

ACT ONE

Meeting the Parents

Ann and JD, recently married, have just arrived from JD's country. Ann is from the United States. The couple has decided to live for now with Ann's parents. Ann's father, Tom, has questions about his new son-in-law. Tom's friend, George, has a construction company. Tom helps JD get a job interview with George. Yet JD tells Ann, "I am a journalist, and I want to work as a journalist." Ann listens to and understands her husband.

Scene 1.1, Track 1

Arrival at the Browns' House

Ann and JD arrive at Ann's parents' house. JD meets Ann's parents for the first time.



Scene 1.2, Track 2

JD Chats with his Father-in-Law.

JD is chatting with Tom in Tom's shop in the garage. Tom is somewhat suspicious of JD. He is a bit uncomfortable that his daughter has married a foreigner.



Scene 1.3, Track 3

Beginning the Adjustment to a New Life

Ann and JD are in their bedroom at their parents' house. They're talking over the arrival and the meeting.



In order to build a good life in the USA, JD has many challenges. Advise him. What are the most important things to do?

Scene 1.1, Track 1

Arrival at the Browns' House

**Ann and JD arrive at Ann's parents' house.
JD meets them for the first time.**

Ann: Mom, Dad, we're here! How are you? (*embracing them*) I want you to meet my husband, JD. JD, this is my mother, Catherine, and my father, Tom.

Catherine: (*embracing JD*) My daughter told us what a wonderful man you are. Let me look at you! (*looking at him, laughing*) You are handsome! Ann, you made a good choice.

Ann: Mom, don't embarrass him.

Tom: (*Tom shakes JD's hand unenthusiastically.*) I am very happy to meet you.

JD: And I am happy to meet you, too.

Catherine: Welcome to our home, JD! From now on, our home is your home. Tom?

Tom: (*weakly*) Yes! Of course, of course. Welcome! Welcome!

JD: You two are very kind. Thank you for this warm welcome.

Catherine: Well, it's time to eat! Ann, I have made all your favorites. JD, do you like chicken?

JD: It is my favorite too.

JD sits at the table with the family. Ann passes food to him.

Catherine: (*seeing that he has taken very small amounts*) JD, you are part of the family. Take more. Please!

JD: (*laughing and taking more*) I think I will like being part of this wonderful family!

Tom: (*abruptly*) Well, JD, what do you think you'd like to do for work?

JD: (*uncomfortably*) Umm . . .

Ann: Dad, . . . (*making a face at her father*) Remember? You promised.

JD: It's OK, Ann. I like talking to your father. At home, I worked as a journalist.

Tom: It will be hard to get a job here. What other skills do you have?

JD: *(confidently)* I'm sure I will find some work. I like to work.

Tom: Well, here things are very expensive. Some people have to work two jobs.

JD: No problem. In my country I usually worked 40-60 hours every week. Then I did work at home.

Tom: What work did you do at home?

JD: I like to build furniture – chairs and tables. One time my neighbor came and sat in my new chair. *(laughing)* He is a big guy. He was stronger than my new chair.

Tom: *(involved in the story)* He broke it? What a shame! Could you repair it?

JD: He broke it in three places. It took me many hours to fix it. I put two seats on it. Then, I invited this guy back for a test.

Tom: *(very interested)* What happened?

JD: *(laughing as he tells the story)* The chair made a funny noise, like stretching.

Tom: Did it hold him?

JD: Yes, it did. I was very proud.

Tom: Come out to my shop after dinner. I want to show you what I'm working on.

Scene 1.2, Track 2



JD Chats with His Father-in-Law

JD and Tom are in Tom's garage. There is a small workshop there. Tom is still not sure about this foreigner who married his daughter.

Tom: Well, this is my work bench! The vise is new.

JD: (*handling it*) Oh, it's very strong! This will help make many things.

Tom: I have been working on a picnic bench for the yard.

JD: Where is it? Oh, I see it. It looks strong. How many people will it seat?

Tom: I'm thinking six, possibly eight.

JD: I will stain it, if you want.

Tom: Thanks. That might help me out. I forgot to ask, how was your trip?

JD: It was long. We spent many hours in airports with no fresh air.

Tom: That's always the way. I was sorry we couldn't make it to the wedding. Kind of last minute, wasn't it?

JD: We are very sorry for that, but we had to act fast. There was a visa issue.

Tom: Catherine told me a little about that, but what was the problem?

JD: The law in the United States was changing. Soon it was going to be very hard for me to get a visa. So we got married and applied for the green card there.

