

ANDREA: It's mostly in German.

ANDREA: Who am I doing this for?

ANDREA: Why?

ANDREA: For the families of the people I don't know?

ANDREA: For the families of the people Max knew but didn't tell anyone about?

ANDREA: File. Sort. Arrange scans. Upload to dropbox.

ANDREA: I paid for a premium drop box subscription for this.

ANDREA: Three cousins of Max are in New York in 1946. And they have kids.

ANDREA: Why don't I know this?

ANDREA: Why have I never heard about this?

ANDREA: I feel like I should tell someone.

ANDREA: My Mom. David. Claire.

ANDREA: Does anyone care?

ANDREA: I'm googling.

ANDREA: I'm landing on Facebook pages of my third cousins.

ANDREA: One of them

ANDREA: looks kind of...boring. And rich.

ANDREA: And balding.

ANDREA: Google and facebook start spitting out pictures of relatives I didn't know I had.

ANDREA: One of them went to the same high school as me in New York, just six years earlier. I'm looking at her picture.

ANDREA: I always wanted cousins.

ANDREA: Obviously no one wants to be in contact.

ANDREA: Otherwise we would be.

ANDREA: Maybe they don't know about you.

ANDREA: Maybe they don't want to.

ANDREA: You don't know.

ANDREA: You don't know.

SCENE 17: Restitution Office

FR. KRAUTZ: **Sit down please, Frau Stolowitz.**

ANDREA: It's Frau Krautz the archivist that Roderick knows.
His ex-girlfriend. She's back from vacation.

ANDREA: **She called me yesterday. They found Max's restitution
folder.**

ANDREA: At first they told me they didn't have it.

ANDREA: **But that was just a transcription error on the side of the
archivist.**

FR. KRAUTZ: They wrote the case number down wrong on the
request form.

ANDREA: **She drove to the off-site document storage facility
and picked up Max's file.**

ANDREA: She's apologizing that it took so long.

ANDREA: **She hands me the folder.**

ANDREA: Thank you.

ANDREA: **Danke.**

ANDREA: And she walks me down to the reference room
where I can make myself more comfortable.

ANDREA: **It's empty. No other appointments for today. Just me.**

ANDREA: I open the folder and she closes the door.

ANDREA: The first thing I notice. Which is unbelievable. Because I had been going off of what's in the diary

ANDREA: is that his address is not Schlüterstraße 27.

ANDREA: The application lists his last German address as Schlüterstraße 53. He must have moved.

ANDREA: I feel stupid.

ANDREA: I got drunk and almost died in the snow in front of the wrong building.

ANDREA: Ok. Schlüterstraße 53.

ANDREA: I sit in this somewhat small, sort of run down archive reading room.

ANDREA: I look into the tiny courtyard of this wing of the building.

ANDREA: An office worker is outside having his cigarette.

ANDREA: He doesn't notice me.

ANDREA: Hours have gone by.

ANDREA: Is this what a life adds up to in the end?

ANDREA: What you're worth in dollars and cents?

ANDREA: What about family? How do you measure the value of family?

ANDREA: **Frau Krautz comes in.**

ANDREA: There's a second folder.

ANDREA: **It's thin.**

ANDREA: She's handing it to me.

ANDREA: **I open it.**

MAX: October 14, 1948

MAX: **Last will and testament of Max N. Cohnreich**

MAX: These are a few comments and some more detailed explanations in order to palliate your imminent tasks, my beloved ones.

ANDREA: **It's signed by three witnesses.
One is Tante Flora.**

ANDREA: He asks for an obit in the *Aufbau*.

ANDREA: **He asks to have Mahler's adagiatto from
the 5th symphony played.**

ANDREA: And then

ANDREA: **And then**

ANDREA: An extra paragraph.

ANDREA: **Handwritten. In that same minuscule script.**

MAX: Paragraph D:

ANDREA: Paragraph D:

MAX: It would be very nice if all my beloved ones would meet on my birthday anniversaries and one of my grandchildren would read a chapter from my diary.

ANDREA: A shiver goes down my spine. It's like he's speaking to me from beyond the grave.

ANDREA: Why me?

ANDREA: You wanted to know.

MAX: My dear ones: you see each other so rarely, and I saw you all so seldom together that I would be happy to know, now you will be together and enjoy yourselves and perhaps talk about Papi and Grandpa and spend some time with each other.

ANDREA: I'm staring at the file.

ANDREA: He wanted us to spend time together.

ANDREA: But we didn't do it.

ANDREA: Why? In the face of all the death in Europe why couldn't we see each other in New York.

ANDREA: How could we have not made the effort?

SCENE 18: Max

ANDREA: ...

MAX: My darlings,

Today sat five old mourning women at my side in the subway, all of them in dignified black clothes and one in a cape.

Surely a husband had died.

Such is life and you will one day realize the truth of the bible saying "Let the dead bury the dead!"

Dear ones, life goes ahead. Let's get along.

I was told that all my odds and ends, these little trifles in this book are without interest for my future readers, you small rascals, Miss Claire Helen and you other little beloved cryers who will complete my family.

