

**The  
Job  
Interview<sup>©</sup>**

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*Scenes from quasi-everyday life in an effort to arrive at a better understanding  
of that mysterious denizen of planet Earth known as Man.*

“...Throw from your arms the nothing that  
lies between them  
into the space that we breathe as an atmosphere –  
to enable the birds, perhaps, in new zest of feeling  
to hurl their flight through the expanded air.”

Rainer Maria Rilke

*The First Elegy*, excerpt from the *Duino Elegies*,  
translated by John Waterfield

## THE JOB INTERVIEW (*Intermezzo*)

*A man is seated behind a desk. He is interviewing candidates for a job as sales clerk in a shop that sells musical items.*

INTERVIEWER- Next.

(the next candidate enters)

CANDIDATE No. 666- Good morning.

I- Good morning.

666- It's the "Roaring Forties" here today.

I- Hmmm

666- Don't you think so?

I- Certainly...of course.

666- How do I seem to you?

I- What do you mean?

666- Do I seem like I'm roaring?

I- I don't know ...at first sight like this...

666- (interrupting him) You don't strike me as someone who roars. But maybe we all do a little, at the right moment.

I- You think so?

666- I think so.

I- Hmm. Well then. So. Tell me about yourself. Tell me, are you happy?

666- What a question! Of course not! Who is nowadays?

I- They're aptitude questions, you understand.

666- Go on...

I- What's your name?

666- That information is personal. Your name isn't something you relay just like that to the first comer.

I- How old are you?

666- Ditto.

I- Are you married?

666- Completely irrelevant I'd say...

I- Hmm. Do you have children?

666- I can't say...

I- What?

666- I said: I can't say.

I- You don't know if you have children?

666- That's just what I said.

I- Well then, at least tell me about your education.

666- I'm self-taught.

I- You never went to school?

666- Never. (*with satisfaction*)

I- Languages?

666- One. My own.

I- Computer knowledge?

666- Fairly adequate thank you.

I- Do you smoke?  
666- Only when it's very cold.  
I- Your most recent professional experience?  
666- Never worked a minute in my life.  
I- How do you live?  
666- By breathing, swallowing whatever comes along. Even drinking a little.  
I- So how come you decided to start working?  
666- Out of boredom I think.  
I- As I think you must have noticed, we're in the music business. Do you know anything about music?  
666- Well...I often listen to Bach...do you know the St. Matthew Passion? Or the Musical Offering? Do you know that the inspiration for this work came from the word "Ricercar"? Each letter corresponds to a note according to the German system of naming them. And do you know why Bach chose that particular word? It's an acronym, that is, each letter corresponds to a different word: Regis Iusso Canto et Reliquia Canonica Arte Resoluta. Thus for every letter a note, for every letter a word, therefore for every note a word and from every letter of every word other notes and other words and still other notes... I'm very fond of Schubert, the doleful, romantic, moderate and immoderate, the divine duration... But he had a very short life, as did Mozart for that matter, or Chopin, or Schumann or Ravel, or Pergolesi, or Mendelssohn...so many premature deaths...I love Schoenberg's transfiguration of the night and Brahms' arches, Vivaldi's mystery, Palestrina's angels and the Madonnas of Monteverdi...  
I- So then, from what I can gather, you only listen to classical music...  
666- Absolutely not. I'm also crazy about Jazz...it's a difficult type of music, Jazz is, it doesn't harmonize well with our ear. Jazz is based on vertical harmony, hardly ever on melody; it's made up of chords and brushstrokes on drum skins, of shouts of freedom and archetypal rhythms, of sweat and smoke, of sublimated despair, of joy that wells up from the breath of an instrument that shines like gold, or glides from the fingers of a pianist gone wild...  
I- And how about popular music, Folk, Blues, Rock?  
666- When it's genuine. When it emerges from the pools of slime in city streets paved with hot, foul-smelling asphalt or appears among desert dunes or inaccessible mountains. Sometimes though it's so hypocritical that it negates itself and makes me wish I had never heard it, never... ever...  
(*sadly*)  
I- I understand. Well you won't have much time to listen to it – to music, that is – if you work for us...  
666- (*sadly*) Of course. (*pause*)  
I- You could be a help to us...  
666- I don't know...  
I- What's that?  
666- I said I don't know if you could do as much for me.  
I- I don't understand.  
666- It doesn't matter.  
I- As you wish.  
666- Clearly.  
I- Do you have any questions for me?  
666- Yes. One. (*aggressively*) Do you remember your mother?  
I- (*taken aback, bewildered*) My...  
666- Your mother, precisely...  
I- What does my mother have to do with...  
666- She's part of it, very much so... it has to do with her, and how...  
I- You're...

666- Insane? Nuts? Ill-mannered? Arrogant? Rude? A busybody? A buffoon? A sycophant? A kleptophant? An elephant? Oh! A mouse!...you're the mouse.

I- I...I...(muttering)

666- You had forgotten your mother, right? Well of course, a thing of the past, buried, gone, vanished...

(I. is shaken, almost in tears)

I- How do you know that?

666- I don't. I took a guess. I got it right, huh? Oh yeah, you seemed like just the type...ha, ha, ha...

I- And so...and so...

666- Yes, right, just so... now let's get back to the interview... where were we?

I- (regaining his composure) If you had any questions...