Tom: I'm sure that was difficult. But it is not good to have pressure to marry.

JD: Sir, I love your daughter very much. I wanted to marry her. The happiest day of my life was when she said "Yes" to me.

Tom: (*confused*) Now that I have met you, I feel better.

JD: I beg your pardon for not asking your permission before.

Tom: Well, anyway, you're here now! Your skill with wood will get you a job, if journalism doesn't.

JD: Yes, maybe I can be a carpenter first. Sometime, may I use your workshop?

Tom: Use anything out here. Catherine and I want you to live with us. Is that OK with you? You will have your own room, of course.

JD: That is very kind of you. Already you have helped us a great deal. Thank you for the plane fare. We will stay only a short time.

Tom: It will be no trouble. I've missed my daughter very much. To tell the truth, I didn't want her to go away in the first place. But she is stubborn.

JD: *(laughing)* This I know. I wanted Ann to live with my parents in order to save money. She missed you and Catherine very much.

Tom: Maybe we can find a way for them to visit us here.

JD: That will be wonderful. My mother is very sad for us to be so far from her. Do you know anyone who needs a carpenter?

Tom: As a matter of fact, there's a project going on downtown. I know the boss. I'll go talk to him.

JD: My working will make Ann feel better. She worries too much.

Tom: No need to worry, son. You're with family now. We'll take care of each other.

Scene 1.3, Track 3



Beginning the Adjustment to a New Life

Ann and JD are in their bedroom. They are reviewing the day.

Ann: Well, how do you like my parents?

JD: (*enthusiastically*) They are wonderful. Your mother cooked us a beautiful meal. You didn't tell me she was such a good cook!

Ann: She was excited to meet you.

JD: I loved meeting both your parents.

Ann: Don't worry about my father. Don't worry about all his questions.

JD: I see that your father has a good heart. He only wants us to be happy.

Ann: My father sometimes worries too much. We can live here for a little time.

JD: I think your father wants me to work soon. Already he talked to me about a carpentry job.

Ann: My father has worked all his life. Now he wants you to do the same. Don't worry about it.

JD: (*impatiently*) I have to worry about it. We are here. I need to work.

Ann: Yes, but it's not all your responsibility. I think they will hire me at the hospital.

JD: I see now that your parents are older. They need quiet.

Ann: They are happy for company.

JD: I will get work soon. Your father knows a man who has a construction company. I will have an interview.

Ann: But, uh ... Remember. We are not in a hurry.

JD: I know that. When there's an opening, they need to fill it. I will go down and talk to the boss.

Ann: OK.

JD: What if I don't understand him?

Ann: Just ask him, "Please speak a little more slowly."

JD: I understand when people speak slowly. I cannot understand when they talk too fast.

Ann: Your English is fine. Sometimes people don't realize they talk too fast.

JD: OK. Ann, I am very excited to be here in this country. Yesterday we were in my home. Today we are in your home.

Ann: The most important thing is that we are together.

JD: This is the start of our new life together.

Act One Discussion and Improvisation

Discussion:

Part One: Discuss in a small group or in pairs. JD wants to succeed in many areas:

- adapting to a new country
- learning English
- succeeding in a new marriage
- succeeding with his father-in-law and mother-in-law
- finding a new job
- succeeding in a new job

1. Which of these areas do you think will be the easiest for him? Why?
2. Which of these areas do you think will be most difficult for him? Why?

Part Two: Divide your discussion group into pairs. Choose three challenges from the list above. One partner is JD. Give JD one piece of advice for each challenge. Then reverse roles.

Improvisation: *Meeting Your Father-In-Law*

Scene: A young couple has just been married, but the parents of one of the young people could not attend the wedding. The spouse's father is not happy about the wedding. The new husband or wife must meet the parents and make a good impression.

Characters: newlyweds, father-in-law, mother-in-law

Purpose: The young couple wants their marriage to be accepted.
The older couple has doubts about the marriage.

Setting: the parents' home, evening

Optional Opening Lines:

Daughter or son: Mom, Dad, I would like you to meet _____.

Mother: (very formally) I am pleased to meet you.

Father: (quietly) I am pleased to meet you.

New spouse: It is my pleasure to meet you.

Length: Minimum each Person: *Easy:* 5 lines; *Moderate:* 10 lines; *Challenging:* 15 lines

Useful Expressions: Parents:

Tell me about the...

I would like to know...

We were so sorry to miss the wedding.

Newcomer:

I will describe the wedding.

We wish you had been there with us.

We are so happy to be here now.