I will better try now to describe the most important event not only of my own experience but of my generation, that event which has influenced the life and welfare of all of us,

But the sun lights and warms the earth today so wonderfully that it bothers me just now to speak about such a gloomy topic.

My dearest children and honorable readers, please give me still a brief reprieve, a short delay that I could remember a more agreeable time, a better and nicer past.

Scene 19: Plane

ANDREA: **It's August 4th 2019.**

ANDREA: I'm at 39,000 feet.

ANDREA: **In the belly of the plane are four boxes, two suitcases, and two duffles.**

ANDREA: In the cabin are:

ANDREA: **Four carry-on suitcases, wheeled variety**

ANDREA: Four shoulder bags, backpacks really

ANDREA: **Two children, mine**

ANDREA: And one husband.

ANDREA: **They're all happy.**

ANDREA: Plugged in to movies or devices. Or sleeping.

ANDREA: **I'm not feeling well.**

ANDREA: Bad fish in Reykjavik I think.

ANDREA: **We've been on vacation for the week in Iceland.**

ANDREA: On the way home to Portland. From Berlin.

ANDREA: **I look out the window.**

ANDREA: Crazy to be so high.

ANDREA: **The world's big out there.**

ANDREA: Everyone probably thinks that.

ANDREA: **I never said I was an original thinker.**

ANDREA: I feel slightly dizzy, wedged into the seat,
woozy from the fish in Iceland.

ANDREA: **I sent the letters. In case you were wondering.**

ANDREA: The night before I left Berlin.

ANDREA: **To everyone I found on google.**

ANDREA: My cousins.

ANDREA: **And their descendants.**

ANDREA: Australia. Brazil. South Africa.
Israel. Argentina. Chicago. New York.

ANDREA: **I'd gone back and forth about it.**

ANDREA: Families are hard.

ANDREA: **What if I don't like them? Or they don't like me?**

ANDREA: What if we are in opposition about politics.

ANDREA: **Or religion.**

ANDREA: Really the big worry is that they'll think that I want
something from them.

ANDREA: **But you do, don't you?**

ANDREA: I don't know.

ANDREA: **They'll get a letter from across the world from a long
lost relative and they'll think, "what does she want".**

ANDREA: So I offer them something. I send a photo of the apartment
building of their relative and the cover page of the relative's
restitution file.

ANDREA: **I describe the contents. I write down the drop box link
so they can read more if they want.**

ANDREA: I'm writing them to give them information about their
families.

ANDREA: **That's why I obsessively scanned everything from those
files, though I didn't know it then.**

ANDREA: Some part of my brain must have known it.

ANDREA: **I'm trying to turn history upside down.**

ANDREA: To undo the undone.

ANDREA: **To set things on the right path**

ANDREA: A correction maybe.

ANDREA: **I look down at the water.**

ANDREA: The letters won't be faster than me.

ANDREA: **Maybe they're even traveling transatlantically with me.**

ANDREA: Maybe they're somewhere down there.

ANDREA: Maybe they'll come by boat.

ANDREA: Do letters do that anymore?

ANDREA: I stare down at the ocean.

ANDREA: It's really blue down there.

ANDREA: I stand up and feel wobbly. Claustrophobic.

ANDREA: I head towards the front of the plane.

ANDREA: Just want to stretch my legs.

ANDREA: And as I stand there, waiting in the mid section of the plane
I look out the windows on both sides

**ANDREA: All around, everywhere, it's all just blue, everywhere
blue.**

ANDREA: The ocean around me. The sky.

ANDREA: And the room starts to pulsate.

ANDREA: And spin.

ANDREA: I feel dizzy.

ANDREA: Breathe.

ANDREA: Breathe.

ANDREA: I look over at them.

ANDREA: The ones here.

ANDREA: The ones in the plane.

ANDREA: The ones who have been traveling with me all along.

ANDREA: My daughter waves at me.

ANDREA: They all look up.

ANDREA: Steady.

ANDREA: Steady.

ANDREA: Breathe.

ANDREA: I head back to my seat.

ANDREA: And as I plunk down

ANDREA: I close my eyes.

ANDREA: Everything is spinning.

ANDREA: My husband touches the back of my head.

ANDREA: My daughter squeezes my hand.

ANDREA: I sit up.

ANDREA: My son leans in

ANDREA (sings): **Hush-a-bye, don't**

ANDREA: you cry, Go

ANDREA: **to sleep my little**

ANDREA: baby.

ANDREA/ANDREA: **When you wake you shall have**
all the pretty little horses.

ANDREA: And in this moment

ANDREA: **as I float mid-air**

ANDREA: between Germany and America,

ANDREA: **between Berlin and New York,**

ANDREA: between now and then

ANDREA: **The wide expanse of the Atlantic unfolds beneath**
me

ANDREA: And the past

ANDREA: **is the present**

ANDREA: is the future.

*Sound of plane accelerating into the future.
Blackout.*

END OF PLAY