666- Very good. I think I'll wait.

I- Fine. The pay is very low.

666- Less than nothing?

I- No, but...

666- Then there's no problem...

I- It requires working Saturdays...

666- And Sunday?

I- A day off.

666- Excellent.

I- The schedule is broken up.

666- In how many parts?

I- Two.

666- Well...I was thinking more...but that's fine...

I- Is moving to another location a problem?

666- Why?

I- Well, I don't know...sometimes...

666- Is it a problem for you?

I- Generally speaking, no.

666- Not for me either, then.

I- Abroad?

666- What?

I- Is going abroad a problem?

666- For how long?

I- I don't know...a week...maybe two...

666- Three or not at all.

I- All right, you can go for three then.

666- Excellent.

I- Do you have your own means of transportation?

666- My legs are my own, absolutely.

I- Hobbies?

666- Climbing trees.

I- Me too!

666- I was just looking for another one.

I- I love the sycamores most of all...

666- Oh God!

I- Then when I'm up there I like to look down...

666- Hmm, thrilling.

I- And then up, toward the sky.

666- Oh boy!

I- Do you know that sometimes you can see the spirits of the dead pass by?

666- You don't say.

I- It's true! And the dry leaves of the trees, set afire, can be caught in full flight, encased in the gnarled column of smoke that rises in sinuous naked whorls, numbing our senses with the acrid odor of burnt living matter flowing from its grey lips.

666- We have a poet!

I- (*shouting, suddenly disconsolate*) I'm sorry! My God, I'm sorry!

666- There, there, don't do that...come on, pull yourself together...

I- No, no, I want to apologize... I want to apologize ...

666- I don't understand, for what?

I- What, you of all people? You don't understand?

666- I don't understand.

I- I'm sorry...about everything!

666- Oh no! You can't be sorry about everything. You must have done something good in your miserable life, haven't you?

I- One time I saved a flower.

666- Hmm...anything else?

I- One time I threw a fish back into the sea. But it was already dead.

666- There there now, is it possible there isn't anything else?

I- One time I ran away.

666- This is definitely more interesting. Tell me about it.

I- I don't remember if it was day or night, morning or evening, but I remember that I was singing.

666- Good. Go on.

I- I was alone in the house. I was singing "April in Paris". I was lying on the sofa. I used to like that sofa. It was one of those you sink into... Oh, yes, the radio was on as well, but it wasn't tuned in to any station...

I could hear static in the background... who knows what remote region in space it was coming from... what galaxy in flight... maybe it was concealing the secret of the birth of the universe... probably it was just a storm on the way or one that had just passed through... I'd like something to drink now...

666- I'll bring you some water when you've finished. For now, continue.

I- There was a kind of rare stillness; I was suspicious of it, I mistrusted it because I knew it well... nothing more than a sham... nothing more... outside cars were passing by... not constantly, no... but with regularity... with an odd regularity... vroomm...vroomm...vroomm... then, at regular intervals, the sound of brakes... it was very hot... I had closed all the windows and lowered the shutters... but the heat seeped in just the same...

666- Was it then that you ran away?

I- No... I also remember that in the next room there was an enormous grandfather clock, taller than me... every half hour it would strike very loudly... my friends were all away, the cat was out, the trees were motionless... that was when I ran away... when I realized that they too were unable to move, anchored to the earth, stretched out vertically in their urn of wind, immobile... oh God!

(*weeping*)

666- Cheer up. It's all over. I'm here now.

I- Thank you.

666- What are friends for?

I- I would have done the same.

666- I know.

(*they embrace*)

I- It's so hard to accept life.

666- Don't even talk about it.

I- You were saying?

666- I don't remember...hobbies maybe...  
I- Right. Well then. Let's get back to it... what do you expect from this job?  
666- Should I expect something?  
I- You tell me.  
666- Let me think (*pause*)  
I- Well?  
666- No.  
I- Okay. (*pause*)  
666- Are we done?  
I- I think that will do it.  
666- Okay, goodbye then.  
I- Wait. As far as I'm concerned, you can start tomorrow.  
666- No. It's best if we forget about it.  
I- You don't want to accept the job?  
666- No.  
I- I'm willing to increase the pay.  
666- No thanks. I'd rather not mix feelings with work.  
I- I could make your career advance rapidly...  
666- Really...it's best not to.  
I- Please. Think about it.  
666- My decision is made. There's nothing to be done about it.  
I- Tell me what it is you want. I'm willing to meet your needs.  
666- I have to go (*gets up*)  
I- Wait.  
666- I'm sorry.  
I- Please (*imploring him*)  
666- So long. (*starts to leave*)  
I- Don't go. (*imploring him*)  
(*666 stops in the doorway as if reconsidering. I. waits anxiously*)  
666- Maybe...  
I- Yes?  
666- Maybe we could discuss it further...  
*I- Yes, yes of course...*  
666- I'll have to ask you some questions...  
I- It goes without saying...  
666- I'll have to bore into your private life...  
I- I understand perfectly...no problem...  
666- Unpleasant things might come to light...  
I- It doesn't matter...  
666- All right, have a seat.  
(*I. sits down in the candidate's chair and 666 sits behind the desk.*)  
666- So then, my dear man, what did you say your name was? (*darkness*)

CURTAIN